

Celtics get hard-fought win against West Salem

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

In their first game in front of a limited number of fans, the McNary boys soccer team put on a show in the second half.

After falling behind 1-0 to West Salem in the first half, the Celtics rallied to score three unanswered goals in the final 40 minutes to earn the 3-2 victory over the defending league champions on Monday, March 15.

"We stayed ready at all times and were more composed in the second half," McNary forward Eli Petilo said.

The Celtics had multiple opportunities early in the game, getting three shots-on goal in the first seven minutes of the contest. But they were turned away each time.

"Honestly, I think we dominated the whole entire game. But I think these kids got a little nervous in the first half with seeing their parents in the stands for the first time. It's the first time they have played at home with people there," McNary head coach Miguel Camarena said.

McNary goalkeeper Emerson Carella came up with a couple of saves in the early stages, but the Titans were able to sneak one by him thanks to a

fortunate bounce in the 19th minute.

West Salem's Yahir Bernal got free with a nifty spin move and fired a shot towards the net. Carella dove to his left, but the ball ricocheted off the left post right to Kaden Young, who easily scored with Orduna out of position.

Carella, however, would save three more shots before the end of the half to keep the Titans from extending their lead.

Trailing by a goal going into the second half, Camarena decided to change things up from a strategy standpoint. Instead of going with their usual 2-3-2 formation, Camarena elected to push an extra player forward to help the Celtics attack.

The move paid off almost immediately.

"We had to change some things. We pushed one more center-mid so we could play with more numbers. I think that made the difference in the game," Camarena said. "We kept the ball on the ground and started connecting. The energy was there."

In the opening minute of the second half, Oscar Chavez got a through ball to Alexis Soto up the right sideline. Soto beat his defender, brought the keeper out of the box and then nailed



Jose Martinez rises up to get his head on the ball in McNary's 3-2 win over West Salem.

Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

his shot into the left corner of the goal to tie the game up.

"Oscar gave me a great pass on the through ball and all I had to do was just hit it in," Soto said.

Along with pushing numbers forward, McNary was able to neutralize the West Salem attack, giving the Titans minimal scoring chances for the

majority of the second half.

"The way we play the best defense is to have the ball with us. We had more possessions in the second half. We were able to contain them and be more aggressive," Camarena said.

McNary's aggressiveness forced a hand-ball by West Salem in the

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McNary dominates McKay to start season 2-0



McNary running back Zane Aicher runs through defenders on his way to a first down in McNary's 42-7 win over McKay.

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After McNary's season-opening victory against West Albany, Celtics quarterback Jack McCarty put it on himself to help the team clean some things up on the offensive end.

It was clear that the senior signal-caller made good on his promise.

McCarty threw for 248 yards and four

touchdowns as McNary put a beatdown on McKay on Friday, March 12, defeating the Royal Scots 42-7.

"Last week we were sloppy at times, but we fixed it during practice and came in with a ton of confidence," McCarty said. "We were getting guys more chances and taking more one-on-one opportunities, because I honestly believe we have some of the best receivers in the state. I don't

think there are many DB's in the state that can cover our guys one-on-one."

Two receivers that had big nights for the Celtics were junior wideout Tyler Copeland and his younger brother Braiden, who is a sophomore — both had over 70 yards receiving and two touchdowns. While the two brothers are always rooting for each other, both admitted that there is some sibling rivalry that goes on.

"We definitely have a lot of competition out there between us because we both want the ball," Tyler said.

"When I am seeing (Tyler) catch all these amazing passes, I'm like 'aw man I need to do that too,'" Braiden added. "I just got to try and keep up with him."

McNary may have won the game in blowout fashion, but the Celtics had a rough time getting things going early on. After starting with the ball near mid-field to begin the game, the Celtics faced third-and-long in their own territory due to a pair of holding penalties. McCarty tried to pick up the first down with a lengthy pass downfield but was intercepted by Kyrin Fuimaono, who returned the ball to the Celtics 26-yard line.

The Royal Scots were on the verge of scoring after a pair of first downs got them inside the McNary five-yard line. But the Celts defense made a play that completely changed the trajectory of the game just moments later.

On second-and-goal from the McNary two-yard line, McKay quarterback Ui Ale sprinted to his right to try and fight a receiver while being chased by Celtics linebacker Dyami Rios. Rios hit Ale as he tried to throw blindly across his body into the middle of the field.

The throw landed directly in the arms of McNary senior linebacker Griffin Hubbard, who had nothing but open field in front of him.

"I had backside contain on the play, so

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