Second-year Salem Head Coach Mo Moriarity is not making any predictions about the 2012 Salem Lions as far as wins and losses.

One thing this year's team will have, however, over last year's often over-powered squad will be the ability to compete.

Moriarity said last year's team relied heavily on under-sized kids and that ultimately cost them in the win column.

"Our kids are working hard and I think we are taking steps," he said. "I don't know how that will translate as far as wins and losses. Last year we had trouble competing with a lot of people and we feel like we can do that this year.

"We had 15 kids this summer who didn't miss one workout. That's what you want as a coach – kids that are committed and don't miss a day and that's what it takes to get the program in the right direction."

Salem managed just two wins last year and both were against first-year program Silver Creek.

Of there nine losses, the Lions were in a number of those contests early, but ended up struggling late.

Moriarity attributes that to the team's youth and lack of strength.

"I don't know if you can compare this year's team to last year's team," he said. "Last year's team was young and really hadn't had a weight program to participate in. There were just really a lot of things that compounded the situation. This year, we've had kids in the weight room for all of the off-season. We had a good summer program with really good turnout."

Salem has 63 players on this year's roster. Of those, 23 are freshmen and all of them will get to spend time on JV.

That's a real advantage, according to Moriarity as far as the future of the program goes.

"Last year when I put out a two-deep, I had three or four freshman starting," he said. "Not only that, the next guy in, in many cases, were freshmen, too. This year I don't have any freshman starting and there not even in the two-deep depth chart."

In the other classes, Salem has 12 seniors, 10 juniors and 18 sophomores.

The 2011 Lions relied heavily on the offensive side of the ball on the services of Klayton Dougherty.

Moriarity said the senior has had a good pre-season and unlike last year has some viable weapons around him.

"Klayton has had a really good camp," he said. "Of the two weeks of camp he had good days every day except one. He has some weapons around him this year."

Moriarity said some of the players who will help lighten Dougherty's load include running back Andrew Maudlin, Wide receiver Jared Blevins, who goes 6'3" 200 pounds, Tyson Thomas, Trent Pennington, Tyler Sizemore and Kody Kramer.

On the defensive side of the ball, Moriarity also expects improvement.

"Before you can make strides as a program it startes with your defense," he said. "We think we are better. We haven't played a game, but we are stronger and we understand the scheme better. Most of those kids

Maudlin and Pennington, Darrell Troncin, Collin Badger, Jared and Jordan McNeely and Seth Motsinger.

Salem will open the season this Friday at Paul A. Graves Athletic field when the Rams of Paoli come to town.

The Lions lost to Paoli 67-0 last year and has a four-game losing streak against the team that went 9-3 last year.