

Gonzalez got the Celtics off to a quick start, knocking down a pair of floaters in the early stages of the opening period. Moments later, Gonzalez and Tyler Copeland knocked down back-to-back triples to put the Celtics up 10-2, prompting Lakeridge head coach David Duong to burn a timeout.

The Pacers went on a 10-2 run of their own following the timeout, but the Celtics responded with a four-point possession to give themselves the lead back late in the quarter.

McNary shooting guard Brody Roth knocked down a mid-range jumper while getting fouled to allow the Celtics to regain the lead. Despite missing the free throw, McNary regained possession on an offensive rebound, which eventually led to Gonzalez getting to the rim and finishing after a nifty crossover.

Lakeridge threw a number of different defensive looks at McNary in the first half, but with the combination of dribble penetration and backdoor cuts, the Celtics had no trouble getting easy looks.

"We knew Lakeridge plays hard on defense and that they like to take chances and have good ball pressure. If we weren't strong with the basketball and cutting hard, we were going to have issues. That was our focus. They did a good job against the pressure," Keeker said.

A baseline 3-pointer from Roth, followed by an easy layup, put the Celtics up 23-17. Lakeridge came back to cut the lead to one on multiple occasions in the second quarter, but McNary always had an answer.

After the Pacers scored five straight points, Balos got loose for a pair of transition buckets on consecutive possessions to make the score 27-22 in favor

of the Celtics. Lakeridge got within a point once again with less than two minutes remaining in the period, but a long triple from the top of the key by Gonzalez got the McNary advantage back up to four.

With his team 34-30 at the break, Gonzalez's hot shooting continued into the second half. After hitting a pair of triples early in the third quarter, Gonzalez knocked down his fifth 3-pointer of the game late in the period, extending McNary's advantage to 46-34.

Gonzalez credited his performance to getting some extra shots up early in the day and receiving some much-needed rest during the holidays.

"I got a lot of shots up in the morning and my body was feeling rested over Christmas break," Gonzalez said.

Despite making only one field goal in the final quarter, McNary was able to milk the clock for much of the period with a multitude of long possessions without turning the ball over.

"We still wanted to be aggressive, if we got a good look we were going to take it. They took what the defense was giving them during those longer possessions. They did a good job of securing the basketball and looking for opportunities when they could," Keeker said.

McNary's prolonged offensive possessions wound up benefiting them on the defensive side as well, taking Lakeridge out of the rhythm they established in the first 16 minutes.

After giving up 30 points in the first half, the McNary defense locked down the Pacers offensive attack for the remainder of the contest, limiting them to just six points in the second half

— Lakeridge was only able to attempt 11 shots in the second half.

"We did an okay job defensively in the first half, but I thought they got into the paint too much. We talked at half-time about not letting them get into the paint, because everything starts to break down from there. In the second half, I thought we did a better job of containing them and discouraging shots," Keeker said. "They didn't make a lot of shots in the second half, and part of that was because we were close enough to discourage the shot, instead of letting them get wide open."

McNary wraps up their non-league slate on Friday, Jan. 7 when they travel to Eugene to take on Sheldon at 7 p.m.



McNary wing Jabol Balos looks to dribble out of a double-team.

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