

The war at Battle: football starts season 1-0 in offensive shootout

BY BLAKE ÖBERT AND LUKE ALTIER, SPORTS EDITOR, CORE STAFF

A new and improved SLUH football team with an electric young core and returning group of senior veterans geared up and went to war against Battle High School last Friday. Thanks to a powerful offense, a merciless defensive line, and a precise special teams unit, the Jr. Billikens emerged victorious, and succeeded in their mission to come back home 1-0.

The first quarter did not start off as planned for the Jr. Bills. On the first play of the game, senior running back Kellen Porter fumbled the ball, and two plays later, on third and 10, Porter fumbled again. Fortunately for SLUH, the ball slipped past the Battle defense and went out of bounds, giving them a first down.

Despite the rough start, SLUH showcased their short memory and started to roll offensively. Sophomore receiver Ike Thompson secured the first first down of the game, along with a 52-yard gain, placing the Jr. Bills in the red zone. They were able to complete the drive after an 8-yard gain from Porter set up senior quarterback Brendan Hannah to throw a 10-yard corner route to sophomore Chris Brooks for a diving touchdown. SLUH took the lead 6-0 early, but the PAT was blocked.

SLUH did not get to enjoy the lead for long though, as Battle fought back quickly with a kickoff return touchdown, as well as completing their own PAT to take the lead 7-6.

"We had way too many unforced errors and part of that is we came out a bit overly excited for our first game," said head coach Mike Jones.

"So we just had to calm down, we were unfocused."

The Jr. Bills offense marched downfield to Battle's 45-yard line, but some lackluster play left them trapped in a fourth and 17 situation. Then, junior punter Tyler Ridgeway perfectly placed his kick on the one-yard line, where the defense subsequently bagged its first safety of the game for an 8-7 lead.

After Porter's 11-yard touchdown rush with 2:57 left in the first, SLUH led 15-7. The rest of the quarter would remain scoreless.

Battle made it clear they were not going down without a fight by scoring a 39-yard touchdown to start the second quarter, followed by a crafty trick play for the two-point conversion, when Battle's running back threw up a pass that looked similar to a pull up jump shot to their tight end, tying the game at 15-15.

On Battle's next possession, SLUH came up with a clutch third down sack that put Battle all the way back to their 3-yard line. The special teams came up with another huge play, as senior defensive end Luke Schuermann blocked the punt on fourth down. While everyone on the SLUH sideline believed the block should have been a touchdown, as it was blocked inside the end zone, The referees saw it differently, saying that the ball had gone out of bounds. SLUH scored another safety to go up 17-15.

After several scoreless drives, the Jr. Bills offense came through again without too much resistance from the Battle defense. Sophomore receiver Luke Ratterman nabbed a 10-yard reception, and Porter followed with his second consecutive touchdown for SLUH off of a 10-yard rush to the end zone, for

a 24-15 lead at half.

Battle started off the second half rejuvenated, and took the ball to the end zone quickly after a few long runs, including a 43-yard touchdown run. Battle then showcased more creativity on special teams with another running back pass off of a sweep to close the score to 24-23.

"We had to make a lot of adjustments after half," said senior linebacker Anthony Bohannon. "They came out with something completely different at halftime."

Following a three and

game, as Schuermann's legs started cramping and he had to be carried off the field. This was not the first loss to injury in the game though, as Brooks' diving touchdown left him unable to return and sent him to the hospital. This left the Jr. Bills without two of their starting pass catchers, as well as a large hole to fill on defense.

"Every single time I felt better I tried to get up and something else hurt," said Schuermann. "At some point I was just like, 'Okay it's going to be awhile before I get back

play, SLUH's defense blew up Battle's play in the backfield after the DBs read a screen pass and made a tackle in the end zone. The third safety of the game gave SLUH the lead, 33-31.

"In defensive practices we practice playing against plays that they might run," said Bohannon. "More reps against the plays they were running made us ready to be in the right spots in the right moments."

But, Battle regained the lead. After a SLUH turnover, a long scoring drive, and a two point conversion, they led 39-33.

"The thing about our defense is that we were able to hold them as long as we didn't give up the big plays," said Jones. "But they did have at least three big plays for touchdowns."

SLUH struck back. A big pass off of a scramble from Hannah, and a fantastic grab from Ratterman drove the Jr. Bills to Battle's 33-yard line. As the fourth quarter got underway, the offense pounded forward. After another blocked another PAT, the game was tied at 39-39.

"We had to put in the next guy after those injuries," said Ratterman. "(The young guys) all stepped up and started making big plays."

With the pressure at an all-time high, the defense had to make a stop. Thompson intercepted a pass from the Battle quarterback on the first play of their drive. The offense followed suit with good playmaking of their own, securing Porter another easy spot to punch in his fifth TD of the game for a 46-39 lead.

"I just followed big Joe, Zach (Stephenson), and the big boys, and they led me to the promised land. I give it all to those guys," said Porter.

"After they set the front for me I just followed them and used my athletic ability to get to the next level."

But Battle, well, battled, putting together another long drive to retake the lead, 47-46, with 2:46 left.

"We constantly had to make a lot of adjustments," said Bohannon. "Guys were just getting tired."

SLUH had the ball on the 20-yard line to start their final offensive drive. On the first play, Ike Thompson grabbed a pass from Hannah on a post route and took it to the crib to regain the lead, 52-47. But the two-point conversion failed. So, despite the excitement, the game was not over yet. The Battle offense still had two and a half minutes left to make something happen.

