

# The agony of defeat: Jr. Bills lose heartbreaker on Lindbergh

BY RYAN DOWD  
REPORTER

The St. Louis U. High football team (3-3, 1-2 Metro Catholic Conference) fell to the Chaminade Red Devils Friday night in another heart-wrenching loss. As in their previous losses this year, the Jr. Bills hung in until the end, but mistakes and rotten luck doomed them. Squaring up against the best running back in the area, the Jr. Bill offense countered the Devils with an impressive running game of their own. But somehow, some way, the Devils emerged with a 42-40 victory.

With his team down 35-28 with less than a minute left in the third quarter, junior quarterback Trevor McDonagh flicked a 6-yard fade pass to junior wideout Stefan Sansone. Sansone rose high above the Chaminade cornerback and hauled in the crucial touchdown. But senior kicker Brian Silvestri, who up to that point had been perfect so far this season, missed the kick. The seemingly small mistake would come back to haunt them.

Chaminade running back Rob Standard displayed his breakaway speed on Chaminade's last play of the third quarter. He found a seam in the SLUH defense and galloped 84 yards down the field to separate the two teams by a touchdown yet again.

Head coach Gary Kornfeld said, "There were times when we had (Standard) stopped at the point of attack, then he sees it, makes a cut and makes somebody fall down, and that's what made Chaminade's running game go."

After giving up 14 points in each of the first three quarters, the Jr. Bills held the Devils scoreless

in the last quarter.

"One key thing for us to play better defensively is that we've got to tackle better," said Kornfeld.

With the time slipping away, McDonagh and his cohorts showed why their offense is one of the best in the MCC. Stranded at midfield on a third and 16, McDonagh dropped back in the pocket, and McDonagh let loose a rope to junior receiver Mitch Klug, who caught the pass for a 32-yard gain.

The dynamic zig zagging of junior running back Terek Hawkins carried SLUH to the goal line of Chaminade. There, McDonagh powered in behind senior center Will Meiners to bring the score to 42-40. The Jr. Bills needed the two-point conversion to tie.

"We kinda throw when we want and run when we want," said senior captain and left tackle Charlie Brynac.

An unsportsmanlike conduct call brought the Jr. Bills back 15 yards. On the try, McDonagh checked the ball down to Hawkins, who burst for the right pylon. Chaminade middle linebacker Brandon Minor got there first however, and wrestled Hawkins down a couple yards short of the end zone.

Following the disappointment of the previous drive, the SLUH kickoff team executed a perfect onside kick. Silvestri made up for his earlier miss and chipped a perfect bouncing ball straight ahead into the first line of the Chaminade wall. The Jr. Bills crashed into the Devils' front men and SLUH recovered.

The Jr. Bills took over around midfield and began to move the ball again. McDonagh hit Klug yet again this time on a slant to convert

a crucial third and 7. Following runs by Hawkins and a 12-yard pass to junior receiver Cameron Stubbs, the Jr. Bills had a first goal at the Chaminade 6-yard line with 1:03 remaining. The SLUH crowd grew more raucous, anticipating another victory like the last-minute one in

Hawkins should be out of the discussion. Without Hawkins' productive running, the Jr. Bills would not have even been in the ball game. The Jr. Bill offense turned to Hawkins early in the game.

"When somebody wants to go ahead and back off six, seven

PHOTO BY TED WIGHT



Junior running back Terek Hawkins looks for a lane on his way to 371 total yards.

2008.

The fervor would not last, though. Hawkins took the ball and knifed for three yards, but was taken down and stripped of the ball by Chaminade defenders.

But SLUH got one more chance. The defense forced Chaminade to punt with around 10 seconds left. Stefan Sansone received it inside Devil territory but could not muster a miracle return, and time expired.

Whomever pundits may choose to blame for this loss,

people in coverage then you have to run the run," said Kornfeld.

Hawkins kept the Jr. Bills in the game during the second quarter by gashing the Devils repetitively, slithering out of a handful of tackles on each run. He scored twice in the second quarter on 18-yard and 61-yard runs.

"We as a team wanted to make the point that we can run the ball and pass the ball," said Hawkins.

Hawkins had the best game of his career so far, matching Standard stride for stride. He carried the ball

29 times for 292 yards and eventually piled up 371 total yards and three touchdowns.

Standard finished the game with 317 yards on 26 carries. He scored twice in the first quarter and two more times in the fourth quarter.

"The guy's quite a bit of a running back, he's a Division I recruit, and he's hard to contain," said Brynac.

Although the Jr. Bill defense obviously gave up yardage to Standard, for the most part they played decently enough to win. Third-down defense was their Achilles heel, however. Standard repeatedly found a way to get past the markers and keep the chains moving.

While Chaminade quarterback Christian Suntrup did not do much throwing, he completed 9 of 10 passes for 188 yards (74 yards of which came on a second quarter screen pass for a touchdown). He did, however, prove tough to corral in the pocket. On many occasions Suntrup was able to shrug off the pass rush and scramble to make a play. These plays killed SLUH's defensive momentum.

The Jr. Bills' brutal schedule still does not seem to get any easier. Eureka is 5-1 so far this year, with one loss to Lindbergh.

