

BBALL,

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with a technical foul, capping off an 11-0 run from West Salem.

"I was frustrated because I was calling a timeout and they told me not to be on the floor and then we gave up a lay-in because of that. The official apologized later," Kirch said. "I probably should have stopped sooner, but I kind of wanted to fire my team up a little bit."

The Titans went into the break with a 33-24 lead. But after holding Meithof to 11 points in the first half, the McNary star went nuclear in the third quarter.

West Salem went on an 11-3 run to start the quarter to go up 44-27. But Meithof was able to respond by nail-

ing five shots from beyond the arc — a couple of which came from beyond NBA range.

"Once we were down, I knew I needed to turn things up because my team needed me," Meithof said.

Meithof's 15 points in the third period brought his team withing six at 50-44 as the game entered the fourth quarter.

"He's a willing passer when he needs to be. But he also understands that there are times where he needs to make plays. It's an underrated trait for a great player to have. He's making his teammates better. It's fun to watch," Kirch said. "For a guy that scores that much, he's unselfish in how he does it. His teammates know his ability. Points are awesome, but he continues to grow in all the other areas as well."



Junior Nunez backs down a West Salem defender.

KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

While the third quarter belonged to Meithof, Rodriguez's time to shine came in the fourth period.

Rodriguez began the final quarter with a nifty jump-hook in the lane. On the following possession, he completed a three-point play after scoring in transition. Rodriguez scored his seventh straight point by getting position on the post and putting one in over his defender, which cut the lead to three with 4:56 left.

"Being able to come off the bench and having coaches trust in me to score from the inside and outside really has helped my confidence," Rodriguez said. "And being able to be looked at as a second scorer behind Nate has honestly been an honor."

West Salem, however continued to hold onto their lead in the waning parts of the game. Jackson Lowery scored off an offensive rebound to put the Titans 61-58 with 1:16 remaining.

The Titans got the ball back after a defensive stop,

but Gonzalez, who re-entered the game in the second half, came away with a crucial steal to get McNary the ball back with less than a minute left.

On the ensuing possession, Meithof drained a clutch step-back trey to tie the game at 61 with 35 seconds on the clock.

"We played with confidence and just chipped our

way back in," Kirch said. "When Nate hit a three to tie it and they called timeout, we knew we were going to win."

West Salem responded by re-taking the lead when the Titans star guard Justin Scoggin got all the way to the bucket for a layup. But McNary answered back when Rodriguez hit the shot of the season on the Celtics

next possession.

Meithof received the ball in the front court. But when he faced a triple team, he threw a desperation pass to Riley Flores on the baseline.

While nearly falling out-of-bounds, Flores kicked the ball out to the perimeter to Rodriguez.

Even though the ball was initially tipped, Rodriguez still managed to corral the rock and with no hesitation, fired a 3-pointer from the top of the key that went off the glass and into the hoop.

"Kyler just got it and knocked it down. He really stepped up this game," Meithof said.

With eight seconds left in the game, Scoggin tried a heavily contested and deep triple for the win. When the ball fell short, the McNary student section stormed the court to celebrate the comeback victory.

"It was a great win for our guys," Kirch said.

McNary will host Bend on Saturday, Jan. 25 at 2:30 p.m.

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