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McNary dominates Forest Grove

By MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Forest Grove came into Keizer last Friday night beaming with confidence.

The Vikings had started off the season 10-1 and entered their matchup with McNary as the ninth-ranked team in the state.

But in the last non-league contest of the regular season for both squads, McNary emphatically showed that they were the superior team.

The Celtics never trailed in the game and dominated from start to finish, running away with the 62-39 victory on Friday, Jan. 4.

Nate Meithof had a game-high 24 points for McNary in the victory.

One of the main keys to McNary's success so far this season has been the offensive productivity of senior post Boston Smith. However, Forest Grove made it a point-of-emphasis to try and take Smith out of the game, double-teaming him nearly every time he got the ball on the block.

Smith only scored two points on 1-of-2 shooting, but McNary head coach Ryan Kirch commended his senior leader for getting his teammates involved and not forcing up shots.

"I could not be more proud of him and the leadership Boston showed," Kirch said. "He got his teammates so many opportunities to score because of the way (Forest Grove) was guarding us, and that allowed our guards to attack the rim off the bounce and get open

looks."

"Most people won't be able to see Boston's impact tonight, but it was incredible."

Devyn Schurr was the beneficiary of Smith's vision and passing ability in the early going.

With the Celtics up 6-4 in the first quarter, Smith kicked the ball out to Schurr on the perimeter after getting double-teamed down low, and the senior wing buried a 3-pointer from the top of the key to put McNary up 9-4.

On the next possession, Schurr completed a three-point play after knocking down a floater while getting fouled.

Later in the period, Schurr hit another triple off a feed from Smith, which concluded a 9-2 run for the Celtics and put McNary up 15-6 at the end of the first quarter.

Schurr finished the game in double-figures with 12 points.

"I hadn't been playing well the last few games, so I wanted to make sure that I played with a fire and intensity all throughout the game," Schurr said.

In the second period, it was Meithof's time to shine.

The sophomore shooting guard hit back-to-back floaters to open the period up. Moments later, Meithof completed a three-point play, then knocked down a deep trey from the corner on the following trip down the court, putting McNary up 27-11 and forcing Forest Grove head coach Greg Evers to burn a timeout.

Meithof would finish the

period with 12 points, guiding the Celtics to a 31-16 lead at the break. Meithof credited Smith's ability to find the open man as the reason for his offensive outburst before the end of the half.

"(Forest Grove) was really focused on guarding the post and Boston knew that and he did a really good job of kicking it out to us," Meithof said. "That's what really got us going on offense."

While the McNary offense was quite impressive during spurts, their defense really carried the charge for most of the contest.

With a suffocating full-court press and disciplined man-to-man defense in the half-court, the Celtics made life incredibly difficult for the seemingly unprepared Forest Grove team.

"Great players are going to score on you, but we made every single basket and every single point difficult on them," Kirch said. "We still need to rebound a little better, but I thought we were really, really tough on the defensive end."

It was the second time this season that McNary held a team under 40 points.

The Vikings tried to make it a game midway through the third quarter by cutting the lead to 10 at 39-29. But McNary responded by going on a 7-0 run thanks to a pair of hoops by Griffin Oliveira and a transition layup from Meithof.

McNary travels to West Salem tonight for a 5:45 p.m. matchup with the Titans.



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

McNary guard Devyn Schurr drives hard to the rack in the Celtics 62-39 victory over Forest Grove on Friday, Jan. 4.



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

McNary's Isabella Walker looks for an open teammate in a game against Westview earlier this season.

Lady Celts pick up huge win

By MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary girls basketball team desperately wanted to break a six-game losing streak and give themselves some momentum heading into Mountain Valley Conference play.

Thanks to some key buckets down the stretch, along with their tough defense, the Lady Celts got exactly what they were looking for.

Abigail Hawley led the way with a game-high of 15 points and Leah Doust chipped in with 13 points as McNary came away with a 47-39 overtime road victory against McMinnville in their last non-league game of the season on Friday, Jan. 4.

"It was a great confidence builder for us," McNary head coach Elizabeth Doran said. "We have had a really tough non-league schedule, so that

was a great way to finish it off. I think we're in a good spot going into league (play)."

