



SPORTS



Soccer unexpectedly falls in Districts to Chaminade

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Tears flowed throughout the stadium from players, parents, and fans alike last Wednesday as the St. Louis U. High varsity soccer team played its last game of the season: a heartbreaking 1-0 loss to the Chaminade Red Devils in the district finals.

"Going into the game I wasn't expecting this game to be my last," said senior captain Kurt Schumacher.

Tensions flew high for the game as not only did it feature a rematch of last year's district finals in which the Jr. Bills defeated the Red Devils 3-0, but a series of Instagram comments and tweets between the two schools circulated, including the Red Devils advertising a funeral theme for the game with pictures of the Jr. Billikin mascot in a coffin.

"The atmosphere of a SLUH-Chaminade soccer game, especially districts, is always heated and amped up," said senior captain Stephen Lavigne. "No matter what sport's against Chami, it will always be an intense game with big crowds on both sides."

As the team headed into playoffs, Schumacher returned to the lineup after missing four games due to a concussion, and Lavigne was placed back into the starting lineup after playing a few games off of the bench.

The tensions showed right off the bat between the teams through their aggressive styles of play. The Jr. Bills seemed to have the edge on the Red Devils as SLUH had a number of early chances, including a penalty kick from senior captain Cam Verzino in the first half. However, the Red Devil goalie, Joe Mitchell, was the hero for Chaminade, stopping Verzino's hard shot directed to the right side of the goal and saving everything that came his way after that.

"Chami's goalie played the game of his life," said senior captain Will Rudder. "He made huge saves when he needed to and you have to applaud him for that."

"I thought certainly the first half we were the better of the two teams we had more chances to score, their goalie just made some amazing saves on some amazing shots," said assistant coach Bradley Mueller.

The Red Devils' lone goal came 16 minutes into the second half after two Chaminade players, Joe Reed and Zach White, found the

hole in the Jr. Bill defense and connected for an easy goal.

"I am disappointed in myself," said senior goalie Alec Meissner. "I saw that play coming from a mile away and I just didn't trust my instincts. I feel like I could have cut out the cross."

Despite more scoring chances from the SLUH offense and moving Schumacher up to a forward position, with the one-goal lead Chaminade's strong defense proved too much to handle for the Jr. Bills as they closed out the game 1-0 to win the district title, ending SLUH's season.

"Sometimes soccer sucks, and Wednesday night was one of those times. They had one shot on goal and beat us 1-0. We had probably 10 to 20 good chances but just couldn't finish any of them," said LaVigne. "That's all they were looking for—that one goal."

The loss proved especially devastating for the 20 seniors on the team who played their last high school varsity game ever.

"It's the worst feeling in the world. There's physically nothing you can do to make you feel better. The experiences and laughs we had with this team, and last year's team, are irreplaceable," said LaVigne. "There's nothing that can make you feel better when you realize those are over."

"As a senior you just know in the back of your mind that your high school career is over," said Rudder. "I will never again be able to play for my teammates, my family, my friends, or SLUH, all of which I love so much. That's devastating. There's nothing that can ease that pain."

Despite disappointments from the seniors, they look forward to what the future holds for the younger members of the team, especially for juniors Alex Lehmann and Louis Vacca, who started for the team the entire season.

"Vacca and Lehman now have two years of experience and will need to take leadership. They have to step up and control their team," said LaVigne. "It will be tough to have 20 new players, but the current junior class has some very good players."

"They are more capable of winning games than they think," said Schumacher. "Lehmann, Vacca, Reid Horton, and Alex Johnson will be great leaders next year."

With the majority of the team leaving, the underclass-

Football season comes to a close; Jr. Bills fall to Ritenour in first round of Districts

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SPORTS EDITORS

The St. Louis U. High football team ended season in consecutive shoot outs against Ritenour and Jackson, falling in both games to close out its season.

In the first round of district playoffs against Ritenour last Friday, the Jr. Bills lost to the Huskies 55-42. The SLUH coaching staff was sporting pink shirts for Breast Cancer Awareness Month that evening.

Senior quarterback Austin Hannah found success early through short passes and quarterback keepers after SLUH started pinned on its own one-yard line. Coming back from injury, senior Jared Scott ran through his holes for big yardage, helping the Jr. Bills to strike first on a spectacular one-handed catch by senior AJ Hardin in the end zone to cap a 99-yard drive.

