

Offense on the rise as SLUH beats Howell

Brendan Akos
Reporter

The Jr. Bills' offense seems to have found some consistency. After giving Ft. Zumwalt West a scare in the fourth quarter two weeks ago, the offense has grown comfortable playing in the second half. Before the loss at Zumwalt West, the Jr. Bills had scored a total of 14 second half points in three games. After scoring 21 points in the fourth quarter against Francis Howell Central in last week's 28-26 win, they have now scored 35 points in the second half in their last two games.

After finding themselves down 20-7 at the half (quarterback John Swanston connected to Eric Devlin for a 72-yard touchdown pass in the second quarter), the Footballbills returned to the field energized and prepared to play.

Thanks to stingy defending, both teams failed to score in the third quarter. After an impressive showcase of defense in the third quarter, it was the offense's turn to change the game in the fourth.

Swanston hooked up with Dan James for a 35-yard touchdown with 9:43 to play.

Runners reap

Stephen Kuehner
Reporter

"Sport is not about being wrapped up in cotton wool. Sport is about adapting to the unexpected and being able to modify plans at the last minute. Sport, like all life, is about taking risks."

Sir Roger Bannister, the first man to run a mile in under four minutes, certainly understood the nature of distance running. Very rarely can a runner, or a team, win a race without taking risks. Many of Bannister's

contemporaries believed that a four-minute mile was a physical impossibility.

Bannister stuck his neck out anyway, and it paid off. His one-mile time of 3:59.4 has earned him eternal fame among all runners. Today, over fifty years later, the St. Louis

Coach Gary Kornfield felt that Dan James' touchdown catch was "huge" and he did a good job of "converting the yards after the catch into a touchdown."

Within four minutes the Jr. Bills found themselves within striking distance once again thanks to an interception by senior defensive end Matt Rice. This time, junior Ronnie Wingo finished off the defense's work by scoring on a 4-yard touchdown with 5:39 to play. After the extra point by Tom Neuner, the Jr. Bills were ahead for the first time all game, 21-20.

With 3:58 to play, Wingo seemed to put the knife through Howell's heart with an electrifying run. Wingo stiff armed and exhibited great vision as he eased to the outside. Once he broke through the linebackers, there was nothing Howell's defensive backs

risk rewards

U. High cross country team continues this tradition of risk taking.

The cross country coaching staff had its pick of meets last weekend. There were plenty of local meets that the team should have had little trouble winning. However, as Bannister pointed out, the sport is about taking risks. In that spirit, the coaches decided to test their racers at the Rim Rock Classic Invitational in Lawrence, Kansas.

The Rim Rock Classic draws teams from all over the Midwest, including the very competitive Emporia and Oak Park teams. The meet also features three divisions. SLUH, of course, did not hesitate to register in the gold division, the toughest of the three. This week, the team had decided, they were going to challenge themselves.

could do to catch him. Wingo's 80-yard run, followed by another successful extra point by Neuner, put SLUH up 28-20.



PHOTO BY ZAC BOESCH
The defensive line moves in to block a critical field goal. The defensive line proved to be critical in the victory against Francis Howell Central.

Although the battle seemed to be won, Howell returned with a touchdown pass with merely seconds remaining. But as Howell's quarterback rolled out of the pocket on the two-point conversion, Matt Rice tackled him in the backfield,

ending Howell's hope of overtime for a final score of 28-26.

The difference in the game ended up being extra points. As Kornfield said, "One thing that often gets overlooked is Tom Neuner converting those extra points."

The Jr. Bills play at DeSmet at 7 tonight. Said Kornfield, "We look forward to playing our sister school ... it will be nice to have the student body's support."

at Rim Rock

With their 2006 all-state runner, junior John Clohisy, back on the line, the team began the race with confidence. Despite the high level of competition, SLUH managed to stay within nine seconds of each other during the first mile, with Clohisy leading the pack in 5:11.

The pack continued to spread out during the second mile, with Clohisy passing the two-mile mark in 10:27 and team captain Chris Murphy rounding out the U. High team with a two-mile time of 12:07. Murphy, who had been leading the pack earlier in the season, was forced to drop out of the race with breathing problems.

The loss of one of its lead runners was an unexpected challenge. However, following Bannister's philosophy, junior Austin Cookson and team captain Dan Warner modified their plans in the last mile. Cookson took the lead for SLUH, finishing 8th with a time of 17:04. Warner, who has been finishing fourth or fifth on the team, ran a spectacular final

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PHOTO BY ZAC BOESCH
Junior Matt Kliethermes (far left) leads the SLUH pack to a great start at the Jorgensen Memorial Invite at Ladue Jr. High. He posted SLUH's best time, 18:06.

VODICKA

(from 7)

during that (time).” Vodicka said that adding a spiritual purpose to his playing propelled him to continue his career.

“The sport of tennis is so mental,” said Vodicka. “Growing closer to the Lord totally elevates me on the mental level to try to be more than I could have been on my own.”

Tennis, unlike other major sports, allows players to play in professional events even while continuing to play National College Athletic Association (NCAA) sports. Vodicka played NCAA tennis for SLU during the tennis season, but delved into professional competitions during the off-season, entering as an amateur.

