

# Auvinen era met with numbers surge

By ERIC A. HOWALD

*Of the Keizertimes*

If the numbers are any indication, McNary High School football players are excited about Jeff Auvinen, McNary's new football head coach.

Auvinen expected about 130 players at tryouts this year. He got 160.

"That's great for us and great for the program," Auvinen said. "In the short term, we've been scrambling to come up with uniforms for everyone."

Auvinen steps into the shoes left vacant by Isaac Parker, who left the school to coach and recruit at Lewis and Clark University last winter. However, Auvinen is far from a stranger to the program. He's coached at various levels in Celtic football for longer than two decades. That doesn't even take into account 18 years as head coach of the McNary softball program that saw Auvinen become one of the winningest softball coaches in all of Oregon.

"It's really been a great transition, all the kids from seniors to freshmen have been super respectful. My offense and defensive coaches have been great as far as taking care of play schemes and letting me focus on some of the organizational things," Auvinen said.

KJ McCrae is handling offensive coaching for McNary and Brad Emmert is taking over defense.

As far as where he would like to see the program a year from now, Auvinen said it boils down to toughness.

"We're trying to push the power running game and the kids have to drive their feet and get off the ball. The boys need to get into the mindset of handing it to the guy across from them," he said. "I want to make us physically, mentally and emotionally tougher than we've been the past few years. If we do that it will show when the games are close and McNary is the one making the plays."



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

Jeff Auvinen, a longtime McNary teacher and coach, was tapped to assume head coach duties after Isaac Parker resigned from the role to pursue other opportunities. Auvinen has coached football at the school for more than two decades and had an 18-year run as the head softball coach.



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