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One win from Portland Celtics shoot past Wilson in first round

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

McNary (19-6, 11-5) is one win away from the goal it set back in November before the season started—the state quarterfinals in the Chiles Center on the campus of the University of Portland.

The Celtics defeated Wilson 77-65 on Tuesday, Feb. 28 in the first round of the 6A boys basketball state tournament.

Up next is a long bus ride to North Medford (20-5, 11-1), a trip familiar to McNary. The Celtics lost there in the second round of the 2015 state playoffs.

“This is a big game,” McNary senior Matthew Ismay said. “It gives me memories of sophomore year. We went down to North Medford, same exact situation, and had a loss in a close game.”

The two teams were even seeded the same, North Medford—7 and McNary—10.

This season, the Celtics and Black Tornados share two common opponents. North Medford defeated Oregon City 59-46 in the first round of the state tournament. McNary blew out Oregon City 85-54 but that was back in December in just the Celtics second game. North Medford also edged Forest Grove by one point while McNary split with the Vikings, winning easily at home and losing by three on the road.

“It’s going to be a heck of a ball game,” McNary head coach Ryan Kirch said. “They’re well coached and have a lot of depth. They run some stuff similar to us offensively. We’ve just got to play. You get to this point and all teams can play. It’s the 50-50 ball here and there. It’s everybody boxing out for a rebound, all these little things that are the difference.”

The Celtics got past Wilson by making their first five



McNary senior Cade Goff drives past a Wilson defender on his way to 20 points, four rebounds and four assists in a 77-65 victory in the first round of the state tournament.

3-point attempts—one by Cade Goff and two each from Easton Neitzel and Alex Martin to take a quick 15-4 lead. McNary made eight 3-pointers in the first half and 11 in the game.

“The game plan is always to come out with energy and intensity,” Kirch said.

“Our guys if they feel like they’re in rhythm can shoot the ball and that’s what happened. We did an excellent job of just moving the ball, we attacked off the dribble and found Easton and Alex. We

just did a really nice job sharing the ball.”

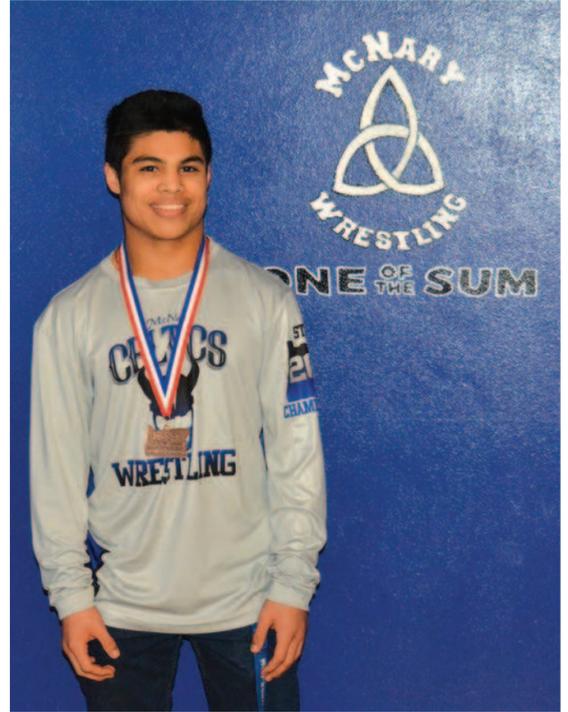
The Celtics finished with 21 assists. Ismay had seven to go along with six rebounds.

“They were really collapsing on the drive and I was able to get a bunch of assists in the first quarter,” said Ismay, who scored all 12 of his points in the second half. “We were trying to get to the rim more because in the first half, we were hitting 3’s in the beginning but later we kind of started settling for them.”

