

Celtics back in playoffs for first time since 2017



McNary forward Yasheth Arciniega Rivera controls possession of the ball in the second half of the Celtics' 2-1 win over Mountain View. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes



BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Before the season began, the main goal of the McNary girls' soccer team was to qualify for the postseason, a feat they hadn't accomplished in four years.

On Wednesday, Oct. 20, the Celtics made that goal a reality in their final home game of the year.

With the score tied 1-1 in the 62nd minute, junior forward Sydnee Alfano scored the go-ahead goal off the pass from Maya Alston to give the Celtics the 2-1 victory against Mountain View.

It is the fifth time in 22 seasons that McNary has qualified for the postseason.

"We were under a lot of pressure and we knew what we needed to do. We knew we had to win," Alfano said.

After winning six consecutive games to conclude their non-league slate, McNary began Mountain Valley Conference (MVC) play with five straight losses. However, the victory over Mountain View lifted McNary's record over .500 (7-6), greatly boosting their chances to nab a wild card playoff spot.

"We needed to remind ourselves of who we are and prove that we belong in

the playoffs," McNary head coach Lauren Brouse said. "It was a huge win. It's huge for the players and the program in general."

After McNary couldn't convert on their first six shots-on-goal in the opening 20 minutes, Mountain View was able to take advantage of a defensive lapse by the Celtics when forward Alicia Welker moved the ball past the back line to get an uncontested shot by McNary goalkeeper Hannah Ferguson, putting the Cougars up 1-0.

The Celtics had a number of other chances at a goal in the final 20 minutes of the half, but a number of outstanding saves from Mountain View keeper Rylee Todd kept the deficit at 1-0.

"Their keeper made some amazing saves. We weren't placing the ball well enough, but (Todd) had a great night," Brouse said.

However, in the opening minute of the second half, McNary capitalized on a golden opportunity.

After a McNary throw-in deep in Mountain View territory, Celtics forward Yasheth Arciniega Rivera was fouled in the box trying to corral the pass, leading to a penalty kick.

McNary captain Isabelle Gatchet was selected to take the penalty kick, and in the final home game of her career, the senior defender buried a ball in the back of the net past Todd to tie the game at 1-1.

“It was a huge win. It's huge for the players and the program in general.”

— **LAUREN BROUSE**
McNary head coach

Following the tying goal, the Celtics began to play with more confidence.

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