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Hooper, Vaughn get Celtics on podium

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

MCMINNVILLE—Kyle Hooper wanted to get on the podium and make a statement for the McNary swim team at the Greater Valley Conference Championships.

With the help of his teammates, he got there, finishing third in the 500-yard freestyle and fourth in the 200 individual medley Saturday, Feb. 10 at the McMinnville Aquatic Center.

“When I saw five or six people standing at the end cheering me and Harrison (Vaughn) on, it shows that our team cares about us and they want us to succeed,” Hooper said. “When it matters they really show it to us.”

Hooper and Vaughn got to A Finals of the 500 free by finishing first and second in Friday's prelims.

Motivated to beat Sprague senior Colby Evenson, who swam a record 4:49.96 at the district meet last year, Vaughn dropped more than 14 seconds from his best time, finishing in 4:58.93, to place first.

“I really wanted to beat Colby, and I did, but he didn't actually go very fast,” Vaughn said.

“It boosted my confidence



McNary sophomore Kyle Hooper, left, finished fourth in the 200 IM at the Greater Valley Championships on Saturday, Feb. 10 at the McMinnville Aquatic Center. Hooper and Harrison Vaughn placed third and fifth in the 500 free.

a lot, probably too much. Today, I tried to hold with him again and obviously that didn't work.”

In finals, Vaughn clocked his first 100 in a blistering 53 seconds before falling back to fifth and finishing in 5:03.12.

Hooper said he also started too fast, finishing his first 100 in 55 seconds.

“I knew I needed to hold a

consistent pace and going out that fast was going to make me die in the end,” Hooper said. “So I had to think to myself, what do I need to do to keep this pace? From feeling in myself, I knew that this isn't the way I'm going to take a medal in this race.”

Hooper slowed down but finished strong in 4:58.95, a nearly 4 second personal re-

cord.

Evenson won the race in 4:50.64. West Salem sophomore Marcus Ramirez took second in 4:58.13.

“Everybody knows that he's probably going to win,” Hooper said of Evenson. “In our minds it was a race for second. My main goal was get up on the podium and make a statement for my team.”

Hooper, a sophomore, swam the 500 free in 5:13 at least year's district meet. Swimming against Vaughn, a teammate at both McNary and Mid-Valley Aquatics, every day has made him faster.

“We're always racing each other and always pushing each other in practice to get better and get results like this,” Hooper said of Vaughn, who

also finished ninth in the 100 breaststroke in 1:05.61.

McNary opened Saturday's competition by placing fourth in the girls 200 medley relay as Alex Beard, Bella Beard, Emily Alger and Haley Debban finished in 200.80.

Alex took fifth in the 500 free in 5:35.17 and sixth in the 200 IM in 2:22.12.

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

McNary wrestlers eye state finals

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

McNary senior Brayden Ebbs and West Linn junior Sean Harman, two of the top 160-pounders in the state, have known each other for a long time, training on the same club team, All-Phase Wrestling, since they were little.

But they've never met in high school competition.

Ebbs hopes to change that at the OSAA State Championships Feb. 16-17 at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

“We've been best friends for a very long time,” Ebbs said of Harman. “We've gone on out of state trips together, multiple camps and we've been very close for a long time. We have trained a lot together. He's actually helped me become a tougher wrestler.”

Harman, undefeated at 40-0, enters the state tournament as the No. 1 seed. He won the 152-pound state title last season and is part of a wrestling family that includes a grandfather, father and two brothers who have all wrestled for

Navy.

“When we were younger I actually used to beat him a lot but he got a lot better as he grew older and he became a great wrestler,” Ebbs said. “As long as I make it to the finals, I know it's going to be a good match between me and him and there's going to be a lot of respect from both sides and I think it will just be a fun match to be a part of, too.”

To get to the finals, Ebbs, the No. 3 seed, will have to first get past No. 2 Josh Grant of Century.

Grant, a senior, lost to Harmon 5-2 in the semifinals last season, and took third in the state.

“He's a tough wrestler but me and my dad (McNary head wrestling coach Jason Ebbs) have prepared and we know what we're going to do and what we need to avoid,” Ebbs said. “I think I have a pretty good shot of beating him.”

McNary junior Enrique Vincent was just happy to qualify for the state tournament a year ago.

That won't be the case this time around.

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

McNary wrestlers Nicolette Parra, front, from left, Enrique Vincent, Grady Burrows, Blake Norton, Nick Hernandez and Brayden Ebbs will compete in the state tournament on Feb. 16-17 in Portland.

Lady Celts fall at South Salem

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

SALEM—Down by three points with 30 seconds to go, McNary had a shot at South Salem, just no one would take it.

After passing the ball around the 3-point line for nearly 25 seconds, Saxons freshman point guard Hilary James stole it, knocked down one of two free throws and the Lady Celts fell on the road 39-35 on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

“We've had very few end of the game situations,” McNary head coach Elizabeth Doran

said. “We wanted to get to the basket if we could and draw contact, score quick. You've got to want it at the end of the game. You can't be passive. We made five or six passes and we had open shots and nobody wanted it right at the end.”

The Lady Celts trailed 34-28 with 4:12 remaining in the game when Kailey Doult made a free throw and Abbie Hawley knocked down a 3-pointer to get McNary within 34-32. Doult then hit a jump shot to tie the game at 34-34 with 1:43 to go.

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

McNary senior Emma Kinler tries to rip the ball away from a South Salem player on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

McNary boys now first in GVC

by **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

McNary's boys basketball team (17-5, 12-2) jumped to the top of the Greater Valley Conference standings on Tuesday night with a 70-48 win over South Salem.

Sprague, who appeared to put an early wrap on the league title after opening GVC-play 11-0, including two wins over the Celtics, lost its third consecutive league game on Tuesday, falling to McMinnville 61-44.

McNary led just 24-21 at halftime against South Salem

but outscored the Saxons 46 to 27 in the second half, including 22 to 10 in the fourth quarter.

The Celtics were led by their seniors. Lucas Garvey had 20 points, shooting 4-for-6 from 3-pointers. Chandler Cavell flirted with a triple-double, finishing with seven points, 10 rebounds and nine assists. Riccardo Gardelli added 12 points and seven rebounds.

McNary, No. 5 in the OSAA power rankings, finish the season at No. 10, West Salem on Friday, Feb. 16 and then host No. 12 McMinnville on Tuesday, Feb. 20.