

“We didn’t have our two fastest players healthy enough to take big shots, but we had other guys step up,” Tyler Copeland said.

“We converted some big third and fourth down plays today. We had a nice mix of running and throwing. We have had some explosive plays, but some of our explosive guys are a little slower at the moment,” Auvinen added. “I thought the game plan was really solid and I thought the kids executed really well.”

After getting the ball inside the 20-yard line, McNary offensive coordinator Connor Astley called Smedema's number, giving him the ball on a fly sweep. Smedema, who was playing in his first game since an injury on Oct. 15, ran to daylight without difficulty, weaving through multiple defenders on his way to a 17-yard touchdown run.

“It feels great to be back. I hated being out. Today was the first day of actually running on it. It felt pretty great,” Smedema said. “I was going to play because I knew it could be my last game.”

The fly sweep isn't a normal staple of the McNary offense, but according to Auvinen, multiple coaches saw the play as a way to exploit the Black Tornado defense.

“I think the coaches just saw how (North Medford) was reacting to it and saw that we had some openings,” he said.

Receiving the ball to open the third quarter, the Celtics pulled some trickery out of their hat as Dyer received the kick and lateralled the ball to Aicher, who sprinted up the sideline all the way to the North Medford 31-yard line.

After a 14-yard pass from Tyler Copeland to Smedema, sophomore running back Jake Allen scored from three yards out to increase McNary's advantage to 20-0.

Despite having an incredibly successful season as the Mountain Valley Conference Player of the Year, Copeland has played half the season with a high ankle sprain and has had a difficult time with his mobility for the last month. But in the third quarter, the senior signal-caller was able to give the crowd a glimpse into his old self,

# Feel-Good STORY

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Zane Aicher stiff-arms a defender on his way to a first down run.

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showing his athleticism to escape from the pocket on third-and-14, elude multiple defenders and connect with Dyer for a first down across the middle.

“I’m still not at 100 percent but I felt like I was able to move a little bit more,” Copeland said.

The Celtics extended their lead to 23-0 later in the quarter after a 35-yard field goal from Ready.

Midway through the third quarter, after having trouble moving the ball for the whole game, North Medford took advantage of a Celtics miscue to make it a two-score game.

On third-and-20 from their own 17-yard line, Warren escaped pressure on a broken play and threw the ball downfield into double coverage. Dyer, who was playing safety, looked to have a

chance to come away with the interception, but he mistimed his jump, tipping the ball into the hands of Black Tornado receiver Bryce Dyer, who scampered down the sideline for an 83-yard score, cutting the deficit to 23-7.

However, it didn't take McNary long to respond. The Celtics went 70 yards

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