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McNary eighth-graders complete perfect season



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

McNary's Cameron Ferrando (33) breaks away from a Lake Oswego tackler after making an interception. The Celtics forced six turnovers in their 28-6 win.

By MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

It's one thing to finish the season undefeated, but it's a whole other thing to do it in dominating fashion.

But that's exactly what the McNary Youth Football varsity eighth-grade team did to Lake Oswego on the afternoon of Saturday, Nov. 9 at Tigard High School.

The Celtics controlled the game from start to finish, beating Lake Oswego 28-6 to clinch the AFC bracket of the Tualatin Valley Football League with a 10-0 record.

"I couldn't be more proud of all these kids. They earned it. Each player worked their butt off and they just put the pieces together all season long," Celtics head coach Dan Burrus said.

The McNary offense was a little bit sloppy to come out the gate as they committed multiple penalties that stalled their first two drives and couldn't take advantage of a pair of early turnovers by Lake Oswego. But the Celtics were able to tighten things up as the second quarter began.

The Celtics defense got a huge fourth down stop in Lake Oswego territory when defensive lineman Nick Henry came away with

a sack to give McNary the ball back.

Facing a third-and-10, Celtics quarterback Jesse Dyer hit Gage Smedema perfectly in stride down the sideline for the touchdown to get McNary on the board.

McNary forced the Lakers third fumble of the game on the following possession, which was recovered by Cougar Bailey and taken down to the Lake Oswego 12-yard line.

Four plays later, McNary running back Pierce Walker punched it in from a yard out to give his team the 14-0 lead.

"We try to take pride in focus and attitude. We just told the boys to calm down and get their heads back in the game," Burrus said.

Lake Oswego responded with a 72-yard touchdown run on the following play from scrimmage to get within one score. But McNary wasn't fazed in the slightest.

An 18-yard scramble by Dyer had 15 yards tacked on to it after a late hit from a Lake Oswego defender, which took the ball down to the Lakers 22-yard line.

Once they got the ball

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Celtics ousted by Sherwood in first round

By MATT RAWLINGS
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After rattling off four straight victories on their way to a Mountain Valley Conference title, the McNary football squad came back to Earth against Sherwood on Friday, Nov. 8.

The Bowmen scored 21 points in the third quarter and easily took down McNary in the first round of the OSAA Playoffs, defeating the Celtics 49-7.

The 42-point defeat was McNary's worst loss of the season.

"That second half was a little bit hard to take. They got after us and we didn't respond on either side of the ball very well," McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen said.

While the Celtics showed signs of competitiveness early, they struggled to capitalize on opportunistic situations in the first half.

On the opening drive, McNary quarterback Erik Barker looked to be getting into a rhythm after a pair of first down completions to Layton Thurlow and Junior Walling.

The Celtics got the ball past midfield thanks to a personal foul on Sherwood. But while trying to keep the ensuing play alive, Barker was stripped of the football and the Bowmen took over on their own 45-yard line.

From there, it only took Sherwood four plays to get into the end zone. A 15-yard score from Jamison Guerra put the Bowmen on top 7-0 midway through the first

quarter.

Guerra ran for another touchdown later in the period to increase the Sherwood lead to two scores.

McNary was on the verge of responding on their following possession, thanks to two long completions to Noah Lelack, getting the Celtics in the red zone.

But on fourth-and-one from inside the five-yard line, the Sherwood defense came up with a huge stop, stuffing Walling right at the line-of-scrimmage.

The Celtics offense got another chance inside the red zone just moments later when Sherwood fumbled the ball inside the 20. But once again, McNary couldn't take advantage.

"That second half was a little bit hard to take. They got after us and we didn't respond on either side of the ball very well."

— Jeff Auvinen,
McNary head coach

encouraged with how the McNary defense played in the second quarter.

"I thought kids were making plays and owning their gaps in that second quarter," he said.

McNary held the Bowmen to a three-and-out midway through the quarter. But later in the period, Guerra struck for his third touchdown of the game, finding the end zone from 39 yards out to put Sherwood on top 21-0 with 49 seconds left in the half.

The Celtics, however, were able to show their quick strike capability right before halftime.

McNary took over on

their own 38-yard line after a solid kick return from Ethan Martin. On the first play of the drive, Barker threw a perfect pass to Walling on a wheel rout for a 41-yard gain. The two connected for another first down on the following play.

Barker then hit Alex Tavera on a quick out for a 11-yard first down to put the ball at the seven. The senior signal-caller finished off the impressive series by finding

Walling on a screen pass for the touchdown with less than 10 seconds remaining in the second quarter.

But any preconceived momentum that McNary had going into the locker room was dissipated in the second half.

The Celtics had no answer to Sherwood's daunting wing-T attack as the Bowmen scored on all three of their possessions in the third quarter. McNary's offense, on

the other hand, had a difficult time moving the sticks.

Sherwood finished the game with 416 rushing yards on 52 carries.

"We thought we were getting a handle on things after stubbing our toe a couple times in the first half. But the second half, it was not pretty. (Sherwood) could pretty much just do whatever they wanted to. It looked like we were not handling blocks very well," Auvinen said.

Similar to last season, it's safe to say that the 2019 football season was a roller coaster for the Celtics.

But for the second straight year, despite having a 4-6 record, McNary was crowned the MVC champs, which allowed them to walk off the field with pride on Friday night.

"Whether they were seniors, juniors or sophomores, we had a lot of kids rise up this season," Auvinen said.



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

McNary quarterback Erik Barker steps up in the pocket to get away from pressure. Barker threw for 230 yards in the Celtics 49-7 loss to Sherwood on Friday, Nov. 8.