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## Vincent shows fight of champion



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By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

SALEM—When McNary sophomore Enrique Vincent's knee swelled up early in the wrestling season, he didn't know if he'd be able to recover in time to compete for a district championship.

After finally getting cleared, Vincent ran twice a day, in the morning before school and then after practice, to cut 12 pounds so he could get back down to 120 and wrestle in the Celtics final two duals of the regular season on Feb. 8 and 9.

The hard work paid off as Vincent defeated West Albany junior Wyatt French 11-5 in the finals of the OSAA 6A Special District 5 tournament on Saturday, Feb. 18 at West Salem High School.

Vincent thanked his coaches, Jason Ebbs and assistant Devin Reynolds, for pushing him.

"They knew my limits. They knew I would do anything for this spot right here," Vincent said. "It feels great. It makes up for all the days and weeks I've missed."

Vincent started the district tournament with two



Top, left: McNary sophomore Enrique Vincent gets his hand raised after winning the 120-pound district title. Bottom, left: Vincent wrestles West Albany junior Wyatt French in the finals. Right: Vincent celebrates with McNary assistant wrestling coach Devin Reynolds.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

pins on Friday. After defeating Sprague sophomore Luke Merzenich 8-5 in the semifinals, Vincent led French from the beginning, scoring a quick two points on a take-down in the opening seconds.

"He (Vincent) loves to wrestle and when you've got a kid out there who wants to be out there, great things can happen," Ebbs said.

Vincent said the key to

winning the finals match was controlling his opponent's wrist.

"I knew he was a big scrambler and I'm a big scrambler, too. I love scrambles," Vincent said.

Vincent was one of eight McNary wrestlers to place in the top four in the district and qualify for state: Sean Burrows (second, 132), Brayden Ebbs (third, 145),

Jerry Martinez (fourth, 126), Killian Dato (fourth, 138), Carlos Vincent (fourth, 152), Isaiah Putnam (fourth, 170) and Blake Norton (fourth, 285).

Senior Sean Burrows has attended the state wrestling tournament in Portland as a spectator since he was in elementary school. But this will be his first time as a competitor.

Burrows pinned McMinnville sophomore Andre Mushombe in the third period of the semifinals.

"I had a kid I hadn't seen or heard of or wrestled all season," Burrows said. "He was a 138-pounder that dropped down, just out of nowhere. I watched him wrestle a few times and he's strong and solid but he's not special. My goal was just to out work

him. He was a 138-pounder and I'm a 132-pounder so I should have better endurance. I just wrestled him until he broke and then pinned him."

Burrows was then pinned by Forest Grove senior Lucas Higginbotham in the finals.

"It's going to be a different experience," Burrows said of wrestling in the state tournament.

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

McNary senior boys basketball players Matthew Ismay, from left, Alex Martin, Kevin Martin, Easton Neitzel, Adam Harvey and Cade Goff were recognized before their final home game of the regular season, a 61-47 win over West Salem on Friday, Feb. 17.

## A fond farewell

### Celtics top West Salem on senior night

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

When Matthew Ismay and Cade Goff cracked the McNary varsity lineup as freshmen four years ago, the Celtics were coming off two of the worst seasons of any basketball team in the state.

In the two seniors final regular season home game, McNary suffocated the No. 4 ranked team in the OSAA power rankings, West Salem, 61-47, on Friday, Feb. 17.

"This senior group has changed my six years here from where the program was, where we were the worst

team in the state," Celtics head coach Ryan Kirch said.

"I told them before the game, 15 years doing this, this is my favorite group I've coached. I'm just so happy for them. It was an awesome night."

The evening started with a recognition of McNary's six seniors, which along with Ismay and Goff, includes Adam Harvey, Easton Neitzel, Alex Martin and Kevin Martin.

"I was sitting in the locker room before the game and it's crazy how fast four years actually goes by," Ismay said. "It was great tonight. We had

a lot of fans, a great atmosphere. It was a good game to end on."

With 2:30 remaining in the first quarter, Chandler Cavell broke a 4-4 tie.

Alex Martin then knocked down a 3-pointer and the Celtics rolled from there as Harvey scored five straight points to extend McNary's lead to 14-4.

Cavell closed the first quarter with five more points as the Celtics led 19-7 at the end of the first quarter, which grew to 33-14 by intermission.

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## Lady Celtics come up short in home finale

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

Sydney Hunter, Jaylene Montano, Gabby Schmit and Kelsey Koenig's final home game at McNary wasn't one they'll likely want to remember as the Lady Celtics lost to West Salem 55-44 on Friday, Feb. 17.

"Inconsistent effort" and "inconsistent execution" were the reasons head coach Derrick Handley gave for the loss, McNary's third in a row.

"We're still looking for leadership, someone on the floor who isn't just emotional every time something good or something bad happens," he said.

"We're not consistent with our attitudes. We're not consistent with our effort on a play to play basis. If things go well, we're a good team. If things don't go well, we tend to fold quite a bit earlier than we should."

The Lady Celtics fell behind 16-6 as West Salem knocked down a 3-pointer just before the buzzer sounded to end the first quarter.

McNary opened the second quarter on a 7-0 run with a Schmit basket in the paint, a Montano 3-pointer, followed by a Kaley Doust 3-point play to get within 16-13 with 4:20 remaining.

However, West Salem was able to stretch its lead back out to 30-17 at halftime.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

McNary senior girls basketball players Gabby Schmit, from left, Kelsey Koenig, Jaylene Montano and Sydney Hunter were recognized before their final home game on Friday, Feb. 17.

Doust, who finished with a team-high 16 points, kept the Lady Celtics in the game with 10 points in the third quarter but McNary couldn't get any closer than nine points of West Salem.

A Doust jumper made it 35-26 with 3:49 remaining and then Abigail Hawley banked in a jump shot at the 1:33 mark to get the Lady Celtics within 39-30. But the Titans answered with the next eight points to extend their lead to 47-30 early in the fourth quarter.

McNary closed the game on an 8-2 run but it wasn't enough.

"We're having really good practices," Handley said. "The frustrating part as a coaching staff is what we're putting in the game plans, we're doing in practice and it's looking really good and we're able to do it for stretches in the game. Sometimes the moment is getting too big. I don't know what it is at this point but these are games that we need. We need to do our job. We need to be better at this point."

Hawley was the only other Lady Celt to score in double figures, finishing with 10 points.

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