

CHAMP: 'I just got sick and tired of losing'

"I've just got to remember to do what I've been training to do my whole life."

McNary junior Brayden Ebbs finished third at 145 pounds. After losing to the eventual district champion, North Salem sophomore Ian Carlos, 10-6 in the semifinals, Ebbs pinned Sprague junior Dalton Lethco-Willis in 44 seconds and then McMinnville senior Max Morton in 1:02.

Carlos defeated McMinnville junior Michael Abeyta 13-2 in the 145 finals.

McNary junior Blake Norton, was unseeded and hadn't won a varsity match all season when he opened the tournament with a 9-7 overtime victory over West Salem senior Blake Buchheit.

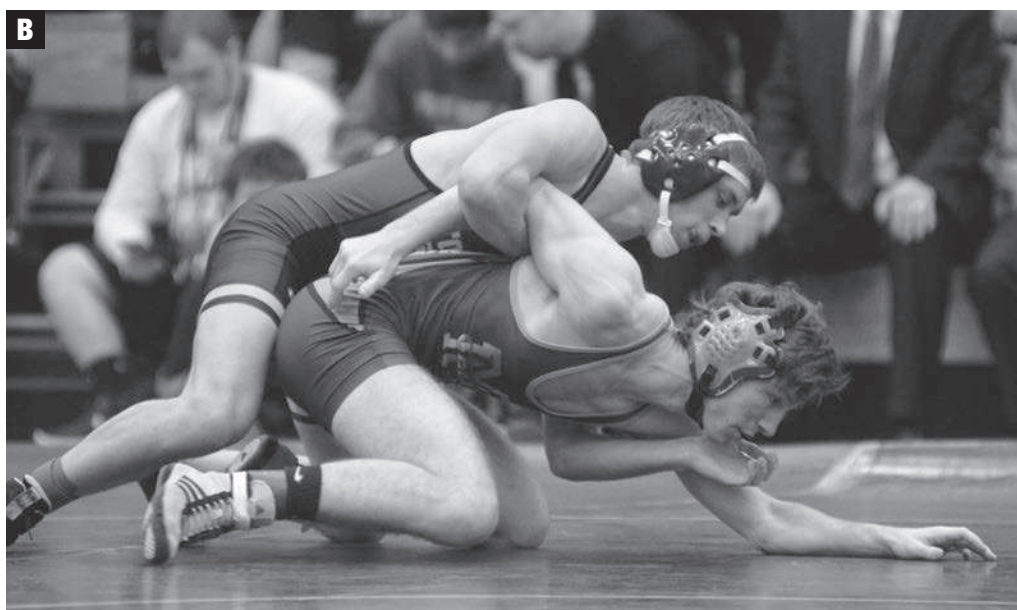
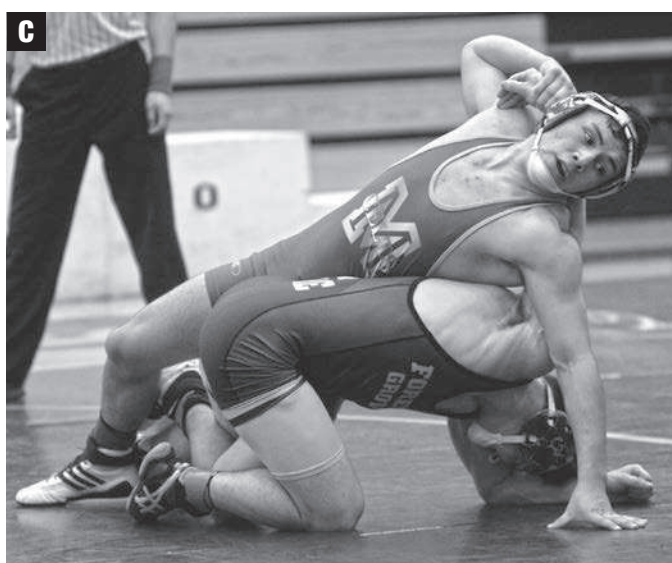
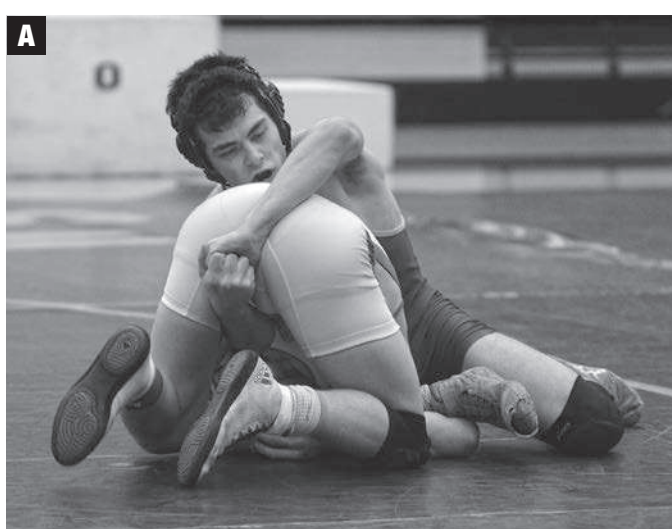
Norton was pinned in the first period of his next match but won his next two, 5-2 and 3-1, to set up a match with West Albany senior Jalaam Stewart, the 3-seed who had already defeated Norton twice during the season, to qualify for the state tournament.

