

QUICK HITS

A look at all the teams in the Greater Valley Conference

McMinnville Grizzlies

McMinnville went 3-6 last year, but Ryan McIrvin, a Grizzly coaching veteran in his second year as head coach, reports improvement and looks forward to this season.

Of the players lost to graduation, those who stood out in 2015 were Justin Trimble, Jesse Medley, and Luke Grossnickle, wide receivers and defensive backs; Taylor Brown, offensive lineman and linebacker; Jesus Fajardo, who played on the offensive and defensive lines; Sam Swenson, wide receiver and defensive lineman; and Griffin Williams, wide receiver and offensive lineman.

Returning to the varsity are players McIrvin calls "a pretty good bunch of guys." Expected to stand out are Tyler Sitton and Odin Thorson, both wide receivers and defensive backs; Brad Hessel, a defensive back; Wyatt Smith, a quarterback; Cedric Agcaoili-Ostrom, a running back and linebacker; and



three who play on the offensive and defensive lines, Cooper Bousquet, Dylan Cramer, and Kevin Amsden.

One reason for McIrvin's optimism is that last season he saw improved play each week and through summer practice.

"Our kids are a little more comfortable with what we've done offensively and defensively," he said.

Asked about current weaknesses, he said the main problem is overall depth, especially on the offensive and defensive lines.

McIrvin is his own offensive coordinator. Don Rutschman is defensive coordinator. Other assistant coaches are Reeve Woodward, running backs and defensive backs; Mike Gower, defensive line; Lucas Vinson, offensive and defensive lines; and Chip Ford, linebackers. The entire coaching staff is involved with special teams.

West Albany Bulldogs

"We learned a lot," head coach Brian Mehl said of last year's inexperienced West Albany football team, which won only one game.

At this writing, Mehl was not prepared to say who was likely to start at any position this season. Several first-string positions will change because of players who were lost to graduation.

Those who played their final high school season in 2015 included Jeff LaCoste, running back; Tanner Wilson, linebacker; Hunter Jones, offensive and defensive lineman; Kyle Myers, wide receiver and safety; Finn Carlson, wide receiver and cornerback; and Wyatt Burris, guard.

"We played a lot of young kids last year," Mehl said. He noted that he has a more experienced team in 2016 and pointed to

depth in the defense as well as the running back and wide receiver positions in particular.

"I think we have a good core group of linebackers," he said.

Asked about weaknesses, Mehl said there seemed to be "no big ones." However, he said the added experience the Bulldogs have is not great for either the offense or the defense.

Mehl is his own offensive coordinator. The defensive coordinator is Cole Pouliot. Other assistants are Jared Hinkle, offensive line; Les Duman, defensive line; Peter Zoumboukos, running backs; Derek Duman, quarterbacks; David Lang, wide receivers; Don Lien, secondary; and Darrell Mehl, the coach's father, and Mike Doctor, linebackers.

"Obviously last year was a difficult year," the head coach said. "We learned a lot. I'm excited about what we're capable of being."



Sprague Olympians

Jay Minyard, head coach of a Sprague team that made the first round of the playoffs last year, thinks his Olympians have enough talent this year for another winning season.

Last year, Sprague went 7-3 overall and 7-1 in league play. Then the Olys lost a close first-round game to Sunset.

Those lost to graduation include David Prosser, linebacker and tight end; Bryce Webber, Jake Nelson; and Ryan Morgan, first-team all-league linemen; and Anthony Nunn, a unanimous choice for a first-team running back.

Competition remains for most starting spots, but returning players expected to make first string are Kyle Rosenau, tackle; Tanner Sorenson, guard; Nick Brotton, receiver and cornerback; Dane McKinney and Noah Mellon, running backs; and



Austin Kleinman, fullback.

Minyard sees "a large and strong senior class" as the strongest point of his team. He finds experience to be his weakest point, because there will be several first-year starters.

He is his own offensive coordinator. Luke Buchheit is the defensive coordinator.

There are 14 other assistant coaches, some of whom are more involved with JV and freshman football than with the varsity. Aaron Lawson, Dan "Bear" Putnam, and Soren Sorenson coach linemen. Ryan Cash is the quarterback coach. Karry Hadden and Rick Lacey work with running backs. Rodney Eudy and Justin Trammell coach receivers. DG Gier is in charge of defensive backs. Giovanni Galvez has longtime experience coaching at various positions.

Forest Grove Vikings

Perry Herbst, whose Forest Grove Vikings finished 5-5 last year, 4-4 in league, is looking for ways to get past the .500 mark.

He has plenty of spots to fill.

Among last year's seniors were Bobby Taylor, Ben Godfrey, and Griffin Torrence, offensive and defensive linemen; Wyatt Andresen, tight end and defensive lineman; Ronnie Thompson and Ben Pearson, each a wide receiver and defensive back; Taylor Jensen, quarterback; Marcus Estrada, linebacker and running back; AJ Turner, wide receiver and linebacker; and David Francisco, defensive back.

Likely starters this year are Austin Brown, Bryan Blix, and Diego Ruis-Diaz, offensive and defensive linemen; and Zac Ennis and Trevor Rhorer, running backs and linebackers.

As the above positions may indicate, Herbst sees the line, on both offense and defense, as the strength of his team. Asked what the

weaknesses seem to be, he said, "All else."

"We have a lot of kids who haven't played much varsity football," he said.

For his offense, he hopes to balance running and passing attacks.

Herbst has been his own defensive coordinator for several seasons but this year is switching to offensive coordinator. Eddie Littlefield is the new defensive coordinator.

Other assistant coaches are Ron Morris, tight ends and defensive linemen; Tim Hoppe, Mike Horn, and Greg Evers,

wide receivers and defensive backs; Francis Fabela, quarterbacks and defensive backs; Jeff Turner, running backs and linebackers; Travis Tocher and Adam Kriz, offensive and defensive linemen; Ed Galvez, quarterbacks and linebackers; and Jimmy Doyle, running backs and defensive linemen.

"We're going to work hard and see what happens," Herbst said.

