

## **2009 SLUH Water Polo – Varsity Game Recaps**

### **Preseason Outlook**

For any other program, graduating the Missouri District Player of the Year, a 95-point scorer named to the All-District Second Team, a third starter, and three more solid contributors would be cause for alarm. Not so for the 2009 Varsity Water Polo team, which returns more decorated talent than any in recent memory. William Page is the reigning Missouri District Offensive Player of the Year. Michael O'Neill is the reigning Missouri District Defensive Player of the Year. Captains John Heafner and Matt Hohenberger earned All-District First Team and Second Team honors last year, respectively. And fellow seniors Will Derdeyn, Trent Going, John Savio, and Steve Sigman are recognized as among the most talented players in the area. Including Nick Debandt and Charles Gerber, the Jr. Bills return players responsible for 59% of the scoring from and 61% of the turnovers forced by last year's undefeated state championship squad. These totals include the top two scorers from 2008 in Page and Heafner, the primary defender in O'Neill, and the starting goalie in Hohenberger. The seniors will be supported by juniors Pat Archer, Dan Goeddel, Rob Golterman, and Daniel Pike and sophomores Michael Hagerty and John Lewis, who led last year's JV team to an equally perfect 16-0 record. After three weeks of practices, the boys are ready to find out how they stack up against competition, beginning with three teams likely to be in the top ten of the preseason coaches' poll.

### **Game 1 – March 16, 2009**

#### **W (1-0) – 15-6 vs. Ladue**

The Jr. Bills opened their season by toppling the Rams, ranked seventh in the preseason coaches' poll. Running set plays as often as a more fluid offense, SLUH jumped ahead 3-0 and led 6-1 after one quarter, 10-2 at half. John Heafner (7 goals, 1 assist) and Player of the Game William Page (2 goals, 6 assists) led the attack, Michael O'Neill (3 steals, 1 field block) and Matt Hohenberger (10 saves) secured the defensive end, and sophomore John Lewis notched his first two points on Varsity, both assists. Some sloppy defense and ill-advised ejections afforded the Rams more goals than desired, but the Jr. Bills still managed a comfortable win.

### **Game 2 – March 18, 2009**

#### **W (2-0) – 12-3 vs. Kirkwood**

The Pioneers, ranked eighth in the preseason coaches' poll, began 2009 with an upset of fourth-ranked Chaminade. The Jr. Bills were undaunted, though, and duplicated their success from their opening game, exploding out front 7-1 after one quarter en route to a 10-1 halftime lead. William Page scored four goals in the first period alone, Player of the Game John Heafner contributed four goals and five assists over the course of the game, and Trent Going led a defensive press which limited Kirkwood to only thirteen total shots. The second half again featured significant playing time for SLUH's bench, highlighted by an incorrect overturn of Nick Debandt's penalty shot conversion.

### **Game 3 – March 19, 2009**

#### **W (3-0) – 13-1 vs. Chaminade**

Despite losing their season opener to a decent Kirkwood squad, Chaminade came into this game with some confidence. Last spring, only two teams held the Jr. Bills to fewer than ten goals, and the Red Devils accomplished the feat three times in three games. But this is a new season. Chaminade did play solid half court defense, but SLUH's counterattack out of both press and drop defenses was simply too much. At one end of the pool, Player of the Game Steve Sigman notched five goals and two assists, and John Heafner and William Page added six points and four points, respectively. At the other end, Michael O'Neill, Trent Going, and Matt Hohenberger each posted five steals, and Hohenberger stopped nine of ten shots in earning his third win. Co-Plays of the Game were two nearly pool-length dry passes from Hohenberger to a moving target, once Heafner and once Sigman, both of which resulted in quick goals. Backup goalie Pat Archer performed impressively during the fourth quarter, saving all six shots thrown his way.

#### **Game 4 – March 25, 2009**

##### **W (4-0) – 16-6 vs. Parkway Central**

Parkway Central started their season well, handling Fort Zumwalt West and nipping Parkway South. And the Colts started this contest well, scoring on their first possession. But the Jr. Bills scored the next six goals, most on cross goal passes near the 2 meter line, and cruised to their fourth straight victory. SLUH's sloppiest game to date, characterized by careless turnovers on offense and poor communication on defense, was offset by its best shooting performance. The Jr. Bills scored their 16 goals on only 24 attempts, highlighted by William Page and Player of the Game Michael O'Neill combining to go nine for nine.

