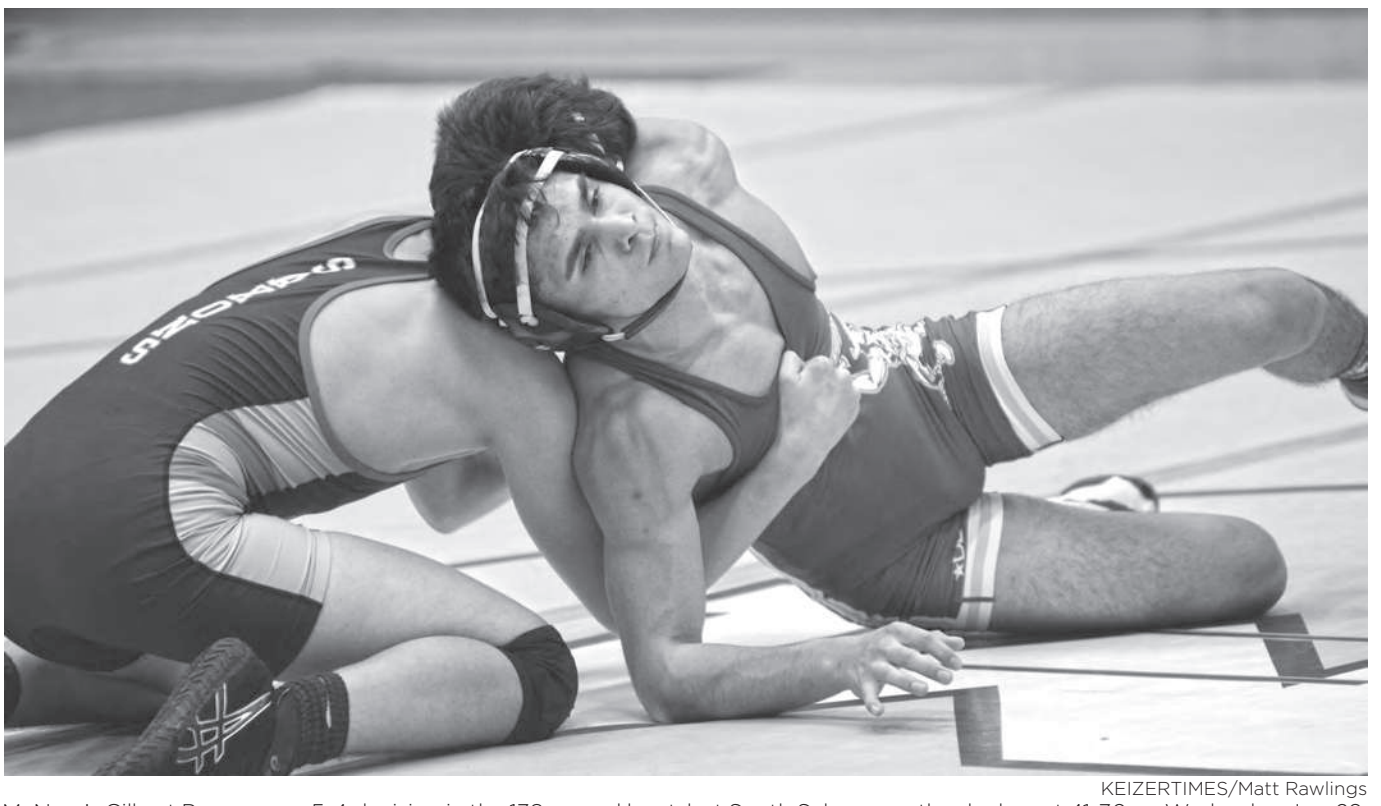

KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

McNary's Gilbert Parra won a 5-4 decision in the 138-pound bout, but South Salem won the dual meet 41-30 on Wednesday, Jan. 29.

Celts drop dual against South Salem

By MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

McNary went back and forth with South Salem for the majority of the night, but eventually, the Celtics wrestling squad fell to the Saxons 41-30 in a dual meet on Wednesday, Jan. 29.

It was a tough couple days for the program as head coach Jason Ebbs was placed on administrative leave the day before the match. But with the Mountain Valley Conference District Tournament approaching, interim head coach Sam Martin liked what he saw from several of his wrestlers.

