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Swimming has historic day at COMO invite; high hopes for state



The swim and dive team after their COMO invite victory.

photo | Mr. Michael Slatin

NICHOLAS DALAVIRAS AND JOE FEDER REPORTERS

The SLUH swim and dive team had its best competition weekend of the season this past Sunday, capturing the first SLUH victory at the CoMo Invitational meet in program history after coming in second last year.

After the team arrived at the faculty lot at 5:45 a.m. on Saturday morning, they drove two hours to Columbia, Mo. for the meet. The swimmers were exhausted, but the preparation and excitement for the meet trumped fatigue during the morning preliminary heats.

The team saw season time drops from nearly every swimmer, which in turn led to 17 indi-

vidual swims and three relays qualifying for the evening finals.

Junior Sean Santoni blasted off the blocks in the second event of the day, the 200 freestyle, dropping over five seconds to qualify for his second event at state with a time of 1:49.84.

"I wish I could have seen it," said Santoni. "It felt simply spectacular."

A few events later, junior Andrew Zimmerman clinched his first individual state qualification in the 100 freestyle, clocking in at a 49.72. Both Santoni and Zimmerman qualified for the B-final in their events, placing 14th.

"It was kinda surprising to be honest," Zimmerman said about his first state cut. "I didn't

expect at all to make that in the 100 (freestyle), so when I looked up at the scoreboard, it was like 'What?'"

After the final race of the morning, the team was quick to relax before finals started just an hour and a half later. Due to an increased number of swimmers this year, the preliminary session lasted longer, giving swimmers less time than usual to recover in between sessions.

"For not having a big break between prelims and finals, I think we had some really great swims, which really shows the great effect of our training," said assistant coach Tony Ciaravino.

Based off of SLUH's placing in prelims, the Jr. Bills were predicted to win the meet by

a mere three points over Liberty High School of Kansas City, without diving being included. The dive team's 30 points turned out to be crucial in helping to secure the tight 20-point U. High victory. Junior Gabe Manalang placed seventh in the competition, freshman Sebastian Lawrence took eighth, and junior Max Manalang got tenth.

The night of swimming finals began as the 200 medley relay team of Scharif, Zimmerman, and juniors Evan Lu and Josh Brown dropped over a second from their season best preliminary time to move up from sixth to fourth place, coming just shy of medaling. Next, in the 200 freestyle, Feder earned his

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Soccer yonders across the state; falls to Blue Valley Northwest

BY CHRIS STALEY AND BLAKE OBERT SPORTS EDITOR, REPORTER

what's happening."

In a one-game week for the St. Louis U. High soccer team, the boys took their talents across the state to the barren lands of Kansas to play Blue Valley Northwest High School. Missing a few defenders, the Jr. Bills lost 2-0 to make their record 4-13-1.

While most of the faculty and staff enjoyed sleeping in on Saturday, the team arrived at school bright and early to begin their odyssey at 8 a.m. to tame the Huskies of Blue Valley Northwest. Four hours later, the boys arrived in plenty of time for their 1:30 p.m. match.

"When I inherited the schedule, (this was) one of the things that Mr. Martel had done in the past," said head coach Bob O'Connell. "We wanted to continue the experience of going some-

With senior captain and defensive leader Brian Lymberopoulos out from a red card and junior defender John Marshall sidelined because of injury, the defense was lacking a little bit.

Awarded a corner kick with 38 minutes left, the Huskies took advantage, converting on a head ball to make the score 2-0.

Although the Jr. Bills were in possession of the ball for most of the half, the Huskies' one goal was all they needed to get the win.

"Their goal on the corner was pretty good as well," said Stachowski. "We didn't have Lybbo or Marshall in the game, and they're two

guys who are key to winning head balls in the box. The guy played a good ball in and another guy beat us to it and put it in near post. "We didn't feel like they were leading 2-0 at this point,



art | Jack Colvin

Check out underclassman fall sports updates on page 7



photos | Mrs. Kathy Chott

Sports included: C, B soccer; B football; JV swimming; and rifle

XC perfect scores 2 of 3 races in MCC sweep

BY PETER LABARGE AND JOE CALLAHAN REPORTERS

Last Thursday, the St. Louis U. High cross country team went into the race looking to dominate, and they did just that. Their goal in the MCC Championships was to score perfectly (finish places 1-5 overall) in every level, and they only failed that feat in the freshman race, where they finished 1st through 4th and 6th. Still, the program had a huge day, sealing their 15th varsity win in a row, and finishing with the top 13 runners in the JV race.

For the first time in the history of the MCC Championship meet, the races were run at Jefferson Barracks Park. Despite dealing with a hilly course, SLUH was able to take advantage of the great weather and downhill of the course, finishing with lots of medals and personal records.

