

Cross country finishes third against tough competition in Illinois; anticipates Forest Park XC Festival

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CORE STAFF

On Saturday, Sept. 2, the St. Louis U. High varsity cross country team participated in its first meet of the year.

The team placed third in the Granite City Invitational against tough competition.

"We knew there were four very good teams in the meet that had returned a lot of their team from the previous year," said head coach Joe Porter. "Edwardsville, Chatham Glenwood, O'Fallon, and us. We felt like those four teams were separate from the field."

The team's third place finish was led by junior Patrick Hetlage, who finished ninth with a three-mile time of 15:21:26, that converted to a five-kilometer time of 15:55, a personal record. Hetlage was followed by senior captain Paul Burka, who finished 11th with a three-mile time of 15:23:94, and a personal re-

cord 5K time of 15:57.

The coaches had been stressing controlling gaps between finishes for this meet, and have been for the season in general.

"We were looking at the gaps. In our first Alumni Race there was a gap between Noah Scott and Adam Mittendorf, and they ended up finishing together," said Porter. "We said to keep that under 25 seconds and they were next to each other, and then Chris Staley was within six seconds of that, which was another surprise as well."

Hetlage and Burka also managed to finish within two seconds of one another.

This being the first race of the season, many of the runners were also able to take chances that they would normally not be able to take during the rest of the season.

"Again it was our first race, and we tell them 'Hey, if you want to take a risk, take

a risk. If we make a mistake, we learn from it," said Porter. "We're at that point in the season where we can focus on learning from our mistakes and racing tougher and getting ready for the festival this week, and going to Chicago in two and a half weeks."

"It was the first race, and I feel like as a team we did really well overall," said senior captain Matt Gunn. "That is what we were really shooting for."

The team is continuing to build on the work and dedication put in by many runners, especially underclassmen, over the summer.

"It really is though a testament to the guys that have been running varsity, guys like Matt (Gunn), guys that have kinda been around the team and we've kind of worked on building a culture that had a lot of work to do in the summer, and that's why we see guys like Mittendorf

and Staley having these bigger improvements, and it has a lot to do with how hard they were working," said Porter.

The team looks ahead to this Saturday, when it will host the XC Festival in Forest Park, one of the largest meets in the Midwest with 4,160 runners registered in the high school division and over 4,500 middle school and college runners. These runners come from around 200 teams, around 120 schools, and seven states.

"It's something that we take a lot of pride in, and it has an anticipated attendance of 10,000 people, which is definitely what Dave Laughlin calls 'the largest event that SLUH holds,' and when you look at it that way, it really is," said Porter.

Soccer shuts down Vianney, 4-0

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game. Instead, the Tigers relied on a number of younger players to fill their slots.

"They were a lot smaller than we were," said Verzino. "So we had to play physical and that's what we did."

Immediately after the kickoff, the Jr. Bills showed their physicality, shooting over six shots on goal within the first 20 minutes. Then in the 21st minute, Nicastro shot a rocket past the goalie off of an assist from senior Will Rudder.

As the game continued, the Tigers became the aggressors. With just six minutes left in the half, the Tigers tied the game, and two minutes later, had a chance to grab the lead with a good shot on goal, but Meissner dove across the net to make the save.

"We started off pretty hot," said Kickham, "but we get too comfortable."

Heading into halftime, Martel expressed his disapproval, telling the team to get its act together and for the captains to give a speech.

"I didn't say much, but I guess I made myself pretty clear that they had to play better," said Martel. "What they did the last 15 minutes of the first half was completely unacceptable."

After halftime, the Jr. Bills looked like a completely different team as they controlled the ball for the majority of the half and scored twice to give them the 3-1 victory over the Tigers.

The CBC tournament officially began on Tuesday and SLUH's first test was the then-undefeated Vianney Griffins.

Though the Griffins came in ranked above the Jr. Bills, SLUH took a lead three

minutes in when Kickham launched a free kick to the left side of the net to give the Bills a 1-0 lead they would not relinquish.

"I've put a lot of work into free kicks," said Kickham. "It was just muscle memory from there and putting the ball in the net."

Later into the first half, Kickham scored yet another goal as he went left side again on the goal.

"Ever since Peter got moved to the midfield, he's really produced a spark and got the offense going," said senior Jack FitzPatrick. "And I think we really needed that."

"His offensive mindset has been really paying off for us," said Verzino. "He was dangerous the whole game for us."

In the second half after back-to-back goals by the Bills to make the lead 4-0, many of the starters got a much-needed rest, allowing a variety of players to see the field as they helped coast to the victory.

"Anytime a coach can clear their bench and put everybody in, that's a good night," said Martel. "And anytime you beat Vianney 4-0, that's an even better night."

