

Celt Ty Penner heads up the field after making a catch.

KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald



Celts hit gridiron with new coach, new looks

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

For McNary High School's new starting quarterback Trent Van Cleave, the upcoming season isn't about just competing with the other Greater Valley Conference teams.

"We want to bury them. We want to be top dogs and we know we can do that," Van Cleave said.

That's tough talk and, if McNary has hope of living up to that expectation, it is going to be a full team effort. This season the team doesn't have the established playmakers of its recent past, but Van Cleave is probably the biggest name opponents will remember in the ranks.

In 2014, McNary went 5-3 in the Greater Valley Conference, finishing fourth. The boys made it to the state playoffs based on their ranking and fell in the first round to Oregon City High School in a 38-6 rout.

Van Cleave cut his teeth in the varsity ranks last year performing on special teams and as the Celtics' wildcat quarterback, but Jeff Auvinen, McNary's new head coach, said there was little question Van Cleave would be the McNary shotcaller.

"He had the leg up, but he's embraced it. He's elusive and he's got great feet. He's hard to chase and hard to bring down. He's

got a very good, accurate arm and he's going to surprise some people with that part of our game. He has risen to earn the spot without question," Auvinen said.

Surrounding Van Cleave will be a veritable army of big bodies that should be able to give their quarterback time to pick his passes.

"We've got Jason Sperle at center starting for his third year, Hayden Sader

at tight end, Kyle Bonn at right tackle, Kolby Barker will be a two-way guy for us and Sam Farr is looking really good at center guard and tackle," Auvinen said.

Sperle was already liking what he saw in early practices.

"We're senior dominated up front with a couple of swingers who know what they're doing and it creates a lot of depth," Sperle added.

Add to that mix returning running back Brady Sparks, and the team has a

nucleus with which to build its offense around.

"Brady is a very good runner with good vision and explosive speed. It's a good combination to have in the backfield," Auvinen said.

Sader said the new schemes implemented by Brad Emmert, McNary's new offensive coach, fit like a glove.

"I like our defense this season, they're tough and flying around and physical"

— Lacroix Hill

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VARISTY FOOTBALL SCHEDULE



Sept. 4 at North Salem
Sept. 11 vs. Westview (7 p.m.)
Sept. 18 vs. West Albany
Sept. 25 at McKay
Oct. 2 vs. McMinnville
Oct. 8. at Forest Grove
Oct. 16 vs. West Salem
Oct. 23 at South Salem
Oct. 30 vs. Sprague

All game times are 7:15 p.m.,
unless otherwise noted.