

Celtics blank Cougars on senior night

BY KEIZERTIMES STAFF

Whether it was on offense, defense or special teams, the McNary football squad dominated from start to finish, defeating Mountain View 35-0 in their home finale on Saturday, Oct. 23.

After making some costly mistakes in their loss to West Salem the previous week, McNary head coach Jeff Auvinen was impressed with how his team remained disciplined throughout the game.

"I thought we were great in all three aspects. We cleaned it up really nicely," Auvinen said.

With the victory, the Celtics secured their first winning season since 2017, improving to 3-2 in Mountain Valley Conference (MVC) play and 6-2 overall.

Despite playing on an injured ankle, McNary quarterback Tyler Copeland had another brilliant game for the Celtics, going 12-for-17 for 247 yards and three touchdowns. The senior signal-caller has thrown for over 200 yards and three or more touchdowns in five of the seven games he has played, and improved his touchdown-to-interception ratio to 19-1.

The McNary offense got things going late in the first quarter after Jesse Dyer broke off a 40-yard run into Mountain View territory. Moments later, senior running back Dakota Dunagan scored from 22 yards out to give the Celtics the 7-0 advantage.

After missing some time this season, Dunagan had a night to remember in his final home game as a Celtic, rushing for 128 yards and a score on 19 carries.

McNary didn't take long to get the ball back as Zane Aicher picked off a Mountain View pass early in the second quarter and returned it into Cougars territory. After the big play on defense, Aicher capped off the short McNary drive by punching in a four-yard touchdown, extending McNary's lead to 14-0.

Mountain View was on the verge of answering back, driving the ball



McNary running back Dakota Dunagan ran the ball 19 times for 128 yards and a touchdown in the Celtics 35-0 win over Mountain View on senior night. Photo by JOEY CAPPELLETTI of Keizertimes

inside the five-yard line. But the Cougars coughed up the ball on third-and-goal, giving it right back to the Celtics. McNary then went 98 yards on their ensuing possession, thanks to a 24-yard touchdown catch by Aicher, putting the Celtics up 21-0 at the half.

"It's a good way to end it," Aicher said about his final game at Flesher Field. "I'm really happy with how we played."

With their second-leading receiver, Gunner Smedema, missing the game due to injury and their top pass-catcher,

Braiden Copeland, getting banged up earlier in the game, senior wide-outs Aron Montoya and Logan Ready stepped up for the Celtics in the second half.

After Mountain View committed their third turnover of the game on another interception by Aicher, the Celtics took advantage when Tyler Copeland found Montoya for an 81-yard touchdown to make the score 28-0 in favor of McNary late in the third quarter.

Ready soon followed with a

touchdown catch of his own from 25 yards out early in the fourth quarter to make it 35-0.

McNary heads over the mountain to face seventh-ranked Summit in their final regular season game at 7 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 29. If they are able to come away with a victory, the Celtics would likely finish ranked in the top 16 and would be in position to host their first round playoff game.

"Summit is a good football team so it will be interesting to see what happens," Auvinen said.

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