

# Copeland leads Celts to victory over Bend

## Football



McNary quarterback Tyler Copeland shakes free from the Bend pass rush. (Photo courtesy of Tammy Ready)

**BY MATT RAWLINGS**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

The McNary offense made a big statement in their Mountain Valley Conference (MVC) opener, led by their senior quarterback Tyler Copeland.

Copeland was 17-of-25 for a career-high of 318 yards and three touchdowns through the air, plus one on the ground, as the Celtics moved to 4-0 with a 41-21 win at Bend on Friday, Sept. 24.

It's the first time McNary has started the season with four straight wins since 2005 — which was Tom Smythe's second to last year at the helm of the Celtics football program.

"The offense was very dominant. It was great to see. We threw the ball really well, and a lot of it was Tyler shaking

off defenders, reversing field, and our receivers continuing to work to get open for big gains," McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen said. "Not all the throws were there right away, so Tyler had to keep his eyes downfield and do some things that aren't easy to do."

Senior running back Zane Aicher also had a monster game for McNary, rushing for 100 yards and two touchdowns on 16 carries. Additionally, Aicher caught four balls for 148 yards and a score.

McNary had an abundance of explosive plays in this one, starting with the first snap from scrimmage as Copeland connected with Aicher for a 71-yard gain down to the Bend seven-yard line. Two plays later, Copleand found his brother, Braiden for a touchdown to put the

Celtics on top 7-0 — Braiden Copeland finished the game with seven catches for 114 yards and two touchdowns.

Bend responded on their opening possession with a touchdown to trim the deficit to 7-6, but Tyler Copeland capped off a 75-yard drive with a five-yard touchdown run late in the first quarter to extend the Celtics lead to 14-6.

After giving up a touchdown on the first drive, McNary stifled Bend's Wing-T attack for the remainder of the half. A rushing and receiving score by Aicher in the second quarter gave McNary 20 unanswered points and a 27-6 advantage at halftime.

"For Zane to play as many snaps as he did in a physical game and do what he did in receiving and rushing was huge

for us," Auvinen said.

After Bend got within two scores with a touchdown to open the third quarter, Braiden Copeland caught his second touchdown of the game later in the period to get McNary's lead back to 20 points at 34-14.

In the fourth quarter, Aicher ran for a 28-yard score to put the game on ice.

McNary hosts Sprague at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 1. McNary lost to Sprague 28-0 during the COVID-shortened spring season, and are coming into this game with something to prove according to Auvinen.

"They took us to the woodshed. That was by far our worst game of the year," Auvinen said. "I think we have some payback for them."

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