

TITLE,

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Despite having a lot of success with their vertical passing game in their first two drives, the South Salem defense struggled to get anything going against the Celtics defense for the remainder of the contest.

After the Saxons could barely get past the line of scrimmage on their next two drives, the Celtics increased their lead to three scores midway through the third quarter when Barker found the goal line from four yards out.

“Our defense kept getting tougher and tougher throughout the game. We got a few three-and-outs and I think that was huge for us,” Walling said.

Even though the South

Salem offense drove into Celtic territory in each of their next two possessions, the McNary defense forced turnovers both times, including an interception from Celtics linebacker Quinn Bach that was returned to the Saxons 24-yard line — which eventually set up Walling’s fourth touchdown of the game.

“It’s unbelievable. It’s the same exact story as last season. This team has fought so hard throughout the season. It’s an honor to play with these guys,” Young said.

Auvinen added: “We have really grown as a group as the weeks have gone on. It’s been very good to see us improve on both offense and defense. The kids have stayed with it, the coaches have stayed with it and the community has stayed with it. It’s been a testament to the city of Keizer.”



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings
McNary cornerback Ethan Martin raises his hands in jubilation.

Celts set to take on Sherwood

By MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

After ending the regular season with a four-game win streak and a conference title, the McNary football squad will travel to Sherwood to take on the Bowmen for their first round playoff game on Friday, Nov. 8 at 7 p.m.

Sherwood ended their season as the #12 team in the state, winning the Pacific Conference with a 7-2 record.

McNary’s last playoff victory came against Grants Pass in 2017. Coincidentally, that was also the last time the Celtics have beaten a team that wasn’t in the Mountain Valley Conference.

Even though McNary comes into the game as an underdog, head coach Jeff Auvinen believes that his crew can give the Bowmen a run for their money.

“I’m hoping to see these guys take another step. If we play well and play with that mentality of believing in ourselves, I think it can happen for us. (Sherwood) is a solid team and we’re a solid team. It should be a good ballgame,” Auvinen said.

Sherwood and McNary have played two common opponents this season in Sprague and West Linn. Sherwood defeated Sprague 42-14 and lost to West Linn 52-27. McNary fell to West Linn 49-14, but beat Sprague 51-18.

Sherwood’s offensive attack looks a little bit different than most teams around the state. While the Bowmen average just 57 yards per game through the air, they rush for an incredible 338 yards per game with their daunting

wing-T system.

The Celtics, however, come into the game more prepared than most teams, as they faced a similar offense on Oct. 18 when they played Bend — McNary won the game 28-20.

“It’s almost a carbon-copy of what Bend runs, (Sherwood) has just been doing it for a lot longer, so they are probably a little more precise,” Auvinen said. “They do a really nice job of carrying out their fakes and hiding the ball. I think playing Bend helped us out in our preparation. We will try and force them to throw the ball if at all possible.”

What makes Sherwood even more dangerous on the offensive side is that they have several different ball-carriers that can do damage. The Bowmen have 12 different players that have run for touchdowns this season.

Sherwood’s two backs that do most of the heavy lifting are Clay Peden and Brody Stevens. Peden leads the team in rushing with 635

yards and has scored eight times on the year. Stevenson has rushed for 583 yards and seven touchdowns while averaging more than 12 yards per carry.

Lucas Voss also plays a big role in the offense, leading the team in rushing touchdowns (11).

While their offense averaged more than 40 points per game this season, Sherwood’s defense proved they could be just as stout at times. The Bowmen held seven of their nine opponents to 14 points or less during the regular season.

Bryan Cuthbertson is the

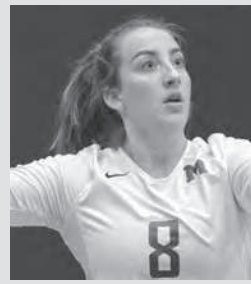
unquestioned leader of the Sherwood defense, leading the team with 135 tackles from his middle linebacker position.

The Celtics struggled with more physical defenses earlier in the season, but have maintained better balance in their attack the last four games.

“We just want to keep doing what we have been doing on offense. It will be nice to try and control the ball when we have it, so we can try and rest our defense a little bit, because we want to play as physically as we possibly can on that end,” Auvinen said.

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ATHLETE of the Week



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ZOIE WARNER Senior at McNary High School

#8, Outside Hitter

Warner was the only McNary volleyball player to receive first-team all-league status for her outstanding play this season.

In her final year with the Celtics, Warner led the team with 201 kills, while having the second-highest hitting efficiency on the squad. Warner also added 183 digs on the season and helped guide McNary to the state playoffs.

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