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Walling's four TD's lead McNary to rout

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the Keizertimes

In desperate need of a victory after an 0-5 start, McNary's Junior Walling put together an all-around dominant performance to lead the Celtics to victory in their Mountain Valley Conference opener.

The senior running back rushed for 101 yards and three touchdowns on just eight carries, and added a receiving score as well, leading the Celtics to their first win, a 51-18 rout of Sprague on Thursday, Oct. 10.

Walling also led the Celtics on defense with 11 tackles.

"This was huge. We knew we needed this one and I couldn't be more happy for this team. Our O-line

was a huge factor. They balled out and had an amazing day," Walling said. "Those first few games made us tougher. We had to form an identity and learn who we were as a team. But that's what has happened and we're ready to go now."

Things were not going in McNary's favor to begin the contest. After the Celtics went three-and-out on their first possession, Sprague converted

a 3rd-and-19 bubble screen to Carson Vankempen, who scored from 22 yards out to give the Olympians the early advantage.

But thanks to a 48-yard kick return from Alex Tavera to the Olympians 37-yard line, the Celtics were able to take advantage moments later.

Facing a 3rd-and-12, McNary quarterback Erik Barker eluded the rush to find Walling in the flat on a broken play. Walling broke a tackle and then cruised to end zone for a 29-yard score, putting McNary on top 7-6.

The Celtics offense got great field position once again on their opening possession of the second quarter thanks to a partially blocked punt by the McNary special

teams.

On the second play of the drive, running back Nico Sandoval took a shovel pass 14 yards down to the goal line. Barker punctuated the drive with an easy score from a yard out on a quarterback draw. "We have been waiting for a performance like this all season. And our hard work has finally paid off. This is the best feeling in the world right



McNary running back Junior Walling scampers down the sideline for his first of four touchdowns in the Celtics 51-18 win over Sprague on Friday, Oct. 11.

KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

now," Barker said.

McNary got the chance to have their third straight possession start in Sprague territory when the Celtics recovered a fumble on the Olympians 42-yard line. And for the third straight drive, the Celtics capitalized as Walling scored from 20 yards out to put his team up 21-6.

"It was good to see the

execution and it was good to see the offense clicking and the defense playing hard and keeping things under control," McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen said.

Sprague responded to start the third quarter with a 20-yard touchdown pass from Elias Polanski to Zach Dodson-Greene, but the Olympians couldn't convert the two-

point try, which still made it a two-score game at 21-12.

But on the ensuing McNary drive, Sandoval found the end zone from 36 yards out, dragging multiple defenders with across the goal line, which gave the McNary sideline a huge boost of energy.

After Sprague went three-and-out, Walling put the game

on ice on his following touch.

Facing 3rd-and-seven at midfield, Walling took the handoff and looked like he was stacked up at the line of scrimmage. But his 6-foot-2, 230-pound frame was too much for Sprague to bring down as Walling broke through the pile and strolled

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Celts dominate McKay for first conference win



LEFT: McNary Isabella Walker fires a shot that finds the back of the net. Walker scored two of the Celtics eight goals on the afternoon. RIGHT: Ashlyn Lyda prepares to throw the ball into play.

KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

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The McNary girls soccer team only scored one goal in their first three Mountain Valley Conference games. But on Thursday, Oct. 10, the Celtics erupted for their best offensive performance of the season.

Sydney Alfano and Isabella Walker scored two goals apiece and Haley Hughes added a goal and an assist as McNary demolished McKay for their first league win of the season, defeating the Royal Scots 8-0.

While he was happy with the win, one of the biggest

takeaways for McNary head coach A.J. Nash was that he got to give some of the team's more inexperienced players some significant playing time.

"Any win is good, but I was glad that we were able to play some girls who don't see the field that much and get them some good experience at the varsity level," Nash said. "Those girls have worked really hard and have earned it. And there were times that the goal-scoring came from those players."

The second unit missed out on some opportunities in the first 25 minutes of the first half, but Hughes, a senior for-

ward, finally broke the seal in the 26th minute with a nifty goal that just snuck below the crossbar.

"Haley scoring that goal near the end of the first half took a lot of the pressure off. She stepped up and showed a lot of leadership," Nash said.

The score remained 1-0 at halftime, but the Celtics went on an goal-scoring onslaught to start the second half, scoring six times in a 22-minute stretch.

McNary's first goal of the half came three minutes in when Hughes set up Walker with a high cross-field pass over the goalie's head. Walk-

er easily put away the point-blank goal with a header.

"Haley really put me in good position for that goal. I was just there at the right time," Walker said.

Less than 90 seconds later, Walker put away her second goal after stealing the ball away on a McKay goal kick and hitting a rocket into the back of the net from 30 yards out.

Emma Stephen got in on the action in the 55th minute. The junior defender hit Ashlyn Lyda with a pass off a corner kick. Lyda, got the ball back to Stephen, who took advantage of the space she

was given and put a shot into the top corner of the post to make the score 4-0.

Alfano would wind up scoring a back-to-back goals moments later to extend McNary's lead to 6-0.

Samantha Alfano and Regann Donahue each added goals down the stretch to round out the scoring for McNary.

The Celtics were also stellar defensively in this one, getting their second shutout of the season, allowing just three shots on-goal.

"We made sure we had good spacing and we were playing to feet really well,

which helped us keep possession of the ball," Hughes said.

With three games remaining, McNary still is in a position to finish in fourth place in the MVC, which would give them a berth in the playoffs, but the Celtics will likely have to win out to keep their postseason dreams alive.

"We are now in a jockey for fourth place. Every game we have is winnable, but we have to show up for the next three games. If we remain focused, it's definitely within our grasp," Nash said.

McNary's next game will be at home against Sprague on Friday, Oct. 18 at 4 p.m.