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Don't forget about McNary

Teams from all over the state will most likely look at McNary's first two games, both 55-27 losses, to North Medford and West Linn, and write off the Celtics as any kind of threat.

They shouldn't. What's lost when just looking at the scores, is first, how close McNary was at West Linn.

Playing against one of the top teams in the state, the Celtics trailed just 34-27 with 8:51 remaining after McNary's two Division-I recruits, quarterback Erik Barker and running back Junior Walling, connected in what was as an impressive a high school throw and catch as you'll see anywhere on a Friday night.

Barker and Walling both have the talent to take over a game and that makes McNary dangerous.

The Celtics should also be encouraged by how much progress they made from week one to two.

I would have never thought the team that got blown out at home to open the season against North Medford would have any chance of winning at West Linn. But McNary was within reach into the fourth quarter.

Sure, there's still plenty of work to do. The Celtics have to finish games and the defense has to improve. After allowing more than 570 yards, most of it on the ground, against North Medford, West Linn quarterback Ethan Long passed for more than 400 yards and six touchdowns.

But even in those gaudy numbers the Celtics did show signs of life against the Lions, intercepting Long twice in the second half. And few quarterbacks are as talented as Long, who has committed to Arizona State.

McNary will also miss Wyatt Sherwood, one of the team's top lineman who suffered a back injury and had to be carted off the field at West Linn, for however long he's out.

But after leaving McNary's first game concerned, I drove home from West Linn optimistic, and the Celtics should have to. I was impressed with how McNary bounced back from a bad loss to North Medford and after falling behind quickly at West Linn. And an insanely difficult schedule should help the Celtics down the stretch but are they ready to go to Tualatin and knock off another top team?

Here are my picks:

South Albany at McKay
The Royal Scots have struggled offensively in their first two games, scoring a total of just 14 points. While the RedHawks are coming off a blow out loss to Silverton, I need to see more from McKay before I pick them here.

Prediction: RedHawks 24, Royal Scots 21

Dallas at North Salem
The Vikings were close to getting their first win last week leading Corvallis 28-21 in the fourth quarter before ultimately falling 35-28. North Salem finishes the drill this week.

Prediction: Vikings 28, Dragons 24

Central Catholic at Sprague
The schedule doesn't get any easier for the Olympians, looking for their first win of the season. It won't come here against the best 0-2 team in the state.

Prediction: Rams 38, Olympians 28

McMinnville at South Salem
The Saxons host a familiar opponent in the Grizzlies, who remain in 6A but in a different league. McMinnville has opened the season 2-0 but by playing a much easier schedule. South Salem, coming off a bad loss at Sunset, exposes the Grizzlies.

Prediction: Saxons 27, Grizzlies 21

West Salem at Grant
The Titans continue to take out their anger and get the bad taste out of their month from the loss at Lake Oswego to open the season.

Prediction: Titans 48, Generals 24

McNary at Tualatin
While the Celtics have the potential to be a really good football team by the end of this season, here's what I know about Salem-Keizer teams versus Portland area squads: West Salem opened this season at Lake Oswego and lost 48-21, Sprague is 0-2 against Liberty and Lakeridge, and South Salem is coming off a 36-3 loss at Sunset. McNary's last four trips to Portland went as followed: 55-27 and 41-6 losses to West Linn, a 58-28 loss at Tigard and a 42-21 loss at Central Catholic.

Prediction: Timberwolves 50, Celtics 38

Derek Wiley is associate editor of the Keizer-times.
Last week: 3-3, Overall record: 7-5



By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

McNary already has the Celtic Pride Award for seniors who have competed in three sports every year of their high school career.

For Haley Hughes, it may have to create a whole new honor.

Last year, as a sophomore, Hughes participated in five sports at McNary—soccer and cross country in the fall, swimming in the winter and then lacrosse and track and field in the spring.

"I've just always been busy overall with sports so I've just kind of gotten used to it," said Hughes, who started with soccer when she was five years old. "I've been able to handle it and it's not too difficult for me."

Now a junior, Hughes decided to give football a try. With a father, Kyle, who coaches at the high school as well as for McNary Youth Football and three younger brothers who play the sport, it's a wonder it took her so long.

"I could have played when I was younger but I had soccer," Hughes said. "I could have played last year but I couldn't get into it. I started practicing kicking last year in the spring and I kept working on it and I got out for their summer camp for football and started practicing."

Kicking runs in the Hughes family. Kyle kicked and punted in college at Willamette University.

Haley started with extra points before moving further and further back and trying kicks at different angles. She's made a 40-yard field goal in practice.

Kicking a soccer ball and football isn't that much different.

"The way that you actually kick the ball is pretty much the same," Hughes said. "With football you have to get more height to the ball but overall it's the same."

Swinging between the JV and varsity football teams, Hughes has made two extra points, including one for the varsity team's home opener against North Medford on Aug. 31.

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KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
McNary junior Haley Hughes, with her father Kyle, is playing football and soccer for the Celtics this fall.

West Salem holds off McNary

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

SALEM—Just as it appeared McNary had grabbed the momentum, West Salem took it right back to defeat the Lady Celts 3-1 on Tuesday, Sept. 11.

After losing the first two games 15-25 and 22-25, McNary took the third 25-19 to stay alive.

Looking to send the match to a deciding fifth set, the Lady Celts led late in the fourth game before West Salem roared back to win 25-22.

"We're just like any other team. We need all of our pieces to be working in order to be successful and we were off to a slow start," McNary head coach Crystal DeMello said. "We were just playing catch up. They definitely put that fight in there and took that (third) game. But to keep that momentum it takes a lot of discipline."

Kimmie Bain led West Salem with 15 kills. Kyla Newton had 12 kills. Emma Ehlers finished with four aces and three blocks. Emily Cheavtharn had five aces.

The loss dropped McNary to 0-4 in the Mountain Valley Conference.

The Lady Celts were able to go 3-0 in pool play at the South Eugene Tournament on Saturday, Sept. 8. McNary then defeated Reynolds 2-0 in tournament play before falling to Willamette 2-0.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
ABOVE: McNary senior Kara Thomas hits the ball over the net Tuesday, Sept. 7 at West Salem. BELOW: McNary senior Hannah Corpe, left, and West Salem senior Kimmie Bain in action.

