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McNary wing Griffin Oliveira holds his follow through after knocking down a 3-pointer on the baseline in the Celtics 74-61 victory over Mountainside on Tuesday.

McNary wins home opener to remain unbeaten

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the Keizertimes

Boston Smith led the Celtics with 25 points on 9-of-15 shooting as the McNary boys basketball squad moved to 4-0 on the season with their 74-61 victory over Mountainside on Tuesday night in their first home game.

"We're still getting used to playing with one another a little bit, but I thought that we made some important plays at important moments," McNary head coach Ryan Kirch said.

Nate Meithof was also in double-figures with 15 points — 11 of which came in the first quarter. Griffin Oliveira had 13 points and knocked down a pair of shots beyond the arc while Alfredo Villareal added 12 points.

Both squads played at a

break-neck pace to begin the game as it seemed like the ball barely touched the floor in the opening quarter.

Meithof was incredibly aggressive early on, which worked to the Celtics advantage. The sophomore guard scored nine points on 4-of-5 shooting in the first three minutes of the game, including an impressive three-point play where he split a double-team on his way to a nice finish off the glass.

"I was just playing my game," Meithof said. "We had really good ball movement and I was able to dribble-drive and get to the hoop."

Despite Meithof's scoring flurry, Mountainside still held a 15-10 advantage midway through the first quarter. But a pair of buckets by Villareal and a layup from Smith

helped McNary go on top 21-19 at the end of the period.

After Mountainside came back to take the lead momentarily, McNary responded by going on an 11-2 run and forced Mountainside head coach Dustin Hewitt to burn a timeout with his team trailing 32-26.

McNary was much more intentional about slowing the ball down in the second quarter with the goal of getting Smith more involved in the offense on the low block. The plan was executed effectively as the senior center finished with eight points in the quarter.

"We were a bit nervous with it being our home opener. But we shook it off and did a better job of getting into out offense and ex-

cuting," Smith said. "I was able to adapt how they were double-teaming me and got down low."

McNary was able to extend the lead to nine before the break at 45-36 thanks to a transition layup by Oliveira.

After a first half full of explosive offense, McNary went stone cold to begin the third quarter. Smith finished one at the rim in the Celtics first possession of the period, but a five-minute scoring drought allowed Mountainside to cut the lead to 47-42 with less than three minutes remaining in the quarter.

But a midrange jumper from Oliveira and a three-point play from Smith got the Celtics advantage back up to double-figures. The Celtics eventually took a 57-44 lead to the final period after Smith

hit a nifty floater right before the buzzer sounded.

"I thought Boston did a good job of not allowing the double-team to frustrate him," Kirch said. "He's been posting up really smart. When the ball moves, he holds his position and it allows us to get him the ball inside."

"(Smith) has been a really good leader for us and this was by far his best overall game."

A big key that allowed McNary to pull away in the second half was their intensity on the defensive end. The Celtics allowed just two points over a seven-minute stretch and did a much better job of closing out to shooters and not allowing second-chance opportunities.

"I just thought our concentration was a little bit bet-

ter defensively in the second half," Kirch said. "That was certainly the difference in us extending the lead."

McNary led by as many as 20 after a baseline 3-pointer from Riley Flores made it 70-50 late in the fourth quarter. Mountainside rallied back to make the score a little more respectable, but Smith put an exclamation point on the game in the final moments with a monster two-handed jam that sent the student section into a frenzy.

"It felt good to play at home. This was a good confidence booster for our team," Boston said.

McNary will compete in the Newberg Boys Basketball Tournament this weekend, with their first game coming Friday at 6 p.m. against David Douglas.



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

Nate Meithof gives the ball up during a fast break.



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

Alfredo Villareal tries to go between two defenders on his way to the hoop.



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

David Boston looks to score in the paint after receiving the ball in the post.