

McNary drops non-conference game

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen was blunt after his team's 38-17 loss to North Medford on Friday, Oct. 21.

The Celtics laid an egg. "They just played a lot harder than we did," Auvinen said. "They took it to us and played with more intensity. We got caught kind of flat-footed and by the time we responded, we were still in the game, and then we got caught flat-footed again and didn't respond nearly as well."

North Medford entered the game with a pass-first spread offense but the Black Tornado did most of its damage against McNary on the ground, rushing for 200 yards and passing for only 49.

"I figured they would like to run the ball," Auvinen said. "They just haven't been very effective at it. They were much better today, obviously, and took it to us."

North Medford scored on its first drive with a 6-yard run to take an early 7-0 lead. But the Celtics quickly answered as quarterback Josiah Gilbert hit Brendan Van Voorhis in stride for an 84-yard touchdown pass to tie the game at 7-7 with 7:19 remaining in the first quarter.

The Black Tornadoes added another 6-yard touchdown run on its next possession but McNary again responded. On fourth-and-goal from the 1-yard line, Gilbert pushed his way into the end zone and AJ

Johnk's extra point tied the game 14-14 with 7:23 remaining in the second quarter.

North Medford returned the following kickoff 87 yards to take a 21-14 lead.

Gilbert then fumbled, giving the Black Tornadoes the ball at their own 41-yard line. But the Celtic defense stood strong as Caleb Kiefiuk-Yates sacked North Medford quarterback Javan Gail on third down to force a punt.

With 36 seconds remaining in the second quarter, Lucas Garvey lined up at quarterback but the North Medford defense wasn't fooled and Garvey threw an interception to close the first half.

McNary caught a break early in the third quarter when the Black Tornadoes muffed a punt and the Celtics recovered at their opponent's 35-yard line.

On third-and-8 from the 18-yard line, Gilbert appeared to have Van Voorhis open in the end zone but the pass was short and McNary had to settle for a Johnk 35-yard field goal to get within 21-17.

North Medford had its own chance to kick a field goal but on fourth-and-6 from the Celtic 16, decided to go for it and Garvey broke up a pass in the end zone.

Defense then took over the game. The Black Tornadoes started their next two possessions at the McNary 39 and 24-yard lines, respectively, but got zero points to show for it as both drives ended in punts.

In between, the Celtics weren't able to do anything either. After a 5-yard penalty, Gilbert threw three incomplete passes and McNary punted.

North Medford was then able to place a punt on the Celtic 1-yard line. After three plays and gaining zero yards, the Celtics elected to take a knee in the end zone for a safety rather than try to punt.

"That was my call," Auvinen said. "We had trouble on the last punt. We were on the 1-yard line and the last punt went to about the 23. Let's see if we can reverse the field a little bit."

The decision looked like the correct one when North Medford later blocked a McNary punt and returned it for a touchdown to expand its lead to 30-17 with 11:25 remaining in the game.

The Celtics continued to do little on offense, turning the ball over on downs at the North Medford 42-yard line with 10:06 left to play.

"We struggled all night long controlling the line of scrimmage," Auvinen said. "I thought we had them tired in the second quarter and started moving the ball a little bit but we couldn't duplicate that after. We weren't throwing the ball on time frequently, rather it was good coverage or the rush was too much pressure. There were a lot of reasons."

Garvey was able to momentarily stop the bleeding, intercepting Gail at the Mc-



McNary freshman Junior Walling pressures North Medford quarterback Javan Gail in the second half of a 38-17 loss on Friday, Oct. 21.

Nary 3-yard line. However, three plays later, McNary was called for intentional grounding, which resulted in another safety and gave North Medford a 32-17 lead.

With only 21 seconds re-

maining, Gail threw a 4-yard touchdown pass to complete the scoring.

McNary finished with 59 yards rushing on 31 carries. Gilbert was 9-for-25 passing for 203 yards.

"It was a playoff type atmosphere," Auvinen said. "Maybe we got our egg laid at this juncture and in the scheme of things it's not going to make or break us, two weeks from now it will make or break us."

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think they're much improved. I know our girls have been working really hard so I think

it will be a very competitive match."

Claggett's varsity team improved to 4-4 after defeating Waldo on Monday, Oct. 24.

"They're a dynamic group of girls and they play very

well," Richardson said of her team.

"We beat Walker (earlier this year), which was a huge defeat because we hadn't beat them in years. That was a huge accomplishment because

they've always been a really good team. We've had close matches with them in the past and hadn't come out on top. It was a huge victory."

A win over Whiteaker would also be huge since the

Wolverines have won every game in the series but one, five years ago.

"I think Whiteaker is going to be a good game," Richardson said.

"We've always played

tough against Whiteaker so I'm expecting another tough game. It's going to be a good rival matchup."

The B-teams will begin the action at 3:30 p.m. Varsity will then follow.

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"Our offensive line blocked very well and gave Jack plenty of time to get his passes off," Claggett head coach Aaron

Carr said. "We've been on quite a roll lately, the hard work of our kids and the way they've improved so much over a short time. Definitely, we are improving every game."

Led by its defense, Whiteaker opened its season 3-0 before falling to Waldo and Crossler.

The Wolverines then tied Leslie 8-8 on Wednesday, Oct. 19.

Whiteaker dominated to-

tal yardage and time of possession, but failed to score on three drives that ended inside the Leslie 25.

"We did a very poor job of finishing our drives," Larimer said. "When you work hard to move down the field like that, you need to capitalize, and we did not do it."

Whiteaker drove the length of the field on its first possession and scored on a 6-yard touchdown run by Cameron Parks. Running back Quen-

tin Camenisch led all rushers with 83 yards on 18 carries.

"We did a solid job running the ball and our offense was good enough to run by far the most plays in a game that we have all year," Larimer said. "We just executed poorly in the red zone."

The Wolverines drove nearly 60 yards in the final four minutes to the Leslie 8-yard line.

But ultimately, Leslie stopped the Panthers on fourth-and-2 just short of the first down.

Whiteaker's defense was led by Ethan Schurr, who recovered a fumble and an onside kick, and Griffin Hubbard, who had four tackles for loss and a sack. Isaac Everts and Hunter Zimmermann each had a game-high six tackles.

Whiteaker and Claggett Creek will play at McNary High School. The junior varsity teams kick off at 5 p.m.

followed by the varsity at 7.

"For a lot of these kids it's the first time they've ever played under the lights so it's a huge deal and it's a big rivalry game," Carr said. "The kids should be pumped up and ready to go."

The players will also get the full experience of having a color guard present the national anthem as well as school bands.

"We want the kids to feel like they're playing high school football for one night because then we hook them in to McNary," Larimer said. There's tenuous balance between wanting to have a rivalry with your sister school but not forgetting that Aaron Carr and I both have the same goal, that (Whiteaker Principal) Julie DeWitt and (Claggett Principal) Rob Schoepper both have the same goal, to have these kids have a great experience in football that will make

them better people, that will make them more disciplined, make them better students, make their whole experience at McNary more worthwhile. We want to win and we want to be competitive but we can't forget that really we're all in it for the same reason, just to give the kids a good experience here."

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