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Wolverines finish undefeated

Under the lights at McNary High School and in front of the biggest crowd in memory for a middle school football game, the Whiteaker Wolverines heavyweight football team capped off an historic undefeated season with a win over rival Claggett Creek Middle School.

"First, I want to thank all three principals who made this happen: Julia Dewitt (WMS), Rob Schoepper (CC), and Eric Jespersion (MHS). It is great to win this game, because Claggett has had Whiteaker's number for a while now. But what's better than the win is this atmosphere—the color guard, the band, and the stands filled. Keizer came out and really made every one of these kids—on both teams—feel special tonight," said Tom Larimer, Whiteaker head coach.

Immediately after the game, McNary Head Coach Jeff Auvinen gathered all the players together at midfield, saying, "I saw some great players out here tonight representing two rivalry schools—Whiteaker and Claggett—but now you are all one team. You are McNary's future team. Tonight you played hard, but now the rivalry is over. You are all teammates now."

The game was all Whiteaker from the get-go. Whiteaker, which never trailed at any time the entire season, scored on its first play from scrimmage when wide receiver Junior Walling took a flanker sweep and followed blocks by Joel Knight and Nico Sandoval to go 58 yards nearly untouched to paydirt.

"As good as Junior is — and



Above and right: scenes from the Claggett Creek Middle School and Whiteaker Middle School heavyweight football game Wednesday, Nov. 4.

he is the most talented middle school back I have ever seen — that play is so successful because of our offensive line: Josh Patton, Nate Young, Sion Springer, Andrew Shaw and Malakai Vasseur, and the unsung star of this team: H-back Joseph Fowler," said Larimer. "Three of our starting O-line had never played football before this season, but you wouldn't know it."

Minutes after Walling's touchdown, all three starting Wolverine linebackers—Walling, Brian Schindler and Fowler—combined on a fourth down stop to force CCMS to turn the ball over on downs. Speedster Nico Sandoval took a toss to the left and scampered 60 yards untouched for Whiteaker's second score.

Sandoval recovered a Claggett fumble on the ensuing kickoff, and quarterback Erik Barker hit wideout Riley Flores with a 40-yard touchdown pass. A second consecutive fumbled kickoff recovered by Noah Lelack gave WMS the ball right back on the Claggett 40-yard line. Barker led a four-play touchdown drive that ended with a perfectly thrown 26-yard strike to Walling, and the two-point conversion run by Layton Thurlow gave the Wolverines a 28-0 lead.

WMS defensive coordinator Kurt Walling said, "Many people don't understand how much intensity and emotion can help get a team off to a good start. Our kids made a commitment to each other to take the momentum in that

game and, once they did, they never looked back."

Larimer credited his son, Offensive Coordinator Marcus Larimer, for his work with the offense.

"Marcus has a great offensive mind. He has a sixth sense for what to run, and I don't worry because I know we have done literally hundreds of controlled, technique based reps on every one of our plays, so each guy knows his job on each play and executes it properly," said T. Larimer.

M. Larimer credited the student-athletes for their work.

"That preparation and commitment by my kids allows me to run almost any play in any situation and know the kids are ready to execute it



properly," said M. Larimer.

The offense was sharp, both on the ground and in the air. Barker completed four of six passes for 137 yards and three touchdowns, while backup quarterback Layton Thurlow added a 65-yard second quarter touchdown strike to Riley Flores.

Thurlow, fresh off being named a team captain for his unselfish play, made the most of his big night, adding a 56-yard touchdown run of his own. He also recorded a

quarterback sack when the Claggett wideout could not shake the tight coverage of defensive back Anthony Rice.

Nine different Wolverines carried the ball, but none more than twice. Walling had 66 yards rushing, Thurlow 63 and Sandoval 60. Flores led all receivers with two catches for 107 yards and two scores. The defense was led by Schindler and Fowler's 10 tackles apiece, with Nate Young adding nine and Walling eight.

Please see WMS, Page A11

Rams take 42-21 victory in first round of playoffs

BY ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

McNary High School's varsity football team never threatened in a 42-21 loss to Central Catholic High School in the first round of the playoffs.

Fortunately for the Celtics, the team had just enough big plays — led by quarterback Trent Van Cleave's three interceptions — to keep the game interesting despite the lopsided score.