Ritenour, running a quarterback option offense with a lot of QB keepers, took advantage of the size of their



Sophomore Kellen Porter against Ritenour last Friday. photo | Dominik Skroska offensive line, creating effective running lanes. A two-headed monster of quarterback Mann McGruder and running back De'metrius Jackson caused havoc for the Jr. Bills defense and piled up 441 rushing yards and eight touchdowns in the game. "Our mistakes made them look better than they actually were," said Scott. "When we don't execute it's easy to kill us and they took advantage of that. I feel like we stopped ourselves." A back and forth battle of field position ensued for most of the second and third quarters, with each team taking advantage of the other's mistakes. SLUH scored just before halftime but gave up a big pass, and Ritenour was able to score within seconds of receiving the ball. "Boneheaded mistakes that cost us the game like the touchdown before halftime were big momentum shifters, we just couldn't get it back," said Hardin.

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Swimming finishes undefeated in dual meets; preps for state

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The St. Louis U. High swim and dive team finished the regular season this past week with three major meets and a dual meet that sets them up for major success in the post-season.

The swimmers took on Chaminade last Thursday and beat the Red Devils 119-67 to complete an undefeated dual meet season, which was one of the team's goals at the beginning of the year. Following the meet, the team honored the seniors. The swim and dive team will miss Barclay Dale, Jack Laux, Nick Mattingly, John Burke, Joe Jellinek, Nathan Lu, and Mathias Hostetler.

At the MICDS Invitational last Friday, the Jr. Bills swam with passion. The team added



Adam Trafton '05 (center), member of the 2003 State Champion swim and dive team, at swimming practice Thursday. photo | Ms. Lindsay Ehret

two individual state cuts, from senior Joe Jellinek in the 100 Breaststroke and from junior Jarrett Schneider, who shaved not just his legs but also an

unprecedented four seconds from his previous time. "I just can't believe I got it," said Schneider. "It was just the best feeling in the world!"

The following morning, SLUH hosted the JV MCC Championships, where they retained the title of conference

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Cross country program impresses with hardware collection to end regular season

JUSTIN KOESTERER
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In the words of Randy Moss and a favorite life lesson from head coach Joe Porter's history class, the St. Louis U. High cross country program gets "straight cash, homie." In the past two weeks, the SLUH cross country team has taken four first place trophies: two at the varsity level, one JV, and one freshman.

Two weeks ago, SLUH took a team to the St. Francis Borgia Invitational in Washington, MO. The varsity top

seven did not race, as Porter wanted them to do a strength workout instead, running 1000-meter loops on Art Hill.

The Borgia Invitational is usually a meet for smaller schools, though SLUH usually sees a few bigger schools like Kirkwood there, along with MCC schools like Chaminade.

Senior John Thomas won the JV race, finishing with a time of 18:30 and beating the next SLUH JV runner by 30 seconds.

"All I had for breakfast

was a Dr. Pepper before the race," said Thomas about his race preparation.

SLUH edged Kirkwood by four points, winning the JV race.

"A huge victory for the program," said assistant coach Tom Flanagan. "You know, we had guys step up, get into packs, and finish the last 1K strong. That's what we need from our runners."

The varsity ran next, with SLUH running their second seven. They finished seventh out of 20 teams, and although

no SLUH runner medaled, it was a valuable experience. Sophomore Joe Callahan led the Jr. Bills in 28th place overall, three spots from a medal, and close behind him was junior Jack Sommers, who has slowly forged a solid season.

The last to race were the freshmen. Following the JV's lead, they too, stepped on the gas pedal, and the Jr. Bills surged past Kirkwood for the second time in one day. Second overall and first for SLUH was Ryan Kramer, followed by Daniel Hogan, Reid Jackson,

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Hardin impresses; sets new reception record against Jackson

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Going into the fourth knotted at 28, the game had the look of a powerful playoff clash.

The Huskies scored twice quickly, but the Jr. Bills answered back. Big passes to Hardin and Porter quickly brought the Jr. Bills from their own goal line to the Husky goal line. Hannah then completed a pass to Hardin for a five-yard score, cutting the lead to 41-35 with 5:51 left in the game.

The Ritenour rush game made quick work though, getting inside the SLUH 20. With 2:45 left in the game, Jackson rushed up the middle for the Ritenour score, and McGruder scampered for the two-point conversion to give the Huskies the 49-35 lead.

The SLUH offense couldn't find a positive play to get going down the field to answer back and was forced to turn the ball over on downs. Immediately, Jackson rushed for a score to put the Huskies up 55-35 after a failed two-point attempt.

