

# Celts fall short against West Salem



McNary guard Ava Rubio reads the defense in the Celtics game against West Salem on Wednesday, Jan. 26. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

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

The McNary girls' basketball team was able to keep pace with West Salem in the early going, but in the end, the Titans offense was too much for the Celtics to handle.

Elizabeth Bennett had 19 points for West Salem and Mady Diaz added 14 points on 4-for-5 shooting from beyond the arc, allowing the Titans to defeat McNary 55-45 on Wednesday, Jan. 26.

"(Diaz) had a phenomenal game and then Bennett killed us on the inside. She was hard to guard. But I was proud of the girls for sticking with it. We didn't give up," McNary head coach Elizabeth Doran said.

Both teams went back-and-forth trading buckets in the early stages. KJ Custer got loose for a pair of transition layups in the first 90 seconds of the contest, and Lillian Besa soon followed with a runner to put the Celtics on top 6-5.

A scoop shot from Kylie Nepstad, who led McNary with 19 points, and a put-back bucket by Ava Rubio kept the McNary offense rolling, but West Salem was able to go on top 16-14 at the end of the first quarter.

The Titans took advantage of multiple turnovers and cold shooting from McNary to extend their lead to nine midway through the second period. But back-to-back 3-pointers from Nepstad kept the Celtics in the game.

"She is having a tremendous senior year. She is shooting the ball lights out for us and playing great defense. She is just playing all-around good basketball and

has really stepped up as a leader on this team," Doran said.

Despite the hot shooting from Nepstad, West Salem continued to build on their lead, going up by double-digits at the half. But the senior sharpshooter started off the second half with two straight triples to cut the lead to six.

Nepstad finished the game shooting 4-for-6 from beyond the arc and is shooting over 42% from 3-point range so far this season.

"I just appreciate my teammates driving and then kicking the ball out to me," Nepstad said.

But West Salem, who shot over 50% from the field in this one, would not be denied, building their lead to 15 early in the final quarter.

"It was a lot of little things defensively. We didn't do a very good job of picking up their shooters, but it's hard when you have four shooters on the perimeter that we needed to get matched up on," Doran said.

"We could have played better defense and not let them get so many easy baskets, but we played a little better at the end," Nepstad added.

Despite the large deficit, McNary mounted a mini-comeback late in the

fourth quarter.

After consecutive hoops from Rubio and Hailey Schwinof, Nepstad completed a three-point play to trim the lead to single-digits.

Moments later, Rubio came away with a steal and found Custer for an easy layup on the outlet pass to make the score 52-45 with 1:11 remaining.

West Salem made free throws down the stretch and eventually ran out the clock, but Doran was pleased with the effort from her squad.

"I was proud of the fight that we showed," Doran said.

## brainfood ANSWERS

9	5	3	8	6	1	7	4	2
4	7	1	5	3	2	6	9	8
2	6	8	7	9	4	5	1	3
3	1	7	4	2	8	9	6	5
6	9	2	3	7	5	4	8	1
8	4	5	9	1	6	3	2	7
1	3	4	6	8	7	2	5	9
5	8	9	2	4	3	1	7	6
7	2	6	1	5	9	8	3	4

**sudoku**

DRUB	SHOD	ACRE	
TITO	HOLE	SNOUT	
SOAR	ANIL	PINTO	
THANKYOU	NOTES		
BIO	SOUR		
ABBOTS	PINTAILS		
TERRE	ALOE	SEE	
PLEASE	DONT	LEAVE	
ALA	RUTS	INNER	
RADICALS	BARGES		
GOTT	ONO		
WELCOME	WAGONS		
METOO	ARES	TOTE	
GENOA	LILT	EVEL	
SPAS	ENDS	DAPS	

**crossword**