

# SPORTS

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## Soccer changes lineup to take on St. Dominic, Oakville, and Kirkwood

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REPORTER

The St. Louis U. High varsity soccer team improved to 9-3-2 this week with victories against St. Dominic and Kirkwood, and a draw with Oakville.

Last Saturday, the Crusaders of St. Dominic High School traveled to the U. High to face off against the Jr. Billikens. SLUH carried momentum into the game from last week's penalty kick win against Webster Groves.

Head coach Charlie Martel decided to move around his lineup in an attempt to create more offense. Junior Pietro Nicastro was moved from left back to the midfield, and junior captain Cam Verzino was moved from center back to the striker position. Junior Billy Hughes replaced Nicastro at left back, and senior Carson Berry replaced Ver-

zino at center back.

Although a big switch, Martel had confidence in his defense to remain dominant.

"I think defensively we're just as good. That enabled us to free up Po (Nicastro) and Cam to put them in more offensive positions," said Martel.

St. Dominic, a dominant team in Missouri Class Three (ranked No. 7 in the area for small schools), was not expected to be an easy foe.

"They won a State title a couple years ago. They're always prepared, it's like playing a Class Four team, they're at that level," said Martel.

The Jr. Bills started off the game with commanding play. In the 13th minute, new starter Hughes ran down the left side and cut into the middle, putting a bullet just over the crossbar to start off a flurry of U. High scoring chances.

As the first half ad-

vanced, chances from Hughes and sophomore Louis Vacca continued, only to be stifled by the Crusader keeper. With eight minutes left in the first half, Hughes put a beautiful through ball in to senior Donovan Ditto, whose shot was barely saved by the keeper.

As the first half came to a close, Nicastro blasted a loose ball off the crossbar, where the rebound trickled out to Hughes, who put another hard shot on net that was saved by the St. Dominic goalie. The first half ended 0-0 despite SLUH dominating possession and creating many scoring chances.

Seven minutes into the second half, junior keeper Alec Meissner made a clutch save off an opposing header, one of St. Dominic's best chances of the afternoon.

The second half played out as a battle in the midfield

until newly-moved midfielder Nicastro hit a rocket that dipped just over the goal-keeper's fingertips and into the top corner, giving SLUH a 1-0 lead.

"I would say it was our best goal of the season so far. Pietro picked the ball out maybe five or ten yards outside the box, and just hit the ball on the run into the top corner," said Berry. "It came at the perfect time. We had been struggling to score, it just helped tremendously."

SLUH attempted to maintain possession and control of the game, but to no avail as the Bills had trouble finishing off chances.

With five minutes left in the game, a St. Dominic forward struck a looping shot that was saved by Meissner, who hit it right over the crossbar to preserve the 1-0 lead.

continued on page 10



From left: Scott Janasik (17), Brandon Trusler (8), Pietro Nicastro, and Billy Hughes celebrating against St. Dominic.

photo | Brendan Voigt

## Senior XC Captains Lipinski and Northcott lead team in their final season



Captain Matthew Northcott in a meet last year.  
photo | Brendan Voigt

ANDREW MODDER  
SPORTS EDITOR

After discovering their passions for running cross country early in their high school years, senior captains Roman Lipinski and Matt Northcott hope to build a team dedicated to hard work and friendship as they act as leaders in their final seasons at St. Louis U. High.

Both Lipinski and Northcott had other interests when they enrolled at SLUH, and neither of them planned to run cross country in their freshman year.

Lipinski, after quitting the football team, decided to focus on track as his top sport in high school. He had displayed his running talent in various competitions at the grade school level, and wanted to continue.

"We just had the grade school track program, which wasn't too competitive, but I found out that in grade school I was fast enough to actually qualify for these grade school National things," said Lipinski.

Lipinski looked at cross country as a way to improve in the fall so he would be more prepared as track season came around in the spring.