However, the Jr. Bills are still not satisfied as they set their eyes on becoming the CBC tournament champions.

"It's going to be a re-learned good test to see where we stand in St. Louis and Missouri," said Kickham.

The Jr. Bills' next game is tomorrow night at 5:00 p.m. versus De Smet at CBC.

See Nightbeat for results of last night's game against CBC.

Soccer Nightbeat

The Jr. Bills rolled to 2-0 in the CBC tournament after a shutout 3-0 victory over the CBC Cadets last night. Despite CBC being previously ranked No. 1 in the state prior to the tournament, the Jr. Bills dominated the game, putting up a solid defensive front while pushing a run-and-gun offense.

The Jr. Bills came out with the early lead as senior William Rudder scored within the first eight minutes of the game. Later in the half, Rudder scored again, pushing SLUH to a 2-0 lead before halftime. In the second half, SLUH had a strong defensive showing as they allowed only a few shots on goal, and senior Alec Meissner stopped anything that came his way. Late in the game, senior Pietro Nicastro scored a goal to, stifle any hope of a CBC comeback.

-compiled by Stephen Ocampo

ATHLETE

SPOTLIGHT

Senior Peter Kickham has scored four goals in the past week, propelling the Jr. Bills to wins against Glendale from Springfield, St. Xavier from Louisville, and Vianney.

art | Ian Shocklee



Senior Peter Kickham last Friday. photo | Mrs. Kathy Chott

Football falls to Devils; Hardin provides highlights

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"I know coach Kornfeld ran (the wildcat) when he was here, and we wanted to bring back some of the stuff he was doing, because they were some good ideas," said Jones.

Hannah threw an interception with 2:59 left when senior Daniel McMurrain couldn't find the lofting pass and the Chaminade safety picked it off with ease.

The Jr. Bills' defense found its foothold in the second quarter, holding Chaminade's offense in their own half on three consecutive drives, helping the offense gain good field position.

"We settled down, we came out too excited for the game," said Jones. "We have to play with passion, but a controlled passion."

A huge run by Scott brought the Jr. Bills within striking distance late in the

half. "For me, it was my running back coach telling me to stay focused, stay confident and believe in the process that led to success," said Scott.

Another SLUH penalty pushed the offense back before a pass interference in the end zone by Chaminade brought SLUH to the 5-yard line. Avoiding the rush, Hannah found his brother, sophomore Brendan Hannah, wide open, for a score to tie the game 14-14 with 17 seconds left in the half.

On their opening drive of the second half, Chaminade brought the ball down inside the SLUH 10 on a big pass play to their tight end. The Red Devils then went back to their reliable run offense, punching in a touchdown brought the lead, 21-14.

"We started the second

half slow like we started the first and we weren't able to get our momentum back," said Hannah.

Penalties hurt the Jr. Bills offense once again, negating a big gain on a pass to Hardin. The offense stalled out in their first three drives, giving Chaminade good field position.

"(Chaminade) adjusted and we didn't adjust to their adjustments, so they made us pay for it," said Hardin.

"We cannot allow ourselves to be penalized the way that we were," said Jones. "If the officials find penalties early, they are going to continue to hit you with them. As coaches we have to make sure our guys are prepared."

On the final drive of the third quarter, Chaminade brought the ball down inside the SLUH 5-yard line and on fourth down, rushed for a cru-

cial first down. On the subsequent play, the Red Devils ran again and scored to extend their lead to 28-14.

A personal foul penalty brought back a big return off a punt by Hardin halfway through the fourth quarter. The Jr. Bills were able to gain back the lost yardage, but yet another penalty pushed them back more. Still, SLUH found itself creeping into Chaminade territory and senior Daniel Terry brought the ball inside the Red Devil 10-yard line with a 32-yard catch and run. But on the following play, Hannah was intercepted on a pass over the middle, which the Red Devils returned to midfield.

Chaminade marched down the field for a score to make it 35-14, putting away the Jr. Bills for good. An unsportsmanlike penalty out of frustration pushed back a



Sophomore Kellen Porter runs with the ball against Chaminade. photo | Dominik Skroska

good return on the kickoff by sophomore Kellen Porter.

"Chaminade was a big game for a lot of guys and we got too emotional," said Jones.

Scott tallied 112 yards on 19 carries for the evening. Hannah passed for 247 yards, two touchdowns, and two interceptions. Hardin, the

catalyst of the SLUH offense against Chaminade, finished the night with 133 receiving yards, one touchdown, and one interception on the defensive side of the ball.

"A.J. made plays when they needed to be made. He did a great job," said Hannah.