

Defense prevails in McNary's victory over Bend



McNary's Brookelynn Jackson positions herself to grab a rebound. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

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It was sloppy at times, but the McNary girls' basketball team was able to pull off the upset.

The Celtics defense held Bend to a season low in points en route to their first Mountain Valley Conference (MVC) win, upsetting the Lava Bears 37-26.

"We are starting to hit our stride. We are playing together really well and it was really nice to get the win," McNary head coach Elizabeth Doran said.

Ava Rubio led McNary with a game-high of 12 points while Avery Buss added 11 points.

"It feels really good to get that first league win," Buss said.

McNary hasn't been accustomed to getting off to fast starts this season, but that was not the case against Bend.

The Lava Bears scored the first basket of the game, but Rubio came back down the court on the following possession to tie the game up with a nifty floater.

Buss gave the Celtics their first lead with a 3-pointer from the corner, which was soon followed by a triple from Rubio.

After a steal and easy layup gave the Celtics a 10-2 advantage with less than three minutes remaining in the opening quarter, Bend head coach Allison Gardner called timeout in hopes of stopping McNary's momentum.

"That was a new experience for us this year. That was one of the first times we have had a semi-substantial lead early on," Doran said.

Bend trimmed the deficit to 12-9 at the end of the first quarter. Despite going stagnant on the offensive end after their 10-0 run, the Celtics got back into a rhythm midway through the second quarter.

A layup from Buss ended McNary's five minute drought without a field goal. Moments later, Rubio converted an easy basket after coming away with a steal to push the Celtics lead to 17-9.

With less than a minute left in the half, Buss nailed her second trey of the evening to extend the Celtics advantage to 23-13.

While the McNary offense struggled to start the third period, their defense continued to apply the pressure on Bend.

McNary's full court trap wreaked havoc on the Lava Bears for the majority of the game, and their 2-3 zone prevented Bend from getting good looks in the paint.

"We just wanted to get into our zone as much as we could. That was what was stopping their offense," Buss said.

"We work on getting in passing lanes a lot at practice, and we were able to do that tonight," Rubio added.

Bend turned the ball over 17 times on the night and shot less than 26% from the

field.

"We extended our defense out in our press, which allowed us to create steals and turnovers. We got into passing lanes really well," Doran said.

After both teams traded baskets late in the third quarter, a 3-pointer by Brookelynn Jackson put the Celtics up 30-17 at the end of the period. Bend was never able to get the game back to single-digits.

"I think this game will build our confidence moving forward," Doran said.



Avery Buss blows past a defender to score two of her 11 points for the Celtics.

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