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underclassmen to step up. Also, as I mentioned, McNary is adjusting to yet another coaching change. I do like the fact that Jeff Auvinen has brought in a talented staff to mold this team.

**KT:** Is there one with the most potential to overcome those challenges? A dark horse?

**MG:** Sprague and South Salem both look like teams that will remain conference title contenders, despite challenges at key positions. Forest Grove is a decided dark horse, and the confidence of the coach in his team is a big factor for me.

**CS:** I like Sprague to show the most promise this year and overcome their youth. I say this for two reasons: the track record of Jay Minyard and the valuable playing time so many sophomores received last year. The Olympians are deep and they are tested. With their offensive and defensive lines they will be hard to challenge.

With so many teams really dead even this year, I don't know you can call any of them a dark horse. I guess if I was pressed I would lean towards South Salem having a stronger year than most people think. It all starts up front and the Saxons could have the best offensive line in the league.

**KT:** Who are your favorites for the top of the GVC come November?

**MG:** Following a coaches poll on the matter, it looks like West Salem, South Salem, and Sprague are the top teams, with McNary and

Forest Grove vying for a playoff spot. There will be no pushovers in the bottom half of the standings, so all teams will need to be at the top of their games every week.

**CS:** Okay, this is where I really show I don't know what I am talking about! When it comes to 16-18 year olds, you just never know how things could shake out, but I am going to lean this way: 1. Sprague; 2. West Albany; 3. West Salem; 4. South Salem; 5. McNary; 6. North Salem; 7. Forest Grove; 8. McMinnville; 9. McKay.

**KT:** What individual talents will you be keeping the closest eye on?

**MG:** Running back Jason Terry of West Salem had a fantastic season in 2014, once he broke into the starting line up for the Titans last year, and Sprague runner Anthony Nunn is also a rusher to watch; additionally, West Albany's Jeff LaCoste could also be a top performer again in 2015. Quarterbacks Gabe Matthews (South Salem), Taylor Jensen (Forest Grove), Wyatt Smith (McMinnville) and Trent Van Cleave (McNary) could be very productive this season. There is always a new face or two that surprises everyone, me included—I will be curious to see who those folks will be.

**CS:** I have said it a couple of times already, I am excited to see what Gabe Matthews does this year. A true multi-threat quarterback, big back and exciting to watch. As for others, hopefully Jacob Kizer can heal up and get to 100 percent. What a weapon he could be for

the Titans at tight end. Speaking of injured players, if LaCroix Hill for McNary can stay healthy, he can be a difference maker for the Celtic defense. On the offensive side, I think Fiovanni Gonzalez for North Salem is probably the most exciting running back in the league, he is so quick, and Kyle Terry at West Salem is just a tough, physical running back.

**KT:** What else is on your mind that we

haven't talked about?

**CS:** Over the past several years Sprague and West Salem have certainly separated themselves among the GVC teams at the top of the heap. But because of youth all around, this may be the best year for someone else to step up and claim the prize. If that is the case, my money would be on West Albany or South Salem.

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Fri, Oct. 2 — West Salem at Sprague

Thu, Oct. 8 — Sprague at South Salem

Fri, Oct. 16 — West Salem at McNary

Fri, Oct. 23 — West Albany at West Salem

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