

# Soccer kicks their way into contention

**David Kirner**  
*Reporter*

Though St. Louis U. High's varsity soccer team has only two returning starters from last year's squad, head coach Charles Martel thinks the team will compete.

"Every year we always have an influx of JV players who contribute. That's been the case for the past three or four years. If that occurs again and we get some help from our seniors, we think we're going to be pretty competitive," Martel said.

As always, the Metro Catholic Conference (MCC) is looking very strong. "CBC is much better this year," said Martel. "I think they're the team to beat. Chaminade's going to be a lot better, just a notch below CBC. I have a feeling Vianney may be ranked pre-season number one. They're very athletic, very big, and fast. And DeSmet is always

tough ... It's going to be very competitive."

Preseason training has been going well for the Treemanbills. Both Martel and assistant coach Charlie Clark are happy with the team's work ethic.

"From day one, I remember telling the team that their work ethic and the seriousness of their practices was really, really good," Martel said, "and it has continued throughout the preseason."

One of the team's strengths is its fitness. Clark's Ajax summer running program has seen great results.

"Ajax really helps us prepare for competition by strengthening us mentally and physically," said senior defender Matt Odem.

"SLUH players will work till physical exhaustion," said senior captain Joe Bet-

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# Swimming gets set after 5th place state finish

**Chad Carson**  
*Reporter*

On Monday, the St. Louis U. High swim team finally returned to its home pool at Forest Park Community College ("FoPoCoCo"). For the past three weeks, the team has been forced to practice at the outside Webster Groves Aquatic Center due to pool maintenance at FoPoCoCo.

In accordance with a federal law placed in effect last year, the two main drains needed to be replaced to lessen safety hazards. All pools in the country have been forced to change the drains, requiring a lengthy process of draining the pool. With the drained pool, the Community College decided to do overall pool maintenance, including changing the lights, painting the ceiling and upper deck walls, retiling the inside of the pool, and replacing the metal gutter along the pool walls with blue tile.

Although the pool needed repairs, it had been scheduled to reopen by August 10, the

first day of fall sports practice.

"The maintenance crews worked very hard to get us in as soon as possible," said head coach Fritz Long, "but all the renovations compounded together took longer than expected."

This was not the first time the swim team was unable to practice at the Forest Park Community College pool. In the fall of 2006, the pool was drained to install a metal gutter around the edge of the pool. Without the ability to use the pool, the team participated in dry land only practices for the first week.

"Although the conditions may not have been the best," said Long, "at least we were able to have a pool to practice at for the first three weeks."

Since Webster is a public pool, the team was forced to practice after pool hours from 7:30pm until 9:30pm. With the last

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# XC toes the line

**Will Bufe**  
*Reporter*

After a stellar season and a humbling second-place finish at state last year, the St. Louis U. High cross country squad enters 2009 with a tremendous amount of talent. Nationally ranked seventeenth by Harrier XC, the Junior Bills will be led mostly by seniors in what will be a season full of expectation. After months of off-season training, the team has shown to be extremely deep, with competitive varsity-caliber runners all the way through the third seven.

Senior captain Caleb Ford says that there will be a few things to keep in mind about this season. "We will be very dominant in the St. Louis area, but there are some very good schools, Lee's Summit North and Jefferson City in particular. But I think our team is looking really good, and getting better and better."

Ford hopes to break the 16:00 mark this season, which would certainly make him go down as one of the fastest in SLUH history.

Senior Captain Emmett Cookson, who recently was forced into cutting off his dreadlocks as a result of the school's dress code, remarked, "I do not think it will affect me mentally, because no matter what happens to me, I'm always a '10' up in my head, that's on a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest." He looks forward to the motivating challenge of attempting to beat his older brother, Austin Cookson's, '09, times from his senior year.

Fifth-year coach Joe Porter said, "We've got a pretty good team this year. We're looking forward to seeing what we can do against the rest of the state."

Perhaps one of the more surprising developments during the offseason was the emergence of senior Bill Franey as one of the team's fastest runners. "Coming off last track season I knew there would be opportunity to move up with a lot of the seniors gone. I hope to prove to these guys that I can run with them and do well in top seven races," Franey said after running an impressive 10:52 2-mile at the Alumni Race in mid-August.

