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Lady Celts get 'huge' win

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

McNary senior Kayla Evans had been waiting for a win like this.

Behind strong team defense, the Lady Celts passed their first true test of the season, shutting out Gresham 2-0 at home on Thursday, Sept. 8.

The Gophers have been a mainstay in the state tournament, getting at least to the play-in game the last three seasons and finishing runner-up in the Mt. Hood Conference in 2013 and 14.

"It's huge," Evans said of the victory. "We started from the bottom and we've been building up and up and it finally feels good to be up and be able to compete against teams like this and win. It's definitely one of the best games we've played, ever."

It was Evans who got McNary on the scoreboard with a header off a corner kick from Gina Munguia in the 25th

minute.

"I noticed I had no one on me and I was literally looking up at the ball and I just followed through with as much force as possible," Evans said. "It was a beautiful service from Gina. I definitely think it just pumped up all of the energy. It made us so confident that we could actually do this (win)."

The score remained 1-0 heading into intermission but the Lady Celts increased its opportunities in the second half.

In the 52nd minute, Munguia nearly netted a free kick over the head of Gresham's goalkeeper that was saved. Seven minutes later, Jessy Shore then played a through-ball to Evans, who appeared to have an open goal before a Lady Gophers defender came out of nowhere to make the save. Kolbie Kopp too had a shot to extend McNary's lead but it was also cleared off the

line.

With only eight and half minutes remaining and the Lady Celts still holding on to a 1-0 lead, freshman defender Sam Alfano fired a shot from 35 yards out that even Alfano thought was saved before the ball escaped through the legs of the keeper and into the net.

It was Alfano's first high school goal and she didn't even see it.

"I turned around because I was pretty sure it wasn't going in and then I started hearing everyone screaming so I turned around and the ball was in the goal," Alfano said. "It was one of the best feelings ever. I did not expect to score a goal this game. I was really surprised."

McNary head coach AJ Nash said his team's defense, led by seniors Katelyn Tallon and Abigail Smith, was the difference in the win.

Gresham played a 4-5-1 formation with one attacking

forward.

"In the second half we didn't even know there was an attacking player because Kat completely shut her down," Nash said.

The Lady Celts have opened the season 4-0 but this was their first win over a quality opponent.

"It's a big win for the program, a big win for the girls," Nash said.

"Ultimately, we should expect to begin winning games like this. This was a win against a playoff caliber team from Portland that was primarily made up of club players. In order to get to the playoffs you have to beat teams that go to the playoffs regularly and this is our first big win in a number of years against a team that consistently goes to the playoffs every year. I'm proud to be their coach tonight. They really played well."

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
McNary freshman Samantha Alfano scored her first high school goal in the 71st minute of the Lady Celts 2-0 victory over Gresham on Thursday, Sept. 8.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
McNary defensive back Junior Walling and lineman Caleb Kiefiuk-Yates team up to tackle South Salem quarterback Harrison Broadus Friday, Sept. 9.

Fumbles, penalties spoil home opener

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

McNary head football coach Jeff Auvinen likes the effort he's seen from the Celtics over the first two weeks of the season.

They just have to clean up the mistakes.

"If they can just take that effort, limit the mistakes, the scoreboard is going to take care of itself," Auvinen said after a 34-29 loss at home to South Salem on Friday, Sept. 9.

"You can't say enough about our effort, our enthusiasm, guys going both ways and playing every snap."

Neither team was able to get much going offensively in the first half.

South Salem scored its only touchdown on a short field after blocking a McNary punt and starting at the Celtics 9-yard line.

Three plays later, Francisco Ramirez-Perez was in the end zone

on a 6-yard run.

The Celtics blocked the extra point but South Salem led 6-0 with 9:31 remaining in the second quarter.

The short field wasn't the only one the Saxons had in the first half. They started two other drives in McNary territory. One ended in a punt and the other a missed field goal.

"In the first half, I thought we were fortunate to only give up six," Auvinen said. "Our defense played really hard and kept them out of the (end) zone."

With 1:49 remaining in the first half, McNary had just 53 yards when Lucas Garvey put some life into the Celtics offense by catching a screen pass, making two defenders miss and racing 47 yards to the Saxons 19-yard line.

McNary quarterback Josiah Gilbert then finished the drive with a

1-yard sneak and A.J. Johnk's extra point gave the Celtics a 7-6 lead at halftime.

McNary continued to make mistakes in the second half, fumbling away its first possession, which South Salem, again on a short field, turned into six points to take a 12-7 lead.

After trading punts, both offenses woke up and a shootout began.

First, Gilbert found an open receiver in the end zone—Kyle McCallister, who took a big hit but was able to hold on to the football for a 15-yard score.

A two-point attempt failed but the Celtics led 13-12 with 6:06 remaining in the third quarter.

After a holding penalty and tackle for a loss, the Saxons converted a third-and-14 and then Ramirez-Perez scored a 4-yard touchdown and two-point conversion to put South Salem on top 20-13.

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Up next: Sprague

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

McNary has seen two different Sprague football teams on film.

There's the one that went into South Salem and blew out the back-to-back Greater Valley Conference champions 48-7 to open the season.

And then there's the Olympians who lost 36-29 at home to West Salem.

What was the difference? Mistakes.

"They made a lot more mistakes against West," McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen said. "They were pretty dang good against South as far as being mistake free for a first game."

The biggest mistake Sprague made against West Salem was an interception in its own end zone that turned out to be the deciding score.

"They are pretty good," Auvinen said. "They do a lot of things really well. That being said, they make high school mistakes and I think we've got a good game plan to take them out of what they want to do."

The Olympians want to run the football.

Against West Salem, they rushed

for more than 320 yards but passed for less than 50.

"We're going to force them to do things that are a little more challenging than they like to do and get them out of their comfort level a little bit," said Auvinen, who is also McNary's defensive coordinator.

"They have two good running backs (Dane McKinney and Noah Mellen) that they like quite well. They have a really good group of lineman, a pretty good quarterback (Spencer Plant), especially with his feet. They are naturally a gifted running team. They have good athletes so they still have potential to do other things but I'd rather take them out of what they're most comfortable with."

The past two McNary-Sprague games have been nail-biters.

A year ago, the Celtics offense marched 99 yards and converted a two-point attempt to get within 21-14 with 3:54 left in the game but couldn't complete the comeback.

In 2014, McNary scored a late touchdown to win 34-33.

This season's matchup kicks off Friday, Sept. 16, at 7 p.m. at Sprague.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
McNary senior Sydney Hunter had 10 kills in a 3-0 victory over North Salem on Thursday, Sept. 8.

MHS sweeps Vikings

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Back home after two difficult losses to West and South Salem, it took about half a set for McNary to get going.

But once it did, it was all Lady Celts in a 3-0 (25-19, 25-13, 25-17) victory over North Salem on Thurs-

day, Sept. 8.

"We had to pick up our energy," said setter Samantha Van Voorhis, who had 25 assists and three digs. "We had a few good volleys and that just brings everybody's energy up. We got pretty excited and then kept it up from there."

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