"Out of the four non-league teams we picked up, there's only one of them who has a loss outside of playing us, and that's the team we're playing this week and they're 5-1," said Kornfeld.

The Jr. Bills aren't likely to catch a break versus the Eureka Wildcats. Kornfeld said, "I really feel we are a hair away from being a great ball club, and we need to step over that line to become a great ball club."

## Swimming cruises to fifth straight triumph

BY CULLIN TRIPP  
REPORTER

The SwimBills (6-2) cruised to a win over Cape Notre Dame and Mehlville in a tri-meet Wednesday, scoring 163 to Cape Notre Dame's 112 and Mehlville's 41. The victory came on the heels of a win over Zumwalt West.

Last Thursday SLUH took on Fort Zumwalt West and won, 120-66. SLUH dominated the meet from the start and was able to get a solid win. Junior Amir Paschal qualified for State with a time of 22.88 in the 50-yard freestyle, and freshman Luke Sloan qualified in the 500 freestyle with a time of 5:06.62.

"It was really cool to see the entire team behind Luke on that last 50. He got a great reception and I think everyone in the stands was on their feet, clapping. That really shows how unified we are as a team, and I think that as the season progresses we're growing closer together," said coach Rachel

Graczak.

Sloan's qualification in the 500 free leaves only one more event to fill in the State meet: 100 back.

SLUH hosted Cape Notre Dame and Mehlville Wednesday and controlled that meet well for its fifth straight win.

PHOTO BY TED WIGHT



Senior Nick Piening dives in the Bills' win over Zumwalt West.

"The meet went well. We're working on pacing and breathing, and I did see some negative breathing. We're getting better at not breathing every stroke, and at this point in the season I really think that bringing what we learn in practice to the meets will be very effective in the long run," Graczak said after the meet.

The Jr. Bills jumped out to a lead in the first few races and swam away with the meet. Strong swimmers from Paschal, Sloan, and senior captain Michael Hagerty led the Bills to their sixth win of the season.

In the second race, the 200 IM (50 butterfly, 50 backstroke, 50 breaststroke, 50 freestyle), Sloan

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## Second varsity takes 3rd at Queeny

BY GREG FISTER  
REPORTER

Despite holding back its top five runners in preparation for the upcoming conference meet, the St. Louis U. High varsity cross country team placed third at the Ron Jorgensen Memorial Invitational at Queeny Park last Friday, a testament to the squad's depth and talent.

Queeny Park's fast-paced course, consisting of rolling hills and forested detours, is a favorite of many SLUH racers, many of whom finished with personal records.

The top SLUH finisher of the day was junior Joe Esswein, who placed 16th overall with a time of 17:17. Senior Dan Raterman finished on Esswein's tail with a time of 17:18. With their finishes, they earned the last two spots on the top seven for the Metro Catholic Conference (MCC) championship on Saturday. Behind them, in another close pack, were freshman John Esswein and sophomore Tom Laughlin, who placed 23rd and 24th, respectively, and finished within one second of each other.

In 26th place overall came junior Jack Milford, who, despite being a first-year cross-country runner, finished once again close to SLUH's top runners. The rest of the SLUH finishers all held places among the race's top 40, out of 105 total.

Head coach Joe Porter was happy with the way his team performed.

"One of the things we continue to look at is our one to five spread—how many seconds are between our first runner and our fifth runner. And we really had a low spread; I think it was 11 seconds. That's great. We liked the way they packed up. We would like to see them work together a little more, but we were definitely excited to see the way things turned out," said Porter.

The only teams to finish ahead of the Jr. Billikens were nationally-ranked O'Fallon (Ill.) and Eureka, which Porter described as "probably the third best team in the St. Louis area."

Joe Esswein was very pleased with his performance, saying, "It feels amazing. Coming into the season I was really stoked because I had a chance to be top seven, but I was sick for the first few weeks of the season and that really put me back, but now I'm back where I think I can and should be."

An ongoing subplot for the Jr. Billiken team has been the brotherly rivalry between the Essweins, who have finished near each other in multiple races. At Queeny, it was the elder Joe who came out on top and earned a spot on the top seven, but Porter said he has been impressed by both of the brothers.

"John and Joe are both running

extremely well. And they are going to continue to run extremely well. We'll see how the season unfolds; there is still a little bit of racing left. They are both rising up through the ranks, and we're excited about both of them," said Porter.

The reasoning behind the decision to rest the top five was twofold, explained Porter.

"We want to give varsity racing experience to other guys on the team. It's one of the things we continue to do, it's one of the things our program (stresses), to give quality races to the guys who might not be getting that experience all the time," said Porter. "The other reason is that the top five came off of a really tough race at Palatine in terms of quality of the field and how hard they raced. And typically when we get to this part of the season, we don't race our top guys as much to give them a little bit of rest between races."

Porter added that the final stretch of the season taxes the top runners, with Districts, Sectionals, State, and Regionals in consecutive weeks.

The top five will be back in action tomorrow in hopes of bringing home a Metro Catholic Conference championship; the meet is at 10:00 a.m. in Forest Park.

"The big focus for us is always to come away with a conference title and we hope to do that on Saturday," said Porter.