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Whalen twins pace Celtics

The battle of the winless

A league championship won't be on the line when Sprague visits McNary tonight.

In 6A, where teams play only four conference games, league championships don't really exist anymore.

No, the Celtics and Olympians will compete for much more.

Pride.

Playing two of the toughest schedules in the state, McNary and Sprague are both 0-5. The Celtics have been outscored 251-80, the Olympians 200 to 103.

"We are trying to get better every week and I'm sure they are, too," McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen said. "I think it will be a battle. I think it will be a war with both teams pretty hungry. They do a great job over there as coaches and they'll be as hungry as we are."

Which team will get the monkey off their back? Whose nightmare will continue?

My picks:

McKay at Corvallis

The Royal Scots (0-5) are the other winless Salem-Keizer team and their prospects don't look good after falling at home to North Salem 52-31 last Friday. Looking at their final four games, Corvallis (2-3) may be their best shot. The Spartans are coming off a 20-point loss to Silverton and 45-point loss at Crescent Valley. But in between, Corvallis did knock off Dallas.

Prediction: Spartans 30, Royal Scots 20

West Albany at North Salem

The Vikings (1-4) are celebrating their first win of the season at McKay but now host undefeated West Albany (5-0), which unlike North Salem and McKay has thrived moving down to 5A. West Albany and North Salem have only one common opponent—Crescent Valley. The Bulldogs won 20-7. The Vikings lost 34-0. North Salem won last season's matchup 22-21. West Albany gets revenge.

Prediction: Bulldogs 34, Vikings 17

South Salem at West Salem

The Titans (2-3) open Mountain Valley Conference play after losing back-to-back games to Sheldon and Beaverton. The Saxons (2-3) couldn't carry over the momentum of defeating rival Sprague, falling to Bend 34-24 last week. While the two teams share the same record, West Salem has played the much tougher schedule. The Titans, projected to be one of the top teams in the state, have got off to a disappointing start, but should have enough fire power on offense to get past South Salem at home.

Prediction: Titans 50, Saxons 28

Sprague at McNary

A win here would obviously be huge for both teams, and a loss just as devastating. Opening the season with five straight losses to the likes of West Linn, Tualatin, Tigard and Central Catholic is one thing but to fall to another 0-5 team down the road in the same school district is another. Sprague (0-5) already has a bad loss, falling to South Salem 21-20 in a game it led 20-0 entering the fourth quarter. But the Olympians at least showed they are capable of beating a team, even if for just three quarters.

McNary (0-5) has hardly been competitive and its 55-27 loss to North Medford to open the season is looking even worse after the Black Tornado have lost three games in a row, including two to Mountain Valley Conference teams Bend and Mountain View.

While the Celtics schedule has been a bit tougher, McNary's defense has struggled to stop the run, giving up more than 500 yards to North Medford and Tumwater. And Sprague has the running back in Chris Sharp (694 yards and nine touchdowns this season) to take advantage.

A much more experienced Olympian squad came to Keizer and dominated McNary 62-6 last season. The Celtics haven't forgotten. While Sprague enters this matchup hungry for its first win, McNary is starving, for both the taste of victory and sweet revenge.

Prediction: Celtics 30, Olympians 27

Derek Wiley is the Associate Editor of the Keizertimes.

Last week: 2-3, Overall: 17-11



McNary sophomores Brennan and Ethan Whalen have both run under 18 minutes for the Celtic cross country team.

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Ethan and Brennan Whalen, twin brothers, spent the summer competing in regional and national track meets in Bend, Los Angeles and Reno, Nev.

That experience is now paying off in their sophomore high school cross country season.

Running for McNary, the Whalen brothers have shattered their best times as freshmen.

Ethan, who entered the season with a PR of 18:37, finished the Meriwether National Cross Country Classic in Hillsboro in 17:50 on Sept. 21.

"I just stayed in shape and got better," Ethan said. "I came back stronger than last year."

Finishing just eight seconds behind Ethan was Brennan, whose freshman PR was 18:59.

"That was my goal for the season, said Brennan of breaking 18 minutes. "I'm still working hard. I'm making a new one."

Both Brennan and Ethan, who started cross country as sixth graders at Whiteaker Please see WHALEN, Page B2

Lady Celts end dry spell

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

SALEM—After getting into the playoffs based on its power ranking the past two seasons, McNary wants to earn its spot this year with a top four finish in the conference.

The Lady Celts went a long way to getting there Tuesday, defeating South Salem 2-1.

"We knew that this was a pivotal conference matchup and there was a lot on the line," McNary head coach AJ Nash said.

The Lady Celts came to South Salem on a seven-game losing streak, scoring just one goal in September.

"We've been playing good ball," Nash said. "We've been in the games up until the final whistle on all of them. Even though it was a rough spell, morale was good."

McNary had also played its toughest schedule in years, which got the Lady Celts ready for league play.

"Coming into the night, this is as prepared as I've ever felt," Nash said. "Even though they were losses, we played the teams

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McNary's girls soccer team celebrates with Audrey Williams after the sophomore scored to give the Lady Celts a 2-0 lead in the first half at South Salem.

Auvinen sees fight in latest loss



McNary senior Nigel Harris returns a kickoff against South Medford on Friday, September 28.

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

After another disappointing first half of football, McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen saw something in his team that gave him "a glimmer of hope."

Trailing by three touchdowns, McNary senior Jacob Jackson intercepted South Medford quarterback Giovanni Bottero on the third play of the second half.

Erik Barker then connected with Griffin Oliveira to get the Celtics on the scoreboard and McNary's defense stood tall, stopping the Panthers on fourth-and-1.

But McNary's offense couldn't get anything else going and South Medford

added two more touchdowns, including a 60-yard punt return, to defeat the Celtics 35-7 on homecoming.

"I saw some fight tonight that I hadn't seen for a while, since that West Linn game," Auvinen said.

"The interception, going down and scoring and then the fourth down stop. That was exciting football right there. That's the kind of football we're used to. That was fun football, that little stretch. If we play that way all of the time, we just have to get after it and fly around, trust each other and play together, play hard, play tough. That was a glimmer of hope."

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