Hannah hit Hardin again for a 45-yard strike, bringing SLUH back to 55-42 with 1:05 left. But Ritenour recovered the onside kick attempt and ran out the remainder of the clock, ending the game 55-42 Huskies.

Hardin totaled three touchdowns and 204 yards of Hannah's four passing touchdowns and 376 yards. Hannah also tacked on a rushing touchdown of his own.

"It was like Jackson again," said Scott. "The offense came out and did a good job but we couldn't get enough stops in the end to win the game and so we lost."

On Senior Night, Jackson came out strong against the Jr. Bills, scoring quickly and often in the first quarter, recovering onside kicks to keep their offense on the field. Senior quarterback Cooper Callis found receivers consistently in the soft spots of the SLUH zone coverage, and Jackson lead 14-0 before the SLUH offense even touched the field.

"It took us awhile to get the ball because we weren't ready for the onside kick that they were doing," said Hardin.

With 3:04 left in the first quarter, Hardin chased down a Jackson receiver and knocked the ball out just before the goal line, but the referee called the play a touchdown. A penalty on Jackson negated the score, but instant replay would have shown that the ball was fumbled before the goal line and should have been the Jr. Bills' ball.

After that play, Jackson worked their way down to the SLUH seven and scored on an out route, making the score 21-0 right before the end of the first quarter, the third receiving touchdown for the Indians.

"Our offense was good but we just couldn't stop them and they already

had the advantage of the 21 points, so just couldn't come back," said Hardin.

After the quarter, the SLUH offense found success in the air, taking the ball into Jackson territory. On fourth down, Hannah slung one to the end zone, and after a bobble, Hardin gained control for the score.

From there the two offenses basically traded touchdowns until the end of the game, with Terry and sophomore Kellen Porter rushing for touchdowns; the two got more touches because Scott was still out from the injury he sustained against Vianney.

But the early deficit proved too much for the Jr. Bills to overcome, and the 65-42 loss dropped them to 3-6.

Two SLUH football records were broken against Jackson: the most points combined by both teams, previously 105 points in a 2008 matchup against Vianney, was topped with 107 points scored; and Hardin caught 14 passes, beating a combined 13 reception effort by Stefan Sansone and Cameron Stubbs against De Smet in 2011. Hardin accumulated 232 yards and two touchdowns via those 14 receptions.

"It was a pretty good night for me, but we still lost so it was bittersweet," said Hardin.

"AJ played extremely well. He broke a record so congrats to him. A win would've been better but congratulations to him," said Scott.

Hannah threw for 371 yards, three touchdowns, and one interception, and rushed for 32 yards, for a total of 403 yards, nearly beating another SLUH record of total offense in a game, set by John Swanson in 2007 with 412 yards.

Jackson's Callis threw for 429 yards, eight touchdown passes and two interceptions, providing a majority of Jackson's 685 total yards on offense.

"We just had trouble getting into our drops and coverages, stopping the pass and so the quarterback lit us up all night," said Scott. "We didn't execute as a team and we lost."

SLUH football ended this season 3-7, 1-3 in the MCC, facing a variety of highly ranked opponents throughout the season.

"The season was really disappointing because the talent we had and the coaching we had was a lot better than our record looks," said Scott. "I don't think we did a good job of executing the system as a team throughout the entire year. We made the same mistakes throughout the year."

"I think coach Jones and the rest of the coaches will be something special at SLUH once people start listening to them and set the foundation for themselves," said Scott.

Varsity cross country cleans up at Districts

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Noah Apprill-Sokol, Hayden Rutledge, and Matt Munsell. This isn't the first time this core group has put together a strong performance, following their race at Conference and at Parkway West. SLUH cross country fans should be excited about the potential that these runners bring to the table.

This past week the SLUH cross country team continued its saucy hardware drive, first taking the varsity title at the Clayton Invitational. The varsity this week, like last week, was composed of the second seven runners, as the top seven prepared to start their do-or-die postseason run, and they emphasized the need to not take the early stages too lightly.

The Clayton Invitational witnessed some incredibly fast times. In the varsity, senior John Thomas finished first overall for SLUH for the second time in a row, with a blazing 17:33, good for 10th overall. Senior Matt Gunn ran 17:43, second for SLUH and 14th overall. Sommers continued his impressive season to finish 25th with a time of 18:04. SLUH beat host Clayton, who had previously been one of the top teams, averaging 17:55 for the top five Jr. Billiken runners.

"It was a great way to end the four years of us running together. We had a lot of fun showing off all the hard work



Varsity cross country with the District first place trophy. photo | Mr. James Hetlage

this season," said Gunn.

