

## Jr. Bill soccer falls 2-0 to Griffins, splits Kansas City trip

BY JAMES BOECKMANN  
REPORTER

Last Tuesday night was a scene that has been replayed more this year than most SLUH soccer seasons, and seemingly way too much with the talent of this year's team. After a 2-0 loss to rival Vianney, disappointed fans walked quickly to their cars after looking with disgust at the scoreboard. Everyone looked slightly confused and frustrated as the team talked off to the side of the bench. The craziest part is how it didn't feel like the Jr. Bills were the worse team in many of these games.

With the exception of the DeSmet game, SLUH has played well in every game this year, but it seems that when they play big games, the Jr. Bills can't convert their dominance over the flow of the game into goals, especially early in games.

Not to take anything away from Vianney, who played very well Tuesday night and at times backed SLUH into their own end and created plenty of scoring chances for themselves.

In the first half, SLUH missed the goal on some decent chances, Vianney hit the post with a shot, and SLUH keeper Guillaume Delabar made a few good plays stopping shots and going after crosses. The half ended 0-0, and it was very competitive and exciting to watch.

The first twenty minutes of the second half looked a lot like the first half, with both teams creating valid chances at goals



photo | Kyle Vogt

Junior Nick Kocsiak scores against Francis Howell North last Thursday.

but not converting. But Vianney flicked a throw-in back post and out of Delabar's reach to take the lead 1-0 with 18 minutes left in the half.

After that goal, SLUH stepped up a little bit and gained more control. Senior captain Sam Steurer, who hadn't played in the game due to injury, came on at forward with ten minutes left and made an immediate impact. The offense was noticeably more dynamic with him on the field, and he almost finished a sliding goal off a cross from Ryan Merrifield just after entering the game.

However, Vianney broke out on the counterattack with seven minutes left and beat SLUH's defense. Senior Mason Suess attempted to get the ball out, but hit

it off the ball carrier's foot and it careened into the side netting to double Vianney's lead.

Vianney held onto the lead, even though SLUH continued to threaten the goal for the rest of the game.

Senior captain Paul Buehler described the game as "frustrating. We played well and had our chances to score but just couldn't find the net. If we had converted one of our chances early on it could've been a totally different game."

Last Friday, the Jr. Bills were out in Kansas City to play rival Rockhurst. It was a statement game for SLUH heading into the beginning of their MCC schedule. Regulation was scoreless as both teams failed to convert their

opportunities and Delabar made a strong return from his concussion, carrying a shutout into extra time.

However, after playing two great halves of soccer, SLUH gave up a breakaway in extra time, and Rockhurst finally beat Delabar to win a very evenly matched struggle.

Senior Logan Welge said, "I thought it was really evenly matched. We both had chances to score, but they took advantage of one of their opportunities in OT."

The next day the Jr. Bills had to put the late defeat behind them and focus their efforts on a competitive Liberty team. The first half ended tied, but SLUH looked like they were in a great position to take over the game.

However, five minutes into the second half, Liberty converted on a free kick to take the lead.

Shortly after, Steurer left the game with an injury but the Jr. Bills rallied back to score a goal ten minutes later when Welge made a play on the wing. He beat his defender one on one and slotted the ball to Buehler, who finished perfectly to even the score and take back the momentum for SLUH.

Late in the game, senior Joey "Air Moses" Ferber channeled the mojo into one of his signature throw-ins. Merrifield flicked it on goal with his head, and some sketchy goaltending allowed the ball to cross the line to give the Jr. Bills a one-goal lead, which they held for the 2-1 win to end their KC trip on a positive note.

Coach Charlie Martel described the team's failure to get big wins: "It's frustrating, and it's because we're not scoring goals. We need to find someone who can finish within eight yards, someone who can get that goal."

The tough part of the schedule is just beginning. Last night SLUH took on O'Fallon, a top team in the St. Louis area, and tomorrow the Jr. Bills get their rematch with DeSmet, who beat them 2-0 in the CBC Tournament earlier this year. From there they continue to engage in tough MCC battles for the rest of the season.

"It's a grind," said Martel, "but by the end of the year we are always a stronger team because of it."

## Hockey shows potent offensive promise

BY NATHAN RUBBELKE  
CORE STAFF

"Offense wins games, defense wins championships" is a comma splice known all too well in the sports world. The St. Louis U. High hockey team, with a powerful offense and an inexperienced defense, will look to put that adage to shame in its 2011 campaign.

The Jr. Bills started up their season last Tuesday in their first game of the annual pre-season Top Hat Tournament. SLUH won 4-1 over Eureka, with four goals from the starting offensive line—seniors Trent Lulow and Dan Warnecke and junior Chase Berger.

