

McKAY ROYAL SCOTS



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

In their second season in the Mid-Willamette Conference, the Royal Scots are hoping for improvement in 2019 under new head coach Brandis Piper.

McKay enters rebuild under first-year head coach

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the Keizertimes

The McKay football program was optimistic before the start of the 2018 season as they moved from the 6A classification down to 5A.

However, not much changed for the Royal Scots last season in the Mid-Willamette Conference — arguably the best league at the 5A level — as McKay finished the year with a 1-8 record.

One thing McKay does have, though, is an energetic first-year head coach in Brandis Piper.

After playing football at Lewis & Clark College, Piper was the offensive coordinator for Stayton High School from 2013 to 2016. He then spent the 2017 and 2018 seasons as the running backs coach at Willamette University, before taking over as the head man at McKay.

Piper hit the ground running with his kids over the last couple months, filling the summer with workouts and weekly 7-on-7 competitions

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— Brandis Piper, McKay head coach

against opposing schools, as well as holding a team camp.

As the Royal Scots prepare for their opener against West Albany on Friday, Sept. 6, Piper is really pumped about the work that his crew has put in during the offseason.

“It’s been awesome so far. I’m really excited about it, and the kids are excited,” Piper said. “We were having 50 kids show up to every single workout during the offseason. When they’re pumped and ready to go, it puts me in that same boat.”

Getting kids excited about

football has the potential to be a big deal for McKay — a program that hasn’t had a winning season since 2003.

Over the course of the summer, Piper has been getting his players to buy into the new motto of the program. The motto is EAT, and it stands for energy, attitude, toughness, and it’s something Piper wants to see in every phase of his players’

lives, not just on the football field.

“It’s something that’s not skill-based. You don’t have to be the fastest or the strongest kid on the team to do those three things. We’re asking kids to do those things, not only on the football field,

but also when they’re in the classroom and out in the community,” Piper said. “If they can do those three things, they will be successful in all aspects of their life. So we’re really trying to build something in our program and our culture that is more than just being good on the football field. It’s about what they do every single day, from the time they wake up until the time they go to bed.”

Even though they had a rough season in 2018, McKay is returning some stud seniors that hope to have a big impact in 2019.

“We have definitely got some guys that I have been impressed with over the summer,” Piper said.

Elliott Schaffner is a key senior will be entering his third season on the McKay varsity team. He was a honorable mention selection on the offensive line last year and looks to be the Royal Scots best interior lineman for the second straight season.

“Elliot’s really done a great job in practice. He’s been a force on the offensive line

and he does a really good job of getting to the second level. He can also play multiple positions on the O-line if needed,” Piper said.

McKay’s other top dog on the line of scrimmage appears to be Zaire Ku-Beza, who also received honorable mention status as a tight end last season.

“He’s a guy that can be a difference maker. He will be tough for opponents to handle on the line of scrimmage,” Piper said.

Ku-Beza looks to be a terror on the Royal Scots defensive line as well, along with junior twins Janderi Perez and Giovanni Perez.

Senior Rafael Aguilar is arguably McKay’s best returning player. Aguilar has been on the Royal Scots varsity team all four years of his career, and last season, he was an honorable mention selection as both a linebacker and running back.

“Rafael has definitely put a lot of time in the weight room for us. He’s just a guy that gets it. He sees natural holes out there,” Piper said.

SCHEDULE

ALL GAMES START AT 7 P.M.

Sept. 6 at West Albany

Sept. 13 vs. Central

Sept. 20 at South Albany

Sept. 27 vs. Lebanon

Oct. 4 at North Salem

Oct. 10 vs. Corvallis*

Oct. 18 at Dallas

Oct. 25 vs. Silverton

Nov. 1 vs. Crescent Valley

*game will start at 7:15 p.m.

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