#### **Game 5 – March 27, 2009**

##### **W (5-0) – 13-7 vs. Mundelein**

For the second year in a row, SLUH opened the Midwest Classic at Schaumburg against the highest ranked Illinois team in the tournament, 14th ranked Mundelein. Buoyed by some set plays, the Jr. Bills burst ahead 5-0 after one quarter and 12-2 after two. Player of the Game William Page tallied six goals and two assists in the first half, while Dan Goeddel contributed two goals in the third quarter. Consistent with previous games, though, SLUH's bench struggled at both ends of the pool during the last quarter, getting outscored 4-0.

#### **Game 6 – March 27, 2009**

##### **W (6-0) – 15-0 vs. York**

In perhaps their best performance of the season, the Jr. Bills rolled over the Dukes. Despite running drop and crash defenses for significant portions of the game, SLUH limited an okay York squad to only twelve shots. Exemplifying the team effort, twelve different Jr. Bills recorded points, and ten Jr. Bills posted steals. Michael O'Neill's goal 42 seconds into the game stood up as the winner, as SLUH managed its first shutout. O'Neill's was one of five scored while up a man by the Jr. Bills, who had managed only four 6-on-5 goals through the first five games combined. Most importantly, the bench players found their confidence, contributing four goals, two assists, and solid defense throughout the game. Co-Players of the Game Matt Hohenberger and Pat Archer had an easy day at the office, registering three saves and two saves, respectively.

### **Game 7 – March 27, 2009**

#### **W (7-0) – 19-1 vs. Conant**

Avenging one of their more lackadaisical games from 2008, the Jr. Bills overwhelmed the Cougars. Thirteen of the fourteen field players tallied points, led by Player of the Game Daniel Pike's three goals and three assists and Will Derdeyn's goal and four assists. Play of the Game was Michael Hagerty's first Varsity goal, a left-handed sweep shot out of 2-meter. Pat Archer notched eight saves in earning his first victory of the season. Continuing an early-season trend, SLUH shot the ball well, raising its shooting percentage to an absurd 58.9% through seven games.

### **Game 8 – March 28, 2009**

#### **W (8-0) – 16-4 vs. Lindbergh**

In the tournament semifinals, the Jr. Bills squared off against the Flyers, ranked third in Missouri. Lindbergh features two standouts, Parker Finlinson and Kyle Schnoring, who played with Jungle Cat Water Polo last summer. SLUH seniors Michael O'Neill and Trent Going were asked to do the yeomen's work of guarding them and did not disappoint, holding the pair to three goals on fifteen shots. Player of the Game John Savio chalked up four field blocks, two assists, and one steal, and Matt Hohenberger and Pat Archer combined for fourteen saves. As a team, eleven different Jr. Bills scored goals, and SLUH scored on all six 6-on-5 opportunities, raising their conversion rate for the season to 64%.

### **Game 9 – March 28, 2009**

#### **W (9-0) – 10-6 vs. Schaumburg**

In the championship game of the Third Annual Midwest Classic, SLUH swam against Schaumburg, after the hosts defeated Mundelein 11-8 in the other semifinal. The previous day, Schaumburg had beaten Lindbergh 13-9, so SLUH expected a reasonably close game. But the first half did not play out as planned. Player of the Game Matt Hohenberger posted five saves and four extraordinary assists, three to a streaking William Page, and the Jr. Bills led 4-1 after one quarter and 7-1 at the break. SLUH switched to a drop defense for most of the third quarter, which generated confusion for Schaumburg and counterattack opportunities for SLUH. Led by "superstar" Chris Corbett, the Saxons made a run late in the fourth quarter, but the justifiably tired Jr. Bills still finished comfortably ahead.

SLUH sits at 9-0 heading into next weekend's Central Conference Tournament, which will likely conclude with the first of five meetings with second ranked DeSmet.

### **Game 10 – April 3, 2009**

#### **W (10-0) – 12-6 vs. MICDS**

In the history of SLUH Water Polo, no team has defeated the Jr. Bills more often than the Rams. And no team has lost to the Jr. Bills more often, either. Chalk another one up in the latter column, as SLUH's starters surged to a 6-0 lead after one quarter and were ahead 11-0 three minutes into the third quarter before calling it a night. The Jr. Bills' inconsistent bench was outplayed convincingly after that, resulting in a respectable final score. Still, five of SLUH's six starters scored, led by Player of the Game

John Heafner's four goals and one assist. Defensively, Trent Going and Michael O'Neill combined for seven steals, and Matt Hohenberger surrendered no goals for the third time in five games.

