

McNary linebacker a top recruit

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

Raised a Beaver, Junior Walling got his dream offer early.

But that hasn't stopped the McNary linebacker from working as hard as ever.

After meeting with Oregon State head coach Jonathan Smith and getting his first Division-I offer on a visit to Corvallis in April, Walling spent the summer at the University of California, San Jose State, UNLV, Washington State, Utah, Eastern Washington and the University of Oregon.

"It was unreal," Walling said of the OSU offer. "I was truly honored to even be there and get to talk to those coaches. It was amazing. I think a lot of people are excited about the Oregon State offer because it's close and there's a bunch of Beaver fans out here so I think it's pretty cool getting that offer."

Walling's dad played football at Oregon State and the family had season tickets until Junior was old enough to play youth football and Saturday's became about his games. But the Wallings still attend at least one or two Beaver games a year.

Walling isn't as familiar

with the other schools.

"I've been to OSU tons of times and I know that the best," Walling said. "I'm trying to learn about other schools and how each school is different and which school best fits me academically and athletically."

Walling mostly stays in contact with coaches through Twitter. Along with Oregon State, Oregon, Washington, Boise State, Utah, UCLA and Eastern Washington are showing the most interests.

He is rated the No. 1 high school inside linebacker in the northwest for the Class of 2019 and 2020 by 247 sports as well as the No. 14 2020 inside linebacker in the country and No. 4 2020 prospect in Oregon at any position.

Walling was invited to the Adidas Rivals Combine in March, the Nike Opening in Las Vegas in May, May Madness featuring the top 150 prospects in the northwest and Saturday Night Lights Camp at the University of Oregon in June.

"It was just fun competing against such great talent and such great coaching," Walling said. "I just love competing against all those kids. A lot of



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Junior Walling, with his father, Jason, has an offer from Oregon State and received attention from schools all over the Northwest.

coaches give me tips on what I need to improve on, which I love, being more explosive and stuff like that."

Working out with Jake Forshey at Forshey Training Systems in Salem four days a

week, Walling has gotten both stronger and faster. He weighs more than 220 pounds after playing at 210 last season.

Walling hasn't decided when he will commit.

"Whenever it feels right

and see what else comes my way and I'll choose after that," Walling said.

Most important is academics when picking a college. He'd also like to stay close to home.

"I think it will be good to be close with my family," Walling said. "We're really close so I think it would be good to stay home but whatever feels right. We'll see."

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