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Lady Celts in playoff hunt

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

For the first time in years, the McNary girls soccer team has a shot at the playoffs entering the final week of the regular season.

The Lady Celts shut out McKay 5-0 on Monday, Oct. 10 to improve to 6-4-2 overall and 1-3-2 in the Greater Valley Conference.

With two games to go, McNary is currently 38th in the OSAA rankings and need to move up to 36th to at least get a play-in game, which would be a first since 2009.

The Lady Celts go to North Salem on Tuesday, Oct. 18 and then host South Salem on Thursday, Oct. 20 to finish the season.

McNary head coach AJ Nash believes the girls need a win at North and at least a tie against South in order to get into the playoffs.

“There’s no guarantee but I feel good going into the final game,” Nash said. “I do believe it’s (playoff spot) in our hands, even though I can’t confirm that. We just need to get results in the last two games and we should have playoffs in our destiny.”

South Salem is ranked 30th with two games left to play so the Saxons should also have plenty at stake when they go to McNary.

“It should make for a great game,” Nash said. “I’d say we’re fairly evenly matched so it should be a battle. They are probably going to have similar implications. We might both be fighting for who gets the one playoff spot. They are one of the teams that we’re hoping to leapfrog.”

Senior Kayla Evans made sure the Lady Celts got off to a good start against McKay, which was another must-win

game.

Evans scored McNary’s quickest goal of the season, in the first minute and 12 seconds on an assist from fellow senior Abi Rodriguez.

“We challenged the girls to go out and get a good score early and they did that,” Nash said.

Freshman Ariana Santana-Albright then scored her first varsity goal to extend the Lady Celts lead to 2-0 in the 23rd minute. Senior Isabella Heath, who had the assist, scored the next two goals, both in the second half on assists from sophomore Natalie Gonzalez.

The final goal came on a penalty kick by sophomore Gina Munguia.

Senior Scarlett Working got the shutout at goalkeeper.

Playing at home, McNary tied McMinnville 1-1 on Thursday, Oct. 6.

The Grizzlies took advan-

tage of a lost ball in the mid-field and scored on a counter attack in the 19th minute.

The equalizer came in the 58th minute as junior Jessy Shore took a long throw from the sideline, flicked on by Munguia, and collected and finished in the box by Gonzalez.

In the 65th minute, sophomore Katy Wyatt put a header on goal off a Munguia corner kick that hit the cross bar, and bounced back towards three charging Celts. But the McMinnville keeper found a fortunate bounce and was able to collect the ball.

McMinnville threatened a couple times on counter attacks, forcing sophomore goalie Sydney Snapp to make a couple strong saves, and with 10 minutes to go Munguia defended a ball with a header on her own goal line to keep the game tied.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
 McNary sophomore Natalie Gonzalez scored the Lady Celts’ only goal in a 1-1 tie against McMinnville on Thursday, Oct. 6.

McNary shocks Grizzlies

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MCMINNVILLE—With 1:25 remaining, McNary trailed by four points.

Two of the Celtics top offensive weapons had just dropped back-to-back passes, unable to catch a slick and heavy waterlogged ball.

Facing a fourth-and-25 just inside its opponent’s 30-yard line, McNary called its last time out.

The McMinnville home crowd was at its loudest of the night.

The Celtics needed a hero. Quarterback Josiah Gilbert rolled out of the pocket and saw Jonathan Williams, a McNary junior who prior to the game had just two receptions for 16 yards, in the end zone. Williams out-jumped a McMinnville player to catch the ball off the top of the defender’s head.

“I still can’t believe it’s real,” Williams said on Friday, Oct. 7 immediately after the 30-27 McNary victory. “I was surprised that the ball even came my way. It just ended up in my hands and I’m just glad I caught it. I had a drop a few weeks ago that would have been an easy touchdown for me. This week was a good comeback from that. It’s amazing. I’ve dreamed of this

moment but I never thought it would be real. Now it’s happening and it’s crazy.”

Gilbert thought Williams was more open than he actually was.

“I just saw my boy (Williams) in the end zone,” Gilbert said. “I didn’t see the guy underneath him to be honest but I put it up for him to go get it and he went up and made a great play. When he jumped up, I was so scared because I thought he jumped up too early. But he just hung there and as soon as it hit his hands, I started freaking out. I was so excited. I can’t even describe the emotions that I felt.”

Brendan Van Voorhis, the Celtics top receiver who was also running a route on the play, had a front row seat for Williams’ catch.

“That was spectacular,” Van Voorhis said. “That was one of the best catches I’ve ever seen. He was over the defender and caught it behind him. The ball was pretty hard to catch and it got kind of waterlogged so it was heavy. I took off my gloves because they got super slick when they get wet. My hands weren’t much better.”

McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen knew it was only a matter of time before

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
 McNary linebacker Kolby Barker, No. 54, pressures McMinnville quarterback Wyatt Smith into an interception with 36 seconds remaining in the game.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
 McNary junior Kailey Doult placed first in 20:22 at Bush Park in Salem on Wednesday, Oct. 5.

Doutt wins at Bush Park

By **DEREK WILEY**
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SALEM—McNary junior Kailey Doult was looking forward to competing against South Salem sophomore Anna Chau and North Salem junior Madison Willhoft, two of the top runners in the Greater Valley Conference, Wednesday, Oct. 5 at Bush Park.

But she’ll have to wait. Willhoft missed the race with the flu while Chau, the defending conference champion, decided to run with the boys, finishing sixth in a season best 18:18.

“I was kind of mad,” Doult said. “I was disappointed because I was looking forward to racing them because I haven’t since the (GVC) preview meet and I wanted to see where I

was with Madison because she usually beats me but our times are super close.”

Willhoft and Doult placed fourth and fifth respectively in the district meet last year at Bush Park.

“I was looking for them to push me to run faster,” Doult said. “When I run by myself it’s harder to push myself and compete so that makes a big difference in time.”

With Chau and Willhoft out, Doult led from start to finish, easily winning the girls race in 20:22. North Salem freshman Abi Swain took second in 20:42.

“I had a pretty nice lead,” Doult said. “I could hear one girl breathing behind me like the first mile but I think she dropped off a little bit after

I feel okay about it. I wish I could’ve run faster.”

Because of shin splints, the race was Doult’s first since Sept. 23.

Four North Salem runners finished in the top six as the Vikings had the best team score with 32 points. South Salem (43) and McNary (46) placed second and third.

McNary sophomore Emma Garland took seventh in 21:54 and junior Alison Repp finished 10th in 23:04.

Freshman Madeline Bielby had a PR of 23:41 to place 11th and sophomore Xena Lane (24:33) also scored for the Lady Celts.

McNary junior Jonas Honeyman and senior Eddie Martinez both ran personal record times but that wasn’t enough

for the Celtics (73) to overcome South Salem (16) and North Salem (46).

Led by Jay Grant (17:08), the Saxons had five runners finish in the top six.

For McNary, Honeyman took eighth in 18:39 and Martinez placed 11th in 18:46. Brock Wyer (19:43), Brian Young (19:57), Tyler Dougall (20:05) and Noah Egli (20:05) also ran for the Celtics.

The GVC Championship, where Doult will finally get her shot at Chau and Willhoft, is Wednesday, Oct. 26 at Crystal Lake Park in Corvallis.

“I just want to keep pushing myself in practice and run as hard as I can to get better,” Doult said. “I just want to prepare myself to run fast with the other girls.”