

Celtic athletes put pen to paper

By JOSHUA MANES
Of the Keizertimes

McNary athletics celebrated some of its student-athletes on Monday at McNary's college signing day.

Joined in the library by friends, family and staff, with balloons and decorations of their future schools surrounding them, college bound athletes signed letters of intent for their respective colleges.

At the main ceremony, Tyler Copeland and Jake Patton from football and Hannah Ebner and Ellie Martin from softball signed. Copeland is going to Western Oregon University, while Patton is going to George Fox University. Ebner is enrolling at Eastern Oregon University, and Martin is on her way to Chemeketa Community College.

Earlier in the day, baseball's Logan Ready and Hayden Kaiser had their own ceremony, as baseball had a game scheduled at West Salem High School later that day. Both Ready and Kaiser are heading to Pacific Lutheran University.

"I hope it celebrates all the hard work that led up to that point," athletic director Scott Gragg said. "Everyone's recruiting



Jake Patton, Tyler Copeland, Ellie Martin and Hannah Ebner sign at McNary High School's college signing day in the McNary library on Monday, April 25. The ceremony celebrated McNary student-athletes continuing their athletic careers in college.

Photo by JOSHUA MANES of the Keizertimes

path is different. It's nice for them to be able to acknowledge their path and how they got here. It's like when you get married or have

significant events and you see all the people around you that helped get you there, it makes moments like this significant."

The athletes can see how special it is for those that supported them throughout their careers to be there.

"It just shows how much support I have had throughout this journey," Copeland said. I have lots of coaches, friends, family coming to show love and support. It's a blessing sitting here looking at all their faces and trying not to cry."

It appeared as though most of the softball team was in attendance to support Ebner and Martin. Something head coach Kelly Parsell sees as a tribute to the closeness of her team.

"Whatever girl is up there, our whole team would be here to support and not because we have to, because we get to," Parsell said. "They all love each other, it's one big happy family. They're together and they're each other's supporters and they've really bought into that. I think it's really special for those two

girls to see the whole team is here and cares about them and supports them."

As with almost everything in the past two years, COVID forced some changes in how McNary handled their signings.

According to Gragg, they used to have three separate signings during the year. One in November for early signings, one in February that typically featured football, and one in April to catch the late signers.

But they've had to do it out on the track the last two years. Now this year, they were in the library being celebrated.

For Copeland, the decision on schools has an even more significant meaning. His choice of Western Oregon also happens to be the alma mater of his father, McNary wide receivers coach Andrew Copeland.

"Going to the same school as him, following in the same footsteps, I wasn't planning on it, and now that it's coming, it's a joy," Copeland said.



McNary softball head coach Kelly Parsell talks about Hannah Ebner and Ellie Martin at McNary High School's college signing day on Monday, April 25, in the McNary Library. Ebner is going to Eastern Oregon University, and Martin is going to Chemeketa Community College to continue playing softball.

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