“It was always one of my goals that started when I was three,” said Vodicka.

Shortly after completing college, tragedy struck Vodicka’s life and career. His father, a huge supporter of Vodicka’s tennis career, died. Having lived at home during college, Vodicka was forced to shift to a more independent lifestyle.

Living off himself, Vodicka faced financial troubles when considering world travel to play tennis. The club where Vodicka taught tennis held a fundraiser to show its support for him in playing pro tennis. Vodicka credits the club, which contributed almost \$10,000 to his cause, and the people of St. Louis as the major benefactors to his career.

“Since then, I really have been playing full-time,” said Vodicka. “When the people of St. Louis supported me like that, I really felt it as a door that was opened to go give this a shot.”

Vodicka considers the first time he won an ATP point, in 2002, to be a highlight of his career. “All these years trying and trying to play pro and then all of a sudden you’re on the list of pro players in the world,” said Vodicka.

His next ATP point would not come for four years because of his college studies and a brief tennis lull due to personal and family problems. Vodicka considers his second point equally memorable because to him, it marked the beginning of his comeback. Subsequent wins built up his ATP point total to its current ten and raised his world ranking to its present 940.

His recent world tour took him to India for three weeks, then to Slovakia, Romania, Finland, Naples, Sardinia, and France, playing in weeklong tournaments at each location. On a separate trip, Vodicka met a former doubles partner from SLU and played doubles tournaments in Hawaii, China, and Thailand, making it to the finals of one tournament in Thailand.

In Slovakia, the tournament Vodicka played in was held only 20 miles from the house in which his grandfather was raised. Vodicka had the privilege of being allowed to spend a night in the house his ancestors had owned.

“That is priceless for me,” said Vodicka. “Playing something I love, then getting to stay at the house ... it’s just amazing when I look back on it.”

Vodicka will play in a tournament starting Monday in Mexico. “God willing, I’m going to try my best to see how far I can go and how I can climb up the ladder,” Vodicka said. “I’m trying to bring glory to the Lord the best I can (and) develop the best that I can as a man and as a tennis player.”

RIM ROCK JAYHAWK

(from 5)

mile and finished 11th in 17:08.

Clohisy, who made his 2007 race debut this weekend, was right on Warner’s heels, finishing 14th with a time of 17:10. Sophomores Caleb Ford (17:15) and Bill Gabler (17:17) secured the victory for SLUH with their 21st and 23rd place finishes.

When asked how the team managed to win against such a competitive field, Warner gave much of the credit to head coach Jim Linhares. “Coach kept saying, ‘We need places. We need these two places.’ I was, like, crying at the end,” reported Warner.

Clohisy decided that the day was “pretty satisfying.” He says that he is just glad to be racing again. “It’s nice to be back with the guys and helping the team out the best I can.”

The varsity team was not the only group testing their skills at such a high level meet. Team captain Stephen Schumacher (2nd, 17:42), junior David Kuciejczyk-Kernan (6th, 17:54), and sophomores Tony Minnick (1st, 17:36), Emmett Cookson (3rd, 17:44), Casey Fitzgerald (4th, 17:48), Tyler Jennings (7th, 18:00), and Ben Ford (63rd, 19:33) represented SLUH in the JV gold division. Their outstanding performance earned them the JV team title.

The U. High cross country team decided to take one more risk. With their top fourteen runners in Kansas, SLUH entered both a varsity and a JV team in the Ron Jorgenson Memorial Invitational. This meet, held at Ladue Jr. High, is named in honor of Linhares’s former cross country coach.

Juniors Matt Kliethermes (16th, 18:06) and Ben Carron (18th, 18:07) led the way for SLUH’s varsity team, followed by standout freshman Dan Raterman (27th, 18:22). Four seniors rounded out SLUH’s Ladue team. Aaron Shepard (18:28) and Matt McBride (18:28) crossed the line together for 32nd and 33rd place, respectively. Steve Kelly (55th, 19:02) and team captain Dave Linhares (73rd, 19:42) were the last two finishers of a varsity team that placed third, despite missing fourteen runners.

“It’s phenomenal that we can put in a third seven and still place third,” said Shepard. “I don’t think a lot of teams can do that.”

Not wanting to spoil such a spectacular weekend for SLUH, sophomores Tim McLaughlin (2nd, 18:33), Ted Varty (3rd, 18:39) and Zach Thomas (7th, 18:47) teamed up with juniors Neil Backer (4th, 18:42) and Max Ottenlips (6th, 18:46) to win the JV meet at Ladue.

So, SLUH risked defeat by competing at Rim Rock, and compounded that risk by entering teams at both levels at Ladue, and it paid off. The team claimed three first place and one third place title, showing that they can compete with the very best high school teams in the area.

This Saturday, the team will square off against CBC, DeSmet, Vianney, and Chaminade for the MCC championship. During the upcoming meet, SLUH intends to run for the victory. They might not be able to pull off another day as fantastic as this weekend, but they will chance that. After all, taking risks is what sport is about.
