

Odometerbills win sectionals with 41 points

Cross country looks to knock off Liberty at State

Henry Samson
Reporter

There is a great running equation that sums up the conditions at the 4A Sectional 2 race at Sioux Passage last Saturday: big hills + strong wind = adversity. Fortunately, the Jr. Bills' math was a little rusty as they jogged away with yet another first-place finish over DeSmet and the rest of the field with only 41 points, but this win was not normal for SLUH. Though they won easily, head coach Jim Linhares said he didn't see anything spectacular, which is what he wanted the week before state. "I'm not knocking (Ben) Murphy-Baum's performance at all by saying that," Linhares said, "but we need a better team performance in Jeff City."

Although the team suffered a mild off-day on Saturday, Murphy-Baum, again proving to be the most reliable runner on the team, finished second overall in 16:55 on a particularly difficult day. Senior Alex Muntges ran stride for stride in the lead

Muntges even started to break away from the field. Unfortunately, Sioux Passage is not the course to exorcise any demons in your legs. The downhill caused Muntges' pelvic problems to flare up, and he fell behind. He pulled himself together, though, securing an eighth-place finish in 17:21.

Senior Dan Meier ran an impressive race for the second week in a row and responded when Muntges was failing. He continued to gain places through the entire race and eventually provided the Jr. Billikens with a much needed fifth-place overall finish in 17:14.

The Matt Dirnbeck-Joe Carlson tandem finished as the teams' 4th and 5th men for the third week in a row. They were virtually see **STATEBOUND, 7**



The cross country team proudly displays its Sectional wares.

with Murphy-Baum through the first mile of the race, and after the mile mark,

third week in a row. They were virtually see **STATEBOUND, 7**

Footballbills take down No. 2 Kirkwood, 14-12

Football keeps district title hopes alive

Seth Clampett
Staff

Last Friday night, the Jr. Billiken football team faced off against Kirkwood, the No. 2 team in the area. St. Louis U. High prevailed over the Pioneers, winning 14-12, improving both their record, to 6-3, and their chances at winning districts. The Kornfeldbills attributed their win to their ability to pressure Kirkwood's quarterback and force turnovers.

Head coach Gary Kornfeld said about the game, "I think our kids did a real good job of playing to Kirkwood's tendencies. In other words, we had a feeling of what might be coming in certain situations. I think our guys just made some great plays."

The game started in favor of Kirkwood, but SLUH's defense demonstrated that it would be difficult for the

Pioneers to score. On Kirkwood's first drive, senior defensive end David Franklin bobbled a pass but could not hold on to the ball for the interception. Surviving the near turnover, Kirkwood's quarterback threw a touchdown pass with 6:29 left in

tried to add to their lead. The Pioneers moved down the field quickly until senior linebacker Will Holleman and junior linebacker Scott Rice broke through Kirkwood's blockers for a sack. The ball popped out of the quarterback's hands, but it unfortunately bounced out of bounds. Then, with seconds remaining in the first quarter, junior defensive back Anthony Alessi broke up the play to force Kirkwood to punt.

Starting the second quarter, a couple of dropped passes prevented the Jr. Bills' offense from scoring, but the defense seemed determined to keep

the Pioneers at six points. Putting pressure on the quarterback, the Jr. Bills forced a turnover when Rice intercepted the ball off of a tip with 5:34 left in the half.

see **UNDER THREE, 7**



Senior Curtis Hoette corrals a Kirkwood player during last Friday's victory.

the first quarter for an Kirkwood early lead. However, they missed the extra point, and left the score at 6-0.

SLUH failed to score on their first drive, and Kirkwood took possession and

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UNDER THREE

(from 5)

SLUH's offense built off the momentum, capitalizing on their drive as junior running back Stephen Simmons ran in the touchdown. Quarterback Matt Behr's kick was good, giving the Jr. Bills a 7-6 lead.

Kirkwood tried to answer back as time was running out, but the Jr. Bills' defense crushed the Pioneers' hopes when junior safety Eric Hunt caught a tipped pass for SLUH's second interception with just 45.2 seconds remaining, and SLUH went into halftime ahead 7-6.

Throughout the third quarter, the two teams exchanged the ball, both failing to score. On SLUH's second drive, senior center Phil Brown landed on his neck with 7:57 in the quarter. An ambulance was called for precautionary measures and took Brown to the hospital.

