

# SENIORS,

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Senior Josiah Christensen led his match 2-0 at 152 pounds before getting pinned in the second period.

"That's one of those matches, if those guys wrestle 10 times, it goes 5-5," coach Ebbs said. "Those are two guys that are probably equal-matched."

The Celtics lost two matches, 285 and 138, by 3-0 and 4-3 decisions.

"The most important thing that needs to matter right now is they need to know what those mistakes are and we need to fix them and we need to turn that into consistent behavior and we do that in two weeks (at districts) and we'll come back after this team," coach Ebbs said. "They'll know we're coming."

Grady Burrows (106) and Tony Castaneda (113) were out with injuries.

"We've got people who could make us a little bit tougher but I'm very happy



Seniors Josiah Christensen, left, and Jerry Martinez wrestled their final match at McNary High School on Friday, Jan. 19.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

to have the lineup we had with us tonight based on everything we're dealing with," coach Ebbs said.

McNary honored all eight of its seniors before the dual: Ebbs, Martinez, Norton, Christensen, Joe Collins, Noah Grunberg, Alex Harrison and Isaiah Putnam.

"That stuff is always spe-

cial," coach Ebbs said. "That stuff's more important than who won the senior night dual. Some of those guys are first-year wrestlers, some of those guys are four-year wrestlers. Some have been wrestling for half their life and I've known them for half their life. The bonds that we form here are a little different

than most teams. That makes our senior night pretty special."

The Celtics earned five pins against McKay on Thursday: Vincent (126), Castaneda (106), Norton (220), Randal Nordberg (182) and Garrett Wampler (170).

Martinez won by a 16-6

major decision and Grunberg added a 15-0 technical fall.

McNary won four matches by points. Christensen won 12-7 at 152 pounds and Ebbs edged his opponent 6-4 at 160.

Collins earned a 3-2 victory at 285 and Rigoberto Hernandez won 13-9 at 113.

Wampler, Norton, Hernandez and Jaydin Gomez all had pins against West Salem. Grunberg won a 16-4 major decision. Martinez and Nick Hernandez each won by one point, 7-6 and 9-8. Castaneda added a 10-3 victory in the rout.

The district meet is Feb. 2-3 at McKay.

# STUDENT,

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Gardelli's first introduction to American basketball came while playing for McNary in a fall league. He barely got on the court in the Celtics first regular season game, entering for the first time in the second half of a 68-54 win over Grants Pass on Nov. 30.

But by the third game, Gardelli was starting.

"The main problem was the language and understanding the plays," said Gardelli, who had never played zone defense before.

Gardelli handled the ball more in Italy and was usually one of his team's top scorers. He's played primarily forward at McNary and had to buy-in to the Celtics' philosophy of playing unselfishly on offense and working hard on defense. There's also more scouting of other teams.

"The program at McNary is very serious and I like that," Gardelli said. "You feel more like a real basketball player. You start to understand how it works. (McNary) coach (Ryan) Kirch is a very good coach."

Gardelli also realizes he's new to the team while other players have been in the program for four years.

"They are more senior than me," Gardelli said of fellow seniors Lucas Garvey, Chandler Cavell and Andrew Jones. "I've been here four months so I understand when people have more leadership than me. I'm learning a lot of new stuff. I feel that I'm improving, playing this

kind of basketball with other people that I've never played before in this league."

Gardelli has remained in the starting lineup, averaging eight points and 3.7 rebounds per game as McNary has opened the season 13-4.

"I love my teammates," Gardelli said. "I don't know, maybe this will be my best season of my life. We are doing pretty good right now and I think we can get better."

Gardelli has also enjoyed playing in front of larger crowds. While in Italy a good game drew maybe 120 people, the gym was packed when the Celtics hosted rival West Salem on Jan. 5.

"That's very cool," Gardelli said. "I love that and the students and my friends coming to watch me. That's so cool. That's not happening in Italy."

Gardelli is staying with a host family. Since the legal driving age is 18 in Italy, he doesn't have his license. While he's yet to witness his first college or NBA game, the family has taken him to see Silver Falls and Crater Lake. He misses his own family, Skyping with his parents every two weeks.

"Sometimes you want to see your dad watch your game but he can't," Gardelli said. "I miss that."

While Christmas is big in Italy, Thanksgiving was new.

"I like being here because I learn new stuff about America," Gardelli said. "I had never actually ate a turkey before. It's pretty good. American food (overall) is not that good. But I'm a guy that can adapt to things. You have to be very flexible with everything."

While school has been

more challenging due to the language, he likes the flexibility of picking his own classes. At Gardelli's school in Italy, students stay in the same classroom for the entire day. The teachers move.

But Gardelli's stay in America, however long it might be, always comes back to basketball.

"I don't know what I can do without basketball," Gardelli said. "Basketball is my life. I decided to come here for the basketball. The first thing was basketball."

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