In the varsity race, the top two SLUH runners, senior captain Patrick Hetlage and junior Lucas Rackers, were nearly inseparable for the entire race until Hetlage edged out Rackers by .06 seconds, fin-

ishing with a winning time of 16:28.33 while Rackers crossed at 16:28.39.

"We packed together and were neck to neck the whole race. I tried to make move with about 600 to go, but Patrick stayed with me, and got me at the end," said Rackers.

Around 30 seconds after Hetlage and Rackers finished, the next three SLUH runners (senior Chris Staley, junior Noah Scott, and senior Reed Milnor) rounded out the team's perfect score. Junior Joe Callahan finished a few seconds after Milnor, the last of SLUH's six first team MCC runners.

The final SLUH finisher was junior Adam Mittendorf, who finished his first race of the cross country season 8th overall and second team all-MCC. "We didn't really know how Mittendorf would feel in his first race, but he exceeded expectations," said Porter.

Despite the varsity team's strong performance, they still have a lot of work left in order for them to compete at the state level.

"It's hard to compete when there are not many other

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where, being together on a bus, and traveling together."

When the whistle blew, the team started out strong.

"We seemed to have the ball in their half most of the time, and we were really moving the ball around well, getting it up top," said senior Luke Stachowski. "We played two up top for the game which led to more possession in the midfield and better holding the ball up high."

The Huskies took command later in the first half, though. With about 15 minutes left, senior captain Alex Lehmann headed the ball up the middle, but none of the Jr. Bill midfielders could get to it. But a Husky did, and he fired the ball from 30 yards out into the back of the net.

"Their first goal was just unlucky for us," said Stachowski. "Their forward beat our mids back and he just had a great shot over Herrmann's head."

Going into the second half, the team began to lose hope.

"The morale was just a little low, as it has been all season when we go down," said Stachowski. "In all our heads we constantly just think 'here we go again' instead of working to change

though, because we seemed to have the ball a lot."

Despite the loss, the team keeps seeing positives that can help them take on districts in a few weeks.

"As a group we keep trying to work on attacking and trying to score in front of the goal," said O'Connell. "I think some of the effort of a lot of the guys who haven't gotten a lot of time this year (has improved)."

"For the first time all season, we were moving the ball around the back and constantly switching the ball to the wing mids," said Stachowski. "As we're moving towards the postseason, I think we are in good shape for districts because of how we've been moving the ball. Although we haven't been getting the results recently, we've been looking better with possession. I think what we need now is to figure out how to get to the goal and score. The postseason is what we've been working for all season and we'll be ready when the time comes."

The Jr. Bills play De Smet Jesuit this Saturday at SLUH at 10:00 a.m. for their final home game, and will play St. Dominic Catholic High School next Thursday at St. Dominic's at 6:00 p.m.

Football hopes for wins after loss to Chaminade in final MCC game

BY BRAD PIKE AND NICK PRAINITO STAFF

Playing their final MCC opponent of the season last Friday, the St. Louis U. High varsity football team showed improvement in some areas, but ultimately fell to Chaminade, 30-13. With the loss, the Jr. Bills are 0-7 for the season, but hope to end the season with a couple of wins. While SLUH showed improvement in some offensive aspects of the game, the Jr. Bill defense continued to struggle, with the Red Devils exposing flaws in their run defense.

Beginning from their own 20-yard line, SLUH's offense, led by quarterback Brendan Hannah, opened up the game with a nice 12-yard completion to Kellen Porter Jr. up the middle, but SLUH was forced to punt. The two teams traded possessions for the next several minutes.

Unfortunately, on Chaminade's third drive, the Red Devils were the first to crack the scoreboard.

Starting in fairly good field position from their own 40, a run and pass brought Chaminade inside SLUH territory. On the next play, the snap went high, causing many to think that the ball would be fumbled. But upon receiving the snap, the Red Devils' quarterback tossed the ball to their running back, who then lofted a pass down the left field sideline—a flea flicker. The Jr. Bill defense never saw it coming. Senior Luke Sansone rushed down the field in a noble attempt to reach the Chaminade wide receiver who was bolting toward the end zone, but couldn't reach him in time. With five minutes remaining in the quarter, Chaminade had a 6-0 lead.

"Once the receivers show a block or the running back gets the ball, it's second nature to bite on it and play the run," said Sansone. "They simply executed it well, and we played exactly into what they wanted."

For the next 12 minutes of the game, both offenses went silent. On one drive, SLUH went three-and-out after several rushing plays, and on another, the Jr. Bills

started with excellent field position at midfield, but could not capitalize.

