

Swarming defense puts Celts over the top in season finale against Sherwood



BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary girls basketball team gave one of their best performances of the season in their final game of the year.

Leah Doult filled out the stat sheet with 18 points, six assists, five steals and eight rebounds while Bekah Grimmer added 14 points and eight rebounds as the Celtics defeated Sherwood 48-29 to take third place in the White Bracket of a culminating-week state tournament at Grant High School on Thursday, June 24.

"I am just really proud of our girls, for the season in general, and especially these last three games," McNary coach Elizabeth Doran said.

The Celtics finish the year with a 12-3 record. Despite the season being shortened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is McNary's highest win total since the 2017-18 season.

"We knew going in that this was going to be our last game together, so we wanted to go out and leave it all out on the court. We really executed our game plan," Doult said.

The biggest aspect of the McNary game plan was figuring out how to slow down Sherwood's Ava Heiden - a 6-foot-4 post who is considered to be one of the best freshman players in the state.

Without a player over 5-foot-9, Doran elected to play a 2-3 zone for the entire game, with two players at the bottom of the zone covering Heiden.

The plan worked to perfection as the Celtics limited Heiden to just five points - Sherwood's 29 points for the game was their lowest output of the season.

"We executed our defensive scout to a



Leah Doult puts defensive pressure on the ball at the top of McNary's 2-3 zone in the Celtics 48-29 win over Sherwood.

Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

T and just did a really good job. Overall our defense was tremendous," Doran said. "We pretty much had two kids on her at all times. We played one in front and one behind to discourage the pass into her, because if she gets the ball inside, we are in a bad situation. Limiting her touches around the basket was our game plan."

"We had to keep her out of the key and box her out hard so she couldn't get offensive rebounds," Grimmer added. "We had good communication to keep her away from the basket."

Despite their exceptional defensive

effort, the Celtics had a hard time getting going offensively early on as they only held a 6-4 lead at the end of the first quarter.

But at the start of the second period, Doult began to take over.

The senior point guard had a put-back basket off her own miss to begin the quarter, then knocked down a runner on the following possession.

Later in the period, Doult got fouled on her way to the basket on separate occasions and knocked down all four free throws to put the Celtics on top 14-8.

"We were struggling, so I was just attacking whenever I could and trying to get open shots for my team," Doult said. "Getting Bekah some shots in the paint was also really helpful."

Doult went from scorer to facilitator late in the first half as she hit Grimmer with a pair of beautiful feeds for easy hoops off the pick-and-roll action.

"They switched all screens, that gave us some mismatches that Leah was able to attack. We were just taking advantage of mismatches," Doran said.

A steal and fast-break layup by Doult

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