As shown in that first game, the Jr. Bills are loaded with offensive prowess. The team holds 12 forwards on its roster, and returns Lulow, Warnecke, and Berger, three of its top scorers from last year's squad.

"(It) is probably the best group of forwards we have had in the last ten years," said Busenhart.

The Jr. Bills will rely on their offensive skill early in the season, while the defense gains varsity experience.

Senior Joey Luongo and junior Remy Hoffman will provide stability on the defense corps, and junior Peter Hummel will also use his varsity experience to be a leader on the defensive end.

Busenhart expects Luongo, Hoffman, and Hummel to improve the inexperienced defend-

ers as the season progresses.

"The other guys probably saw a grand total of ten varsity games between them" last season, said Busenhart.

To combat the defensive inexperience, Busenhart and his fellow coaches have experimented with their forward lines.

In the past, Busenhart has created his offensive lines to spread the talent around.

"My philosophy has always been to divide the power and get three equal lines," said Busenhart.

But Busenhart will stray away from that philosophy this season, as he has put his three strongest forwards on the same line—Berger, Lulow, and Warnecke.

"Our job is to pretty much score," said Lulow.

Busenhart and Lulow are confident that the line change will be successful. Neither worries that the other lines will be lost on the ice without a main scoring threat.

"We can have confidence in more than one line," said Lulow. "Each line has a job to do. The other lines' job is to grind and wear the other team down."

The Jr. Bills will also see a change in goalie this year. With the graduation of two-year starter Justin Ragland, senior Thomas Place takes his place between the posts.

"Thomas will be an excellent gatekeeper," said Busenhart.

Trust in a team's goaltender is

## Michael McLaughlin wins race as SLUH XC conquers MCC battle

BY GREG FISTER  
STAFF ARTIST

Rivalries run deep among the schools in the St. Louis Metro Catholic Conference. In most high school sports, the competition for the conference championship is a long, difficult one, but cross country is not one of those sports. SLUH's cross country team has been conference champs for the past seven years, veritably crushing their MCC opponents. This year was no exception, even with senior captain Nathan Rubbelke, a top runner sitting out due to an iron deficiency.

The weight of SLUH's victory in the race was carried mostly by underclassmen, as there were only two seniors racing in the team's top seven runners. The varsity race, the first of last Saturday morning's races in Forest Park's Central Fields, started with the Jr. Bills feeling a little uneasy due to Rubbelke's absence.

But the team performed very well, with five runners in the top ten overall. Sophomores Tom Rubio and John Esswein gave their elders a run for their money, with Esswein placing 12th, even better considering he recently recovered from an injury, and Rubio placing seventh with a finishing time of 16:55.

The juniors in the race, Joe Archer, Tom Laughlin and Matt Nicholson, really cemented their

positions as State-quality runners for next year, placing eighth, fourth, and third, respectively.

Where was the lightning-fast, mysterious senior Michael McLaughlin during all of this? Rest assured, cross country fans, he did not sit idly by: while the youngsters fought for positions among the best runners in the MCC, he put his lasting dedication and peak fitness to work, speeding past everyone else in the first mile of the race to become the singular MCC champion.

McLaughlin got right down to business at the starting gunshot, taking only 400 meters for him to find his way to the front of the pack.

"My goal then was basically to hold the lead for the rest of the race, but around the end of the first mile a CBC runner passed me up, so for most of the second mile I was hanging on to him, and in the third (mile) I tried to pass him, and succeeded," said McLaughlin.

"My goal was to win, and my mindset was that I should take the lead from the beginning, and lead the race from there," said McLaughlin. "Though as a team, we focused more on just winning the race, and less on the competitive side of things, because the win was kind of in the bag for us; it was more about just being content with first place."

McLaughlin has come a long way to be the great runner that he is today. He has been on the track and cross country teams each year so far at SLUH, and has been neck and neck with classmate Rubbelke for the position as top runner from the class of 2012.

McLaughlin received an All-State title last year in Jefferson City, and though his most recent track season was fraught with disappointment, he has returned to SLUH cross country stronger than ever and, as Rubbelke would say, "hungry4more."

"I value the team atmosphere of SLUH's cross country program; I know other people like their teams, but I think (ours) is just a great atmosphere that I've enjoyed since I was a freshman," said McLaughlin.

"The other thing is the drive to do well at State; ever since my freshman year, I've wanted to race well at the State meet as a junior and senior year."

The cross country team, though it has once again conquered the MCC, has a long way to go: over the next few weeks they face the District at Sioux Passage Park, then the Sectional meet at McNair Park, then the State meet in Jefferson City, wrapping up with the Regional meet in Terre Haute, Indiana.

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