

McNary earns 3-0 win in home opener



McNary outside hitter Taylor Ebbs hits the ball past the Silverton block in the Celtics straight-set victory.
Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

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Of the Keizertimes

After winning a thrilling five-set match in their first contest, the McNary volleyball team won in much more convincing fashion in their home opener.

The Celtics were challenged in the first two games but still came away with the straight-set victory, defeating Silverton 25-23, 27-25, 25-15 on Thursday, March 11.

"We love being back in our home gym. Our fans are dearly missed. But the girls are really excited to be back on

this court," McNary head coach Crystal DeMello said.

"It's just great to be out here. We were fortunate enough to get a season so we are making the best out of what we got," McNary outside hitter Taylor Ebbs added.

After taking a 5-4 lead in the first set thanks to a kill from Emily Blagg, Silverton rattled off six straight points to take a 10-6 advantage. But McNary rallied back in what turned out to be a match-changing run later in the set. Lexi Eldridge found soft spots in the

Once we get the momentum and keep our energy up, we're a good team. That is what gives us the confidence to go out there and compete.

— **TAYLOR EBBS,**
McNary outside hitter

after Ebbs sealed the first game with a touch-kill that landed in-between a pair of Silverton players.

"Energy and momentum are huge in volleyball, so those runs help our players get into a rhythm. It was a game changer," DeMello said.

Both teams went back and forth in game two with neither squad leading by more than three

Silverton defense with back-to-back aces. Moments later, a big spike from Eliana Dean gave McNary the 13-10 lead and forced the Foxes to burn a timeout.

A kill by Ebbs after the timeout helped the Celtics continue the rally — McNary rattled off 10 straight points before Silverton was able to stop the bleeding.

"Once we get the momentum and keep our energy up, we're a good team. That's what gives us the confidence to go out there and compete," Ebbs said.

"It just got the whole team excited and pumped up," Blagg added

Silverton clawed their way back to tie the game at 23, but McNary was able to regain the momentum to end the set

at any point in the set. With the game tied at 24, Trinity Kampstra ended a long rally with a huge stuff at the net, allowing the Celtics to gain the advantage. Silverton tied it at 25, but after an error by the Foxes, Ebbs once again ended the set with a kill to give McNary the 2-0 lead.

With a two-set advantage, and all the momentum, the Celtics put an exclamation point on the match with their performance in the third game. With a 16-13 lead, McNary scored nine of the next 11 points to win the third and final set by double digits.

"The key is defense and making sure we know who is covering what space. It's a cohesive effort," DeMello said.

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points in isolation suggest the presence of specific challenges with mental health. They simply capture snapshots in time that help us identify patterns and trends in student social-emotional well-being as we look for more efficient ways to respond to emergent student needs, especially now," Moore said.

Moore was able to compare the answers that were received with similar data that was collected across the country. One alarming stat the district found was that 80% of elementary students across the country experienced more positive feelings than SKPS students. However, SKPS elementary students reported doing better with challenging feelings than 70% of their peers across the country.

On the contrary, 60% of secondary students across the country experienced more positive feelings than SKPS students while 50% had similar struggles with challenging feelings.

Both elementary and secondary students said that they were the happiest about family, friends, video games and pets — each set of students also reported that not being able to see family and friends, distance learning, fears about COVID-19 and struggles with mental health have been the hardest issues for them.

Although there has been a hands-on

effort across the district to meet the mental health needs of every student, there have been many instances where staff members haven't been able to get in touch with kids.

"Our counselors, teachers, support staff, and administrators have been relentless in their respectful attempts to reach out and consistently connect with students and their families. There are still a few hundred students with whom we've lost contact despite trying on a daily or weekly basis — virtually, via phone, and in-person. This is worrisome," Moore said.

While Moore believes that having in-person classes will create a rise in the overall mental health of students, he knows that theme won't rein true for every kid.

"Overall, I have no doubts that we'll see improvement in the mental health of students as we return to in-person learning. Kids are much more resilient than we often give them credit for, but we will need to be mindful that during the transition back to in-person learning we are likely to see a spike in anxiety for some students, and some significant mental health struggles for around 10-15% of students," Moore said. "We are under no illusions that our transition back to in-person learning will be easy, but I am confident in the will and skill of thousands of SKPS staff to show up for students, meet them where they're at, and focus first on social-emotional well-being, while we build our collective capacity not only to heal through this difficult time, but also thrive."