

Back to Back? '91 Soccerbills begin defense of state title with speed, scoring punch

by James F. Cosgrove
of the Prep News Staff

What does a coach do for an encore after a championship season? Jr. Bills' Coach Ebbie Dunn makes it sound easy, "I'm looking forward to doing as good or better." The first test comes Wednesday when the Jr. Bills will travel to Fort Zumwalt South for a 7:00 p.m. game. On the following day, the defending champs will trek to Lindbergh High School for a 4:00 p.m. game.

The new season brings with it the pressure of defending the state title. While Coach Dunn says he feels no pressure, he added, "I think the kids probably do." Most of the players agree with this sentiment, although senior Mike McDonough complimented Mr. Dunn and assistant coach Dan Coughlin on doing their best to relieve the pressure.

McDonough noted that "the pressure we feel we've put on ourselves, at least at the subconscious level."

Everyone seems confident that this team is strong enough to overcome the pressure if, in the words of captain and goalie, Josh Hertel, "We take it day by day." Joining Hertel in leadership of the team are fellow captains Todd Bruemer, Brian Flanagan, and Jeremy Moore.

Coach Dunn looks forward to strong play from Brian Flanagan and Jeremy Moore and the rest of his seniors. Among the juniors, Damon Rensing, Brian Seymour, Paul Sorrentino, and Todd Standley can also be expected to see plenty of action. The 1991 soccer team will, like its predecessors, be characterized by speed and lots of offense from the halfbacks as well as the forwards.

Players cited their positive attitude, unity,
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Linhares' Harriers Race Into New Campaign With High Expectations

by Ryan Fagan
Prep News Reporter

With what has been said to be one of SLUH's "best cross country teams ever," the 1991 Harriers promise to be among the top teams in the area, and will challenge the best teams in the state.

Led by head coach Jim Linhares, the Harriers are returning nearly all of last year's varsity lettermen, including seniors Jeff Bierling, Ryan Fagan, Matt Heebner, Mike Kenney, Sean Lock, John Miles, and Chris Schmidt. Bierling has run on varsity since his freshman year, and Kenney and Miles joined him on the varsity squad that finished tenth at the state meet two years ago. The trio of Fagan, Heebner and Lock joined the team in their junior years, and all three, most notably Lock, tasted success on the varsity level.

Other seniors with varsity experi-

ence are Steve Brockland, John Brooks, and Joshua Wheeler. Brockland and Brooks both traveled to the state meet two years ago, but Brockland experienced a relatively "off" year, and Brooks' season was seriously offset by problems with a strained achilles tendon, despite appearing on varsity for last year's sectional meet. Returning senior Bob Bryant and newcomer Joel Baumgart also figure to contend for top spots on the team after displaying impressive speed in the first two weeks of workouts.

Standouts from other classes include juniors Gene Marshall and Tim Probst, and sophomore Ray Griner.

Linhares will again be aided by assistant coach Fr. Jim Goeke, S.J. There are also two new additions to the coaching staff: assistant coaches Mr. Tom Flanagan and Mr. Charles Merriott, both of whom have had experience coaching cross coun-

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Returning Talent Spearheads 1991 Gridbill Squad

by Scott Witte
of the Prep News Staff

The 1991 varsity Gridbills look to have their hard pre-season work pay off in what will certainly be an exciting season against many challenging foes.

This year's offense will be run by third-year starting quarterback Steve



Schnur. Schnur, a senior, set a new school record in passing last year and is one of the most sought-after prospects in the area this year.

Schnur will face no lack of experienced targets to pass to this year. Possible targets include Division I prospects Jason Dulick at wide receiver and Scott Pfeiffer at tight end. Dulick possesses excellent speed and great height at 6'5". Pfeiffer makes another awesome target at 6'5" and 232 pounds.

Other returning offensive starters include senior tackle Jim Gunli and third-year running back Jesse Motton. Having such experienced returners, head coach Gary Kornfeld promises the offense will not be one-dimensional.

The greatest concern, according to Kornfeld, is the front five on offense and defense. Many of last year's frontliners have graduated, creating a disturbing lack of senior experience. But the team hopes a smooth transition can be made.

The secondary is returning three
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SLUH's Commings Plunges Into International Swim Spotlight

by Kevin Navarro
Prep News Reporter

SLUH graduate Jeff Commings, a member of the class of 1991, braved his first international swim meet as he competed for the U.S. National team in the Pan-American Games this summer.