The Keizer team was off to a rough start from the get-go. Three plays in to their first drive, a wild snap was recovered by the Rams at the Celtic 20-yard line. It took Central Catholic only two plays to notch the first touchdown of the game at 10:49.

The Celts made it to midfield before fizzling on their first possession. Once Central Catholic had the ball back, a 31-yard rushing attack brought up first-and-goal at the one-yard line. The Rams scored again on the next play for the 14-0 lead.

McNary's drive started at the five-yard line because of a holding penalty and a fumble on the first play was recovered by Central Catholic. The Rams scored on the next play and, with 7:28 remaining in the first quarter, McNary trailed 21-0.

"The difficult thing to swallow is that, if you take

away the first four minutes of the game, we played them even the rest of the way," said Jeff Auvinen, McNary head coach. "It's just too bad we couldn't compete to our full ability those first four minutes."

The Celtics finally bolted the wheels back on their game in their next possession. A first-down rush by running back Brady Sparks was helped along by a personal foul that reset the chains at McNary's 42-yard line. Sparks reeled in a one-handed catch on the next play but it was called back on a holding penalty.

Facing first-and-22, Van Cleave found teammate Josh Benson cutting across the field for a short gain, but lost five yards on a penalty. On second-and-20, Van Cleave made a short pass to Hayden Sader and it took four tacklers to bring him down at third-and-seven.

The Rams drew a defensive holding penalty and reset the chains for McNary at the Central Catholic 45-yard line.

Sader and Benson finished off the drive with catches and the Celtics made it to the board with 2:19 left in the first quarter.

Sader and Bobby Botta got key stops for the Keizer team on Central Catholic's return, but the Rams scored on a long rushing attack facing third-and-one, making the score



Celt Jon Anderson chases down Ram quarterback Marcu Mildenberg at Hillsboro Stadium Friday, Nov. 6.

28-7. The Rams cushioned their lead to 35-7 on their next possession shortly after the start of the second quarter.

After punting away their next opportunity, Van Cleave pulled down a one-handed interception at the McNary 15-

yard line and ran it all the way back to the 40-yard line. After a Ram player was judged out of bounds and returned to the playing field, McNary took possession at Central Catholic's 43-yard line.

Please see PLAYOFF, Page A12

Rusty's 1st rooster



On the Wild Side
by G.I. Wilson

The young Brittany freezes in a classic point—a breathing orange and white statue. The months of training, working and learning are finally over. This is the real thing. It's hammer time!

I had taken a job in Gooding, Idaho, knowing the area could provide excellent pheasant hunting. One of my hunting friends, an avid bird hunter, convinced me to buy a Brittany spaniel.

When I saw an ad in the newspaper, I called and made an appointment to see the eight-week-old litter. It was obvious the owner knew Brittanies and had a deep passion for them. He took me into the field behind his house and demonstrated the female's skills and eagerness to please. Her bloodline was impressive, and the sire's line consisted of a long string of field champions. "These pups have the best genes that can be bred into a bird dog. They will do it all naturally," the breeder said. I came home with a bouncing bundle of energy that loved people. My three kids returned his love threefold. They named him Rusty.

We moved to Gooding in late August. The hunters at work informed me it was going to be a bumper year for pheasants. You could hear roosters crowing, in all directions, from any place in the small town. It was difficult to

contain my excitement.

I had never owned a bird dog. I had grown up on a farm in the southwest, where we always had hunting dogs, but my dad thought all bird hunters were "city slickers." As a teenager I had hunted quail, over a pointer, with my high school basketball coach. He had also been a great coach for wing shooting.

The breeder had suggested I buy the book: *Training Your Hunting Dog*. It proved to be an excellent resource. So, armed with "book knowledge" and a starter's pistol borrowed from the track coach, Rusty and I headed for the fields to learn.

He actually pointed the very first pheasant he came across! I was amazed how natural it was for this six-month-old pup. He would point a bird, I would flush it and fire the starter's pistol (to train him not to be gun shy). He learned not to chase flushed birds, to keep track of me, and to respond to the whistle. I learned to follow him to where the birds were when he turned into the wind and went into his "stalking" mode. I was anxious for season to open.

The hunting group at work took it for granted that I was to hunt with them on every weekend. I was the new guy on the block and I could learn

Please see WILSON, Page A11