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## CATERPILLAR

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cool weeks, the team often practiced in frigid waters with an outside temperature of around 60 degrees.

"The pool was freezing, especially in the morning. I've never been in a colder pool in the past years as a swimmer," said freshman Jerome Laforest.

The majority of the team shared Laforest's feelings about the pool. "I'm actually glad to be returning to FoPo after those cold night practices," said senior Andrew Danter.

The highlight of the practices came when Long utilized the pool's facilities for a set of exercises. The set consisted of going down the large slide followed by laps around the lazy river upstream.

"That set was probably one of the most memorable moments of my SLUH swimming career," said Danter. "The only thing that beat it was lining Elm Street in Webster doing jumping jacks in speedos."

"Even with the changes at the start of the year, I have hopes for a promising year coming off of our fantastic fifth-place State finish last year," said Long.

With the loss of many state-qualifying teammates such as diver Mick Dell'Orco, '09, and swimmer Will Derdeyn, '09, the team will be looking to its current senior class to fill their void. The effort will be led by newly-elected senior captains Dan Schmidt, Daniel Pike, George Staley, and John Helling.

## EXLAX

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a great shot on goal, but it was stopped by the Rockhurst keeper.

On the other half of the field, Saville made a miraculous save to keep the Jr. Bills alive. Midfielder Phil Azar, '09, completed his first and only assist of the season to Fonke, who buried the game winner in the back of the net. The newly-crowned State champions celebrated their 11-10 victory on the field.

"When I saw the shot hit the back of the net, I threw my stick up in the air and jumped into the dog pile," said Meagher. "I was sort of stunned. It was such a long game that all I could think of was it's finally over, we finally won."

"We'll have to make up their loss in other places. In looking at the numbers, the team is broader than we've had in past years," said Long. "We have more guys this year that are ready to make a name for themselves, so I'm expecting this to be a breakout year for some upperclassmen."

While the team may be losing many individual state qualifiers, the depth of the team promises for more relay qualifiers than in past years.

"While our first meet is against a very tough opponent (Parkway West), the true predictor of the season will be Marquette Relays," Long said. "At Marquette, you have to have a lot of depth in every stroke to do well."

The first meet of the year was last night against Parkway West, a team who has defeated SLUH in past years.

In past years, divers Dell'Orco and Ryan Berger, '09, have accounted for a great deal of points at Marquette Relays. Even so, Long believes that "the divers this year will still be a huge contributing factor to our team. They're more prepared and better than they were at the end of last year."

In addition to a promising season from upperclassmen, the incoming freshman class will be a beneficial part to the team.

"This incoming class adds to our depth and adds variety to our stroke. They have a lot of potential to help this team out this year," said Long.

"The feeling that I had after we won that game was beyond excitement," said senior defenseman Adam Clark. "That was one of the best moments of my SLUH career."

The Cradlebills ended their season with an exceptional record of 18-3. Several players were showered with All-State honors: Meagher, Fonke, Hof, Saville, and graduate attack Andrew Howe were awarded with first team All-State, and Hof was named an All-American.

## XC

(from 6)

Tim McLaughlin, another senior, has battled a tough road en route to a top seven position, after a busy school workload caused him to forego his junior track season. He said, "Well, track...take it or leave it, I left it...but you know what? Track is in the past. I'm thinking about this present season...I'm going to give it my all."

But cross country is more than just a competitive sport. Senior captain Bill Gabler explains that there's a "community aspect. We have over 100 guys on the team...very exciting stuff. Everybody is very into it. I enjoy seeing the top guys go, all the way down to the slowest guy on the team."

Running a varsity race is a very honorable privilege on this team, as it is a very competitive ladder to climb to the top seven. SLUH tends to use its second and third seven in varsity races throughout the season in order to give more guys an opportunity to race at the varsity level, which all of them would do at almost any school in the area.

"The depth of the team is pretty clear...last year out at Rim Rock or Findley, you have in the JV meet almost complete domination. You don't see that kind of depth on other teams," said senior Charlie Stoltze, currently a member of the second seven. "As for my role, I try to stay in there and help lead. The seniors have really got to step up."

The Junior Bills have got talent that any coach would beg for. The Boys in Blue begin the quest for November glory today at 4:00 at McNair Park in St. Charles.

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