

DRIVE-BY
Eighth-grader Matthew Raroque powers by an ESD defender on the way to the hoop on January 8 in Hicks Gym. The Lions went on to lose the game 43-33.



CHRIS MCELHANEY PHOTO



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SHATTERING THE COMPETITION

As varsity soccer prepares for the SPC championship tournament, the team hopes to score another title.

The boys walked off the field with smiles covering their sweat-drenched faces. For the second time this season, the soccer team defeated rival Greenhill, another top contender for the North Zone number 1 seed. Team members have started off the counter season 2-0, (as of Jan. 18) with their other win coming against Fort Worth Country Day.

After this impressive start, the team only has one thing in mind: winning the SPC championship, which starts Feb. 11 in Houston.

After losing the week before to Trinity Christian Academy, the team has found their comfort zone, as they are playing very effectively to start off this counter season. Although the team has recorded wins in most of their first SPC games, this team, led by head coach Corindo Martin and senior captains Sam Eichenwald and Graham Gillespie, knows there is a lot of work left if they want to return to the top of SPC.

"I'm concerned about defending as a team rather than as individuals," Martin said. "And then the other thing is that I'm a little bit concerned that we were too soft, not willing to be physical enough. We've got to have players who are willing to do the dirty work. I want to be attractive and elegant in the way we play, but soccer is also a game where there is a physical component, and sometimes you just have to get your hands dirty. That is what this team needs to work on the most."

Although the team was not able to win SPC last year, Martin believes this year's group has the capability of bouncing back and winning it all.

"I think we have several seniors who are having their best season in the program, which is exactly what you want," Martin said. "They are really setting the standard high, and I'm really encouraged by their attitude and by their play."

One of the things Eichenwald enjoys about the team is the amount of fun the players are having, while still being able to compete intensely.

"There's always a feeling of positivity amongst the team, even if we're down a goal or two," Eichenwald said. "Generally, we play to have fun, and when we're having fun we play our best. So, in the end, we always will keep our heads up and keep fighting, no matter if the score is 2-0 or 0-2."

Eichenwald can speak for the entire team when he says that this SPC tournament is an all-or-nothing event. This group expects a championship, and its members will not be satisfied until they win it.

"As a two-sport senior, this SPC tournament will be the last time I ever play a varsity sport for St. Mark's," Eichenwald said. "I've had the privilege of learning from some of the best coaches and playing with the hardest-working teammates. Now, I want to do my best to try and help my team to another SPC championship and end my St. Mark's career on a high note."

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Four goals scored by left winger Arjun Singh (right) in **five** counter games against FWCD, Casady, Holland Hall, Greenhill and Oakridge



Besides Singh, other soccer team members include (from top) Scott Smythe, Corday Cruz, Hyer Thomas and Graham Gillespie.