Meanwhile, the Red Devils were stopped first on a turnover on downs. Then, after a great punt by senior Nick Lang to Chaminade's own 7-yard line, the Red Devils went three-and-out, and, punting from their own end zone, gave SLUH a great chance to tie the game.

With 8:25 left in the half, the Jr. Bills started their fifth drive from the Red Devils' 48. An incomplete and 9-yard run by Porter brought SLUH to a critical moment. On fourth and one from Chaminade's 42, Hannah ran for it. He received the snap, looked, and then sprinted, cutting sharply to the right and advancing 20 yards to the Red Devil 23 for a first down.

"The fourth down choices, whether to go for it, is first based on field position," said head coach Mike Jones. "If the ball is on our end of the field, we will be more unlikely to go for it. If the ball is on their side of the 50, it will be based on time remaining, in the half or game."

Then, on third down of the next series, Porter squeezed through Chaminade defenders as he streaked down the right sideline, dashing into the end zone for a 25-yard touchdown to even the score. The extra point was blocked, and with 5:18 left in the first half, the score was 6-6.

On the ensuing kickoff, however, a short kick brought the Red Devils to midfield. Chaminade wasted no time on this drive, taking only 42 seconds to score. Two rushes of around 20 yards each paved the way. Special teams proved sloppy for both teams all night, as the point-after was blocked again. Chaminade was up 12-6.

On their sixth drive of the night, the Jr. Bills worked their way into Red Devil territory. Passes, runs, and a QB sneak by Hannah brought the offense to Chaminade's 32. However, with 1:27 left in the half, Hannah was picked off and the half ended.

The third quarter be-

gan with a couple of three-and-outs. Then, Chaminade received SLUH's punt at the Jr. Bills' 46. Two plays later, a 25-yard pass ramped up the pressure on SLUH's defense. The Red Devils kept pushing and ran their way into the end zone, adding six more points to their total.

"The defense is working every day on playing within the scheme," Jones said about what the defense has been practicing. "We have not had our guys executing their responsibilities, on a play by play basis."

The rest of the third quarter went by scoreless; and SLUH began the final frame in possession of the ball. Beginning deep in their own zone, it was looking like another early punt for the Jr. Bills. However, on third and 14, Hannah fired to wide receiver Luke Ratterman for a 24-yard first down. A run by Porter brought the squad to midfield.

Another pass, this one 13 yards, and a fourth down conversion by Porter brought the Jr. Bills to the Red Devils' 25 with about eight minutes remaining. Then, after another run by Porter for a first down, Hannah added on to his impressive tally of QB sneaks—this one 12 yards and into the Chaminade end zone. After the long, grueling drive, six minutes remained in the game, with SLUH trailing 18-13.

On the very next play after the kickoff, the Red Devils put the game away with a 55-yard pass to get inside the Jr. Bills' ten-yard line. A couple of runs added another six points. SLUH's offense couldn't produce anything else, and the game ended 30-13.

SLUH takes on Trinity Catholic High School tonight at SLUH. It is the last home football game of the season, and the last ever for seniors.

"We have been watching film after school and taking note of different players to focus on defensively," said senior cornerback Eli Saadi. "We hope we can pull off the win on Senior Night."

Cross country heads to Borgia and postseason with momentum

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runners around you, and the times were a little slower than they would normally be in a more competitive race," said head coach Joe Porter.

The JV team showed similar success in its race, taking home 22 of 30 medals. Sophomore Ryan Kramer led the SLUH pack and the race, finishing first with a time of 17:30. Senior Chuck Perry finished second for SLUH, followed soon after by junior Peter Dillon, senior Jack Buehring, and junior Mitchell Booher to round out the 5 perfect scorers. SLUH's JV 1-5 gap was an extraordinary 22 seconds.

"Me, Chuck, Peter, and Jack all went out together, but I made my move right after the first mile and continued to build on my lead throughout the race. Overall, it was

a great program day with all of our medals and being able to sweep the top 13 of the JV race," said Kramer.

At the JV level, the program's huge depth showed hope for the races in the future. "We are built by the depth of our program. The JV team would have won the varsity race pretty convincingly if they had been in the race," said Porter.

In the final race of the day, the freshmen nearly repeated the perfect scores accomplished earlier in the day. Freshman Grant Brawley, racing with his classmates for the first time, led the way, running an 18:22. De Smet pulled one of their freshman varsity runners down to the freshman race, so the SLUH pack of four focused on gradually closing the gap. In the end, three of SLUH's four freshmen beat De

Smet's top freshman. Joe Labarge ran a great closing mile, earning himself a PR and a second place medal. Sean Kellogg and Baker Pashea came in third and fourth, respectively. Although the final scorer for the freshmen, Justin Glass, was unable to beat the De Smet runner, he still ran an impressive race, finishing sixth overall and earning a PR on a windy and hilly Jefferson Baracks course.