"After having a falling out with the football team, I decided, 'well I really like track,' it was my biggest thing and I had been running track since seventh grade, and I figured the best way to get better at track was to run cross country," said Lipinski.

continued on page 11

## Football gets shut out by Jeff City, struggles without Adams

(continued from page 8)

touchdown of the game, and the extra point raised the deficit to 19 points. A fourth quarter touchdown set the score at its final mark of 26-0.

Despite the unfortunate outcome of the game, head coach Gary Kornfeld took positive things from it.

"Defensively, we did a wonderful job in spots," Kornfeld said. "Our effort was there, but it seemed like everything that could go wrong did."

The game stats show just how rough the offensive game was for the Jr. Bills. They managed just 141 yards of total offense, their lowest total of the season by over 150 yards. Clair, who totalled 105 yards on 21 carries, gained the majority of these. But the passing game was simply too watered down to be effective. Batschelt completed just seven of 17 passes for only 47 yards.

The offensive was also hurt by four total turnovers (three lost fumbles and an interception) that allowed the Jays' offense to keep relentlessly pushing against the defense until it finally broke.

On the defensive side, however, several players stepped up in a big way to try to keep the team in the game. Despite the loss, the Jays scored just four times, which was impressive, considering they had averaged almost 56 points per game up to that point. Bowdry played a major role for the defense, totaling seven tackles while working to contain the Jays' run game from his position on the defensive line.

"I just had to fill the holes up to make opportunities for the linebackers and (defensive) ends to make tackles," said Bowdry on his approach to the game.

This style of play Bowdry

mentioned was evident. Senior defensive end Ryan Henstretit totaled nine tackles, and senior Henry Herzberg put up yet another huge game, totaling 15 tackles while helping to keep the defense focused from his key position at middle linebacker. And while Herzberg is not quick to praise himself, Kornfeld once again had high praise for his abilities.

"I wish everyone's motor could be like (Herzberg's)," Kornfeld said. "He just plays so well, flying around the field and doing what he does. On every snap, he's all in and he just keeps going."

Tonight, the Jr. Bills face yet another huge challenge in the form of their longtime MCC rivals, the CBC Cadets. The Cadets are 4-1 and are ranked third in the state, their one loss coming against the top-ranked East St. Louis Flyers. Just like past years, the

Cadets have a balanced offense that can make explosive plays from multiple positions, with scoring threats all over the field.

Despite the shaky offense of last week, Kornfeld is sure that the team is ready to go for tonight's game.

"I know we're better than how we played Friday," Kornfeld said. "And I know that our guys are going to come out and battle on Friday night. We're up for a heck of a challenge. We're going to have to limit their skill players and move the ball well."

Bowdry is also looking to continue his solid play on the defensive side.

"(The loss) was a huge wakeup call," Bowdry said. "I think the team is going to play a lot harder and a lot more together, both Friday night and for the rest of the season."



Senior Andrew Clair against Jeff City last Friday.

photo | Dominik Skroska

## Lipinski and Northcott promote hard work and dedication in teammates

(continued from page 9)

Driven by the hard work and success of Dustan Davidson, '16, Lipinski took up cross country in the fall of his junior year to improve his chances in the track season.

"I saw Dustan Davidson and I thought, 'Wow he's really good; what does he do? Well he runs a lot of miles, so I was just like, yeah I'll run cross country too and that's how I'll get better,'" said Lipinski. "It's actually helped out quite a bit too."

Lipinski finds lots of difficulty in running due to his physical stature, but he especially enjoys the team aspect of cross country and being able to talk to his friends while putting in hard work in practice.

"Getting to run with William (Kelly), and Reed (Millnor), and all the other guys, and just talking with them it really helps us connect more and through cross country and track," said Lipinski. "I've felt more connected to my teammates than I have with football because we're talking the whole time and getting to know each other; that's all we



Senior Roman Lipinski in a race last year. photo | Brendan Voigt

do." As he has attended more meets throughout his cross country career, Lipinski has come to appreciate the community aspect of large meets and the atmosphere of being there with a ton of new people. He has become really good friends with two

Lafayette runners that he met through cross country.

