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McNary lineman Alex Harrison celebrates with defensive back Alex McGrath, No. 19, after McGrath's interception sealed a 22-20 first round playoff victory for the Celtics on Friday, Nov. 3.

## McNary not content with first round playoff win

By DEREK WILEY  
*Of the Keizertimes*

McNary head football coach Jeff Auvinen looked out at the Celtics five league and two state championship banners and told his team how much fun it is to practice on Thanksgiving.

McNary had just won its first playoff game since 2013 but the Celtics aren't satisfied.

In order to continue its postseason run and get to Thanksgiving, McNary must first knock off defending state champion and No. 3 West Linn on the road Friday, Nov. 10.

"I think we've got a great game plan," Auvinen said. "I think the kids are excited. I think it's a quality opponent we're playing. We're going to have to play a really, really good game but it can be done."

Auvinen compared West Linn to Sprague and West Salem, two teams that combined to outscore the Celtics 119-12 during the regular season.

"Hopefully we've learned from those two outings that weren't very good efforts," Auvinen said. "We didn't keep our mentality about us and hopefully we've learned from that."

While West Linn cruised to a state championship last season, the Lions lost back-to-back games to Tigard and Lake Oswego this season.

"They lost a load of seniors," Auvinen said. "But they're a quality team. They're well coached. They have good players. They're good offensively, defensively and special teams. They do things well."

One of those seniors was quarterback Tim Tawa, who after being named the state Gatorade player of the year in football three straight years signed a baseball scholarship

with Stanford University.

While this season's quarterback, junior Ethan Long, doesn't have near the accolades, Auvinen sees another good player on film.

"He's athletic. He throws the ball well, especially on timing routes," Auvinen said.

West Linn also graduated defensive back Elijah Molden, who signed with Washington, and offensive lineman Alex Forsyth, who signed with Oregon.

West Linn's biggest 2018 prospect is Keishon Dawkins, a 6-foot-6, 240 pound tight end who has committed to Oregon State.

"He's big and physical and uses his body real well," Auvinen said. "They also have a good little receiver (senior Qawi Ntsasa) and a couple nice running backs (seniors Tyler Good and Ahmir McGee)."

McNary last played a Three Rivers League opponent in the first round of the playoffs last season, losing at Tigard 58-28.

"Tigard was a much more physical team," Auvinen said. "They were bigger and stronger. This team is not that team. I think they (West Linn) throw the ball a little better. They have a different brand of defense. They're not as big but they do run hard and play hard. It's different than that (Tigard) team. It's a different challenge."

But McNary will have to play its best game of the season to pull off the upset.

"We've got to combine that game we've been looking for with all three aspects, special teams, offense, defense, all coming together," Auvinen said. "We're getting closer all the time, I think. If we combine all three of those and play really well, keep them off balance offensively and defensively, we'll be fine."

## Celtics fight on

By DEREK WILEY  
*Of the Keizertimes*

During every pre-game, halftime and post-game, McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen has challenged his team to respond to adversity and play the next play.

In the first round of the state playoffs, the message finally sunk in as the Celtics came from behind to defeat Grants Pass 22-20 on Friday, Nov. 3.

"We responded well tonight," Auvinen said.

McNary trailed 20-10 late in the third quarter when quarterback Erik Barker connected with Junior Walling on a wheel route for a 30-yard gain to get the Celtics inside the Cavemen 20-yard line. Barker then found Jakoby Duke for a 12-yard touchdown to cut the deficit to 20-16.

After both teams exchanged fumbles, Grants Pass, aided by a personal foul penalty, drove inside the McNary 15-yard line but the Celtics defense got a stop when the Cavemen decided on fourth-and-1 from the 14-yard line to go for the touchdown and throw an incomplete pass in the end zone.



McNary senior Noah Bach runs after the catch against Grants Pass in the first round of the state playoffs on Friday, Nov. 3.

McNary then drove 76 yards on 11 plays, including a 22-yard run by Walling on fourth-and-inches, to get to the Grants Pass 10-yard line. However, the Celtics weren't able to add any points to the scoreboard, turning the ball over on downs with 5:40 left to play.

Forcing just its second

three-and-out of the game, McNary's defense got the ball back to its offense and Barker needed only one play to throw the winning touchdown, finding senior Kyle McCallister for a 48-yard score with 3:21 remaining.

"I just extended that route because I knew there was nothing," McCallister said.

"Jonny (Williams) had a great block on the outside for me to get to the end zone. I've only had one other touchdown this year. That felt amazing."

Barker, who had to step up in the pocket waiting for someone to get open, said he didn't actually see McCallister catch it.

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## Montoya the hero in win over Whiteaker



Claggett Creek eighth grader Aron Montoya, #32, scored a 60-yard touchdown as time expired to beat rival Whiteaker on Wednesday, Nov. 1.

By DEREK WILEY  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Claggett Creek football got its storybook ending.

All tied with nine seconds remaining, running back Aron Montoya found a hole and out-ran the Whiteaker defense for a 60-yard touchdown as the Panthers won the battle of Keizer middle schools 44-38 on Wednesday, Nov. 1 under the lights at McNary High School.

"You can't really ask for a better ending for all the hard work," CCMS head coach Aaron Carr said.

Before the final play of the game, Carr asked Montoya if he could take it to the house and the eighth grader in his first season ever playing football replied "yes."

"I was running it and I saw an open hole so I cut in and I took it," Montoya said. "It was very exciting because everybody is going to know me for

that now and I'm just happy that we won against our other school in Keizer."

Trailing 38-22 with 33 seconds remaining in the third quarter, Whiteaker had to score two touchdowns and convert two 2-point conversions to even tie the game.

Axel Zapien, in his first game back after suffering an injury at the start of the season, broke free for a 59-yard touchdown run and then also ran in the 2-point attempt to get the Wolverines within 38-30.

After getting a stop on defense, Whiteaker then went on an 11-play, 58-yard drive, capped off by a Carson Long 1-yard touchdown run to make the score 38-36 with 18 seconds remaining in the game. Zapien then added another 2-point conversion to tie it.

"I told the boys I'm not going to remember the last

play because that kid (Montoya) deserved it and we got beat by a kid who was beating us all night," Whiteaker head coach Tom Larimer said.

"I'm going to remember coming back from two scores in the last few minutes of the game. I'm going to remember converting two 2-point conversions and I'm going to remember what it felt like to take a bunch of kids that have never played football before and have that feeling that they earned when they tied the score with 18 seconds to go."

When Whiteaker defensive lineman Laz Chavez then sacked CCMS quarterback Nathan Allen, the game appeared to be heading to overtime.

However, Montoya had other plans.

"He's got the ability to put it in the end zone from anywhere on the field," Carr said.

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