Jeff, a freshman at the University of Texas, was the number one seed in the 100 meter breaststroke at the games. Being the number one seed "put a lot of pressure on me because of the ferocious competition," Commings lamented. Jeff, at seventeen, was relatively young compared to the veteran international swimmers whose ages averaged over 20 years. Swimming a 1:03.02 in the event merited Jeff a bronze medal along with his new rank as the eleventh best breaststroker in the world. His time was only five-tenths of a second shy of his personal record.

Jeff wasn't overly pleased with his time, but he was nonetheless excited with his bronze

medal. Jeff feels the gold medalist, a graduate of the University of Texas, was able to edge him out because of Jeff's lack of experience in international meets.

During an ABC Sports Special about the young swimmer on August 17, following his race, Jeff noted the important role his mother played in giving him support throughout his career, but he said that he had to brave the Pan-Am Games without his mother because he stayed with his team in a small village complex.

He received support from his teammates, but harsh living conditions forced the swimmers "to find new ways to keep comfortable and to keep focused on the race." A comforting element of the trip was that the team's sponsor, Speedo, supplied all the team's clothes, suits, and supplies. Jeff lauds the Pan-Am Games as "a stepping stone for younger swimmers like me."

Jeff is further developing his swimming talents at the University of Texas, where he

was one of two freshmen swimmers to receive a full scholarship. Training with the Longhorns swim team only twenty hours a week forces Jeff and other swimmers "to spread out the twenty hours to get the full benefit." This timetable enables him to be a full time student as he pursues a degree in advertising. If all goes well with his swimming, Jeff wants to be part of the Olympic tryouts March 1-6 in Indianapolis and, if possible the '92 Olympics in Barcelona.

Jeff is now ranked fourth in the nation, but has to ascend two spots because only the number one and two spots are sent to the games, but no one is guaranteed a spot, even Matt Biondi and Janet Evans.... everyone has a chance."

Jeff placed his mark on SLUH by capturing three state titles, two in breaststroke and one in the individual medley. He set state records in both events. Jeff was dubbed the third fastest high school breaststroker ever after his outstanding accomplishments at SLUH.

Cross Country

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try at Bishop DuBourg High School. Commented Linhares, "It's just good luck that we got these two."

A larger staff is necessitated by the sheer size of this year's team. While a recent article in the *North County Journal* blamed many area schools' lack of success in cross country on low turnout for their teams, SLUH's team has grown to 60 members, a large number by St. Louis standards.

The team's growth has created a need "to focus leadership a little more," according to Linhares, from the seniors as a whole to two elected captains. The captains were announced to be Sean Lock and Chris Schmidt following a vote by Linhares, Goeke, and the seniors on the team.

The large turnout is also indicative of growing interest in the team, and thus far, the future looks bright for the Junior Bills. Commented Linhares, "I'd say that psychologically and physically, this team is as prepared as any team I've coached." This year's squad is hungry and ready to compete, an observation backed up by the amount of summer running that the team has done. A good number of Harriers came prepared on the first day of

practice, with summer mileage ranging from 150 to over 300 miles.

However, even those who worked the hardest over summer vacation can not be assured of a spot on varsity this year. Top 7 (the team is allowed to field seven varsity runners for each meet) competition will be fierce this year because of the size and quality of the team. In fact, commented Linhares, "Just to be among the top 14 is going to be difficult."

The one runner who does seem to have an assured position as the team's top runner is Sean Lock, who finished fourth at last year's state meet behind three runners who graduated last spring. According to Linhares, "Sean had a good summer in preparation ... and he is ready to deal with the fact that he'll be regarded as one of the top runners in the area." Linhares added that Sean is exciting to watch, and that his presence "adds something to the whole team."

The team's depth will be an advantage in the face of tough competition from other area teams, especially DeSmet, Fox, Lafayette, Northwest House Springs, and Parkways South and West.

In an early analysis of the season, Linhares said that "we want to be among the top

teams in the area, and I'd like to tell our team not to give quarter to anyone." And, as it has been for the last three or four years, the team's primary goal is to get to the state meet.

Due to a restructuring of the qualification process, this goal's success or failure will be decided in a "winners take all, no second chances" regional meet. In the past, teams were forced to first qualify through the district meet and then through the sectional meet in order to reach state. The two-part qualifying process has been eliminated. Missouri has now been divided into four large regions. Only the top four teams from each regional meet will advance. Consequently, SLUH will no longer be able to cruise through districts before meeting stiffer competition.

An early gauge of the team's abilities will be the first meet of the year next Wednesday, in which SLUH will take on Vianney and Parkway South. Though Vianney does not figure to threaten the Jr. Bills, Linhares pointed out that "Parkway South is a team we really respect," and is a team that has troubled SLUH in the last several years.

The Top 7 for the first meet will be determined by the team's intrasquad meet on Saturday morning.