Down by one point, Norton pinned Stewart with only four seconds remaining in the third period.

"I just got sick and tired of losing," Norton said. "It felt really good. I'm excited. I didn't expect to make it to the second day. Coaches just kept picking on me until I finally got fed up."

Vincent and Putnam both reached the semifinals of their weight classes, where they lost to the eventual district champions.

Vincent then topped Sprague senior Landon Menerich 13-5 to qualify for the state tournament while Put-



A: McNary senior Killian Dato finished fourth in the district at 138 pounds. B: Senior Sean Burrows reached the finals and placed second at 132 pounds. C: Senior Carlos Vincent took fourth at 152 pounds. D: Wrestling at 170 pounds, junior Isaiah Putnam finished fourth to qualify for state for the second straight year.

nam bounced back by defeating West Albany senior Wyatt Walls 5-0 to advance to the state tournament for the second straight year.

Martinez won his first match 10-4, was pinned in his second, but won his third 10-0. He then topped McKay junior Sergio Mendez 8-6 in overtime and got a forfeit win

to advance to state.

Dato won two straight matches, 11-2 and 7-4, in the consolation round, to set up a match with West Salem sophomore Kaedyn Malcom to qualify for state.

On a takedown in overtime, Dato won 8-6.

"I get down and I see my opponent is already tired,"

Dato said. "He already has the look of defeat on his face. I knew if I wanted to go to state, I had to get an upset. I just did what we were taught all season, which is to capitalize on our opportunities. I don't know if I've ever been happier inside this sport. It's such a great feeling."

With 483 points, Sprague

easily won the team title. West Albany took second with 244.5 points.

Third through seventh was decided by only eight points with North Salem placing third with 177 and McNary finishing seventh with 169.

"We won some huge matches to get some more kids to the state tournament

today and that's what these kids needed to see was that instant change based on your effort and your attitude," coach Ebbs said.

The state tournament takes place on Friday, Feb. 24 and Saturday, Feb. 25 at Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

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"Our kids are tough," Kirch said. "Instead of worrying too much about game planning, we decided we're just going to get down and try to make somebody beat us. We simplified it a little bit and our guys just did a great job. Just toughed up, got in a stance and guarded them."

McNary extended its lead to 45-23 heading into the fourth quarter. With a minute remaining, West Salem got within 55-44 as the Celtics got sloppy with the ball.

McNary scored the final four points of the game on a fast break dunk by Goff and a layup from Martin.

"This is probably, with the exception of the last four minutes of the game, as good as we've played all year," Kirch said. "We came out right from the get go and we think we're a top 10 team in the state, and we just really put it on West and I just couldn't be more proud of them and just happy for them on senior night like this at home."

Ismay led the Celtics with 19 points and five assists. Harvey finished with 12 points and four assists. Cavell had 10 points, all in the first



McNary senior Cade Goff scored nine points and had six rebounds against West Salem.

half off the bench, Goff added nine points and six rebounds and Alex Martin had seven points, seven assists and seven rebounds.

McNary closed the regu-

lar season with a 76-67 win at McMinnville on Tuesday, Feb. 21 to finish 18-6 overall and 11-5 in league play.

The boys state tournament begins Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Softball camp March 4

The McNary softball program is holding two camps on Saturday, March 4.

Pitching and catching, from 9 a.m. to noon, is led by Lady Celts pitching coach Cari Buchholz along with McNary pitchers and catchers. The cost is \$45.

The Lady Celts coaches and players will then instruct

a softball skills camp from 1 to 4 p.m. The session includes defensive skills and hitting drills. The cost is \$35. Kids, ages eight to 18, can sign up for both camps for \$45. Registration includes a McNary t-shirt.

Payment can be made by cash or check. Checks should be made out to McNary Soft-

ball. Weather permitting, the camp will take place either on the softball field or in the gym so campers are asked to bring both cleats and indoor shoes.

For more information, contact McNary softball coach Kevin Wise at 503-399-3233 or wise_kevin@salkeiz.k12.or.us.

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Hunter had seven points and seven rebounds in her final home game. Montano added three points. Schmit finished with two points and four rebounds. Koenig chipped in with a rebound.

"They're different but all four of them are incredibly vital to what McNary has meant over the last four years to the program," Handley said of the seniors.

"Sydney is one of the better players in the state and is going to play Division I next year but you have three others girls who are the best teammates you'll ever find.

"Obviously, Jaylene's played more this year but for girls like Gabby and Kelsey,



McNary junior Kailey Doult, who led the Lady Celts with 16 points, try to score against a West Salem defender.

they're just committed to their teammates. They're here everyday. They work their tails off for us. They never know when their number is going to be called but they're always ready. Incredibly important, all four of them. We're obviously going to miss them as people because ultimately they're honestly

better people than they are players and that's pretty special."

The Lady Celts closed the regular season with a 53-38 victory at McMinnville on Tuesday, Feb. 21 to finish 13-10 overall and 8-6 in league play.

The girls state tournament begins Wednesday, March 1.

Behind the wheel there is no such thing as a small distraction.

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