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# McNary wins first playoff match since 2015



The McNary volleyball team celebrates after defeating Grant in four sets in the first round of the OSAA playoffs. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

**BY MATT RAWLINGS**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Whether it was injuries, heart-breaking losses, or needing players to change positions, the McNary volleyball squad had their fair share of trials during the regular season.

But when adversity hit in the Celtics opening round playoff match against Grant, they responded in resounding fashion.

After dropping the first set, McNary rallied back to win the next three games, defeating Grant 19-25, 25-20, 25-17, 25-21 on Wednesday, Oct. 27 to win their first postseason match since 2015.

"I am so excited for them. We have been battling and overcoming one

obstacle at a time with injuries and figuring out players playing different positions," McNary head coach Crystal DeMello said. "They have been able to make that journey all season and come out here and take care of business against a great team. We are beyond happy."

Junior middle blocker Emily Blagg led the Celtics with 16 kills and Emily Lettenmaier added 13 kills for the Celtics in the win.

"It feels amazing honestly. Our team really came together," Lettenmaier said about the victory.

The Celtics led 10-6 in the first set, thanks to back-to-back kills from Blagg. However, Grant took advantage of some sloppy play from McNary and

went on a 12-1 run to take a commanding 18-11 advantage. The Generals finished off the set by winning 25-19 to gain a 1-0 edge in the match.

Before the second set, DeMello made a key adjustment and subbed in an extra defensive specialist to help the Celtics cover the court better. The move paid dividends as McNary took a 14-7 lead to begin the second set, quieting the previously raucous home crowd.

"It is all about small adjustments. Defense is a huge component for us and we are so lucky to have five (defensive specialists) that push the pace of practice every

single day," DeMello said. "We were able to put a lot of them in at the same time and that was a game changer for us. They all did an excellent job."

Another key for the Celtics was the return of junior setter Maddison Corpe,

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— CRYSTAL DEMELLO

McNary head coach

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