McNary led 30-21 at in-

termission. Wilson made a 3-pointer to get within 30-24 early in the second half but that’s as close as the Trojans could get as the Celtics stretched their lead to 50-38 on an Adam Harvey 3-pointer at the end of the third quarter. “I was really impressed with more than anything with how we finished the game, being able to finish with confidence, not passively, strong at the rim, making free throws late in the game,” Kirch said. “That’s a really good step for us.”

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McNary sophomore Enrique Vincent placed third in the state at 120 pounds on Saturday, Feb. 25 in Portland.

Vincent takes third at state

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

Wrestling in the state tournament for the first time, McNary sophomore Enrique Vincent remembered the words of teammate Sean Burrows—“Whatever happens, just smile.” Vincent had plenty to smile about as he placed third at 120 pounds Saturday, Feb. 24 at Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

Vincent claimed he entered the tournament a “little intimidated and scared” but it certainly didn’t show as he won his first match by a 15-2 major decision and his second by a 19-4 technical fall.

“After maybe the first round of my first match, I started to get used to it,” Vincent said. “I had Devin (Reynolds), my assistant coach, I had his voice in my head ‘this is just a tournament that they call state’ just over and over so I was able to

work with that.”

In the quarterfinals, Vincent faced his first challenge. Trailing Newberg junior Zach Irving late in the third period, Vincent was able to turn the match into a scramble and earn a pin with only 11 seconds remaining.

“I was on my stomach and I looked at the clock and saw 45 seconds,” Vincent said. “It was all or nothing. I was lucky to stick him.”

Vincent got another Newberg wrestler in the semifinals, sophomore Christopher Strange, and lost 10-6.

“I wasn’t mentally prepared,” Vincent said. “I wasn’t taking as many shots. I wasn’t being as aggressive as I usually am. It was hard to accept the loss because I knew I wasn’t wrestling like I usually wrestle. I had to get over that real quick so I could get ready for my next match.”

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Whiteaker Middle tops rival Claggett Creek

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

With 10 lead changes and two matches decided in overtime, Whiteaker Middle School narrowly edged Claggett Creek 45-41 on Thursday, Feb. 23.

Wrestling under a spotlight and large crowd at McNary High School, Whiteaker seventh grader Aldo Villalvazo (195) got a pin in the first period to seal the win for the Wolverines.

“He (Villalvazo) was a first-year kid for us that’s giving the sport a try,” Whiteaker head coach Kelly Hafer said. “That was really encouraging to see him get a pin and get to be the hero by winning that last match. It really was a team effort to get to that point where he was in position to make that happen.”

Both Matthew Araiza and Nick Martin won in overtime. At 85 pounds, Araiza came out on top 14-12. Martin then won 4-2 at 90 pounds.

“I really appreciated Nick Martin and Matthew Araiza getting overtime wins,” Hafer said. “That takes a lot of effort and most middle schoolers aren’t used to having to win in overtime. It’s rare for matches to go that long.”



Seventh grader Aldo Villalvazo got a pin in the first period to seal the win for Whiteaker. Right, top, Whiteaker wrestler Nick Martin won in overtime, and bottom, Claggett Creek eighth grader Grady Burrows pins his opponent.

Hafer was also proud of Jeremiah Ratliff and Chad Croucher, who both lost by major decision but were able to avoid getting pinned, saving the team four points.

Claggett Creek won four matches by pin fall—Brandon Blanco (75), Grady Burrows (95), Joey Hernandez (132) and Jayden Gomez (175).

The 95 pound match appeared it might go another

way as Whiteaker eighth grader Cameron Parks got Burrows in a cradle and near fall at the end of the first period. However, Burrows was able to recover and pin Parks in the second period.

“It was a good experience having everyone watching you in the middle of the mat,” Burrows said.

“I knew he liked cradles and he got me in one.”

Burrows and Parks know each other well, wrestling on the Celtic Mat Club.

“Both are really good friends and really good wrestlers and that was a really good match,” CCMS head coach Aaron Carr said. “That’s good for them, both being good wrestlers, it’s always good to wrestle someone else that’s good.”

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