With a PR of 17:25 from this year's Granite City Invitational, Lipinski has set himself up to be the fifth man on the team.

"I'm going to work on improving my time and staying closer to our pack because we go first four in a clump, and then there's this huge gap in between that I want to decrease," said Lipinski.

Lipinski also hopes to represent SLUH in the State meet this year.

"It's hard to look at Roman and not say that he puts in a ton of work and works his hardest every day," said Northcott. "I mean you look at him, and he's not called 'The Ox' for no reason. He inspires me to work harder."

Northcott came into SLUH wanting to play soccer, but after getting cut freshman year, he shifted his focus to prepare for sophomore year tryouts.

"It was almost a little bit of revenge," said Northcott. "I wanted to prove them wrong by coming back the next year in better shape, and blow them

away, but that did not happen the next year, so I just decided to stick with (cross country)."

Like Lipinski, Northcott acknowledges the pain in running all the time, and he stresses the team aspect of the sport and how running with others is extremely helpful.

"It's hard to get out there every day and run alone, but when you're running with a team you share that pain, and it makes everything 100 times better," said Northcott. "You grow closer because the entire team day in and day out is working their hardest."

With the Palatine Invitational coming up this weekend, Northcott reflects on last year's meet and how he truly felt bonded to his teammates while stranded on the side of the highway in Illinois.

"We were stranded in Dwight, Ill. for six hours, and the nearest exit was five miles in each direction, and you really had nothing to do but talk to your teammates and just have fun," said Northcott. "It was a real great moment of team bonding."

Northcott's teammates recognize his fun and easy-go-

ing personality, which makes him very fun to be around in situations like last year's Palatine meet.

"He's very friendly, he does put in effort and you notice it, he's really nice," said Lipinski.

Northcott's PR came last year at the Clayton Invitational with a time of 18:04, and his goal is to break 17 minutes for a 5K by the end of his final season.

"I hope to make my way up into the top seven and run at State this year," said Northcott. "Hopefully I can be the fifth guy."

Northcott wants to continue to run for the rest of his life so he can stay in relatively good shape.

"I am going to keep running as long as I possibly can," said Northcott. "I might not be trying to run sub-seven minute pace for a regular run, but I'm going to run until I can't run anymore."

### Soccer Night beat

Last night, the varsity soccer team defeated Mehlville 2-1 in their third match of the CYC tournament. Throughout the first half, both sides were held scoreless in a tight battle with both sides maintaining possession. In the second half, junior Ray Godeker had a breakaway shot, which ricocheted off of the Mehlville keeper rebounding out to senior Donovan Ditto, who buried the shot giving SLUH the 1-0 lead. After the Jr. Billikens' breakthrough goal, the U. High started to develop more and more chances, including a corner kick from junior Billy Hughes that found the head of junior Cam Verzino putting SLUH up 2-0. With less than 20 minutes in the game, Mehlville finished a chip-shot over junior Alec Meissner, leaving the score at 2-1. The Jr. Billikens' defense held on to clinch the 2-1 victory, their second of the tournament.

—Compiled by Jack Waters

### Sports Quote of the Week

"Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion."

— Muhammad Ali

## Freshman Intramurals Update



Intramurals basketball opened up last week with the opening rounds of the freshman tournament. On Thursday, J124 took on J127, and J127 came away with a dominating victory with a final score of 5-1. J121 and J123 were the second game of the day, and J121 produced a last minute goal to win 6-5. The last game of the day, M103 versus M105, came down to a controversial call with the potential game-tying goal being

waved off by referee Patrick Zarrick. The game ended with a 2-1 victory for M103. On Friday, the second round of the tournament began with three more games. J128, who received a first round bye, came up short to J121, losing 4-3. The second game matched up M107, who also received a bye, and J127. M107 came out on top with a 5-4 victory. The last game of the day was a nail biter between M109 and M113, which went



into a golden goal overtime period. M113 came up with the game-winning goal two minutes into the overtime period, giving them the 3-2 victory.

Coming next week are these quarterfinal matchups:

J128 v M103

M107 v M113