

SPRAGUE OLYMPIANS



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

The 2019 Sprague Olympians team will be striving for a better year, despite having one of the most difficult schedules in the state.

Sprague hoping for bounce-back season

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the Keizertimes

Since Jay Minyard took over the Sprague football program in 2012, the Olympians have consistently been one of the best teams in the Salem area, making three appearances in the state-quarterfinals over the last seven years.

Last year, however, Sprague suffered one of their worst seasons in recent history.

The Olympians lost their first six games of 2018 for the first time since 1986 before finishing the season with a 2-7 record.

Part of the reason for Sprague's lack of success last season was their brutal non-conference schedule. The Olympians took on Liberty, Lakeridge, Central Catholic and Tigard in the first month of the 2018 season — all four

teams finished with a top 11 state ranking. Sprague also had a ton of youth and experienced numerous injuries over the course of the season.

Sprague still has a limited amount of seniors as they head into the 2019 season, but after winning two of their final three games to end 2018, Minyard is encouraged about the the crew that he has coming back.

"We're really excited right now. It's been a great offseason," Minyard said. "We have had one of, if not the best, summers we've had since I've been here when it comes to attitudes and efforts."

As far as their schedule is concerned, Sprague will have their work cut out for them once again in 2019, playing in four non-league road games that will come against teams

that are projected to finish in the top 15 — Liberty, Sherwood, Central Catholic and Tigard.

The Olympians will also have to take on defending Mountain Valley Conference champion McNary in their first league contest of the season.

"I want to make sure the kids understand that our schedule is tough and we

could have a season where we go through some ups and downs. Either way, we're going to continue to get better each week and see where we're at by the end of the season," Minyard said. "It's not about the win necessarily. In the big picture, you'd like to win, but it's really about teaching kids how to give their best effort at all times and feeling good about themselves because



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