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**WILEY**

## Celtics fun to watch

My last year in Georgia, the four high school boys basketball teams I covered went a combined 41-62.

None made the playoffs.

Three of the programs have new coaches.

Fortunately, at least one of the schools had a strong girls team and they excelled at most other sports, even winning state championships in wrestling, softball, golf and track and field.

But boys basketball was the outlier, the one sport none of the schools could figure out. A lot of it was demographics. Some of it was a lack of interest compared to other sports. Ask the parents and, of course, they'll say it was coaching. But regardless, the product was mediocre, which means, for me, covering boys basketball has rarely been fun.

Until now.

Before this season, my first covering McNary, I heard from several parents that they expected big things from the Celtics—a conference championship, deep playoff run.

Head coach Ryan Kirch was confident as well and senior Cade Goff said the first day of practice was the best first day McNary's had in his four years.

Although the season is young, especially due to multiple postponed games for winter weather, the Celtics are so far delivering.

Coming off two blowout wins (81-51, 86-26) and then a 73-72 victory over Capital, Idaho to win the Oregon Holiday Hoopfest at Summit High School in Bend Dec. 28-30 and a Greater Valley Conference win over Forest Grove on Tuesday, the Celtics travel to West Salem tonight with a 10-1 record and are an undefeated 3-0 in league play.

McNary is athletic enough and can really shoot the ball but what makes the Celtics special is the way they play together, constantly making the extra pass.

McNary is also deep. Five different players, Goff, Adam Harvey, Matthew Ismay, Chandler Cavell and Easton Neitzel are averaging more than 10 points per game and that doesn't include Alex Martin and Lucas Garvey, who could also easily score double digits on any given night.

The Celtics are averaging 76 points per game. They've already scored at least 80 six times and their average margin of victory is more than 25 points.

They're also good guys. Before Christmas, they spent hours shopping and then wrapping gifts for a Keizer family in need.

So support the program and come to McNary and watch a game.

The Celtics have at least seven more home games. Not everyone is so fortunate to be able to witness good boys basketball in their town.

For too long, I know I wasn't.

# McNary sweeps Forest Grove

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

Easton Neitzel looked like he was shooting on a bigger rim than everyone else.

The McNary senior had a career high 30 points as the Celtics defeated Forest Grove 86-68 at home on Tuesday, Jan. 3.

"Guys were finding me when I was open," Neitzel said. "I hit some shots and got in rhythm."

Neitzel's 30 points included four 3-pointers. He also went 6-for-6 from the free throw line.

"He didn't take any bad shots," McNary head coach Ryan Kirch said. "We've really been working on him playing with strength in his lower half and draw contact and play through it. We were really impressed with Easton tonight. He just continues to get better and plays within himself and I thought that was huge."

McNary also nearly got a triple-double from Matthew Ismay. The senior finished with 14 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists.

"I think Matt leads us with his toughness consistently over 32 minutes," Kirch said. "Guys sort of follow suit around him."

Chandler Cavell gave the Celtics a spark off the bench in the first quarter. The junior had 10 points but Forest Grove led 23-21.

McNary took control in the second quarter, scoring the first seven points and outscoring the Vikings 24-9 in the period to take a 45-32 lead into halftime.

"Early on, we gave up some offensive rebounds that we shouldn't have," Kirch said. "They made some shots. It was a few different things but

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McNary senior Matthew Ismay scored 14 points to go along with 10 rebounds and seven assists against Forest Grove on Tuesday, Jan. 3.

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I think once we got into the second quarter, we got a little bit more rhythm going."

Ismay picked up his third foul just 30 minutes into the second half and was forced to the bench. However, he didn't

stay there long as Forest Grove pulled within 45-39 with 5:32 remaining.

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## Present, future on display at Northwest Duals

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

ALBANY—McNary went into the Northwest Duals having not wrestled in nearly three weeks, missing three veterans with illness or injuries, forfeiting four weight classes and had another four spots filled by either first-year or freshmen grapplers.

