

there for a long time," Rios said.

"I don't know if we let our foot off the gas a little in the second half, but they made some good adjustments," McCarty added.

After a South Salem interception on a tipped pass, South Salem receiver Gabe Johnson lined up in the wildcat and scampered 14 yards for the score to give the Saxons their first lead at 36-30.

McNary, however, showed that they still had some fight left after giving up 30 straight points.

McCarty began the drive with a 25-yard completion to Aron Montoya, then followed with a 29-yard pass to Martin after extending the play. A 34-yard screen to Braiden Copeland put the Celtics inside the 10-yard line.

"We struggled leveling off the ups and downs of momentum. But towards the end we started picking it up. Guys were making plays," McCarty said.

After three incompletions, the Celtics faced fourth-and-goal at the seven-yard line. But on fourth down, McCarty delivered one of the most clutch plays of his career, escaping pressure, rolling to his left and throwing a strike to Montoya for the score to tie the game up midway through the final period.

Montoya, who came into the game with just 42 yards receiving, was much more involved in the offense than in previous games, catching four balls for 64 yards and a score.

"It just kind of happened. (Montoya) just stepped up. We never really go to specific guys, whoever is open is getting the ball. He happened to be open a lot," McCarty said.

However, with a chance to take the lead back, Ready missed the extra point after the Montoya touchdown, a McNary error that proved to be costly down the stretch.

Both teams failed to score before the end of regulation, forcing the game into overtime.

McNary got the first possession in OT and went to work quickly as a completion to Martin and a first down run from Braiden Copeland put the ball inside the three-yard line. Copeland later scored on a one-yard run, allowing McNary to re-take the lead.

The Celtics forced South Salem into a fourth down situation in the Saxons overtime possession. Gertenrich threw the ball across the middle that fell incomplete and the Celtics started celebrating on the field, believing that they won the game. But a late flag was thrown, calling pass interference on McNary, which negated the incompleteness and gave South Salem a first down.

"I didn't agree with a lot of the calls the refs made, but that's neither here nor there," Rios said. "We were the better team and we should have beat them, we just didn't execute in the second half."

Auvinen added: "We had way too many penalties and breakdowns. We did certain things well at times, but nothing was consistent."

Gertenrich scored on a four-yard quarterback draw to cut the lead to one moment later, and with the kicking issues they experienced all night, the Saxons elected to go for two and the win.

Johnson once again lined up in the wildcat on the two-point play, found a crease and snuck across the goal line, propelling the Saxons to the one-point victory.

"I love winning and I hate losing, but right now all I am really thinking about is the guys I have been playing football with since we were kids," McCarty said.

After the game had concluded, the Celtics held their senior night ceremony, honoring the nine seniors who had given the last four years to the program.

"My four years have been completely amazing. I have grown a lot as a player and a person. I love the coaching staff here," Rios said.

While he is going to miss his seniors, Auvinen hopes that this loss will serve as fuel for the team when they begin preparing for the fall season.

"These guys are great kids, just a pleasure to be around. They work their butts off. They are good to each other and good to their coaches. Hopefully this will make us hungry for the fall because I think these kids will want to get the sour taste out of their mouth," Auvinen said.

Questions or concerns? Contact the reporter via email: news@keizertimes.com



McNary quarterback Jack McCarty fires a pass to the flat. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes



WE TAKE PRIDE


in being staffed better than any other senior living community

Quality senior living for those who have reached the age of sixty-two.



ASSISTED LIVING AND MEMORY CARE

Come See the Finest in Senior Living!
CALL (503) 390-1300

 1165 McGee Ct NE, Keizer, OR • www.VillageAtKeizerRidge.com