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Celtics sprint past South Medford



McNary wideout Gunner Smedema had 107 receiving yards and two touchdowns in the Celtics 35-13 victory Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

In their opening game of the 2021 season, McNary controlled the contest from start to finish.

McNary quarterback Tyler Copeland went 14-of-18 for 211 yards and three touchdowns in his first start under center, and Dakota Dunagan ran for 125 yards and two scores on 14 carries as the Celtics blew past South Medford, winning by a final score of 35-13 on Friday, Sept. 3.

According to McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen, the key to the Celtics success was dictating the game in the trenches. McNary maintained a balanced offensive attack with 211 passing yards and 239 rushing yards, while the defense stopped the run for most of the night and forced South Medford to become one-dimensional.

“We really controlled the line-of-scrimmage. When you do that, you

have a good chance of being really successful. It was nice for us to be as physical as we were,” Auvinen said.

“I got to shout out the O-line. They really showed up. I have never been more impressed with them,” Copeland added. “They gave me a chance to read the field and do what I had to do.”

Despite being his first varsity start at quarterback, it didn't take long for Copeland to get comfortable.

On McNary's first play from scrimmage, Copeland hit Gunner Smedema with a hitch pass and the senior wideout weaved through the South Medford defense to go 75 yards for the score, giving the Celtics the early 7-0 lead.

“Once I caught it I saw Logan Ready got a great block to seal the outside, and then all I saw was one defender coming. I gave a hard stick to the left, and I was free,” said Smedema, who finished the night with four catches for 107 yards and two touchdowns, as well

as an interception on defense.

Copeland connected with Smedema once again for a 13-yard score early in the second quarter to extend McNary's lead to 14-0.


Copeland continued to find his rhythm throughout the first half, taking advantage of South Medford's Cover 3 zone defense by hitting his receivers

with quick passes, and letting them operate in space — Copeland completed eight of his first 10 passes for 132 yards, with only one of his completions traveling more than five yards downfield.

“I had to knock the rust off. It's been a couple years since I played QB, so


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