And the results showed as the Celtics finished 1-8 on Thursday, Dec. 29 and Friday, Dec. 30 at the Linn County Fair and Expo.

"Our first day, we wrestled some programs that are traditionally very good," McNary head coach Jason Ebbs said. "I like wrestling those programs because it teaches our kids what wrestling is supposed to look like and what they can become. We're coaching a team that's going to be at its best in February and we're going to get better everyday."

McNary went 0-5 on Thursday, losing to David Douglas, Sherwood, Hillsboro, Redmond and Central.

But there were bright spots. Competing at 152 and 160 pounds, Wyatt Kessler went 8-1 over the two days. After getting pinned by Bryce McKinley of David Douglas to open the tournament, Kessler went on a roll, winning six matches by pin fall, one by technical fall 15-0 and another on a 12-0 major decision.

"He commits the time that is over and above what a typical high schooler will do," Ebbs said. "The work he's done is what helps pay off for him."

The Celtics got their only team win on Friday, edging St. Helens 36-33 in the middle bracket.

At 152 and 160 pounds, Carlos Vincent went 5-4 with four pins and a 13-5 major decision. Sean Burrows also

finished 5-4. Wrestling in between 132 and 138 pounds, he had four pins and won another match by forfeit.

The surprise of the tournament for McNary was freshman Javier Torres, who went 4-5 in his first varsity action. At 126 pounds, Torres pinned Joshua Smith of Hillsboro for his first win. Before the tournament was over, Torres earned another pin, won two matches by forfeit and lost another in overtime, 15-13, to Blake Hodges of Cleveland.

Ebbs said Torres has a feel for the sport.

"I just enjoyed watching Javier," Ebbs said. "There were several times where he was taking pressure from his opponent and instead of just falling over because he didn't know what to do, his body felt it and he put his feet in the right place, he put his hands in the right place, he put his head in the right place and he did some things that are very difficult to teach. He just felt wrestling and turned bad situations into better situations."

The Celtics were without Brayden Ebbs (illness), Nick Hernandez (injury) and Enrique Vincent (injury).

"They're (Hernandez and Vincent) going to be out injured for a little while still and hopefully make it back," coach Ebbs said. "Those are some key players for us that help make a difference when we go to a dual match tournament."

The Celtics will continue to compete against some of the best programs in the state.

McNary will begin 2017 on Friday, Jan. 6 with a tournament at Newberg, which placed second in the Northwest Duals behind only Elk Grove. Redmond and David Douglas finished fourth and sixth respectively in the 36-team tournament.



Wyatt Kessler went 8-1 for McNary High School at the Northwest Duals on Thursday, Dec. 29 and Friday, Dec. 30 at the Linn County Fair and Expo Center.



McNary freshman Javier Torres was 4-5 in his first varsity wrestling tournament of the season.

Kirch said. "The guys that kind of go unnoticed are Alex Martin, just how consistently he plays defensively. Lucas Garvey comes in and guards really well for us. Adam Harvey can do the same."

Neitzel made back-to-back 3's and went 4-for-4 from the free throw line in the final three minutes of the third quarter as the Celtics held on to a 65-54 lead.

The Vikings opened the fourth quarter with two 3-pointers and a free throw to get within 65-61. However, Forest Grove couldn't get any closer as Cade Goff and Ismay scored on back-to-back possessions to stretch the lead to eight. McNary made its final nine free throws to put away the Vikings.

"We play in the toughest league and just getting one win is so difficult. It's exhausting," Kirch said.

**Lady Celts win at the buzzer**

Playing on the road, McNary senior Sydney Hunter made a 3-pointer at the buzzer as the Lady Celts escaped Forest Grove with a 43-41 victory. Hunter finished with 18 points and nine rebounds.

Jaylene Montano added seven points as McNary outscored the Vikings 12-5 in the fourth quarter.

McNary travels to West Salem Friday and then hosts Sprague in a make-up game on Saturday. Girls tip off at 5:45 p.m. followed by the boys at 7:15.