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McNary student headed to Junior World Cup



Submitted
Anneke Titus has established herself as one of the best junior roller derby competitors in the world, which is why she will be representing Team USA at the Junior World Cup in August.

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the *Keizertimes*

Anneke Titus, a senior at McNary High, has been competing in roller derby for the last six years.

What started as a fun

after-school activity has turned into a deep passion for Titus, which is one of the reasons why she will be heading north of the border this summer.

Last month, Titus was no-

tified by the Junior Roller Derby Association (JRDA) that she has been selected to compete for Team USA at the Junior Roller Derby World Cup in Saskatchewan, Canada.

Titus will join a team of 19 other skaters considered to be some of the top junior roller derby athletes in the country.

"I really couldn't believe that I got in. I started crying as soon as I found out. I know that I'm talented, but I never thought I was at that level," Titus said. "I still can't describe how excited I am about it."

Titus first got into the sport at the age of eight when her mom joined a Cherry City Roller Derby adult team. Three years later, a junior team called the Cherry Blossoms was created, which gave Titus a chance to compete.

Even though she was only allowed to practice at first and couldn't make contact with other skaters, Titus fell in love with the sport.

"I was so excited when the junior team started," Titus said. "This is my main passion. I was always a sporty kid growing up, but I just fell in love with roller derby."

In roller derby, there are five members of each team that are on the track at the same time (four blockers and a jammer). Each jammer wears a star on their helmet and starts behind the opposing blockers, otherwise

known as "the pack." Jammers score points for every opposing blocker they are able to lap.

Jams last for two minutes, with a 30-second break in-between to make lineup changes. At the end of two 30-minute halves, the team with the most points wins.

For the majority of her career, Titus has been a jammer. But over the last two years, she has been able to show her versatility as a blocker. Titus has also recently played the role of pivot — a blocker who is allowed to become a jammer while the action is going.

The pivot is often the team's most experienced player that can establish

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— Anneke Titus

strategy during the course of play and set the pace of the blockers.

"She mostly wanted to be a jammer and wear the star on her cap and score all the points. But she also is great at defense. I know I can count on her to lead the team in that area," said Chris Austin, who has coached Titus for the last two years. "I forced her to be a captain because I felt like she was someone who wanted to build this thing up."

While roller derby is an

aggressive sport that allows full contact, Titus believes that it's tamer than what it used to be.

"It's not how it was in the '70s with all the punching and kicking. You do get some nasty shoulders to the sternum, but it's not as violent as it used to be," Titus said.

In her time with the Cherry Blossoms, Titus has gotten the opportunity to compete in bouts with the Rose City Rollers in Portland and even got to go to Los Angeles for a tournament with her Cherry Blossom teammates.

After seeing growth in her skill level, Austin encouraged Titus to go to Portland for a tryout for the World Cup team.

In late September, Titus participated in what she called a "grueling" tryout that was focused heavily on conditioning, followed by a two-

hour scrimmage. "I was trembling by the end of it. I was so sore," Titus said. "It was very physically demanding, but also very fun."

A couple weeks later, Titus got the call to join the team.

"It's the highlight of my athletic career. I never thought I would be up this high," Titus said.

"I really have to credit my coaches over the years. I feel

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McNary girls basketball preview Celtics set to reload for 2019-20 season

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the *Keizertimes*

In each of Elizabeth Doran's first two years as the girls basketball coach at McNary High, the Celtics were one of the younger teams in the league.

But as she prepares for her third season at the helm, Doran is thrilled to be returning eight players that were on the varsity roster last season.

"For the first time in a while, we have a more experienced group. We have been pretty young over the past two years, and now we have a strong junior class to go along with two seniors that have been in the program for a couple years that know what to expect from me and know what to expect from each other," Doran said. "It's a good group. I love coaching them and I am looking forward to the season."

The top player out of McNary's eight returners is junior guard Leah Doult, who could be a candidate for Mountain Valley Conference Player of the Year by the time the regular season is over.

Doult was a second-team all-league performer last season, averaging 12 points and 4.5 rebounds per game. She also led the team in assists and blocked shots.

With her multi-faceted offensive ability, Doult will likely be at the center of the scouting report for all of McNary's opponents.

"Leah is going to have a target on her back, because she's such a great player. She

can score the basketball really well and can create shots for herself, but she is also a great distributor and is really good at setting up her teammates," Doran said.

Despite returning the majority of their roster, the Celtics will greatly miss the services of Abigail Hawley.

As a senior last season, Hawley was one of the top scorers in the conference at 13.3 points per game. She also led the McNary in steals (30) and three-point field goals (25), and was named first-team all-league.

While Doult looks to take over the bulk of McNary's scoring, Doran believes that the Celtics will have other

players that will be able to step into key offensive roles.

"Losing Abby is hard because we lose a lot of scoring and someone who embraced a leadership role. But there are a lot of people stepping up," Doran said.

Junior shooting guard Mackenzie Proctor started for most of the season last year and proved to be a consistent sharpshooter for Mc-

Nary. Look for her to play an even bigger role in the offense this season.

"We have seen a big improvement with Kenzie and her confidence. When she's confident, she's hard to guard because she shoots the ball really well and can also go off the dribble. I think she will step into more of a scoring roll for us," Doran said.

The Celtics will also re-

turn junior guard Kennedy Buss, who was an honorable mention performer last season. Buss led the team in rebounding and was arguably the best on-ball defender in the league.

"She's always going to give us great defense, but I believe Kennedy is going to step up and hit more shots for us this year," Doran said.

For the second year in a

row, McNary will be a team that lacks size. But thanks to their quickness and athleticism, the Celtics are hoping to make life difficult on opposing teams with their defensive pressure.

"I think we will be able to put more full-court defensive pressure on teams. We want to avoid getting caught

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McNary point guard Leah Doult takes the ball to the rack in a game against Mountain View last season. Doult will likely be one of the top returning players in the Mountain Valley Conference.

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