

Wildcats up next



Celt Matt Aguilar sprints up the field on a kickoff return.

KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

McNary High School junior Kolby Barker thought the Celtics could have come out stronger in their first game last week. He wants to see that change with this week's game at Westview High School.

"We were a little bit nervous. That was part of it, but we need to be more prepared for our next game," Barker said. "We watched some film and (Westview) seems to be pass heavy. We had pass pretty well locked down against North, but then we still had some mistakes. We have to contain a bit better."

The Celtics beat North Salem High School, 34-21,

in their first game. Westview lost their first game of the season in a squeaker to Springfield High School, 26-23.

While Brad Emmert, McNary offensive coordinator, was happy to rely on the running game when it was successful against North, he's hoping for a little diversity in plays when McNary meets Westview.

"I want to see us throw for 150 yards or 200 yards. Our goal is to be 50/50 in the run/pass and we weren't even close to that last week," Emmert said. "Their defense is a little more familiar to us and I think we'll get the ball to more players in a lot of different ways. Brendan Van

Voorhis and Matt Aguilar will get the ball more frequently, and we have a lot of people who have the talent to step up for the team."

Against North, McNary had 300 yards on the ground and 51 in the air. Senior quarterback Trent Van Cleave completed four of five with one touchdown and one interception.

KJ McCrae, Celt defensive coordinator, said the big takeaway from the first game was the need to hit the field ready to play.

"We have the capability to be really good as a defense but it starts with alignment, assignment and effort. I know the guys were not satisfied with how the North

game was played but a victory is a victory and they'll learn from it. This week we want to come out and play fast, make decisions and do them with 100 percent effort. With that kind of mindset usually good things follow," McCrae said.

Westview is likely to be a slightly more skilled team than North and the Wildcats played with heart despite the loss — the team came back from a 20-7 deficit at halftime against Springfield to take a lead.

Senior running back Donovan Baldocchi had 122 yards and two touchdowns for Westview. Junior Jason Rucker chipped in another 86 yards in the game.

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A fumble ended McNary's next drive and North took the change in momentum and turned it into another touchdown. The teams headed to the locker room with North leading 14-8.

In the second half, McNary's running game came to life. Van Cleave and Sparks shared running duties on the opening drive and were in the end zone after seven plays. Van Cleave ran in the touchdown and the conversion to reclaim the lead, 16-14.

"On almost every play, they were lining up four guys on defense to our six on offense and I assumed we'd see an adjustment, but we never did," Emmert said.



McNary's LaCroix Hill takes down Viking Pedro Flores.

KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

for Gage Mance to make plays. I think the defensive line was very strong inside which made North run the ball outside more to gain yards. Josiah Gilbert definitely showed up this game and made some great plays. Brendan Van Voorhis also made a few touchdown-saving tackles."

Martinez said the difference showed in the relatively small gains North made while the Celtics' first-stringers were on the field.

"We started causing some turnovers on downs and kind of got into their heads," Martinez said.

McNary's offense went back to the same well (the run game) and kept drawing from it. The highlight was a 25-yard run that saw Sparks get brought down on top of a North Salem tackler. Sparks spun out and up off the tackler to keep running for another seven yards. On the next play, Sparks ran for a

touchdown from the 13-yard line. Van Cleave put in his third two-point conversion on the ground for a 24-14 score.

North made some of its biggest attempts at the passing game on its next drive, but Celtics Josiah Gilbert and Trevor Guzman broke up two passes that would have given the Vikings prime field position. North's offense left the field empty-handed.

Sparks and Van Cleave traded running plays on McNary's return drive that ended with another Van Cleave touchdown after a brief scramble. After another Van Cleave two-point conversion, McNary led 32-14.

The Celtic defense gave up just 15 yards on the next North drive. Barker put the nail in the coffin with a sack for a 10-yard loss. A blown snap on the punt attempt ended up as a McNary safety.

North scored the game's final touchdown on a long bomb to Alex Vasquez off McNary's secondary for the final 34-21 score.

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The Celtic defense put up big stops again and gave control of the field back to McNary's offense.

"I think the defense kind of woke up in the second half and realized how they

needed to play the game to win," said McCrae. "LaCroix caused a lot of problems in the middle when he was in the game and had to be double or triple teamed a lot which opened up gaps

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