

# PIONEERS,

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Despite the success of the squad, the biggest issue the Pioneers have faced is generating interest from potential players.

“It can be tough on the women’s side because there is less interest. The biggest hurdle has just been getting the word out,” said Steve Polanski, the recruiting coordinator and assistant coach for the Pioneers.

Polanski started last season taking photos for the team, but after watching multiple games and practices, he knew that this was a program he wanted to be a part of.

“This is legit tackle football. The women are so bought in to this opportunity. They want to see this grow and succeed. It is great working with them,” Polanski said.

Polanski has been coaching football at different levels since 1999, but since the majority of women who come out for the team are new to the sport, he prides himself on trying to simplify the game to the players.

“We have to start from scratch with a lot of them, so we need to figure out how to present information at a base level,” Polanski said.

“Coaches need to work with the knowledge that we have, and it takes them a moment to step down. We are super lucky to have the coaches that we have,” Fineran added.

As the president of the Salem Women’s Football, Fineran has the goal of starting a tackle football league for girls under the age of 18. But for now, Fineran is fully focused on continuing the success of the Capital Pioneers.

“We have nurses, we have stay at home moms and we have city workers. We are all from different walks of life, but our bond has been incredible,” Fineran said. “There is no experience necessary, so I would encourage any woman with the slightest bit of interest to come check it out.”

“The women really enjoy the camaraderie in a different way. They stick together and are there for each other on and off the field,” Polanski added. “I want the community to get behind these women. Once they get going, they’re going to love it.”

Those interested in playing or sponsoring the team should visit the team site (<https://capitalpioneersfootball.square.site/>) for more information. The season opener is April 9.



# NEWS TIPS?

*If it's happening in Keizer, or to someone from Keizer – WE WANT TO KNOW.*

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TOP: Maribel Gomez runs through the Portland Shockwave defense in a game from last season. BOTTOM: Alyssa Flores sacks the quarterback. Submitted photo