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Celtics run against the best at Nike Portland XC Invite

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

McNary's young boys cross country team showed off its potential on Saturday, Sept. 30 when runners from all over the Pacific Northwest converged at Portland Meadows for the Nike Portland XC Invitational.

Competing against 26 other teams, McNary's freshmen placed sixth overall and second in Oregon behind only Sunset.

Ethan Whalen led the Celtics, finishing 31st out of 333 runners in 18:46. Tristan Proctor (19:15), Emmanuel Figueroa (19:20), Brennan Whalen (19:22) and Nathaniel Prout (19:56) followed.

McNary junior David Allen (18:20) and senior Jonas Honeyman (19:00) ran in the Division 3 varsity race.

Francisco Orta and Brock Wyer finished in 19:15 and 19:17 in the junior/senior race.

McNary senior Kailey Doust and freshman Reyna Terrazas ran in the girls Division 2 race. Doust took 16th



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

McNary senior Jonas Honeyman finished the Portland Meadows course in 19 minutes on Saturday, Sept. 30.

in 20:07 out of 184 runners. Terrazas crossed the finish line in 23:06.

Nina Garland had a PR of 22:50 in the girls freshman/sophomore race.

Sabella Alfaro finished the

junior/senior race in 23:39.

The Celtics are running against West Albany and Sprague at Crystal Lake Park in Corvallis on Wednesday, Oct. 11. The district meet is Oct. 25 at Bush Park.

BEND, continued from Page B1

Schools and the public will have the opportunity to respond to the committee's recommendation in writing or in person at the meeting.

Whatever the board decides, athletic director Scott Gragg said McNary will adapt.

"We will make things work," Gragg said. "That's what athletes do and that's what athletic directors need to do. We face adversity or we face a challenge and we make the most of it and we get better from it."

"You can look at it two ways. You can look at it as a problem or a negative or you can look at it as an opportu-

nity. I'm surrounded by leadership in our district that will use it as an opportunity and we'll make the best and make sure that our kids are engaged and safe and successful."

Gragg came to McNary from Montana, where his daughter played volleyball and the closest game outside of town was 108 miles away. Teams played on the weekends and some of the smaller schools even went to a four-day school day to avoid missing class time.

"I don't think we're in the realm but there's all kinds of ways and I feel fortunate to have experienced that model firsthand," Gragg said. "I think I might have some ideas that maybe haven't been tried in Oregon and maybe works for us, if we're traveling long dis-

tances."

McNary currently has block schedule on Friday, where student athletes would miss a lot of class time if they're traveling on a regular basis.

Gragg is looking forward to the OSAA making its final decision. He estimated teams are two to three months behind scheduling next year's fall sports waiting for classification.

"Whenever there's a proposal made, you start brainstorming and right now that's all we can do because we don't know what the final say is going to be," Gragg said. "Once that final says happens, then we will start and those brainstormings will have to formulate into real plans moving forward."

HOME, continued from Page B1

But Williams saw other issues on the Forest Grove film as well.

"A lot of times we ended up throwing check down routes when we could have hit a deep ball and a few bad routes, so we're working on fixing that," Williams said.

The Celtics will face a McMinnville defense that has allowed an average of 38 points over the past three games, the latest a 39-37 loss to South Salem on Friday, Sept. 29.

Watching the Grizzlies play McKay, a game they won 35-14 on Sept. 8, Williams believes McNary has the skill players to exploit McMinnville's defense.

"Watching that film, I think we can definitely take advan-

tage of some opportunities in the secondary," Williams said.

The Celtics defense is playing at its best, having allowed just one touchdown to both McKay and Forest Grove the past two weeks.

McNary head coach and defensive coordinator Jeff Auvinen said the key has been getting all 11 players on the same page.

"Kids are flying around and starting to trust their neighbors and starting to disguise what they're doing and I think it's paid dividends," Auvinen said.

"It's a combination of our blitzing and our D-lineman doing what they should be doing and our linebackers getting to the right spot at the right time. Our coverage looks better. Kids are starting to understand their zones."

The Celtics also hope to

get senior Tim Kiser back, after the defensive lineman suffered a concussion on Sept. 15 against Sprague.

McMinnville graduated quarterback Wyatt Smith and running back Cedric Agcaoili-Ostrom, who rushed for 200 yards and two touchdowns in last year's game.

"They do a lot of different things on offense so I think it's going to be quite a bit to contend with there," Auvinen said.

"They have some skill players that are pretty good. I like their best receiver. They're throwing the ball a decent amount. They seem to be passing a little more than their run this year. Still, they want to run as well. They'd like to be a split team. I think they still are. I just don't think they're as physical as they have been sometimes in the past."

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