

A healthy Jack Swing bodes well for Kennedy



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MT. ANGEL -- The spark of what Jack Swing can do when healthy should give reason for pause.

The 6-foot-2, 195-pound tight end/linebacker missed most of the 2015 season for Kennedy's football team, but when he came back for the OSAA Class 2A state semifinals, his presence was felt.

Swing broke his collarbone early in his junior season, but recovered in time for the semifinals.

He caught two passes for 40 yards and a touchdown and recorded 4.5 tackles in a 34-20 win against Stanfield then had nine tackles, second most on the team, in a 48-0 loss to Heppner in the championship game.

"Not being able to play was a very humbling, but I was still there with the guys and it was a great experience," Swing said. "It was very hard personally, but seeing the team do so well was a huge plus."

Swing was an All-State tight end as a sophomore, but will transition into a fullback/tight end role this season.

"We're really looking forward to having him back for a full season," Kennedy coach Joe Panuke said.

Swing is part of a large group of experienced, strong seniors for the Trojans, including quarterback/defensive back Brett Traeger and running back/defensive back Bishop Mitchell.

Mitchell was first-team all-state on both sides of the ball as a junior and Traeger was a first-team all-state defensive back.

"We know we've got some good players coming back and the expectations are high," Panuke said. "The kids think they'll have another good year."

The veterans with playoff experience have the potential to lead Kennedy on another deep run.

"I'm hoping to help lead our team because we lost some good seniors last year," Swing said. "Last year was good, but now we have to focus on this year and taking every day one step at a time."

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Jack Swing missed most of the 2015 season with a broken collarbone but returned for Kennedy's state semifinal game.

Team capsules

Tri-River Conference

Kennedy

Coach: Joe Panuke, third year.

Last year's record: 10-2 overall, 3-1 Tri-River, lost in state championship game.

Key athletes:

Bishop Mitchell, sr., RB/CB: A first-team all-league player on both sides of the ball as a junior who amassed 1,800 yards and 25 touchdowns.

Brett Traeger, sr., QB/DB: Passed for 901 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior and was a first-team all-league defensive player.

Jeremy Kliever, sr., OL/DL: A first-team all-league player and the leader on the line for the Trojans.

Outlook: Kennedy has a prolific group of skill position players back led by Mitchell and are experienced on the defensive side of the football.

The Trojans' biggest holes are on the line where Kliever and David Wright are returning starters, but the team has the talent to challenge for the state championship.

Regis

Coach: Kyle McGrath, third year.

Last year's record: 8-4 overall, 3-1 Tri-River, lost in state semifinals.

Key athletes:

Bryce Piete, sr., QB/DB: An athletic, experienced first-team all-league player who will set the tone for the Rams on offense.

Eric Gustin, sr., TE/LB: A first-team all-league

player on both sides of the ball as a junior and an experienced multi-sport athlete.

Brandon Piete, jr., RB/LB: A second-team all-league player on both sides of the football as a sophomore and a dynamic player.

Outlook: The Rams have an experienced, athletic group and has the potential to compete for the league championship.

Santiam

Coach: Dustin McGee, second year.

Last year's record: 4-5 overall, 1-3 Tri-River.

Key athletes:

Jackson Klagge, sr., OL/DL: He was a second-team all-league player on both sides of the ball as a junior.

Jordan Lanham, jr., RB/CB: A strong straight-ahead runner and second-team all-league defensive player.

Sean Horning, jr., WR/S: An honorable mention all-league defensive back and one of the team's top skill players.

Outlook: The team returns nine starters on both sides of the ball from a group that made a big step forward in placing 4-5 last season. But in a loaded league the team still has work to do to battle for a state playoff spot.

St. Paul

Coach: Tony Smith, ninth year.

Last year's record: 3-5 overall, 0-4 Tri-River.

Key athletes:

Adal Izquierdo, sr., RB/DB: A standout on defense last year and second-team all-league player who will play an increased role on offense this year.

Holden Smith, jr., QB/DB: A second-team all-league selection at punter as a sophomore.

Jacob Forsythe, sr., OL/DL: The most experienced player up front and a second-team all-league defensive player last season.

Outlook: The Buckaroos have a large group of seniors and the experience at the skill positions to challenge for a state playoff spot this season.

Also in the Tri-River

Central Linn: The Lions (9-2 overall, 3-1 in TRC in 2015) have won at least a share of the league championship the past two years and with players like Chandler Jeppsen, Ben Hughes and Braden Nightingale will contend for the league title a third straight year.

1A Special District 3

Falls City

Coach: Laric Cook, third year.

Last year's record: 3-6 overall, 3-1 Special District 3, lost in league playoff.

Key athletes:

Jeremy Labrado, jr., QB/S: The returning starter on offense and a dual-threat quarterback.

Dylan Young, sr., WR/S: An athletic player and returning starter on both sides of the ball.

Outlook: The Mountaineers made progress last year, but still were short of making the state playoffs.

Also in 1A Special District 3

Yoncalla (10-1 overall in 2015) has the big

guns to compete for the league championship again this year, but North Douglas (7-3) has young players who will put the team toward the top of the league.

1A Special District 4

Perrydale

Coach: Duane Riddell, first year.

Last year's record: 10-1 overall, 6-0 Special District 4, lost in state semifinals.

Key athletes:

Haylen Janesofsky, sr., RB/CB: A starter as a freshman who missed his sophomore season, he was a welcome addition in the second half of the Pirates' deep state playoff run.

Alex Hawes, sr., OL/DL: A first-team all-league lineman as a junior.

Daniel Domes, sr., QB/DB: The team's returning starting quarterback and a second-team all-league player under center.

Outlook: The Pirates have an interesting combination of talented skill positions and a new, but long experienced head coach. Perrydale has the talent to contend with Dufur at the top of the league.

Also in 1A Special District 4

Senior quarterback Bailey Keever makes **Dufur** (11-2 in 2015) the favorite to repeat as 1A state champion. He amassed 2,000 yards and 52 touchdowns as a junior and is the most dynamic player in the state. Sherman returns a strong class of upperclassmen including junior quarterback Jacob Justesen and running back Maverick Winslow and will compete for a playoff spot.