"I'm proud of the way they came out and battled while dealing with adversity. Some of the matches just didn't go our way. I'm proud of them though. It was a good effort," Martin said.

After falling behind 10-0, McNary's Gilbert Parra got the Celtics first win of the night with a 5-4 tiebreaker victory in the 138-pound bout.

Parra trailed 4-3 with less than a minute remaining in the third round, but the McNary senior was able to get a one-point escape with 30 seconds let to force the match into overtime. Neither wrestler scored in the extra session, but Parra earned another one-point escape in the tie-breaker round to secure the win.

McNary freshman Hunter Ruberto was placed in the 145-bout with South Salem's Mario Garcia. Even though Garcia appeared to be the bigger, stronger wrestler, Ruberto found a way to attack his opponent's legs and grabbed a 5-0 first round lead thanks to a takedown along with a near-fall.

"Because of how long he was, I wanted to get to his legs. I tried to get a couple ankle picks and I was able to capitalize of his lengthiness and just get points off his mistakes. I felt like all the conditioning we do at practice really got me the edge," Ruberto said.

Garcia came back to tie the score in the third round, but Ruberto took over the match late, scoring on a two-point reversal, and then got the pin with 11 seconds left on the clock.

"I like how Hunter wrestles. He always hangs in matches. He's never really out of a match. He's technique has gotten so much better and he's able to work through tough situations to stay in matches," Martin said.

Gio Cervantes was in position to win McNary's third straight match in the 152-pound bout. But with an 8-7 lead, Cervantes lost his footing late in the third round and wound up getting out of position — Cervantes lost the match 12-8.

Matthew Mehlhoff got the Celts back on track with an easy 35-second pin at 160 pounds. Isaac Evarts, who was coming off an injury, followed that up with a pin of his own in the 170-pound match.

"I was super proud of Isaac. He has been a big contributor and he's gotten a lot of pins for us in our varsity lineup. He has been shining pretty lightly," Martin said.

The Celtics however, lost their next four matches as South Salem took a commanding 34-21 lead.

Damian Hernandez (106) got the Celtics back into it with a 10-0 major decision win over Michael Boss, but the Saxons officially claimed the dual victory in the 113-pound match as Matthew AcClair scored a pin against Kyler Donahue.

Grady Burrows won the final bout of the night at 120 pounds, earning a pin in under a minute.

McNary will be heading to Mountain View High School in Bend next week to compete in the MVC District Tournament Feb. 14-15.

While Martin knows that his team needs to make improvements in several areas, he believes that they will be prepared.

"We got to cleanup our conditioning a little bit and get our lungs back. We also need to work a little bit on our pinning combinations, but I think these guys will be peaking at the right time," Martin said.

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good to see her log some game minutes," McNary head coach Elizabeth Doran said.

Besa followed with four straight points and Bekah Grimmer got in on the action with a slick turnaround jumper on the block.

On the defensive side, McNary hounded Sprague for most of the game, holding the Olympians to under 10 points for the half.

"It was all about playing with high defensive energy," Besa said.

McNary took a 21-9 lead into halftime, but Sprague started to creep their way back into the game during the third quarter, cutting the deficit down to eight at 29-21.

The Olympians continued to chomp away at the McNary lead and even had the deficit down to 31-27 with just over three minutes left in the contest.

But down the stretch, McNary dominated on both ends of the floor.

Doutt scored a big bucket to get the Celtics lead back up to six. On McNary's next possession, Besa hit a clutch jumper with less than two minutes to go.

"We did a good job of taking care of the ball on offense and making sure that we got a good shot," Doutt said about her team's offensive performance late in the game.

The McNary defense, on the other hand, held the Olympians scoreless for the final 4:27 of the contest — and the 27 points scored by Sprague was the least amount McNary had surrendered to an opponent this season.

"We stayed composed and we fixed our help-side defense and kept them out of the paint," Doran said. "The win was definitely a good morale boost. We showed a lot of heart late in the game."

McNary will host Summit at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 7.

KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

McNary point guard Leah Doutt had 12 points in her first game back after missing four games due to illness.

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