

# Football season is here



The *Keizertimes* is expanding its high school sports coverage this fall and that begins here with the football preview.

Not only does this section include McNary but previews of all five public high schools in Salem — Sprague, West Salem, McKay, North Salem and South Salem.

The 2018 season brings many changes with the biggest being realignment.

McNary, West Salem, Sprague and South Salem have been placed in the new Mountain Valley Conference with three Bend schools — Bend, Mountain View and Summit.

Mountain View and Summit have both had recent success in 5A.

Mountain View finished the 2017 regular season 9-0 to earn the No. 1 seed in the state playoffs before falling in the semifinals.

Summit won the 5A state championship in 2015 and entered the state playoffs as the No. 1 seed in 2016.

But with OSAA's decision to have 6A football teams play a four-game league schedule, conferences don't really matter. McNary plays Bend but neither Mountain View or Summit.

Sprague and South Salem are playing as usual but in a non-league game.

While a team may try to claim it, there will be no outright Mountain Valley Conference football champion.

West Salem is clearly the team to beat in the new conference.

With all four members of its state runner-up 4x100 relay team, Anthony Gould, Simon Thompson, Stanley Green and Jamal Murrin, now seniors on the football team, West Salem will have one of the fastest squads in the state.

Thompson, the Titans new quarterback, is also the reign-



ing state champion in the 110 hurdles.

West Salem also returns last season's Greater Valley Conference Defensive Player of the Year Alex Hurlburt as well as Micah Pugh, an all-league First Team linebacker.

McNary has two of the top recruits in the state in juniors Erik Barker and Junior Walling,

Walling, who has an offer from Oregon State, is rated the No. 4 prospect in Oregon for the Class of 2020.

Barker is ninth and the top quarterback in the state, according to 247sports.

While the Celtics have a smaller senior class than in years past, there are several solid pieces there beginning with lineman Joshua Schmeltzer and receiver Jacob Jackson.

Dyami Rios, a sophomore who dominated freshman football last season, is another intriguing player at linebacker and

possibly running back.

Sprague has finished near the top of the league standings the past three years but returns just three starters from last season.

This could be the year McNary and South Salem get revenge on the Olympians. The Celtics haven't defeated Sprague since 2014.

South Salem also returns a lot of talent in lineman Ashton Adams, linebacker Josh Raynak, quarterback Elijah Enomoto-Haole and tight ends Diego Fuimaono and Brock Hale.

North Salem and McKay,

who have consistently finished at the bottom of the league, hope to get some relief by moving down a classification to 5A. But the Vikings and Royal Scots were placed in a tough league with the likes of Lebanon, South Albany, Crescent Valley and Silverton.

With only three weeks of official practice to prepare, coaches already feel rushed. Air quality concerns forcing many practices indoors has made it even harder on teams this year.

But the 2018 season is officially here, ready or not.

## ON THE COVER: Junior Walling, McNary LB/RB



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