### **Game 11 – April 4, 2009**

#### **W (11-0) – 19-5 vs. Ladue**

The Jr. Bills recognized the importance of putting the Rams away early in order to rest the starters for two more games later in the day. And SLUH came through, scoring a season-high ten goals in the first quarter and cruising to an easy victory. All but one field player scored at least one goal, including Player of the Game John Savio's wicked no-look backhand which surprised nearly everyone in the building. Pat Archer kept the Rams at bay in the second half with a personal best ten saves.

### **Game 12 – April 4, 2009**

#### **W (12-0) – 14-4 vs. Chaminade**

The Red Devils seemed to have found their game over spring break, putting together eight consecutive wins before a loss to DeSmet. But the Jr. Bills have a streak of their own, and it continued in their most balanced performance of the year. Chaminade's coach, Tom Milford SLUH '00, marveled after the game that SLUH managed fourteen goals from eleven different players, with no one scoring more than two. Michael O'Neill collected Player of the Game honors for his two goals, two steals, and typically solid defense, but Daniel Pike received consideration for his two goals and one assist. John Lewis deserves mention for a fourth quarter sequence in which he left his man smartly to force a ball under, and on the subsequent offensive possession ripped in a beautiful backhand.

### **Game 13 – April 4, 2009**

#### **W (13-0) – 12-5 vs. De Smet Jesuit High**

Perhaps the most intriguing question about the 2009 season is whether the second-ranked Spartans, who are led by a host of juniors set up to win state in 2010, can pull off the feat a year early. SLUH entered the game believing that they were in for a fight, and DeSmet did not disappoint. The Jr. Bills generated plenty of chances, but sloppy shooting held the offense in check throughout the first half, and a few defensive mistakes found SLUH trailing 3-2 at the break. The second half, though, looked very different. Player of the Game Will Derdeyn scored two quick goals to get the Jr. Bills back on top, and John Heafner led a surge in which SLUH scored six times in just over four minutes bridging the third and fourth quarters. When the waters calmed, the starters exited the pool having scored ten unanswered goals to win the Central Conference Tournament for the third consecutive year. For the game, Jr. Bill defenders Trent Going and Michael O'Neill combined for as many goals, three, as did Spartan 2-meters Michael Schonhoff and Matt Stipanovich. DeSmet may have four more opportunities to topple SLUH, and time will tell which half of this first game was the aberration.

### **Game 14 – April 8, 2009**

#### **W (14-0) – 10-1 vs. MICDS**

Five days earlier, the Jr. Bills led the Rams 9-0 at halftime en route to a 12-6 win. The rematch was hardly different, as SLUH led 8-0 at half and finished convincingly. William Page (2 goals,

4 assists) and John Heafner (4 goals, 1 assist) came to play offense, but much of the rest of the team did not. However, the sluggish performance at one end of the pool was offset by dominant defense. Led by Player of the Game Trent Going's six steals, the Jr. Bills limited the Rams to only eleven shots by pressing for the full 28 minutes. The win was SLUH's 71st in a row over the past four seasons, tying the school record set in 1992-95 and probably the state record.

### **Game 15 – April 14, 2009**

#### **W (15-0) – 12-6 vs. Parkway South**

The Patriots feature one of the strongest freshman classes in the area as well as a solid group of sophomores. Unfortunately, these underclassmen are forced to play Varsity this season and are overmatched against experienced teams like SLUH. Player of the Game John Savio scored one of his four goals on the first possession of the game, and it held up as the winner, as Matt Hohenberger and Pat Archer combined for their second shutout of the season. William Page notched two goals and four assists, Trent Going tallied six steals, and Michael O'Neill held Parkway South 2-meter and fellow Jungle Cat Patrick Maloney to zero points and only one shot. In raising their season record to 15 - 0, the Jr. Bills likely set a new state record with their 72nd consecutive win.

### **Game 16 – April 16, 2009**

#### **W (16-0) – 14-6 vs. Marquette**

The Jr. Bills dominated the Mustangs from the outset, scoring four goals in the first 95 seconds of the game and cruising to an 11-1 halftime lead. After that, a suspect crash defense surrendered a handful of goals on uncontested perimeter shots, but SLUH still managed a convincing win. Player of the Game Will Derdeyn posted five assists, William Page scored five points in the first half alone, and Michael O'Neill recorded six steals. Sophomores Joe Kabance and Mitch Kramer were promoted to Varsity for the weekend and played several uneventful minutes each in their debuts.