"I took it out a lot harder than I normally would to try to wear down the De Smet freshman so the other guys could work their way up to him as he faded. In the end, I think we had a great team race with two PRs in our top 5 and many more in the rest of the group," said Brawley.

This weekend, SLUH will run varsity 2 at the Francis Borgia Invitational in Washington, Mo. This race is another great opportunity to show off the program's depth and for some, a chance to prove themselves for the state travel team. The program will have a chance to compete against top teams like Kirkwood and Jefferson City.

Generally, the varsity squad has done a workout on Art Hill rather than going to the meet. But this year, the varsity will run the race to familiarize themselves with the course that they will be running two weeks later in the sectional meet.



The varsity with their MCC trophy. photo | Mr. Jim Hetlage

Swimming continues season of success; triumphs at Parkway Central

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first medal of the night, shaving another second off prelims to take second place by just 0.2 seconds with a 1:43.55. Fink also medaled in fifth place with a 1:44.77, and Santoni improved on his time from prelims to take 13th.

Senior Garrett Baldes shined for SLUH in the next event, the 200 individual medley, finally earning his first state cut with a 2:05.60, finishing 13th.

"I was looking back at my CoMo times from freshman year, when I was on JV, and I saw that I went a 2:36 in the 200 I.M.," Baldes said. "I've dropped 31 seconds since freshman year, so for me, it was huge to get the state cut. After all that time, it was just like, 'Finally.'"

Other notable races included Andrew Zimmerman qualifying for the state meet for the second time in the 50 freestyle to win the consolation final with a time of 22:55. Slatin got 13th overall, and Brown continued to drop time off of his 100 butterfly, shaving off a tenth of a second to move up to tenth, one spot above his seed.

In the 100 freestyle, Feder swam to third place, earning another medal, while Slatin and Zimmerman both moved up a place from prelims to get some much-needed points placing 12th and 13th respectively. In the next race, the 500 freestyle, which was swam as timed finals due to its length, Fink and Santoni both dropped around three seconds. Fink placed fifth again,

and Santoni took ninth, earning his second state cut of the meet and breaking the five-minute barrier for the first time with a 4:59.45.

The most controversial race of the night, the 200 freestyle relay, came after the 500, and the SLUH squad of Feder, Slatin, Brown, and Zimmerman took second place by 0.17 seconds. While the Cape Central relay team won the event, the anchor leg of the relay appeared to kick underwater past the 15-meter mark off of his start, which should have resulted in a disqualification. However, the officials missed the infraction, and the results stood.

Coming right off the relay, Scharff took fourth in the 100 Backstroke final with a time of 52.67 seconds. In the final individual event, Lu touched for tenth and Baldes fifteenth in the B-final of the 100 breaststroke. The 400 freestyle relay of Feder, Slatin, Fink, and Scharff narrowly missed relay victory again by taking second place to Liberty in the final, but ultimately secured SLUH's CoMo victory.

"We didn't win a single event, yet we took the overall win, which I'd rather have any day of the week," said head coach Lindsey Ehret. "We don't need individual glory because we have team glory. We made a statement that we're faster than ever and have the depth to back it up."

During the bus ride back to St. Louis, the Jr. Bills made their traditional stop at Gumby's Pizza to pick up some of the best

pizza that a Mizzou student can afford, and toward the end of the drive, in Wentzville, the team celebrated with Fritz's Frozen Custard.

Fresh out of the CoMo win, the Swimbills continued their winning streak in a dual meet against Parkway Central on Monday, winning 125-61.

The U. High swimmers swam in their secondary events against Central to try to see how they could do in events that they don't normally swim. Many swimmers on the team were still exhausted from the long day on Saturday, but Mikhail Shulepov was named Swimmer of the Meet for his notable time drops in the 50 and 100 breaststroke.

"It was fun to see guys swim in different events," said Ehret. "Central was an easy 'W,' but state won't be as easy. Now is the time to bear down and focus on our remaining weeks together."

Looking forward to next week, the swim and dive team will host its Senior Night against Vianney on Tuesday night. With a little under a month left until the State meet, the team will be amping up its training again in a final surge to try to qualify at least four more individuals for state to reach the team goal of 17 individual qualifiers.

"This past week the swim team was like a pack of blue marlins, one of the biggest and fastest fish in the sea," said junior Patrick Moehn. "We slashed our CoMo competition to bits in our commanding victory."



art | Brad Pike