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## McNary swimming preview

# Celts look to build on last season's success



LEFT: Alex Beard is expected to be one of the top returning girls swimmers in the Mountain Valley Conference. RIGHT: Zander Rhoades hopes to have a breakout year for the McNary boys team.

By **MATT RAWLINGS**

*Of the Keizertimes*

Although they weren't able to send an athlete to state, both of McNary's boys and girls swim teams finished with a 5-2 record in dual meets last season. And with the majority of kids coming back on each squad, head coach Casey Lewin believes that this could be a big year for the Celtics program.

"We have a lot of raw talent and I think we have some kids that could have some breakout seasons," Lewin said.

Although the McNary boys lost some of their best swimmers in Harrison Vaughn, Jabez Rhoades and Wyatt Sherwood, the Celtics do return senior Kyle Hooper, who is expected to be one of the top swimmers in the Mountain Valley Conference.

Hooper has finished in the top seven at districts the last two years in the 200-yard individual medley and in the 500-free. He is hoping to finally reach the state meet in his final season.

"He is definitely motivated and ready to go this year. Kyle will be a big leader for us, so we're hoping that this will be the year for him," Lewin said.

Tyshin Nguyen, Zander Rhoades, Ethan Whalen and Brennan Whalen will also be returning after having some success in the pool last season.

"Hopefully, our guys will be able to build off their suc-

cess from last year and just get faster and score more points," Lewin said. "We expect them to always be getting faster. With them, we don't want to get too caught up in worrying about state, but instead, just taking care of things one day at a time and working on little things that they need to work on."

While the boys do have some higher expectations coming into this season, the Celtics girls squad arguably has the most potential.

The McNary girls 200-medley relay team of Alex Beard, Bella Beard, Paris Boyd and Alyssa Garvey took third at districts last season, falling just short of nabbing a spot a state.

However, the Celtics return all four swimmers to this year's team and are hoping to secure a conference title in the 200-medley relay.

"They are very excited to see what they are able to do. I don't want to say that's their main focus because they also have all of their individual events that they can also do really well in, but that relay brings them all together," Lewin said. "The relays are also just fun and I think their success in that is a huge motivator."

While the Beard sisters, along with Boyd and Garvey had their most success in the relay, each swimmer also had some significant individual accomplishments last season as well.

Alex Beard was the only girls swimmer for McNary to earn a pair of top-eight finishes at the district meet, as she placed sixth in both the 200-IM and the 500-free at districts

last year. Bella Beard had the highest individual placing out of all Celtic swimmers at the last district meet with her fifth-place finish in the 100-breaststroke.

Boyd, on the other hand, took seventh in the 50-free at districts.

"Our girls are excited and hungry for this season. I think all the confidence they have gained from last year is going to carry over," Lewin said.

Overall, the Celtics might not be able to hang with some of the mountain schools like Bend and Summit — who traditionally have strong programs. But Lewin believes that both McNary teams have what it takes to be the best in the Salem-Keizer area.

"With out success in duals over the past couple of years, we have started to show that we have some good top-end talent," Lewin said.

At the end of the day, however, what Lewin really cares about is seeing gradual improvement from each of his swimmers throughout the season.

"It's just about taking care of yourself every day. There are a lot of fast swimmers in the league. There are a lot of fast swimmers in the state. But all you can control is you," Lewin said. "I know it sounds super basic and simple, but if you can take care of yourself everyday and do what you need to do to get better, good things will happen. Kids have really bought into that. They know every day is a step towards that goal."

# Rios establishes himself as a top recruit



McNary linebacker Dyami Rios has taken unofficial visits to four Pac-12 schools so far this fall and is considered one of the best in-state recruits for the class of 2021.

By **MATT RAWLINGS**

*Of the Keizertimes*

In the current recruiting landscape, McNary running back Junior Walling and quarterback Erik Barker have received a lot of attention from college scouts in 2019.

Walling committed to play at Oregon State University in June, while Barker has received offers from a couple of Division I-AA schools.

But one kid who has quietly become one of the best players in the state is McNary junior Dyami Rios.

For the second straight season, Rios received second-team all-league status at linebacker, leading the team with 97 tackles. He also was named first-team all-league at tight end and helped the Celtics win the Mountain Valley Conference.

"I know I don't get brought up as much as (Walling and Barker). But it doesn't bother me because I know people that know the game and watch football a lot, they notice me and they notice that I'm doing big things on the field," Rios said. "I'm proud of where I am at, and I don't need outside people telling me whether I'm doing well or not."

Even though Rios may not receive as much notoriety as a pair of his teammates, his plays has garnered atten-

tion from some big schools on the west coast.

So far this fall, Rios has taken two unofficial visits to the University of Oregon and Oregon State. Over the Thanksgiving weekend, he also took visits to the University of California (Berkeley) and Stanford University.

During these visits, Rios gets to not only tour the campuses, but also be on the sideline at games, chat with coaches and learn more about the football program.

"It's been a lot of fun. I have been watching all of these Pac-12 schools on TV for most of my life, so to be able to check out different places and talk to their coaches and try on their gear has been amazing," Rios said.

On his visits to both Oregon schools, Rios walked away impressed with what each program had to offer.

"Oregon State has a great family environment. It's really tight-knit. Their program is rebuilding right now, so if I could be a part of it, that would be big," Rios said.

"At Oregon, it's all really impressive. They have some expensive facilities. They have some technology I've never seen before. I know it's a top program, so it would great to have an opportunity to go there."

One of the things that separates Rios from others is

his versatility. While his primary position is linebacker, Rios made a transition on the offensive side of the ball from running back to tight end.

Even though Rios wasn't involved in the Celtics passing attack, the move to tight end, which was initially made by McNary offensive coordinator Brad Emmert, gave a boost to the McNary offense. The Celtics averaged more than 35 points per game during league play.

"Emmert told me that I wasn't going to get a lot of routes but he thought that I was the best blocker on the team and that I could have a lot of success," Rios said. "If I can block and help the team, I really don't care if I'm getting touchdowns or not."

On the defensive side, Rios feels like he showed improvement from his sophomore year, coming away with 28 more tackles than he did the previous season.

"He loves to mix it up and be as physical as possible and he's got really good instincts. The sky is the limit for that kid," McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen said of Rios.

While Rios has proven himself to be an exceptional football player, what he does in the classroom is arguably even more impressive.

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