

McNary picks up key victory to remain in hunt for playoff spot



McNary forward Johann Singh Sanchez attempts to dribble around a defender in the Celtics 4-1 win over Bend. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

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With their playoff chances on the line, the McNary boys' soccer squad picked up a much-needed victory against Bend, defeating the Lava Bears 4-1 on Friday, Oct. 15.

Axel Zapien led the Celtics with a pair of goals in the first half.

"We knew we had to win this one. We finished well, which we have lacked at times," McNary head coach Miguel Camarena said. "We are happy to see that result."

The McNary forwards played with a sense of urgency from the opening kick, and it showed nearly right away. In the fourth minute, Zapien sprinted back past the entire back line on a through ball from Max Baez, and the senior forward placed a shot inside the

corner of the post for the score, giving McNary the 1-0 advantage.

"We were really aggressive today," Zapien said.

Zapien came through with his second score in the 26th minute to put the Celtics up 2-0. After a throw-in, McNary forward Hudson Brunk volleyed a ball over to Zapien, who controlled it off the bounce and fired a shot with his right foot into the net for the goal.

"The way our wings penetrated today was the difference," Camarena said.

Bend had a pair of opportunities to score early, but both shot attempts were stopped by senior goalkeeper Tayson Whetten.

McNary has had some goalkeeping issues throughout the season, but Camarena says that Whetten has

shown continuous improvement over the last several games and is playing the best he has played all year.

"Every game he's been getting more confidence. He is gaining his teammates' trust and improving his technique. I think that was his best game so far," Camarena said.

In the 38th minute, Bend got another great look when Lava Bears forward Jack Selman had a free run at the net after winning a ball in the midfield. Whetten played the situation assertively, coming out of the box and sliding towards the ball as Selman was taking the shot. Whetten made contact