



3555 River Road N, Keizer
(503) 463-4853
www.skylineforddirect.com

LONGEST GAME OF FOLLOW THE LEADER. EVER.



FORD TRUCK MONTH



KeizerSports

KEIZERTIMES.COM

From KYBA to state champs

Keizer girls lead Blanchet to first girls basketball title

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

With a roster of mostly sophomores, Blanchet Catholic wasn't supposed to win a state championship.

But its road to a title didn't begin two years ago.

It started when five future Lady Cavaliers—Ana Coronado, Bailey Hittner, Hailey Ostby, Lauren Elmore and Trinity Phipps—came together as fifth graders on the same tournament team in the Keizer Youth Basketball Association.

That squad, which won a state middle school championship as sixth graders, was coached by Bailey's father Ron Hittner, who was an assistant at Corban University and is now the head coach at Blanchet.

"You could definitely tell the potential at an early age," coach Hittner said. "They loved the game and you knew they were going to improve."

Kalea Salang joined the girls at KYBA in the eighth grade.

"There seemed like there was no weak link to the team," Salang said. "The whole team, we were all strong players and we went to the state tournament that year and placed third. We already knew from there that we had a gift and we could go far places if we stuck together."

With all six girls on the varsity team as freshmen, Blanchet made the 3A state tournament last season for the first time since 2012 but were eliminated in the first round.

With the goal of getting back to the playoffs and this time winning, the fifth-seeded Cavs easily defeated Amity 51-29 in the first round to advance to the state quarterfinals at Marshfield High School in Coos Bay. They then edged No. 4 Portland Adventist 46-44 to play Pac-West Conference foe and No. 1 Salem Academy in the semifinals.

Blanchet had defeated the Crusaders by two points early in the season but had since lost twice by an average of 10.5 points.

The Cavs evened the score in the semifinals, winning 51-39 to advance to the state championship game for the

FEEL GOOD STORY

Saluting the people that make us proud of our community

capitolauto.com

first time in school history.

"The kids did a great job executing the game plan," coach Hittner said.

"We're a strong defensive team and when we play defense, we can compete with anybody. We also shot the ball well. It was the most complete game we had on offense and defense."

Up next was two-time defending state champion Dayton, who Blanchet had narrowly lost to back in December.

"We knew us going to the championship game that was a big check but we weren't settled for that," Coronado said. "We thought we could push even more and win a championship and make even more history."

But the Cavs fell behind by 14 points early in the fourth quarter.

Needing a miraculous comeback, the girls went to a defensive drill they've practiced since the fifth grade. The objective is to play defense for an entire minute without making a mistake.

Blanchet did it for seven minutes, holding Dayton without a basket while scoring 16 straight points.

Coronado capped off the run by stealing the ball from two-time 3A player of the year Shawnie Spink and making a layup on the other end to give the Cavs a lead with 30 seconds remaining.

"I wasn't expecting myself to steal the ball but it was out there so I took it," said Coronado, who led Blanchet with 13 points, nine rebounds and four steals in the 36-34 state championship victory on Saturday, March 4.

Blanchet, which prides itself on playing full court



pressure defense, simply wore Dayton down.

"We still had another gear in us, I guess," Coronado said. "They got tired at the end and we kept going and kept pushing. We've always played that way, since fifth grade. I can't even explain how big defense is to us. It truly has been our key."

The Cavs also fed off the crowd.

"The atmosphere was electric," coach Hittner said.

"Our fans were great and our kids really fed off their energy."

Once the final buzzer sounded, the girls couldn't hold back the tears.

"We were all bawling our eyes out in the locker room," Bailey Hittner said. "I remember turning to Trinity and saying this is what ever since fifth grade has led up to. It's crazy to think that every practice, every game in the tournament has led to this moment right here. It was just so surreal."

Please see KYBA, Page A11



Submitted
Top: Ana Coronado, Bailey Hittner, Hailey Ostby, Kalea Salang, Lauren Elmore and Trinity Phipps, who came up through the KYBA, won the 3A state championship for Blanchet Catholic on March 4. Bottom: Ron Hittner's sixth grade KYBA team won a state title.

McNary lacrosse home opener Friday

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

Led by a strong junior class, McNary lacrosse coach Ryan Bowlby expects a solid season.

The Celtics opened the 2017 campaign on Monday, March 13 with a 12-8 win at Newberg.

McNary's first home game is Friday, March 17 versus Hermiston at 7 p.m.

"We have lots of experience on offense," Bowlby said. "Our defense is extremely new but our goalie is a third-year starter. We've got a good mix-match."

Jonathan Williams, who scored three goals and added three assists against Newberg, will lead the offense.

"Right now pretty much everything is ran through Jonathan Williams," Bowlby said. "He's a super athlete. He's

running track this year and doing lacrosse.

"The other team ended up blacking him out, so isolating him and face guarding him and taking him out of the game entirely and he still scored two more goals and got an assist. He's a supreme, supreme lacrosse player."

Williams wasn't happy with how he started his junior season.

"I started off terrible," Williams said. "I turned the ball over the first two times down. I settled myself down and got the offense going and realized I didn't have to get the goal, somebody else could get it. The pressure isn't all on me. We have other guys who can score the ball just as easily as I can."

One of those players is another junior, Chad Pinney,

who has played midfield the past two seasons but is transitioning to attack and scored three goals at Newberg.

Marcus McCoy returns at goalkeeper where he was an all-league honorable mention as a freshman and Second Team selection as a sophomore. As a junior, McCoy is ready to take on a more leadership role.

"Since freshmen year, our coaches have always told us our freshmen class once we get up to junior and seniors, that's when our true leadership was going to come up and that's when we're going to show our true power and that's when we're going to shine the most," McCoy said. "This year, I think we got it. We're coming out strong. We're ready to win."

Please see CELTICS, Page A11



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
McNary junior Jonathan Williams, left, practicing against freshman defender Cabe Nieth, will lead the Celtics offense in 2017.