

Cross Country, Water Polo Finish Strong At State

Cross Country Captures Third Place; Best Finish Since 1961

BY JOHN CHRISTIE AND BEN ROSARIO
SPORTS REPORTERS

Ten years of hard work came to a head Saturday as SLUH's cross-country team captured its first state trophy in the Jim Linhares era. The team finished third in one of the most competitive state meets in Missouri history.

"It was unbelievable," said head coach Jim Linhares. "When I first saw the finishing places, I didn't think we had it, but when I saw the times I knew we had a great race." Although the team did not win the championship, the third place finish remains a great accomplishment.

As the top seven jogged to the starting line, they were greeted by a swarm of screaming Jr. Billiken fans. The first 800 meters of the state race was extremely fast, due to the quality of the competition.

"The key to our whole race was getting a good start," said senior captain Chris Graesser. "We didn't get lost and caught in back of the pack of runners."

The intensity of the start and the fast first mile took many runners out of the race; however, the Jr. Bills responded well to the challenge. The entire team ran tough second and third miles, putting them in good position to capture a state trophy.

Although the team was led by the 18th place finish of Ben Rosario, the hero of the race was junior Ken Reichert. Reichert passed more than twenty people in the last half mile to finish 41st, right on the heels of senior John Christie, who finished 39th.

The team was also helped by the stellar performance of its two sophomores: Ted Snodgrass ran a strong race finishing in 58th place, fourth on the team. His counterpart, Murphy O'Brien, finished 62nd. Seniors Chris Graesser and Scott Lauer rounded out the top seven in their last race as Jr. Bills.

The team has been inspired all season by its coaching staff. Three of the five coaches ran for SLUH in high school and helped to build the program into a state power.

When he accepted the trophy, Linhares said he couldn't stop thinking about all of the people from the last ten years that helped make this possible.

The runners were also helped along Saturday by a large and vocal fan base. More than 20 members of the team who were not running the race painted themselves blue and covered the course cheering for the Jr. Bills.



CHARLES MERRIOTT
Senior Ben Rosario runs his way to an eighteenth place.

Water Polo Finishes Second

BY JON NAVARRO
SPORTS REPORTER

Last weekend at the St. Peters' Rec-Plex, Coach Charlie Busenhart's Polobills came within one game of defending their state title. Earlier in the week the Jr. Bills rallied in their quarter- and semifinal games to reach the finals against Mary Institute-Country Day School.

The team faced off against Oakville a week ago Wednesday. Oakville showed life in the first quarter, but SLUH's experience showed through and soon wore down the Tigers. They defeated Oakville by a score of 10-7.

Next the team faced Parkway Central in the semifinal round. The team had played Central during the regular season at Forest Park Community College, but with no shallow end advantage at the Rec-Plex Busenhart was worried about Central's strong swimming ability.

The Jr. Bills took the early lead but soon discovered the talent of the Central team. Through out the rest of the game the Colts were able to stay close to the Jr. Bills. Every time the team scored Central was able to answer with one of its own which left the game tied. Late in the fourth quarter, the team scored its eighth goal and the Colts were not able to recover.

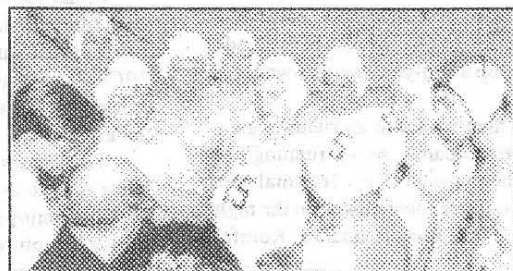
"Our defense did its job to get us out of the game and into the finals," said team captain and goalie Tim O'Connell.

On Saturday night the Polobills faced off against the Rams for the last time. The game started off quickly for the Jr. Bills with Matz finding the back of the net within a minute of the start. The Rams strength and speed was quickly realized, though, when they retaliated with in one minute of SLUH's goal.

At halftime, the Jr. Bills trailed MICDS by a score of 5-2. But with a few quick and effective strikes thanks to strong cross goal passing, the

team was able to bring the score within one goal by the end of the third period.

The Rams' better conditioning quickly showed through as the Rams counter-attacked the Jr. Bills and



CHARLES WOODARD
Coaches Busenhart and Baudendistel give words of wisdom to team before game with MICDS, who they lost to, 10-5.

pulled away from them for good. The team still managed to fight hard despite the players' weariness, but the Rams finally wore SLUH down and were able to defeat them to claim the state title.

