

keeper to tie the game at 1-1.

Earlier in the game, Alfano missed out on a number of opportunities to put the Celtics on the board. But when she got another great look at a goal in the 62nd minute, she wasn't going to let the opportunity slip away.

Alston received a perfect through ball from Peyton Olafson while sprinting up the sideline, then crossed the ball over to Alfano, who played it off the short hop and fired a missile into the top of the goal for the score, giving the Celtics their first lead.

"Sydnee was due. She was bound to get one," Brouse said. "It was such a beautiful goal."

4

Meithof signs to play at Westmont

McNary's Nate Meithof had been one of the top prep players in the state for the last two years, which is why he was able to take his skills to the next level.

In May, the shooting guard signed his letter of intent to play college basketball for Westmont College in Santa Barbara, Calif.

"I am really excited to be able to get the opportunity to show what I can do," Meithof said. "I am going to work as hard as I can. It is going to be fun."

As a junior, Meithof averaged over 23 points and nine rebounds per game and was named the Mountain Valley

Conference co-Player of the Year. In the COVID-19 shortened season, Meithof averaged 25 points per contest.

"I think it's important that Nate goes to a place where he can unpack his bags for the next four years of his life. It's a great fit basketball wise. It's a level where he will have a ton of success and he will play for a very good coaching staff," McNary head coach Ryan Kirch said. "Academics are incredibly high there and he will be set for his life from that standpoint."

Meithof's basketball accolades speak for themselves, but what he is most proud of is being the first person in his biological family to have the opportunity to attend college.

"It really feels like my first major accomplishment," Meithof said.

Meithof was one of the most sought after juniors in the area in the winter of 2020. But when the pandemic hit, his recruiting slowed down significantly. However, there was one coach in particular that never took his eyes off Meithof.

After being an assistant at the school for two years, Keizer-native Landon Boucher took over the Westmont basketball program in the spring of 2020. The first player that he recruited was Meithof.

"My first phone call was to Kirch. I knew Nate was a big-time player and I knew that he could be a high-level player for us," Boucher said.

Nearly a year later, Meithof took his official visit to Westmont with his grandpa.

"It was a fun trip. I felt like I was stepping into a very welcoming environment," Meithof said. "A couple players showed me around the campus, which was a lot bigger than I realized."

During the visit, Meithof got the opportunity to play one-on-one with some of the Westmont upperclassmen, which was when Boucher realized the type of potential Meithof has.

"I only was able to see what he could do against high schoolers. But when I saw him play against some of our seniors, we all found out how gifted he is both offensively and defensively," Boucher said. "I knew he was good, I just didn't realize how good he was."

One week after the visit, Meithof committed to play at Westmont. With Boucher, and assistant coach Josh Erickson being from Keizer, it was clear that the local ties played a role in Meithof's decision — Erickson graduated from McNary in 2003 and was a part of the basketball team that took fourth place in the '03 state tournament.

"I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that me and Josh are both Keizer guys. All three of us went to the same schools when we were growing up. I just feel like it was meant to be," Boucher said. "Nate is an elite shot-maker and the way he is able to create for himself is unbelievable. He is going to have an instant impact and be a part of a really good team. We are thrilled to have him."



5

Celts upset Grant to advance to second round

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.

With the score tied at 1-1, both teams went back and forth to begin the third set, but with the score tied at 13-all, McNary began to take control, scoring 14 of the next 18 points to win 25-17. In the fourth set, Grant was able to stay with the Celtics early. But as the game wore on, McNary continued to prove that they were the better team.

With Grant up 13-11, the Celtics rattled off six straight points to go up 17-13, forcing the Generals to burn a timeout. A stuff block from Jaelynn Wilcox and a kill by Maddox Snider allowed the Celtics to extend the lead to 21-15.

Lettenmaier ended the match with an emphatic kill to send the Celtics to the second round.

DeMello said the most encouraging aspect of the victory was seeing the trust and confidence her girls had in each other.

"All of them wanted the ball and all of them trusted that there was someone behind them if they were out of position. It was excellent to see them lean on each other and put together a great team effort," she said.

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