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## Top 10 sports stories of 2016

### #1 Lady Celts fourth in state

Playing in the state tournament in Portland, McNary's girls basketball team defeated South Medford 57-52 in overtime on March 12 to finish fourth.

"For us seniors, going out like this it's such a great accomplishment, because there is no other team we'd rather do it

with," Lady Celt Madi Hingston said after the game. "We got here together and we made it all the way to the end."

McNary lost to Jesuit in the quarterfinals of the state playoffs but bounced back to defeat Oregon City, the No. 1 team in the coach's poll and then South Medford,

who was the two-seed in the tournament.

The Lady Celts 23 wins were the most in the program's history.

Three players, Hingston (Seattle Pacific), Kaelie Flores (Central Washington) and Renia Strand (Minot State), went on to play in college.



McNary's girls basketball team won a school-record 23 games, including a 57-52 victory over South Medford in overtime to finish fourth in the state in 2016.



File Junior Walling, No. 81, and Jakoby Doke, No. 12, celebrate during a 33-32 win at West Salem on Oct. 28.

### #2 Celtics upset West Salem

West Salem's football team was 7-0 in the Greater Valley Conference and needed only a win at home over McNary to complete an undefeated season.

But the Celtics had another idea. With a 53-yard touchdown run by A.J. Johnk, followed by a two-point conversion by Marc Baiza late in the third quarter, McNary upset the Titans 33-32 on Friday, Oct. 28.

"This has been a long time coming," senior Kolby Barker, who had yet to defeat West Salem in his high school ca-

reer, said after the game. "We were ready to take it to West with everything we had. We were not going to lose this game. It's personal pride for this senior class and everybody. This is something we'll remember for the rest of our lives."

The Celtics had many exciting games in 2016, including a 46-41 shootout against McKay and a 30-27 victory at McMinnville won a Hail Mary pass in the final 1:25. But ask any McNary football player and they'll tell you West Salem was their favorite.

### #3 Three wrestlers place at state

After winning the Greater Valley Conference at 138 pounds, McNary sophomore Brayden Ebbs placed fourth at the state tournament in Portland on Feb. 26 and 27.

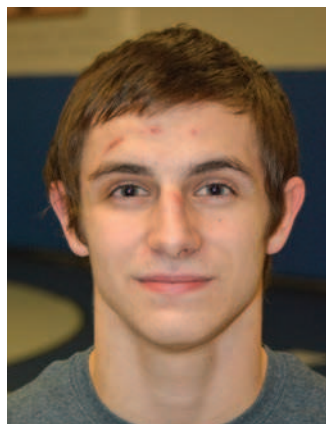
"I wrestled hard and did most of the things I should have," Ebbs said.

Ebbs wasn't the only Celtic to have success.

Senior Jon Phelps finished fifth at 132 pounds and freshman Brooke Burrows took fourth in the girls state tournament at 106 pounds.



Ebbs



Phelps



Burrows

### #5 Kuch breaks two GVC records

McNary sophomore Marissa Kuch was named Greater Valley Conference Female Swimmer of the Year after setting new league records in both the 100 and 200 freestyle races.

"Honestly, I was just having a good day at districts," Kuch said. "After I touched the wall

in the 200, I had to look at the board twice. That was super exciting. I still don't think I realized what I'd done until I got on the podium and they announced it."

At the state meet, Kuch reached the finals in the 100 and placed fifth. She then took eighth in the 200.



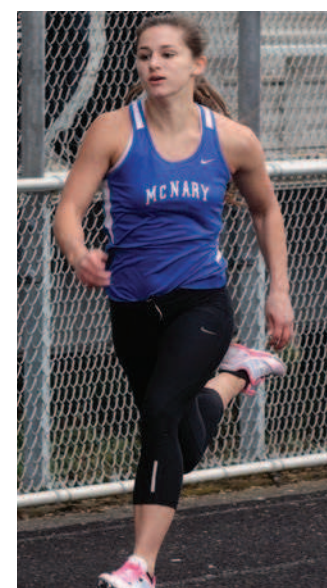
File As a sophomore at McNary, Marissa Kuch set GVC records in both the 100 and 200 freestyle last year.

### #4 Duran 2nd in 300 hurdles

McNary senior Dani Duran didn't clear her first hurdle until midway through her final high school season but she was a quick enough study to set a new school record (44.91) in the 300-meter race, win the Greater Valley Conference title and then place second in the state.

Duran was initially disappointed with second but it was enough to get the attention of Oregon State University head track and field coach Kelly Sullivan, who offered a scholarship.

"I've always wanted to go to college for sports," Duran said. "That was my goal. OSU has always been my top college I still don't have the best form when I hurdle but I have the speed in between hurdles and I can get over them. Every single race I was always nervous I was go-



File Dani Duran placed second in the state in the 300-meter hurdles in 2016.

ing to fall on my face and be embarrassed but I never did, thankfully."



Submitted Deven Hunter kisses the Final Four trophy after the Lady Beavers upset Baylor in the quarterfinals of the NCAA Tournament.

### #6 McNary grad plays in Final Four

Deven Hunter, a 2012 graduate of McNary High School, wrapped up her Oregon State career with a Pac-12 championship and berth in the Final Four.

As a 2-seed in the NCAA Tournament, the Lady Beavers blew out St. Bonaventure 69-40 to advance to the Sweet 16 for the first time in program history.

They then topped DePaul 83-71 to play No. 1 seed Baylor for a shot of the Final Four. Hunter pulled down seven rebounds in a 60-57

win for the historic berth. Up next was undefeated and three-time defending national champion UCONN.

Like all the other teams that had tried to dethrone the Lady Huskies, OSU fell 80-51 in front of more than 15,000 people in Indianapolis and millions more around the world watching on ESPN.

In the title game, Syracuse didn't have any better luck, falling to UCONN 82-51. "Their starting five is

amazing," Hunter said of the champions.

"The game didn't go the way we wanted it to but it was definitely a good learning experience and just making it to the Final Four was an awe moment."

Hunter finished her career with 893 rebounds, good for fourth in Oregon State history and tied for 31st in Pac-12 history.

She played in every game over the course of her four years and started 132 of 135. "It's crazy what we were

able to accomplish over four years," she said. "It's still so surreal, even to this day, like it never happen, definitely a shock."

Going to the Final Four was a goal Hunter made as a freshman.

"We wanted to change the program around," Hunter said.

"Definitely that was our goal that we set out coming in as freshmen. We knew we were a special group of people. We knew we had something special."