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Big wins all around

Boys surge to sixth on win over Vikings

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

In one of the McNary High School boys varsity basketball team's most controlled wins in years, the Celts handily defeated the Forest Grove Vikings 76-62 Friday, Dec. 18.

The victory sent the Keizer team soaring up the state rankings to sixth in the OSAA 6A classification.

"Forest Grove is a very talented team, but our kids have practiced and prepared with a sense of purpose that they can win regardless of the situation. They're not arrogant or cocky, but they are very confident in their abilities and have a strong belief in themselves," said Ryan Kirch, McNary head coach. "It was just beautiful to watch them at times tonight."

The Celtics started the game with a 5-0 lead but soon found themselves trailing the Vikings 12-5. Three-point goals by Harry Cavell, Easton Neitzel and Alex Martin help close the gap to 23-18 by the close of the frame, but Forest Grove still led.

A three-pointer by Chandler Cavell kept the Vikings within reach shortly after the beginning of the second period. Coupled with another try by Martin, McNary then kept the game close. The Celts finally retook the game lead with a two-point goal by H. Cavell with 3:30 to go in the half.

The Vikings took the lead back on their next possession. As the clock was winding down, C. Cavell scored his second three-point goal of the night to give McNary a 41-40 lead and then H. Cavell made a steal and scored on a dunk to give McNary a 43-40 lead going into halftime.

"We shut down (Taylor) Jensen, who is one of the lea-



Celt Cade Goff dribbles around a Forest Grove defender just before putting up a shot.

ing scorers in the state right now, but they had a lot of other guys step up," said Mathew Ismay. "The only problem was we gave up 40 in the first half, which isn't something we want to do."

The second half was all McNary from the get-go. The Celtics scored seven unanswered points at the top of the third frame, five by Ismay.

With limited trips to the foul line, the Keizer boys outscored the Vikings 33-22. Un-

til the Forest Grove match, the Celts had relied on making trips to the foul line to win close games, but only got one in the fourth period this time around.

"We came out strong in the second half and really executed. On defense we played hard and shut down their better players," said Neitzel.

Kirch said the game came down to some key performances in a strong team effort.

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McNary's Kaelie Flores heads for the rim in the game with Sheldon High School. The girls beat the then-No. 1 OSAA 6A team 75-57.

Lady Celts take down Oregon's 6A leaders

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School girls varsity basketball team took most everyone by surprise in a 75-57 win over Sheldon High School Saturday, Dec. 19, themselves included.

"It was kind of a surprise to be winning but, by the end of the game we were like, 'Oh, this is us and who we are as a team,'" said Kaelie Flores, a Celtic senior.

Going into the game, Sheldon was the top-ranked team in the OSAA 6A division, McNary moved up to No. 14 with the win.

McNary hosted the match-up and started out with a seven-point run that included two two-point goals by Flores and a three-pointer

by Madi Hingston.

The Keizer girls carried that lead into the second frame and lost it only briefly midway through the quarter. After falling behind 26-24, sophomore Kailey Doult hit a two-pointer to knot the game 26-26. The Lady Celts would trail through the end of the half, but a final bucket by Reina Strand sent the teams to halftime with the Fighting Irish leading 35-33.

"We started doing things a bit different even in the pre-game warm-ups and that made for a good start," said Strand.

By midway through the fourth quarter, the Lady Celts had a 19-point lead over the Irish. McNary spent much of the late minutes at the

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Wrestlers take down Grizzlies

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Four McNary High School wrestlers were key to picking up the team's first win, 44-28, over McMinnville High School since the Grizzlies joined the Greater Valley Conference.

"It was a four-man puzzle, and we had some kids step up who had never been bumped up a weight class before. You do that and it's like a flip of a coin. It was a string of kids that came out of their shell and did some good things," said Jason Ebbs, McNary head coach.

McNary hosted the meet Thursday, Dec. 17.

It came down to needing a 195-pound wrestler to win the duel, Ebbs added. To make that happen, Celt Jesse Gomez wrestled at 160 pounds and lost by pin. Up next Carlos Vincent, usually a 160-pound entry, wrestled at 170 and won in a 16-8 major decision. Blake Gerstner wrestled at 182 pounds and won a barn burner with a 15-9 final score. McNary's Isaiah Putnam, who was giving up about 20

pounds by the time he took the mat at 195 pounds, won in an 8-2 decision.

"It was a good milestone. McMinnville is one of the teams that floats near the top and we knew they had four studs coming out this year. We ended up losing those matches, but we competed well even in those matches," Ebbs said.

The evening started with the 106 pounders and Celt Brooke Burrows taking on August Hirsch. Burrows dominated throughout, but struggled to turn Hirsch for a pin as the match wore on.

"I realized it wasn't working, so I decided to try for a tech fall," said Burrows, who has been part of McNary's Mat Club for about eight years. Burrows got close to her goal of the tech fall, but simply ran out of time. She won in a 19-8 decision. "It helps that I only have brothers," she said. "It's made me really competitive."

At 120 pound Joey Kibbey won by pin in 1:30; Jon Phelps won by pin in 1:12; and Wyatt Kesler won in a 16-0 tech fall. Please see WRESTLE, Page A11



McNary's Blake Gerstner cinches in a half-nelson during his match of the McMinnville duel meet Thursday, Dec. 17.

Walkers buy out Volcanoes

The Walker family recently purchased 100 percent of the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes after decades of co-ownership with Bill Tucker.

Tucker and Jerry Walker brought the franchise to Salem-Keizer, from Bellingham, Wash., in 1997, as the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes, and have jointly owned the franchise since 1989.

"Lisa and I are honored that this ownership partnership of 27 years helped contribute to three World Series Championships and six Northwest League pennants; it is one of the great recent runs in Pacific Northwest Minor League baseball and we thank Bill Tucker and his family for their true passion for the game," Jerry Walker said; Lisa is his wife. "The commitment to championships and this community is stronger than ever before."

The full ownership allows for continuity as Walker Please see WALKER, Page A13