This past week, we played McNary High School, a solid team that could beat just about anybody if taken lightly. We knew that we could not overlook them on Friday night. As a team, we try to take every week, one game at a time and we were going to do that against McNary.

The entire week of practice leading up to Friday night was a competition to decide who was going to be the starting quarterback. Out of our three quarterbacks, only one of them had yet to start a varsity game. Our third string quarterback, who has had only minimum snaps as a varsity quarterback, was chosen to start the game. All week, he continued to show he was the most prepared for this game, which is why our coaches decided to start sophomore Marcus Mildenberger. They knew he was ready to play.

 In the first quarter, Marcus rushed for two touchdowns and immediately showed poise in the pocket. When the rush came from the inside gaps, he relaxed and rolled outside of the pocket completing a pass for a first down. He was playing like he had been a starting quarterback all year. We maintained control of the game the entire time. Even though our offense had three turnovers, our defense stepped up and held their offense to only 14 total points.

Once again, I was back on the sidelines due to my injured calf. This week included two physical therapy sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I did just about everything I could to try and make my calf loose enough to play, but once again it was not quite ready. This game was especially tough to watch because two full weeks have gone by since I was able to run, which is all that I have wanted to do. The scary thing about missing a game during playoffs is I never know if this will be my last game or not. There would be nothing worse than being on the sidelines and not be able to take part in my last high school game. The thing I miss the most about being able to play is hearing the crowd scream after a big play is made. After scoring a touchdown, making a big hit or getting an interception - the plays where everyone goes crazy.

As I have been working out this season, the thing that drives me to keep going is my fear and the drive to overcome that fear. It is the fear of my last play. It is the fear of watching the clock as it winds down to zero and knowing I cannot do anything to stop it. I am afraid that when the clock goes down to zero, I will be begging it to slow down because I need just one more play. I need that one extra snap, that one extra carry. I remember when I was playing for South Medford and there were only 20 seconds left in the fourth quarter in a game against Lakeridge. Lakeridge had the game in the bag and was about to take a knee to end the game. I looked over at my older brother who was at linebacker. I looked at him and with tears in my eyes I said, “Well Bo, this is our last play ever playing football together… I love ya.” and gave him a big hug. As I watched the clock wind down to zero, it seemed to be going in super slow motion. I needed it to stop, I needed just a few more plays that I could share with my older brother. All I was thinking about were all the games that Bo and I played together; from playing in the backyard, to Pop Warner and then on to high school football. Of all the years, and all the plays that we have had together, this would be the last time I would be next to him and hear the words, “Hike!” It was a sad moment but also a moment in my life that I will never forget. Being able to play with my older brother was a very special time in my life, and the memories will never be forgotten.

 Now, my high school career is coming to a close with only a maximum of four more games and only one of them is guaranteed. At the beginning of the season, I was afraid that when my high school football career is over, all I would have is regrets, but I am now confident that will not be the case. This season I have been practicing as hard as I possibly can, and I will continue to practice this hard at Oregon. I want to know that at the end of my football career. that I always gave 100% effort, 100% of the time. Just like in the movie “Touchback” I want to enjoy every moment of football I have because every single football player in the history of the world has had to hang up their cleats at some point… Well, maybe except for Charles Woodson who will probably be in the NFL forever!

I am enjoying this season with this great group of Central Catholic guys. Also, when I go to Oregon, I will enjoy every minute of it because it is a special dream that I always had as a kid. The dream has not ended for this season either, it has only begun. I cannot wait to see what might happen in the next few weeks. Go Rams, Go Ducks and God Bless.