

Football ends playoff run with loss to Mehlville

Kevin McBrearty
Reporter

The Jr. Bill football team looked to advance to the state semifinals by knocking out Mehlville last Friday. Both teams played hard for all 48 minutes, but in the end the Mehlville running game proved to be too powerful and the Jr. Bills made an early playoff exit, losing 34-7.

The game started as a defensive battle, with both SLUH and Mehlville shutting out the opposing team's offense in the first quarter. Linebacker David Eagleton led the U. High defense with 6 tackles, a forced fumble, and an interception all in the first quarter.

In the second quarter the Playoffbills looked to draw first blood on offense. They started in great field position, from their own 45. As usual, sophomore running back Ronnie Wingo got things going on a 24-yard sprint down to the Mehlville 31 yard line. From there, the Mehlville defense toughened

up and forced the Jr. Bills to attempt a field goal. Kicker Max Wheeler came on to attempt a 42 yarder, but no dice. The Jr. Bills would have to hold off the Mehlville attack once more without the comfort of a lead.

Mehlville came out ready to run in their next drive. They took over at their 20-yard line, but didn't stay there long. Mehlville weaved and stutter-stepped their way down the field on three big runs, bringing them within 15 yards of a touchdown. From there, they pounded away at the U. High defense, finally scoring on a 1-yard run to give them a 7-0 lead halfway through the second quarter.

The Jr. Bills gave Mehlville a scare on the next drive. Sophomore quarterback John Swanston aired out a pass to junior receiver

Eric Devlin, but a Mehlville defender barely got his fingers on the ball to tip it away from Devlin.

Mehlville took over after the Jr. Bills failed to get a first down. They worked quickly, getting to midfield on a 14-yard pass. Then the running game got going. On two consecutive plays, the Mehlville of-

fense ran for 20 yards and a first down and then for 20 yards to score with 2:28 left in the half, giving them a 14-0 lead.

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Dave Eagleton picks off a pass by the Mehlville quarterback.

Cross Country has a successful season

Matt Lawder
Reporter

"Every year we try to get a state trophy," said sophomore Cliff David after the season. "We work hard and try to get ourselves in a good position for when we step on the line at state. We did that this year."

The St. Louis U. High cross country team got off to a successful start this year with an early focus on doing well at the state meet. The team also logged a lot of miles in the offseason with a handful of guys running over 500 miles.

With the summer heat still wilting the greenery in Forest Park, the Jr. Bills began their season with practices of long distances, which took some runners as far as downtown Clayton, and several blisteringly fast tempo runs. By the time the start of school rolled around, the squad had ballooned to 90 runners, with an astounding 36 freshmen. With only three captains to manage the whole team, some team members began losing focus, but the start of the season two weeks later re-energized everyone.

The varsity squad, seasoned by weeks of endurance, opened its season at McNair Park

with a second-place finish behind eventual state champions Fort Zumwalt South. "The only teams that beat us this year ended up being the state champions," said sophomore Max Ottenlips

After the first meet, several new runners began to emerge as varsity contenders. While Matt Lawder, Nate Banet, Dan Viox, sophomore John Clohisy and junior Mike McCafferty were solidifying their spots as varsity main-stays, the battle for the six and seventh spots grew ever more intense. Freshman Caleb Ford, junior Steve Schumacher, and sophomore Austin Cookson joined junior Chris Murphy and sophomores David Kuciejczyk-Kernan and Cliff David as top seven hopefuls. Unfortunately, David was diagnosed with a stress fracture not long after and could not run for the whole season.

The team continued its charge into the season, heading to some top-level meets including the First Annual Forest Park Cross Country Festival and the RimRock Classic in Lawrence, Kansas. The team really began to click and gain momentum with big third and second-place finishes. Then the injury bug took its bite out of SLUH. Clohisy had to sit out of several meets with hip trouble,

and Murphy's previous stomach problems resurfaced. The team looked a little weak and worried heading towards the postseason.

The team hung together to win the conference championship over a tough CBC squad, followed by the district and sectional championships. Each week the team looked stronger, fitter, and more rested. Clohisy and Murphy both healed up and were ready to go full bore for the state meet.

The team had a good a day at state, capturing a second-place trophy and two individual medals for All-Staters Lawder and Clohisy. It was SLUH's highest finish since 1999, when they won the state title.

"I think that our effort and hard work this season really showed at the state meet," said Clohisy.

"I think it was a quality season," said sophomore Ben Carron. "The team definitely came together and it was fun to be a part of."

SLUH had one of the best teams in the school's history, and many of its runners will be returning to next year's squad, so be on the lookout for fast times and more broken records next year.