Each team struggled on the offensive end in the first half as both McMinnville and McNary shot under 30 percent from the field in the first 16 minutes. McMinnville, however, went 7-of-10 from the foul line in the opening half, which allowed them to take a 16-12 lead at the break.

McMinnville still clung to a four-point lead at 29-25 as the game entered the fourth quarter and even increased their lead to seven with less than four minutes remaining in regulation. But the Celtics finished the fourth period on a 9-2 run to tie the score at 37-all and force overtime.

Hawley knocked down a pair of free throws to start the extra session, which was followed by a big put-back hoop

by Anna Leigh Besa on the next trip, putting the Celtics on top 41-39.

Hawley would add a clutch bucket, as well as another pair of free throws, to give the Celtics the six-point lead. Sabella Alfaro came through with a key basket moments later to help McNary outscore McMinnville 10-2 in the overtime.

"We were able to get to the basket and we just shot free throws a lot better towards the end of the game," Doran said. "We stayed aggressive."

Doran also commented on McNary's tenacious defense that held McMinnville to just four points in the final seven minutes.

"The girls really buy into the scout and what were supposed to do against opposing personnel," Doran said. "We play really hard on defense and our zone is looking a lot better."

McNary wrestlers place fifth at Portland Tourney

By MATT RAWLINGS
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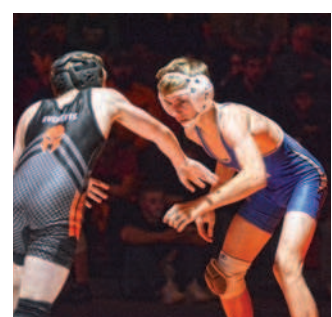
Even though it had been more than two weeks since they faced competition, the McNary High School wrestling team proved that they didn't have any rust to knock off.

The Celtics took fifth place out of 21 teams and sent seven athletes to the podium at the Don York Invitational last Saturday.

While a lot of squads might take it easy during the holiday break, McNary wrestlers use that time to turn up the intensity of their practices and workouts.

Based on the results last weekend, it appears that the extra practice time paid off.

"It's kind of become a tradition for us to work really hard and get better during the break," McNary head coach Jason Ebbs said. "I was definitely really pleased. We're definitely on an uptick



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings
Grady Burrows (blue signlet) wrestles against a Sprague opponent in a match from Dec. 19.

when it comes to performance."

McNary sophomore Tia Vincent provided the main highlight for the Celtics as she won the girls tournament with back-to-back pins in the semifinal and final matches.

If it was the first time Vincent placed first at a tournament in her career.

"It honestly didn't even feel real at first," Vincent said. "I feel like I usually don't win a lot of matches, but I just kept working hard and taking it one match at a time."

Vincent fell behind early in her semifinal match against Dore Young from Franklin. But midway through the second round, Vincent was able to come back and get the pin.

"(Young) was super aggressive so I was just looking for her mistakes because she was coming out too aggressive," Vincent said. "I was able to grab her from behind and pull her down."

In the championship match, Vincent earned a first-round pin against Jennifer Lopez from Forest Grove to take home the title.

"It probably should have been a more challenging match, but Tia just controlled her position and did what she was supposed to do," Ebbs said.

After losing his quarterfinal match, Jordan Orr came back with four straight victories to place third in the

106-pound division. Orr earned a 9-3 decision over his teammate, Damian Hernandez in the third-place match.

113-pounder Grady Burrows earned a pair of falls in his first two matches, then won via technical fall in his semifinals match to reach the championship round.

Burrows, however, was pinned in the second round of the title match against Tualatin's Argenys Arbarca-Lopez.

Garret Wampler (182 lbs.) finished with a record of 4-3 at the tournament, which was good enough for sixth place. Lanye Runyan also placed sixth in the 220-pound division.

Anthony Garcia-Reyes (220 lbs.) earned three straight victories via pin, and then won an 11-4 decision in the semifinals, before losing the championship match against Dustin Jorgenson from Cleveland.

Five out of the seven McNary wrestlers that made it to the podium on Saturday were either freshmen or sophomores — with the two exceptions being Garcia-Reyes and Wampler.

"It's exciting to see the growth out of our young guys," Ebbs said.

The Celtics return to the mat this afternoon to compete in the Earl Gillis Invitational at Newberg High School.

FOR MORE, see pages A10-A11