

# Celts fall to Liberty despite big offensive night



McNary guard Avery Buss is fouled on her way up for a shot. Buss scored 11 points in the Celtics' 66-64 loss to Liberty on Friday, Dec. 17. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

## KEIZERTIMES SPORTS

BY MATT RAWLINGS  
Of the Keizertimes

Despite one of their best offensive performances in recent memory, the McNary girls' basketball team fell short in the final quarter against Liberty.

The Celtics entered the final period

with a nine-point lead, but were out-scored 23-12 in the final eight minutes, falling to Liberty by a score of 66-64 on Friday, Dec. 17.

It was the most points the Celtics had scored in a game since the 2019-20 season.

"Our offense is what kept us in the game. We had good possessions and were moving the ball well, especially in the first half. But I told them at halftime that defense is going to win this game," McNary head coach Elizabeth Doran said. "We needed to hold them to one shot per possession and secure the rebound, and that is what we

didn't do in the second half."

Ava Rubio and Kylie Nepstad each scored 19 points for the Celtics, while Avery Buss also was in double-figures with 11.

"I felt like it was our defensive execution that wasn't going for us. We should have been able to get hands up on more shots," Rubio said.

Liberty threw a multitude of different defensive looks at McNary in the first quarter, but it didn't faze the Celtics in the slightest.

A pair of triples by Nepstad and

Buss gave McNary the 8-4 advantage early in the first quarter. After a fast-break bucket from Buss, Rubio got in on the action with a deep 3-pointer, which was followed by another triple by Nepstad to extend the Celtics lead to 18-11.

"Our intensity was great in the first half," Rubio said.

Buss got loose for a transition layup to end the high-temp first quarter to put McNary up 24-15.

McNary's half-court attack sputtered in the second quarter, going more than



Kylie Nepstad knocked down a pair of shots from beyond the arc.

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— ELIZABETH DORAN

McNary head coach