"The Rams' better conditioning really showed through in the fourth quarter. Even though we played our best game of the year [the Rams] were able to put the ball in the net while we hit the crossbar."

The Polobills ended their season second in the state with its only losses to MICDS, the state champions. Even though the team came up one game short, the season showed that the Jr. Bills continued their tradition of excellence and sportsmanship.

Raqueteers Back For More

BY TOM WYRICH
CORE STAFF

The defending State Champions are back.

After a great season last year, in which they won the state tournament and finished in the top five in the national tournament, the SLUH racquetball team is ready to defend their title this year.

This year SLUH racquetball will again boast the largest program in the country, with six teams and a total of 36 players, including alternates.

The team was almost granted permission to have two varsity teams, but the other coaches in the league would only agree if the second varsity couldn't compete in state, something Coach Joseph P. Koestner and the team would not agree to.

Trying to replicate last year's undisputed record will be tough for the Varsity team, even though it is almost unchanged. Senior Jeff Rombach, a First Team All-

Star for the past two years, will remain as the number one singles seed, followed by seniors Tim Hodits, Kevin Sinwell, Jason Schlude, Jason Stockmann, and junior Brendan Buehre.

The major change will be at varsity doubles, where the team of senior Matt Stewart and junior Scott Ziegler will try to repeat last year's state-winning performance by Tom Dickmeyer and Ted Norwood.

Like most years, the biggest challenge for the Docbills will be the state tournament and holding off rivals Parkway Central and DeSmet.

The Varsity and JV-1 teams beat rivals Parkway Central hands down, not losing a single match. JV-3, 4, and 5 all won their matches this week also.

Schlude said, "We are actually pretty confident about state, but we are aiming higher," which, according to Koestner, is to "aim for winning the nationals."

Busenhart Freezes Over

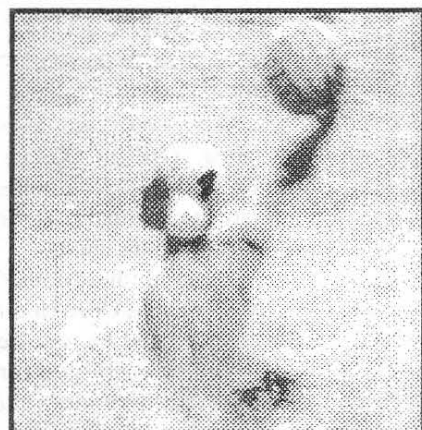
BY JOHN GLENNON
SPORTS REPORTER

With the skinpies and parkas tucked away after another outstanding water polo season, multi-coach Charlie Busenhart now takes the SLUH hockey team helm. The 1997-98 Mid-States High School hockey season appears to be very promising for the Jr. Bills. SLUH hockey has not seen this much varsity experience since it made the state final four during the 1993-94 season.

The core of this year's experience

lies in nine returning forwards, including six seniors, and five defensemen. Sophomore net-minder Adam Thomson has proved that he will be able to hold his own in several outstanding performances in SLUH's summer league and in the single pre-season game against Vianney, which the Bills lost 4-3.

Many players and coaches are calling SLUH's first line the best in the league. This year's senior captains are Josh Franklin, Ryan Barry and Jerry McNieve. See next week's *Prep News* for more hockey.



Charles Woodard
Senior Justin Woodard prepares to shoot the ball in warm-ups before the MICDS game. Woodard helped lead the team against MICDS at the Rec-Plex in St. Peter's.

SPARTAN ROMP

(from 8)

Backed by a good sized student cheering section, the Jr. Bills continued to control play. While still in the first half, Taylor Twellman sent a looping pass over the head of a Knights defender and onto the foot of Tim Gibbons. Gibbons took two dribbles and buried the ball in the goal.

Dave Minges extended his scoring streak to three games when he wholoped a Joe Orso pass in the second half. The pass from Orso came off of a valiant effort on his part, where he beat two defenders and placed the cross onto the foot of Minges.

Netminder Brian Missey recorded the shutout for the Jr. Bills. He came up with a couple of magnificent saves including a stop of a breakaway in the first half.

Next up for the squad is the Spartans of DeSmet on Saturday for the State Quarterfinals. DeSmet upset Chaminade in sectional play. The winner will advance to Semifinals.



Charles Merriott
The top twelve members of the Cross Country team pose for a picture at Jefferson City for the state final. The team placed third at the competition.