### **Game 17 – April 17, 2009**

#### **W (17-0) – 16-1 vs. Ladue**

The Jr. Bills controlled the Rams for the third time this season, setting season highs for personal fouls drawn (10) and shots margin (23). Player of the Game Will Derdeyn was one of six players to score at least two goals. Ladue rested their starters for most of the second half to save them for another game later in the evening, and SLUH responded in kind. JV standouts Dan Schmidt, Joe Kabance, and Mitch Kramer logged significant minutes in the second half, combining for five steals and four shots.

### **Game 18 – April 18, 2009**

#### **W (18-0) – 11-3 vs. Chaminade**

In a mild upset the night before, Lindbergh defeated Chaminade, pushing the Red Devils to second in their bracket and a morning meeting with the Jr. Bills. But any anxiety was quelled early, as SLUH jumped on top 3-0 after one quarter and 7-0 at half. Player of the Game Trent Going notched two goals and four steals, while William Page and John Heafner contributed four points each. Not that it mattered, but the Jr. Bills failed to convert their first 6-on-4 advantage of the season.

### **Game 19 – April 18, 2009**

#### **W (19-0) – 15-2 vs. Marquette**

SLUH arrived at the pool expecting to play fourth-ranked Lindbergh, but eighth-ranked Marquette had upset Lindbergh in a crossover game to earn another chance to play SLUH. The Mustangs' joy was short-lived, though, as the Jr. Bills surged ahead 6-0 after four minutes of play and rested the starters for much of the afternoon. Twelve different players scored goals, including the first Varsity tallies for Joe Kabance and Dan Schmidt, and JV teammate Mitch Kramer added an assist. Pat Archer returned to the field during the fourth quarter, while third-string goalie Steve Sigman ably manned his position, allowing no goals and making four saves.

### **Game 20 – April 18, 2009**

#### **W (19-1) – 10-14 vs. Belen Jesuit (FL) (Winning streak ends at 76)**

In the most anticipated game of the 2009 season, the championship of the DeSmet Invitational Tournament featured the top-ranked team from Missouri against the top-ranked team from Florida, Belen of Miami. The physical Wolverines reached the finals by rolling over the DeSmet Spartans, ranked second in Missouri, 16-8. Both teams missed chances during the first three minutes before Belen drew first blood. One minute later, William Page converted a penalty shot to tie the game, and two counterattack goals from Trent Going provided a 3-2 lead after one quarter. Early in the second quarter, John Heafner scored smartly from the 9-meter line, but Belen responded with a 5-1 run which included three goals out of 2-meter. Will Derdeyn and William Page scored man-up goals in the last 80 seconds to tie the game 7-7 at halftime. SLUH seemed to be in good shape, as Belen was playing its fifth game in two days using essentially seven players. And the Jr. Bills' offense did continue to generate chances. But sloppy finishing, including a missed penalty shot, held them in check. At the other end of the pool, the normally stout SLUH defense had few answers for Belen's 2-meters, who pieced together another run to go up 13-8 with two minutes remaining. The winning streak thus ended at 76 games, most in the history of Missouri Water Polo. While the defense was disappointing, the game turned on the Jr. Bills' inability to convert opportunities. SLUH outshot Belen 34-26 and outchanced them by a wider margin, but managed only ten goals against a JV level goalie. During the first nineteen games of the season, the Jr. Bills ended 26% of their possessions with missed shots; this game, that number skyrocketed to 48%. Interestingly, the season's previous high for a game was 40%, when SLUH struggled during the first half against DeSmet. Trent Going earned the coveted "Player of Game" sticker for his two goals, three steals, and one ball under forced.

### **Game 21 – April 25, 2009**

#### **W (20-1) – 11-7 vs. De Smet Jesuit High**

After one of their best weeks of practice of the season, the Jr. Bills faced the second-ranked Spartans for the second time. During the first meeting, DeSmet led SLUH at halftime 3-2 before the Jr. Bills exploded for ten consecutive goals in the third and fourth quarters. This time, DeSmet tied the score 2-2 on a rebound goal one minute into the second quarter, when SLUH responded with four straight goals in under two minutes to take control of the game. The Spartans slipped in two goals before halftime, but the Jr. Bills scored the first four of the second half to seal the outcome. While SLUH again struggled to convert scoring chances, the defense was impressive. After the Jr. Bills switched to a press at halftime, the Spartans had little room to work with and accomplished little, scoring no goals until the starters

exited the pool ahead 10-4 with three minutes remaining. Player of the Game Steve Sigman scored on all three of his shots and added two steals and an assist, and John Heafner, though limited by a knee injury, gamely tallied a hat trick.

