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Signing on the line

Four McNary High School seniors inked letters of intent to play college sports in the last week

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Mike McDowell only saw Cammie Decker hit one ball before she joined the McNary High School girls varsity golf team.

"She hit a dart straight down the middle for about 230 yards and that was all it took. I knew I was in good hands for the next four years," said McDowell, Celtic head coach.

Decker, a senior, will be taking her skills north to Portland's Concordia University next fall. She signed a letter of intent to play for the school at a ceremony Tuesday, Nov. 17.

McDowell said Decker started with the right foundation.

"Cammie is the first one

at practice and last to leave every day, and puts that kind of example forward for the other girls. She'll also step right up and help the other girls whenever she can help them identify a problem," he said.

Over the years, she's added to her repertoire a steely resolve to excel at a game known for its ups and downs. She doesn't get angry over the bad balls and feels no need to celebrate the great ones, McDowell said.

"Cammie hits a plateau and stays there. I've only met two or three other high school students that can play the way she does in that regard," said McDowell.

Decker said she loves the team and individual aspects of golf, and found the school environment at Concordia fit

well with her priorities.

"I liked the whole environment – how it is a smaller school – and the team atmosphere they have up there," she said.

She is still deciding on a major at the school, but she's currently maintaining a 3.95 grade point average.

She's already anticipating facing the next level of competition in the sport.

"Everybody is all-around competitive, and it's not just a matter of one person we'll have to watch out for," she said.

McDowell doesn't think she'll have to worry much about fitting in.

"This is a sport that takes a lot of years to learn and she's good enough already to move up to the next level," he said.

Decker swings for Concordia

Cammie Decker



Madisen Oliver

Oliver to Cavaliers

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Kevin Wise noticed Madisen Oliver struggle as she made her debut on the McNary High School varsity softball as a freshman, but he never had any doubts.

"One of the things we always talked about with Maddie is that she was going to do great things with her attitude and work ethic," said Wise.

One can guess that the coaches at Portland's Concordia University must have noticed the same things. Oliver signed a letter of intent to play softball

for the Cavaliers Friday, Nov. 13, at McNary.

In her three years in the Celtic program, Oliver has played all over the diamond – outfield, infield and pitching – but her presence at the plate is a cut above.

Last year, her batting average was .432 with 11 doubles, three triples and two home runs, a far cry from her .200 average her freshman year.

"That's the kind of kid she is," Wise said. "She takes the good and the bad and just keeps doing her thing. You know she is going to do whatever she can

to help her teammates."

Oliver said she was invited to a Concordia softball camp while making an appearance at a Portland State University camp last summer.

"I went and the coach was just great, and I really liked that the school has a strong education program because I want to be a teacher," said Oliver.

Oliver is maintaining a 3.7 grade point average while taking honors and advanced courses in her senior year.

She is eyeing a spot at second base with the Cavaliers

and said she'll be putting most of her effort in her senior year preparing for an infield role.

"I'll be working a lot on speed and lateral movement," Oliver said.

She thanked her coaches, teammates, grandparents and parents during the ceremony, saying how much it meant to have them all there at her games.

"I've dreamed about (playing in college) since I was little and it's nice to see all the hard work pay off," Oliver said.

Wise said it was with both pride and remorse he'd watch Oliver move on to her future endeavors.

"I'm still excited for her senior season, but it's sad to lose such a great kid," Wise said.

Hingston headed to Seattle Pacific

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

There came a point last season when Derick Handley, head coach of the girls varsity basketball team, gave then-junior Madi Hingston an ultimatum.

"Madi is great at sharing the ball with her teammates – that's kind of the way she operates – but her unwillingness to shoot held us back at times," said Handley. "We finally told her shoot the ball or you're not going to play any more."

Hingston started shooting, and shooting, and shooting. She shot her way to a new single-season McNary record for three-point goals.

"We finally told her shoot the ball or you're not going to play any more."