After SLUH made three big stops in a row, forcing a fourth and 11 situation, Battle pulled off a late conversion to keep their chances alive.

The next four downs were the biggest of the game. A short run, an incomplete pass, and a short gain on third down left Battle with three yards to go on fourth down. But a penalty pushed them back another five. And on fourth and 8, Schuermann, who had miraculously re-entered the game for the last defensive series, hounded the quarterback and took him down for a sack to secure the first win of the regular season for the Jr. Bills. The final score was 52-47.

The team now sets its eyes on Ladue, whom they will play in the illustrious Running of the Bills game tonight at 7:00.

"It's gonna be a hard fought game, but I think we should have a dub," said Porter. "Come and support and we'll get the job done."



art | Bob DeVoll

out, Battle proved that this game was not going to come easy with a huge rushing touchdown. Battle was on top 31-24.

"We knew that they were gonna be a good team. We also knew they also had a good running back," said Porter. "We just knew whenever we got the opportunity to make big plays we had to get them."

The next drive for the Jr. Bills came with one of the largest tribulations of the

in, but I might as well encourage my teammates and try to keep them going."

The Jr. Bills retaliated the next drive after a deep pass put them on the 3-yard line, where Porter punched in another rushing touchdown. The extra point tied the game at 31-31.

Special teams continued to pull their weight on the next drive, as Battle struggled to secure the ball off the kickoff and SLUH almost stole another safety. On Battle's first

XC wins at O'Fallon, varsity looks to Granite City

BY MITCHELL BOOHER AND PETER LABARGE, REPORTER

The XC Bills trekked east to the cornfields of O'Fallon, Ill. on Wednesday for the O'Fallon Futures Invitational. Although varsity and JV do not race until Saturday, St. Louis U. High's freshman and sophomore teams had impressive days, taking in their respective races.

Wyatt Seal led the freshman team to a 16-point victory over meet host O'Fallon, with a 17:54 three-mile time good for fifth place. After a 40-second gap, a pack of freshmen Nolan Mearam, Tim Greiner, Carter Lowe, Nicholas Purschke, and Will Riggan came flying in, finishing 11th through 14th and 16th. Tyler Barks rounded out the top seven in 17th place with a time of 19:23.

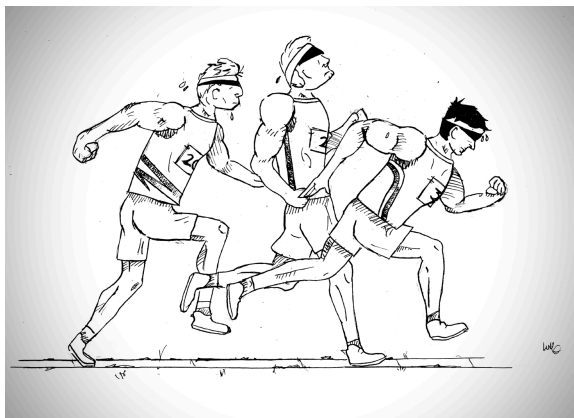
"It just felt really good to finally see all the hard work me and all of us freshmen have put in over the last few weeks finally pay off," said Seal. "It was great to get a race in."

Through the one-mile mark of the sophomore race, the Jr. Bills had a strong pack near the front

out-kicked Glass in the last 400 meters to finish second (17:15) and third (17:18), while Graham Sanfillipo

helping the Jr. Bills secure a dominant first place team finish over Edwardsville.

"I was really happy



art | Will Blaisdell

led by Baker Pashea and Justin Glass, who were hip to hip through two miles while the rest of the pack fell off. The two finished in a dramatic fashion as Pashea

(fourth; 17:53) and Joe LaBarge (seventh; 18:05) rounded out the medallers. Tad Gray, the ever-important fifth SLUH runner, finished with a time of 19:15,

and pleasantly surprised by the way we worked out there. I know a lot of guys have been putting in work and it definitely showed," said Pashea. "I'm excited to

see what more we can accomplish as the season goes on."

Now that the underclassmen have a race under their belts, it's time for the juniors and seniors to join them. This Saturday, the varsity toes the line at the Granite City Invitational, where they look to repeat as team champions. While they are missing senior Joe Callahan to a foot injury, seniors Lucas Rackers, Noah Scott, Adam Mittendorf, and Peter Dillon, along with juniors Daniel Hogan and Hayden Zenor and sophomore Grant Brawley, will focus on running as a unit.

"We want to focus on pack running and closing our gaps," said head coach Joe Porter. "Our focus should not be on any other team except ourselves. If we go out there and run our race, we'll do pretty well."

The gun goes off for the three mile varsity race at 9:10 Saturday morning at Wilson Park in Granite City, and with that, racing season will be officially here.

Underclassmen Briefs

C Soccer (1-0-1)

9/3-Chaminade			
SLUH	0	1	1
Chaminade	0	1	1
Goals:	Jacob McCarthy		

9/4-St. Dominic

SLUH	1	1	2
St. Dominic	0	1	1
Goals:	Sam Tieber, Noah Probst		

B Soccer (0-2)

9/2-Chaminade

SLUH	1	1	2
Chaminade	1	3	4
Goals:	Ben Ridgway, Charlie Stewart		

9/3-Vianney

SLUH	0	0	0
Vianney	1	0	1

JV Football (0-1)

9/3-Battle

SLUH	0	0	0	0
Battle	8	8	0	18