### **Game 22 – April 27, 2009**

#### **W (21-1) – 13-9 vs. Lindbergh**

The Jr. Bills swam against the sixth-ranked Flyers, a more polished team since the Midwest Classic one month earlier. But again the Jr. Bills surged early, this time behind strong play from Will Derdeyn and Steve Sigman, who combined for four goals and one assist in the first quarter. John Heafner managed a second quarter hat trick, and Dan Goeddel's scrum goal at the buzzer put SLUH comfortably ahead 9-2 at half. The Jr. Bills put in the first three goals of the third quarter before sloppy turnovers and poor defensive coverage allowed Lindbergh to close the game on an embarrassing 7-1 run. Player of the Game Trent Going scored a goal and an assist, recorded four steals, and forced a ball under in a complete performance.

### **Game 23 – April 30, 2009**

#### **W (22-1) – 13-9 vs. Parkway West**

The Jr. Bills ruined Senior Night for the Longhorns, cruising to a 10-1 halftime lead and a comfortable win. Ten different players found the scoring column for SLUH, including three goals and three assists from William Page and nine points combined from defenders Michael O'Neill and Trent Going. Pat Archer earned his second win with six saves against one goal allowed in the first half, while Player of the Game Steve Sigman posted his second shutout stint in goal during the third quarter.

### **Game 24 – May 1, 2009**

#### **W (23-1) – 16-0 vs. Marquette**

Two nights earlier, Marquette relished a 13-4 victory over a stripped-down SLUH team consisting of Varsity underclassmen. But the seventh-ranked Mustangs could not duplicate their success against the Jr. Bills' full squad. Steve Sigman opened the game with a natural hat trick, and SLUH led 6-0 after one dominant quarter. Recognizing that victory was out of reach and looking ahead to another game later in the evening, Marquette chose to rest its starters for the remainder of the contest, and SLUH reciprocated. Rob Golterman posted three goals and an assist, but Matt Hohenberger and Pat Archer shared Player of the Game honors for their third combined shutout.

### **Game 25 – May 1, 2009**

#### **W (24-1) – 15-7 vs. Chaminade**

Fourth-ranked Chaminade entered the game after dominating third-ranked Parkway North 11-3 and tying second-ranked DeSmet through three quarters before falling 9-6. But this meeting was no different than the Jr. Bills' first three with the Red Devils, as SLUH jumped ahead 4-0 barely two minutes into the game. Steve Sigman and Will Derdeyn combined for eleven points, Player of the Game Trent Going managed two tee shot goals and seven steals, and SLUH coasted to another solid win.

### **Game 26 – May 2, 2009**

#### **W (25-1) – 13-4 vs. MICDS**

The Jr. Bills overwhelmed the sixth-ranked Rams for the third time this season. MICDS coaching legend Don Casey commented, “Your guys are good, and the more I see them, the better they get.” The scoreboard agreed, as SLUH exploded to a lopsided 10-0 first quarter and cruised to a secure victory. Player of the Game Will Derdeyn recorded an absurd four goals and two assists in the first six minutes of the game, and Matt Hohenberger extended his shutout streak against the Rams to more than seven quarters of play.

### **Game 27 – May 2, 2009**

#### **W (26-1) – 14-8 vs. De Smet Jesuit High**

DeSmet, which seems a lock for the second seed in the upcoming District Tournament, has enough talent offensively and defensively to upset SLUH. And the teams’ third meeting of the season began like the first two, with the Jr. Bill offense held in check by an inability to finish shots. But after two John Heafner goals to open the second quarter put SLUH up 5-1, DeSmet began substituting freely to keep players fresh for a later game. The teams’ third meeting also ended like the first two, as the Jr. Bill starters exited the pool ahead 13-2 before a late run by the Spartans made the final score respectable. Player of the Game Heafner scored on all five of his shots, and Will Derdeyn, John Savio, William Page, and Steve Sigman posted at least three points apiece.