— Derick Handley,
McNary Girls Varsity
Basketball Coach

"The old record was 37 and Madi had more than 60," Handley said.

Those skills have earned her a spot on the roster at Seattle Pacific University. Hingston signed a letter of intent to play for the Division II Falcons at a ceremony Tuesday, Nov. 17, at McNary.

"There was a lot that went into picking them," said Hingston. "There's a good balance between basketball and education at the school. It will be a smaller class size and have a more community feel. They've also always been pretty strong basketball-wise."

In addition to her record-setting three-point season, Hingston averaged 13 points per game, four rebounds per game and was the team's assist leader, all as a junior.

As much as Handley was relieved to see Hingston step up and shoot, he said her approach to the game is equally appreciated.

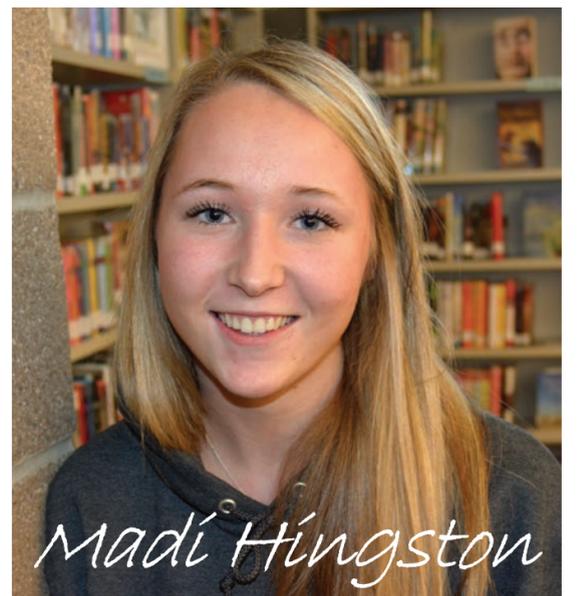
"Madi's personality is get-

ting everybody involved early on even though she can be the game leader, she has a great understanding of the game in that way," Handley said.

Hingston plans to study business at the school with an emphasis on sports marketing.

She'll be one of only two freshmen joining the Seattle Pacific roster, but said she's looking forward to a new school, new teammates and everything that comes with college.

"I feel like it will be totally different and a new challenge, and I'm excited for all of it," she said. "This season, I just want to work on my leadership and being more aggressive. There's always room for improvement."



Madi Hingston



Kaelie Flores

Flores picks Wildcats

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

When it came to picking a school to continue her basketball career, McNary High School senior Kaelie Flores went with the one that stuck by her.

"Central Washington University has been looking at me since I was in eighth grade, and they've stuck by me the entire time I've been developing as a player," Flores said. "I like how supportive they've been of me and of their student athletes."

Flores signed a letter of intent to play for the Division II Wildcats during a ceremony held Tuesday, Nov. 17, at McNary.

She made a second visit to the school last weekend and coaches at the school were al-

ready prepping her for the role she'll play on the team.

"They're thinking a small forward, but they were already walking me through their system and sat me down with video to show me the types of players I would be defending against. It was pretty cool," Flores said.

Flores's senior season is just starting, but she was a steady contributor as a junior – averaging 13 points per game and five rebounds.

Derick Handley, head coach of the McNary girls basketball program, said the biggest recent change in Flores's game is being more aggressive offensively.

"That's come about because she's realized she can be the scorer and the team leader and that got her the looks she

needed to draw attention," Handley said.

While she is an asset on the court, Handley said she is just as instrumental off of it.

"She's the goody leader that can bridge the gap between the coaches and the players when things are kind of intense. She understands the team attitude and picks up on the right thing to say to loosen the team up," he said.

Flores plans on pursuing a major in a medical field, but hasn't cemented her choice as yet. In the short term, she said, her focus will be on improving her game.

"I definitely need to get in college shape for basketball, work on my shot and work on my moves in my position," Flores said.