

NORTH SALEM VIKINGS



KEIZERTIMES/Mat Rawlings

After losing 22 seniors and multiple all-league players, the 2019 North Salem Vikings will have a number of new athletes playing big roles.

North Salem will rely on youth in 2019

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the Keizertimes

After going 2-7 last year in their first season at the 5A level and losing a multitude of all-conference players, North Salem head coach Jeff Flood will be calling on some new faces to carry the torch for the Vikings in 2019.

“We have a lot of kids that played JV last year and they will need to step their game up to be able to play at the speed of a Friday night,” Flood said.

However, one of the

aspects of this 2019 North Salem team that Flood really appreciates is the amount of joy his team plays with from day to day.

“The joy that these guys have when they play football is always encouraging. They enjoy being out here. They enjoy being together. And that makes it really easy to come out here and try to get better. As long as the kids are working together to make the best of it, that’s all we can ask for as a coaching staff,” Flood said.

One of North Salem’s biggest needs coming into this year is finding guys that will be able to play at a high level on the offensive line. The Vikings lost arguably the best lineman in the league last season in Andre Beall, who was named to the first-team all-league squad in the Mid-Willamette Conference.

North Salem will also have to replace Zach Goodwin, who played both ways on the line of scrimmage last season, and tight end Isaak Viperman — both were all-

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— Jeff Flood, North Salem head coach

league players in 2018.

“Our most important challenge right now is finding an (offensive) line that can help us move the ball. We lost a lot of really good kids from last year’s team, so that is a big area of concern,” Flood said.

Flood, however, feels like he has some players that will be able to pick up the slack,

with the leader of the bunch being Antonio Garcia, who is a versatile athlete despite not having the biggest frame.

“He will be the focal point of our offensive line. He’s just a beast of a kid and he will probably help us on both sides of the ball,” Flood said.

Kobe Hubbard missed the

entire 2018 season due to injury, but at 6-foot-5, 290 pounds, Flood expects him to play a big role for North Salem at offensive tackle in 2019.

Senior Nelson Millan looks to be the starting center this season, and might also see some time at linebacker.

“It’s exciting to have some kids that have really progressed from last year,” Flood said.

North Salem’s top returner, however, will be Jason Carter-Varay. As a second-team all-conference defensive back last season, Carter-Varay is the only Vikings returner that received all-league status last season.

As one of the best athletes in the conference, Carter-Varay will also get the bulk of the workload at running back.

“(Carter-Varay) will shoulder a bigger role this year. He’s an outstanding athlete,” Flood said. “It’s fun to see these kids come in as freshmen and then watch them mature over the years.”

Keith Barnett, Anthony Valdez and Adan Gonzalez

SCHEDULE

ALL GAMES START AT 7 P.M.

Sept. 6 vs. Crescent Valley

Sept. 13 at Corvallis

Sept. 20 at Dallas

Sept. 27 at Silverton

Oct. 4 vs. McKay

Oct. 10 at West Albany

Oct. 18 vs. Central

Oct. 25 at South Albany

Nov. 1 vs. Lebanon



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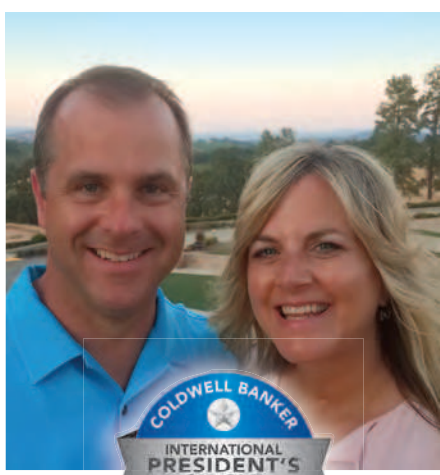
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