Starting the fourth quarter, junior defensive tackle Mark Sharp sacked Kirkwood's quarterback and forced the Pioneers to punt. On the ensuing drive, Simmons found a hole in Kirkwood's defense and ran 48 yards for a first down. Junior fullback Chris Hoffman followed this charge as he forced his way through Kirkwood's line for two first downs. SLUH finally scored when senior wide receiver John Warner jumped into the air to catch Behr's pass for their second touchdown. Behr's kick added to the Jr. Bills' lead, putting the score at 14-6.

SLUH continued to pressure Kirkwood's offense, forcing them to punt on their next drive. However, Simmons fumbled the ball on the Jr. Bills' second play of their drive with 4:51 left in the game. Kirkwood capitalized on this turnover and ran into the end zone for their second touchdown.

Kirkwood attempted a two-point conversion to tie the game, but SLUH's defense repelled them as Franklin sacked the quarterback while he was throwing the ball away to keep the Jr. Bills in the lead, 14-12.

Kornfeld said, "We felt it might be one of the plays they might (have) gone to, and for David to react the way he did and make the play was great."

Kirkwood then set up an on-side kick to give them a chance to score again.

However, the Jr. Bills recovered the ball with 3:14 left to cement their win. Unfortunately, the Gridironbills were forced to punt with 1:00 left on the clock.

Kirkwood had no timeouts left in the game, so they continually stopped the clock in order to give their offense a chance to score. They didn't count on SLUH's stingy defense, however, as junior Isaiah Cole broke up a pass, and, finally, Franklin stopped their running back. Kirkwood watched the final 17 seconds run out. SLUH fans stormed the field to celebrate their team's victory, 14-12.

Kornfeld said, "They're skilled kids, and they are so explosive, and they can go at any time and play well. I was very proud of (the team's) effort and the way (they) played, going the entire game and only giving up two touchdowns."

Friday night's game also featured players who had not previously played much. Kornfeld said of their effort, "We had some guys step up who haven't really been given a chance to play a lot throughout the year, Anthony Alessi had an outstanding game. We're going to need that same effort (against Vianney)."

SLUH now faces a three-way tie in the contest for the district title. If one team had won all three of their district games, they would advance into the playoffs; therefore, if Lindbergh defeats Kirkwood, they will move on to the tournament.

However, if two teams tied with a 2-1 record, they would face a head-to-head match. If three teams are 2-1, as would be the case if SLUH and Kirkwood both win tonight, it comes down to a point system. If SLUH beats Vianney by more than thirteen points, they earn thirteen points in the system, which is the maximum. If a team goes into overtime, as with the SLUH-Lindbergh game, the winning team receives one point and the losing team loses one point.

In order for SLUH to win districts, they need Kirkwood to win by fewer than three points against Lindbergh and SLUH has to defeat Vianney by at least thirteen points. Come cheer for your Jr. Billiken football team today in the stadium at 7:00 p.m. against Vianney as they hope to win and move on to the state tournament.

STATEBOUND

(from 5)

inseparable during the race, a technique which comes in handy in the spread out field of a state race. Finishing 14th and 17th with only a two-second time spread, they locked down the victory for the Jr. Bills.

Juniors Mike Jonagan and Drew Kaiser struggled a bit, but still finished in 21st and 29th place overall, and will be rounding out the varsity team this weekend at the state meet, where anything can happen.

The top four teams receive trophies tomorrow in one of the most highly anticipated state meets in the nation. Nationally-ranked Liberty high school (No. 4 in the nation) will be present, as well as a tough St. Joseph's Central team. A win would be a big deal for the Jr. Bills on the national level. It would also put an exclamatory "We're back!" in the minds of the Missouri schools that still believe the SLUH state championship win in '99 was a fluke.

"It's easy to say that Liberty is a pretty big favorite tomorrow. I mean, they're good and we can't control their race. But we can control ours so that we come out on top," said Linhares.

Assistant coach Tom Flanagan put aside grading calculus tests for a moment to echo Linhares. "Liberty has shown themselves to be a spectacular team all season. Realistically, unless they come back to us a little, it's going to be more of a fight for second." Flanagan continued, "But they do have only five competitive scoring runners, which is a sort of chink in their armor. And, results aside, we have the best chance since 1961 when SLUH won, and since Linhares has been around, to place multiple all-state runners."

Annually among the thousands of spectators on hand for the state meet, SLUH produces an infamous cheering section slathered in blue paint and known for its spirit. At 11:15 a.m. tomorrow morning on the Oak Hills Golf course in Jefferson City, SLUH cross country will try to cap off a legendary season with one last race: One race to challenge them all, one race to fight them, one race to gather them all, and through adversity unite them.