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Imagine a full league schedule

Close your eyes and imagine a world where McNary and West Salem, both 4-0 in league-play, are meeting this Friday for the Mountain Valley Conference championship.

Now open them and check back into reality.

After going 3-0 in Bend last Friday, McNary, West Salem and Sprague have to be wishing they had played a full league schedule this season.

Sure, those first five non-league games, many of them against the state's elite programs (Lake Oswego, Sheldon, West Linn and Central Catholic) prepared the Salem-Keizer teams for conference play and maybe they are all better for it.

But couldn't the same have been accomplished with three non-league games? West Salem could have still played Lake Oswego and Sheldon. McNary could have still gone to West Linn and Tualatin.

What was the point of the Celtics traveling 300 miles to Tumwater, Wash. to lose 56-13?

McNary, which instead would have played winnable games against Summit (1-6) and Mountain View (4-3), definitely didn't save any on travel costs by not taking an additional trip to Bend.

Next season the Celtics are scheduled to play two games in Medford.

Then there's the Mountain Valley Conference championship, which the winner of McNary and West Salem will probably claim, especially the Titans, who thanks to a non-league game against Bend play every team in the conference except Summit.

But without a full league schedule, is there really an outright champion?

Who will at least take a giant step to finishing atop the Mountain Valley Conference standings?

My picks:

McKay at Silverton

The Royal Scots followed up their first win of the season with a 35-7 loss to Dallas, who earned just its second victory of the season. Now, McKay gets Silverton, who opened the season 6-0 before falling to Crescent Valley last Friday. Despite the loss, the Foxes are still one of the best teams in 5A and should have no problem with McKay.

Pick: Foxes 40, Royal Scots 14

South Albany at North Salem

The Vikings have dropped two games in a row since earning their first win at McKay. But the Red Hawks come to North Salem on a four-game losing streak, getting outscored 177 to 20.

Pick: Vikings 34, Red Hawks 17

Summit at South Salem

The Saxons, nursing a three-game losing streak since coming from behind to defeat Sprague, host 1-6 Summit, who were just throttled at home by the previously winless Olympians. While who will finish atop the Mountain Valley Conference standings is still in doubt, the Storm appear destined to be at the bottom.

Pick: Saxons 40, Storm 14

Mountain View at Sprague

The Olympians didn't just squeak out their first win of the season. They dominated Summit, which makes me wonder how good any of the Bend schools are. Mountain View also defeated Summit, 35-12 or by 12 less points than Sprague did. While the Cougars are coming off an 18-point loss to West Salem, Mountain View battled the Titans into the third quarter. The Cougars defense just couldn't stop West Salem's passing attack, allowing 475 yards through the air. But Sprague doesn't have the same threat.

Pick: Cougars 35, Olympians 28

McNary at West Salem

Wow! What a difference two weeks makes. After starting the season 0-5, the Celtics are riding a two-game winning streak, defeating Sprague for the first time since 2014 and then winning 37-26 at Bend, which entered the game 5-1 and No. 10 in the OSAA power rankings.

Were the Lava Bears overrated or has McNary made unbelievable progress? Probably a little of both. At West Salem, the Celtics should find out just how good they are. The Titans, projected to be one of the top teams in the state in the preseason, have had disappointing showings against Lake Oswego and Sheldon, but with a strong finish could still sneak into the top 10 of the power rankings.

While McNary's defense has shown improvement over the past two weeks, West Salem's speed and big play threats, particularly Oregon State-bound receiver Anthony Gould, provides a tough challenge for the Celtics.

Pick: Titans 44, Celtics 30

Derek Wiley is the associate editor of the *Keizertimes*. Last week: 4-1, Overall: 24-13



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

Cousins Jose Luis Bravo, No. 2, Jovanie Bravo, No. 10, Miguel Bravo, No. 7, and Jesus Lopez, No. 20, played their final home game at McNary Tuesday with fellow seniors Kevin Hernandez, No. 9, and Francisco Rios, No. 11.

Kicking cousins lead McNary

By DEREK WILEY

Of the Keizertimes

Like most coaches, Miguel Camarena wants his McNary boys soccer team to feel like a family.

With Miguel Bravo, Jose Luis Bravo, Jovanie Bravo and Jesus Lopez, that's been easy.

The four boys, all seniors, are cousins.

"We spend a lot of quality time together," Miguel said. "Christmas is really big for us, Thanksgiving, New Years Eve. All our families get together. It's really hard to keep us away from each other. If one of us goes somewhere, that means all of us have to go to that place."

place."

One of those places is the soccer field, where at Capital Fútbol Club, then 4-H Chelsea and now McNary, the cousins have played together since elementary school.

All four have been on McNary's varsity team since they were sophomores, with Miguel even swinging between the varsity and junior varsity as a freshman.

"Besides being good soccer players, they're quality young men," Camarena said. "They're really good guys. And when you have qualities like that, it's always an asset to your program, kids that are always willing to work.

They are key players for a program to be where we're at right now."

They all started as defenders before Miguel moved to the midfield and Jovanie to forward by the time they were in high school.

"Our chemistry was good since we were cousins and we played together all of the time and knew how each other played," Jose Luis said.

But their playing days are coming to an end.

The Celtics lost to Bend 2-1 on Tuesday in their final regular season home game.

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How far they've come

Celtics fight back to win at #10 Bend

By DEREK WILEY

Of the Keizertimes

McNary (2-5) is not the same football team it was a month ago.

That was made clear last Friday night in Bend when after falling behind 12-0 the Celtics roared back to win 37-26.

"A month ago, they might have cashed in their chips," McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen said. "We've been working on trying to answer the bell and trying to respond when adversity happens and play that next play. I think they responded really well."

Senior Griffin Oliveira started the comeback, catching a touchdown pass from Erik Barker.

"It almost felt like it was going to be another one of those (blowout losses)," Oliveira said. "Everyone put their head down, but we came back and got a score. There was some talking on the sidelines and we decided that wasn't how we wanted our season to go. We stepped up and made some things happen."

Thanks to a Nigel Harris interception and touchdown on the final play of the first half, the Celtics took a 21-19 lead into halftime but they didn't feel good about it.

"We were not very happy with how we played in that first half, giving up three scores on defense, really being able to do whatever we want on offense but not having all 11 guys on the same page," Auvinen said.

"When we had our halftime talk, that's when we really stepped it up and took it to a whole other level that we hadn't taken it to yet," Oliveira said. "We were up two but there was a lot of room to make way more plays and we finally started making those."

Junior Walling, who finished with 133 total yards and three touchdowns, rushed for two touchdowns in the third quarter to extend the Celtics lead to 34-19.

Please see BEND, Page B2



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

Brian Schindler, left, and Devyn Schurr celebrate during a McNary football game earlier this season. The Celtics have won two games in a row after defeating Bend last Friday.

ATHLETE of the Week

presented by



JUNIOR WALLING McNary High School

McNary running back Junior Walling gained 133 total yards and scored three touchdowns as the Celtics won 37-26 at Bend on Friday, Oct. 12. At linebacker, Walling had 11 tackles, eight solo and three assists, and two sacks, as the Celtics held Bend to 96 yards rushing.