

Roop sets school record for McNary cross country

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Connor Roop prided himself on training hard during the summer, and in the Celtics second to last meet of the season, the junior cross country runner saw the fruits of his labor.

Roop set a school record in the 5,000 meters on Wednesday, Oct. 20 at the Umpqua Invitational in Roseburg, running a 16:12.1, beating the previous record set by Spencer Sol in 2003 by more than 20 seconds.

"I was proud of myself when I crossed because I knew I broke it in that moment," Roop said. "I saw the timer in the last 100 meters so I pushed harder down the final stretch."

Roop has been one of the top runners in the area since he joined the Celtics team as a freshman in 2019.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic forcing him out of competition for over a year, Roop maintained his physical condition and established himself as McNary's top distance runner as a sophomore during the spring cross country season.

"I trained quite a bit outside of practice and I feel like that made me faster," Roop said.

Roop credited the treadmill in his garage with helping him get back into running shape.

"I ran on the treadmill quite a bit. I was still a little out of shape but I felt like I worked really hard to get back in shape,"

Due to a family member's COVID diagnosis, Roop was forced to miss the first two weeks of the season. But when he returned to the team, it was as if he never left.

With already two years of varsity



Roop is now the McNary High school record holder in the 5,000 meters.

Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

experience under his belt, Roop prided himself on being a team leader and competing at a high level.

"When I came in I was already in-shape so I was able to lead the team. I felt like I needed to be a leader because we had a lot of freshmen and I was an upperclassman and showed them how to work hard," Roop said.

"Kids really looked up to him. He is talented, but he led by example and put the time in," McNary head coach Jim Buffoni added.

Buffoni says that Roop's record-breaking run was one of the highlights of the season for the McNary cross country team.

"It was a pretty cool moment. I was really happy for him," Buffoni said.

Roop's goal during track season is to break the school record in the 3,000 meters, chasing the record that Sol set in 2005 (9:00.56). Roop's current best time is

9:43.4, but believes that he can run under nine minutes before the end of his high school career.



"It's about training and running every day to reach my goals. Even during the offseason," Roop said.

Roop hopes to compete in college after graduating in 2023. Buffoni, who has coached for more than two decades, believes that Roop has what it takes to compete at the next level.

"He has improved quite a bit. He has the drive and ability to compete in college," Buffoni said.



Cat of the Week

Name: BIRDY
Age: 2

HISTORY: Birdy is a domestic short hair torbie/calico mix. She was returned to the shelter due to not doing well in a loud home.

PREFERRED HOME: This cat does best in a quiet environment with no younger kids. She is affectionate but will occasionally give love bites.

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