

SKI

League teams trying to clip Snowbirds

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are to be successful," Bragg said. "The good programs find a way to get the most out of the talent available."

To that end, Bragg was pleased with the summer turnout in the weight room.

"We had the best turnout in the weight room of any summer," he said. "We're excited about this team."

Bragg said the Ski Valley is "more balanced" and could field as many as five playoff teams.

One of those team could be **JOHANNESBURG-LEWISTON**, which nearly took the league crown away from St. Mary a year ago.

After losing their season opener to Mio, the Cardinals won seven in a row before losing a hard-fought 18-12 showdown to the Snowbirds in the regular-season finale.

Coach Fred Davis returns a team primed to make a run at the crown. Seven starters return on offense, including three-year veteran Phil Knapp at quarterback.

Knapp will direct a wing-T offense that averaged 34 points a game a year ago.

Leading rusher Matt Martindale, who gained close to 1,700 yards, is gone, but Davis will count on Brad Ewing, Sean Hart and Mike Carroll to pick up the slack. Hart rushed for nearly 600 yards despite missing the final three games with a concussion. Knapp also rushed for

nearly 600 yards.

But Ewing could be the back for the Cardinals. The full-back, Martindale's position last season, gets the most touches in the offense.

"He's (Ewing) the fastest player on the team," Davis said.

Providing the experience up front are center Ben Guild, guard Cody Proctor and tight ends David Tack and Luke Sides. The 6-3, 265-pound Guild was a tackle last season. Juniors Eric Hess and Todd Bolser are slated to start at the tackle spots this fall.

Defensively, Gould and

Proctor will lead the line charge. Sean Hart, Zach Vogt and Sam Hart are penciled in at linebacker. Ewing, Knapp, Carroll and Joe Meyers — the group that qualified for the state track meet in the 400 relay — will line up in the secondary.

Davis has 24 players on varsity, nine more than a year ago. In a game against Inland Lakes last season, Davis played just 11 players because of injuries.

BELLAIRE also went 7-2 in the 2003 regular season. Coach

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