The varsity began their postseason last Saturday at the Class 4 District 3 Championship at Koch Park in Florissant. The main cross country information source, MoMile-Split, predicted SLUH to put three in the top ten, with Webster Groves edging SLUH by a slim margin. That was quite an underestimation of the Jr. Bills. SLUH's Patrick Hetlage, Paul Burka, and Reed Milnor took the top three spots, and SLUH put everybody in the top ten but junior alternate Jack Buehring, who ran for junior Chris Staley, who had been sick earlier that week. SLUH easily took the district title with a score of 20, 32 points ahead of everyone else.

"It was a good team day," said Porter. "We felt like we would have a good group up front and then wanted to keep our four and five guys close. We were able to accomplish that and will focus on that again this week."

Although only the varsity raced, the whole program was required to attend, and SLUH had an army to cheer the varsity on, even putting a smile on Buehring's face as he crossed the finish line. After the varsity race, the rest of the team went for a run in the park.

"We are a program, not just a team," said Porter. "We all work together and everyone in the program is responsible for helping everyone get

better in any way they can. Sometimes it is encouraging a teammate in a workout, sometimes it is working in packs during a race, and sometimes it is cheering your teammates on during a race. Saturday was a great example of the latter."

The varsity will run at sectionals tomorrow at Parkway Central at 10:30 a.m., hoping to qualify for the State Championship in Jefferson City.

"Rock Bridge and Jeff City will be there (at Sectionals)," said Porter. "We've faced Jeff City only at the Festival, and we've faced Rock Bridge twice. We've gotten them, but they're good teams, and we're not taking anything for granted going into this weekend."

Jr. Bills devastated by loss to Red Devils; still post impressive overall record; 21-4-1

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men still have hope of what is to come next season with younger players.

"I loved the seniors to death this year and they're some of my best friends," said Vacca. "They were great leaders and I hope I can lead in the same way next year."

"There's a lot of potential for players next year and for a lot of people it's an unforeseen potential and that's exciting because no one knows what to expect," said Mueller.

"No matter how many returners you have or the skill level of the team, dedication and heart is what will give you wins," said senior captain Pietro Nicastro.

One of the highlights from the season, however, came from Meissner as he led the state in solo shutouts and placed second in shutouts played in.

"Alec has been the best goalie in the state this year in my opinion. He makes the big saves all the time. He's been a beast for two years," said Schumacher. "He controls the game and helps out the defense by organizing us and always talking to us. His stats speak for themselves."

Rudder led the team in goals with 14 and senior midfielder Peter Kickham led the team in points with eight goals and 12 assists.

"I came into the season with a different mindset than last year and really focused

on my finishing touch. The rest of team was always behind me the whole year and it gave me that confidence to continue to score throughout the year," said Rudder. "I'm glad to have led the team in goals, but obviously this sport is always a team effort and I cannot stress enough the role the rest of the team played in helping me accomplish that."

Despite losing in the district finals, this year's team ended with a 21-4-1 record, one of their best records in recent years, capping off a season that will go down in SLUH history.

"21-4-1 is a great record. Early in the year we struggled to finish but only a couple games in, we started building up really well and creating good goals, which was just an amazing feeling," said LaVigne. "Obviously, we wanted to go further and we had much bigger goals, but it was for sure not a bad season. This is a brutal ending to a well-played season."

"I am an incredibly proud coach of them, and there's no words to describe how proud I am of them and no words to describe how they emotionally must feel right now," said Mueller. "Any season has its ups and its downs and our down just happened at the wrong time."



art | Joe Bytman

Swimming MCC champs for seventh straight year

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champions with ease. The meet included personal bests and allowed the swimmers to show how much they had developed as a team.

"I think that a lot of the new swimmers found a new passion for swimming," said assistant coach Tony Ciaravino. "The team support seemed overall like a very powerful thing."

On Monday, the Varsity MCC Championship kicked off with swimming prelims and the diving championships, where sophomore diver Max Manalang joined his brother Gabe as a state qualifier, bringing the total number of individual state qualifiers to 15,

perhaps the most individuals SLUH has ever seen. Finals, which took place on Wednesday, saw the Jr. Bills bring home their seventh straight conference title, beating the second place CBC by 186 points.

"We swam as if we were little fishes getting chased by the biggest predator in the ocean; we swam as if our life depended on our races, giving it all until we were both mentally and physically exhausted," said sophomore Sean Santoni. "We turned into big dolphins and are ready to try to bring home the state title next Saturday."