

Jones named GVC's top defender

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the *Keizertimes*

The Greater Valley Conference Defensive Player of the Year award is staying with McNary.

Senior Andrew Jones was voted the top defender by the league's coaches.

"That's a pretty special award because there's only one guy in the league out of nine teams and there's a lot of good players in our league," Jones said. "It wasn't really my goal to win defensive player of the year. It was just my goal to play the best defense I could play every game. Just really having a commitment to defense helps because not a lot of guys want to play defense and if you can play defense it helps your team a lot more."

Matthew Ismay, a 2017 McNary graduate, had won the previous three defensive player of the year awards.



McNary senior Andrew Jones was voted Greater Valley Conference Defensive Player of the Year by the league's coaches.

"When you have a guy like Matt in your program and you can just see how hard he works on defense and how much better he makes the

team on defense, I always admired him for that and I always wanted to be the best defender on the team because I knew that if I could play re-

ally good defense and I could shut down the best player on the other team it would give us a better opportunity to win more games," Jones said.

McNary has prided itself on playing tough defense. The Celtics allowed 53.5 points per game this season, fourth best in the state at the 6A level.

"It means a lot to me because we base our program on defending and rebounding and it's hard to get a lot of guys to commit to that these days," McNary head coach Ryan Kirch said. "We hold our hat on that. We spend a lot of time. Guys take a lot of pride in that. Whether the shots are going in or not, you can always guard. It's an effort thing. It's a toughness thing. Competitiveness and toughness are the top two things we value and we see that in defending and rebounding."

McNary senior Chandler Cavell was unanimously selected to the All-GVC First Team. He led the Celtics in four categories—16.5 points per game, 6.2 rebounds, 4.4 assists and 1.6 steals.

"He's matured so much as a person and as a player," Kirch said of Cavell. "He's been a great passer, a great teammate, a great leader, a great rebounder. He just does everything on the floor. He's a guy you can't take off the floor. He can hurt you in so many different ways."



McNary senior Chandler Cavell was unanimously selected to the All-Greater Valley Conference First Team.

I can have him handling the ball. I can post him up. I can put him on the wing. You can ask him to run an offense. He's just been invaluable and his attitude has just been outstanding all year long and he's really led by example."

Lucas Garvey, who averaged 12.9 points per game, was also voted to the First Team. Jones and Boston Smith were selected to the Second Team. Riccardo Gardelli was honorable mention.

"I was so happy to see so many of our guys being recognized by other coaches," Kirch said. "I can sit here and

talk until I'm blue in the face about my players but when other coaches recognize them. It's an impressive group. It's been an impressive year."

Kirch and Jordan Graneto were voted head coach and assistant coach of the year.

"That's a staff award," Kirch said. "As the head of the staff, that puts my name on it but really it's a staff award. Our coaches have done a great job. If there's one thing I've done right, it's hire good coaches around me. Coach Graneto has done a great job. Coaches are doing so many different things that fans don't see."

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McNary was also plagued by foul trouble. Garvey and Andrew Jones both picked up their second fouls in the first quarter but were able to get to halftime without getting called for their third.

Garvey got his third foul with 5:29 remaining in the third period, just before the Timberwolves went on their run. Chandler Cavell picked up his third with 7:01 remaining in the game and his fourth less than 10 seconds later. Garvey was then called for his fourth 3 seconds later.

With McNary trailing 41-31, both stayed in the game. Garvey, after making a 3 and then a steal and layup to keep the Celtics within 47-38, fouled out with 4:30 left to play. Cavell then followed with his fifth foul with 3:29 remaining.

"I think they (Tualatin) were more aggressive offensively than we were and that puts officials in position to make the call," Kirch said. "I don't think we were as aggressive as we normally are offensively and that's why we didn't get as many whistles as they did. I thought there was a bunch of calls that could have gone either way and more went their way than ours. You've got to adjust to it and we didn't adjust the way we wanted to."

Riccardo Gardelli made a 3 to get McNary within 49-41 with 3:19 remaining but Tualatin went 8-for-8 from the free throw line in the final 3 minutes to finish off the Celtics.



McNary junior Boston Smith returned from mononucleosis to play against Tualatin on Saturday, March 3.

Garvey finished with 14 points. Jones had seven and Cavell added six.

McNary has lost in the second round of the playoffs four years in a row and hasn't advanced to the state quarterfinals since 2004.

After the game, Kirch told his players to remember all the good times this season.

"As much as this stings right now, all the good that they've accomplished sits under that layer of what hurts and that hurt will go away after a while but what will remain is all those good things that they accomplished, on the basketball floor with winning a league championship, but more so playing with your friends, loving each other, playing for each other and with each other," Kirch said.

"This has been as rewarding a year for me to coach as I've had. I'm just disappointed. It all comes to an end so quickly."

Kirch also told the Celtics to leave with their heads held high.

"They represented their families, they represented themselves, their school and this community incredibly well," Kirch said. "They're just great kids and great people. The families that have raised these kids have done a great job. Just to see the support, so many text messages and emails from so many people. I reminded the guys of how much impact they've had on this community and how awesome of an experience that is and how much I'm proud of them for that."

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