



# Inexperience plagues Pioneer fall sports program

One last weekend of leisure remains before Sandy High athletes will have their vacations come to a premature end. Practice begins Aug. 25 for most fall sports.

Making predictions prior to the first game of the year can be a hazardous occupation and this year is no exception. Many of the Sandy teams will be depending on newcomers to fill in and those new people could mean the difference between a playoff spot and a short season.

### FOOTBALL

The Pioneers will be coached by Greg O'Meara, who will make his varsity debut. Only seven players return from last year's team and those people have little experience. The two most proven players appear to be quarterback John Allen and tailback John Martin.

Inexperience seems to be the major hurdle that the Sandy gridders will have to conquer. Allen or Mitch Paola should prove capable at quarterback and the Pioneers' running backs should also be adequate. A key to the offense will be how quickly O'Meara and coach Jim Saxton can get the inexperienced, but potentially strong line to jell.

Seniors Allen Fry, Tony Childress and juniors Dale Rasmussen, Tim Sytsma and Dave Paugh should be vital cogs in that line.

Sandy will run the veer option this year, the same offense as last season. The

Pioneers finished with a 4-5 record last season, and lost most of those people to graduation. Oregon City and West Linn finished one-two in the Timber Valley League, and O'Meara said it may happen again.

### VOLLEYBALL

Sandy will be hard-pressed to duplicate its success of last year. The Pioneers swept through the league undefeated and finished second in the state.

But gone are valuable seniors Michele Cleland and Christie Elliott and those two may be difficult to replace. Cleland was all-state and one of the most powerful spikers in Oregon.

Coach Ron Grantz returns Cherie Elliott, last year's most consistent all-around player, and setter Coleen MacDonald. Both were all-league and second team all-state. They alone should be enough to make the Pioneers competitive in the league. The spiking of juniors Julie Coleman and Dawn New may be a key to just how competitive Sandy will be.

The Pioneers will have a tough preseason slate. Sandy opens against perennial state power St. Mary's Academy, then goes to Barlow for a tournament which includes five of the state's top six finishers last year.

The Pioneers will get their feet wet early and Grantz should learn right off the bat just what Sandy will need to do to make it three league titles in a row.

### SOCCER

It would be hard to imagine a more difficult season than the one experienced by the Sandy soccer team last year. With a roster of mostly freshmen and sophomores, the Pioneers struggled all season and finished with an 0-14 record.

Unfortunately, the three seniors who did graduate were three of the Pioneers' best players. But coach Lon Welsh's team has matured over the summer and intimidation shouldn't be a factor that it was last year.

Sandy has potentially excellent goalie in Earl Pierson, a sophomore who

did an adequate job last year in his rookie season. What the Pioneers lacked last season was an offensive threat, to take the pressure off the Sandy defense.

### GYMNASTICS

Gymnastics should produce the best team in recent years at Sandy.

Coach Teresa Hjerresen has back a young sophomore named Kathie George and that should be enough to throw a few scares into opponents. George placed third in the district as a freshman in the all-around competition and should move on to tougher routines this year.

Joining the soph is a junior, Janice Hawkins. Hawkins is also capable of scoring high point totals and is a strong all-around performer as well.

A number of Pioneer gymnasts will also return from last year's young team. Sophomore Mary Russell should be tough in the floor exercise, Paris Martin is in the floor and beam, Dorie Dodson and Kecia Harris have experience on the uneven parallel bars.

Sandy's first meet will be a month later, Sept. 25 at Centennial.

### CROSS COUNTRY

Don't bet any money

against the Sandy High girls cross country team this year. If coach John White gets all his lettermen to turn out, a district title should be within reach.

The Pioneer girls won the title last year and all of their point winners should be back. Junior Gayle Roth was second in the district last year and sophomore Renee Hess, sophomore Donna Nelson was in the top five. Also on the Pioneer squad is senior Renne Hess, sophomore Shelby Dries and another sophomore loaded with potential, Laura Stringham. Stringham went to state in the 1,500 meters as

a freshman and just missed qualifying for the finals.

With good training and the right attitude, the Pioneer girls could place high in the state meet, providing there are no injuries this year.

Sandy's boys placed a surprising third last year, but will have to replace the top two runners who graduated. Nevertheless, the Pioneers should be tough, with junior Steve Metelak having the potential to be one of the district's top runners. Sophomore Brian Buhler is also strong.

### WATER POLO

The Sandy boys lost a lot of

good people to graduation from the team that placed fifth in the state.

Coach Carl Neuenfeldt, the his first year, will have to find a goalie and two or three strong swimmers if the Pioneers hope to duplicate last year's finish. Glenn Izer and Matt Falgout should be two of the top returning players, Izer scored eight goals in a game last year and Falgout was one of the top defensemen. Gresham should be a tough challenger again this year.

The Pioneer girls will have an unknown quantity until the first day of practice.

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