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Salazar accepted to Barcelona Soccer Academy



Alex Salazar moves the ball upfield at McNary's Blue Day event last year. Salazar will be leaving McNary to go the Barcelona Soccer Academy in Arizona.

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Coming in to the 2020-21 school year, it appeared that Alex Salazar would be the main star on the McNary boys' soccer team.

However, Salazar was recently granted an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that he couldn't pass up.

Salazar will forego his senior season at McNary to join the Barcelona Soccer Academy for the next two years in Casa Grande, Arizona — a full-time residential academy program that is partnered with Futbol Club (FC) Barcelona, one of the best professional teams in the world.

"I am so proud of Alex. I am really excited for him to start this new soccer adventure in his life. Also, I am excited for his mom and family because they are Alex's instrumental support. Alex has worked hard all these years in club and high school, he deserves this opportunity and hopefully some day in the near future he can achieve his goal to make it to the pro level," McNary head coach Miguel Camarena said.

Salazar was swimming at

a lake when he got the call from his mom about being accepted into the academy. He was speechless when he found out.

For a kid that used to run around playing soccer non-stop with his dad at the age of five, this was a surreal moment for Salazar.

"I had no words. I couldn't believe it. Getting accepted is a dream come true," Salazar said. "I feel like this could be the start of something special."

Student-athletes at the academy will get the opportunity to compete at the highest levels within the MLS Elite Youth Development Platform. They will also will reside at the Grande Sports World campus, which features on-site dormitories, eight soccer fields, professional nutritional programming and a 58,000 square foot athletic training facility — which was named the best training facility by USA Soccer for three straight years.

The facility also includes a lounge area equipped with TVs, gaming systems, ping-pong, and pool tables, hot Please see SOCCER, Page A10

OSAA puts the fall sports season on hold

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

During a "normal" year, student-athletes across the state would be preparing to gear up for the fall sports season.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) to call an audible on how they would proceed with athletics and activities for the 2020-21 school year.

After announcing in July that they would delay the start of fall sports, the OSAA executive board made the decision on Wednesday, Aug. 5 to condense all sports seasons and to shift the fall season into March as a part of the new 2020-21 athletics calendar.

Under this new regime, the OSAA will still hold three distinct athletic seasons. However, there won't be any

prep sporting events played until January 2021.

The winter sports season is scheduled to run from Jan. 11 to March 7, while the seasonal fall sports (football, volleyball, soccer, cross country) will be played from March 15 to May 9. Spring sports will take place from May 3 to June 27 — all sports and activities will be predicated on guidance from Oregon Health Authority (OHA), as well as Governor Kate Brown.

The OSAA association year will begin on Aug. 31. From then until Dec. 27, the permission of sports and activities will not be designated by the OSAA. Instead they will be at the discretion of local school districts, provided they are allowed by the Governor's Office, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and OHA — meaning that teams could poten-

tially hold limited practices and workouts during this time, which is designated as Season 1 by OSAA.

By delaying the start of the athletics season, the OSAA is hoping that more member schools will have a chance to compete.

"I applaud the effort from the board of directors for being able to shift to this model. The goal is to get kids participating in extracurricular activities and this plan gives us the best opportunity to do that," said McNary athletic director Scott Gragg.

In late-July, the OSAA was still planning on having an abbreviated fall sports season (minus football). But after Brown announced the metrics school districts would have to abide by in order to return to in-person classes,

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McNary's Luke Ellis competes in a cross country race at Bush Park in a meet from last season.

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