### **Game 28 – May 2, 2009**

#### **W (27-1) – 13-4 vs. Lindbergh**

With three late-season wins over teams ranked in the top seven, the Flyers have the inside track to the third seed in the District Tournament. And a defeat of SLUH would have turned over determination of the champion of the inaugural Lindbergh Invitational Tournament to the controversial method of goal differential. But the Jr. Bills left nothing to chance, rushing to a 9-2 halftime lead and finishing strongly behind hat tricks from William Page, Steve Sigman, and John Heafner. Once again, Michael O’Neill and Trent Going selflessly ran the defense, though O’Neill still contributed a goal and three assists. Regarding the most ludicrous statistic of the weekend, Going saw his streak of consecutive games with seven or more steals end at three, as he recorded “only” five. Player of the Game Matt Hohenberger allowed two goals but notched eleven saves and redeemed one goal by scoring when masquerading a field player during the last quarter.

### **Game 29 – May 13, 2009**

#### **W (23-1) – 15-4 vs. Marquette (State Quarterfinals)**

For the third consecutive season, area coaches voted the Jr. Bills the top seed for the Missouri District Tournament. And with the bottom nine teams participating in the second-tier Challenge Cup tournament, SLUH reached the state quarterfinals without playing a game. Eighth-seeded Marquette arrived at the same point by defeating Lafayette 9-4.

Despite Michael O’Neill’s two goals and assist in the early going, a couple defensive mistakes allowed the Mustangs to trim their deficit to 4-2 two minutes into the second quarter. But the Jr. Bills began converting their numerous counterattack opportunities and exploded for the next nine goals, including a



natural hat trick from Player of the Game Steve Sigman and two vintage John Savio backhands. Will Derdeyn scored on all three of his shots and added two assists, five steals, and a field block, while Matt Hohenberger extended his record for wins in a season to 26. SLUH advances to the final four for a stunning 22nd consecutive season.

### **Game 30 – May 15, 2009**

#### **W (29-1) – 16-4 vs. Chaminade (State Semifinals)**

Because of a rule change by the Missouri State High School Activities Association, water polo teams had the option of participating in as many as five tournaments this spring. While grateful for the opportunity to play more games, repeat opponents were the norm, such as this state semifinal matchup. The Jr. Bills squared off against the Red Devils for the fifth time this season, and the result was the same. Despite having an early 2-0 lead wiped off the board because of a correctable clock error, SLUH still rolled to an 11-1 halftime lead and another decisive win. Eight Jr. Bills tallied at least three points, including defender Trent Going's hat trick, goalie Matt Hohenberger's four assists, and Player of the Game John Heafner's five goals. SLUH is set to play in the championship game for the fourth straight season, this time against second-seeded DeSmet.

### **Game 31 – May 16, 2009**

#### **W (30-1) – 9-4 vs. De Smet Jesuit High (State Finals)**

The Jr. Bills capped off another impressive season by winning the Missouri District Tournament, subduing the Spartans for the fourth time.

Steve Sigman opened the scoring on the first possession off a pick play. DeSmet tied the score on a well-placed perimeter shot, but William Page returned the favor, finding the far upper corner from even farther out. Again the Spartans responded, this time with a cheap goal off a deflected shot, but Will Derdeyn's counterattack goal off a smart feed from Trent Going put the Jr. Bills ahead to stay.

In the second quarter, Sigman again started the scoring, finding the back of the net from 7 meters out. John Heafner powered in a penalty shot drawn by Derdeyn, and Player of the Game John Savio's counterattack goal forced DeSmet to call timeout and regroup. It worked momentarily, as the Spartans scored once, but Savio's skip shot from 8 meters with one second remaining in the half restored SLUH's four goal advantage.

On their first possession of the third quarter, the Spartans scored off a rebound to trim their deficit to three. But that goal turned out to be their final score of the game, as the Jr. Bills' defense racked up steal after steal. Late in the period, Savio completed his hat trick with the goal of the game, taking advantage of the DeSmet goalie's near-side positioning and surprising him with a backhand inside the far post.

SLUH sacrificed offense for defense in the fourth quarter, and it worked, as DeSmet was held scoreless. Derdeyn's 6-on-5 goal with three minutes left sealed the outcome, and after playing keepaway for a few possessions, the starters exited the pool to the cheers of a large crowd.

The Jr. Bills shot only 33 percent, well below their season mark of 51 percent, but they still won handily because the defense limited the Spartans to a paltry twelve shots for the entire game. SLUH could afford to press because Michael O'Neill and Trent Going capably shut down the first and third leading scorers in the area.

The state championship is SLUH's fourth consecutive and fourteenth overall, most in the history of Missouri Water Polo.