

# Whiteaker outduels Claggett

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

When 160-pounder Jeremiah Ratliff earned a pin on Thursday, Feb. 22 at McNary, he didn't just get his first win of the season.

Ratliff also sealed the victory for his team as Whiteaker Middle School topped Claggett Creek 58-36.

"He's worked hard last year and this year," Whiteaker head coach Kelly Hafer said. "He's just wrestled studs all year and he got a great win to seal the win for the team."

Whiteaker led from the beginning as CCMS had to forfeit the first two weight classes, 75 and 80 pounds, as brothers Brandon and Max Blanco, both undefeated, were absent.

Jesse Dyer (85), who finished the season undefeated at 10-0, then won his match 7-0 to give the Wolverines an early 15-0 lead.

Jordan Orr (90) got the Panthers on the scoreboard with a pin. CCMS then won by forfeit.

But Whiteaker won five of the next six matches to take control. Hunter Ruberto (102) and Jacob Moore (110) both won by fall. Ben Standley, who finished the season 8-0, added a 16-4 major decision at 125 pounds. Aiden McCoy (132) then won by decision and Destiny Rodriguez (140), who finished the season 9-0, got a quick pin.

"I'm just really happy with how my kids wrestled," Hafer



Whiteaker wrestler Jeremiah Ratliff won his match at 160 pounds to seal the win over rival Claggett Creek at McNary High School on Thursday, Feb. 22.

said. "They always run back to the middle. That's huge. That shows a lot of hard work and belief in the fact that hustle and pressure wins matches. You can have a couple of trick moves and that works most of the time but the kid with good solid technique who can pressure his or her opponents is going to win more often than not."

Claggett finished the dual strong, winning four of the final six matches as Aron Montoya (150), Jakob Munson (175), Luis Cortez (195) and Layne Runyan (220) all won

by fall. The Panthers also picked up at win at 117, where Reilly Bandfield earned a pin.

"Overall, these kids competed and worked hard," said CCMS head coach Aaron Carr. "Whiteaker got us today. Having those two forfeits early cost us."

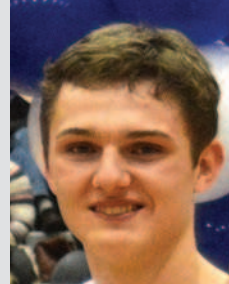
Aldo Villalvazo (275) finished the dual with another pin for the Wolverines.

Whiteaker, which had 57 wrestlers, including 10 girls, both school records, finished the season 8-2.



Jordan Orr earned a pin at 90 pounds for Claggett Creek against Whiteaker.

## ATHLETE of the Week



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### Lucas Garvey Senior at McNary High School

McNary senior Lucas Garvey scored 20 points, which included going 5-for-8 from the 3-point arc as the Celtics defeated McMinnville on Wednesday, Feb. 21 to win the Greater Valley Conference championship.

## CHAMPS, continued from Page B1

"This is the best night of my life," Gardelli said. "We played like a real team, like a family. I've never been on a team where they take me like a member of the family and I've been here just six months and to me it's just like a second family. I feel blessed. I'm from the middle of nowhere and I'm winning a league championship. League championship, I can't stop saying that."

"I'm always trying to get better and this game is showing off the work that I did. I don't know how many rebounds I get. I don't know how many points I get but I know that we're a beautiful team. We all play together. Everybody was on fire tonight."

Cavell, who had 16 points to go with five rebounds, was at a loss for words after winning the league.

"I've got nothing," Cavell said. "That was a goal from the first practice of the year. It feels amazing. Winning with my friends, that's the best part."

Sprague had appeared to wrap up the GVC title with a 56-47 win at McNary on Jan. 26. But the Olympians lost three in a row to West Salem, McKay and McMinnville, and the Celtics took advantage closing the season with convincing wins against South Salem, West Salem and McMinnville.

Now McNary turns its attention to the state playoffs and getting to the quarterfinals at the Chiles Center, where it

hasn't been since 2004.

The Celtics opened the 6A boys state playoffs on Wednesday, Feb. 28 against Sherwood. With a win, McNary would host either Tualatin or Sheldon on Saturday in the second round.

"We know once we get to playoffs there's no room for error," Kirch said. "You slip up a little bit, you miss some shots and that can be it. I think our kids are mature enough to un-

derstand that and again we've just got to keep getting better and keep practicing and take one practice at a time and then one game at a time.

"First goal was tonight and we're going to enjoy it like crazy but we've got to get to the round of 16 and then we'll have the opportunity to go to Portland and then we'll just keep going one at a time. This is more work to do but this is pretty sweet tonight."

## DENIED, continued from Page B1

Gillette added that the district's arguments about safety of students, loss of instructional time and additional expenses were "such that I might be persuaded by one or more of them."

But it wasn't his role to decide the case on its merits. It

is OSAA's task to make the decision.

"My only task is to assure that the choice that OSAA made is one among many that it has a right to make," Gillette wrote. "Here, its choice is precisely that."

Gillette added that the same concerns from Salem-Keizer could be shared by the three other districts that could've been placed with Bend, and all three districts are farther from

Bend than Salem is.

"All three face roads at least as treacherous—and longer—than those faced by Salem," Gillette wrote. "All three face at least an equal if not a great loss of class time than does Salem. And all three will face added transportation costs. Choosing among the four groups of schools was a thankless task, but it was a choice that OSAA could not refuse to make."

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