

Mariners Experience Season of Growth

By John Sandstrom

The Silver Bay Mariner football season came to an end with a difficult loss to a powerful Hill City team. The Mariners finished the regular season 2-3 before losing their opening playoff game. Head coach Ward Kaiser said, "We didn't get to play three games that we believed we had a decent chance to win: Northeast Range, who wasn't able to field a team, Carlton-Wrenshall who had covid related issues and the South Ridge game, in which the Mariners were hampered by injuries and covid quarantines."

Kaiser was asked if the season met his expectations. "When a school our size loses seven seniors as we did a year ago, a person has to be realistic. Last year, the lack of JV games and the reduced schedule limited opportunities to gain experience for the younger players. Given that fact and the low numbers we expected this year, I thought we did a great

job. We had three freshmen that played key roles including a freshman quarterback. We will miss our seniors, but we will return skilled players and we will have some experience at each position.

Senior Kaleb Krech said, "The season sure didn't go quite how we wanted. Losing out on playing three games that we had a good chance to win was a disappointment, especially when you are a senior. Playing the games is fun, but my favorite part of this season was working with the young players and being a mentor to them. As a senior, you hope to help them get pointed in the right direction for their future."

Kaleb said he will always remember having the chance to get to two section championship games, "even though we didn't get to play last year when covid shut us down. "Football is special to me because of the family at-

mosphere and the friends I have made." Krech is undecided on which college he will attend, but will major in marketing and business. This summer, Kaleb will spend three months at Fort Lee in Virginia as he furthers his army career.

Elijah Blanck was another Mariner senior who knew this would be an interesting year. "When the season began and I saw how young we were, I had to wonder how it would go. It took a lot of work, but we became a competitive team. The average age of our players was probably 10th grade." Asked about his favorite moment, Elijah didn't hesitate. "The best memory was last year when we beat Cherry 27-0 after losing to them 21-0 in our third game. We became co-champions with that win."

Elijah is applying to the Coast Guard Academy for entrance following high school.

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