

SPORTS

Superfanmen

Introducing the new Super Fan Men, Daniel Sanchez, Will Chance and Colin Bajec. **Page 26**

Decision Day

Looking into the reasoning behind Harrison Ingram's top six schools. **Page 27**

Protests

SeMaj Musco examines the history and debate behind politics and protesting in sports. **Page 27**

In brief

ALUM MAKES CHANGE Over the past few months, Emmanuel Acho '08 has been filming videos on social media titled, "Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man," addressing racial issues we struggle with in America. Acho recently interviewed NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell on his opinions regarding athletes using their platforms to address issues like these.

In addition to social media, Acho plans to work alongside American talk show host Oprah Winfrey to turn his videos into books. Acho was also named co-host of Fox Sports 1's talk show, Speak For Yourself.

ROOKIE COACH Taylor Jenkins '03, Head Coach for the Memphis Grizzlies, earned 29 points in the NBA Coach of the Year ballot, the NBA announced on Aug. 22.

This ranked Jenkins sixth out of the eleven coaches who received votes. Despite being a first-year head coach, Jenkins was able to lead the Grizzlies to the Western Conference play-in game, where they lost to the Portland Trailblazers.

BACKYARD BASKETBALL Junior Tate Laczkowski and Andrew Laczkowski '20 held a basketball camp in their backyard over the summer for kids in their neighborhood to practice. This camp, from Monday to Thursday, lasted 6 weeks, from mid-June till the end of July with morning sessions from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and afternoon sessions from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The Laczkowski brothers had around eight players come to train per session, ranging from ages six to 11. These athletes practiced shooting, dribbling, and passing alongside varsity forward Tate Laczkowski and University of Pennsylvania basketball player Andrew Laczkowski. In their backyard, they set up two portable goals to accompany their normal basketball half-court, allowing the players to spread out.

MS SPORTS All activities and sports for Middle School teams have been postponed indefinitely following the decision made by SPC to cancel the fall season. This decision attempts to preserve competition on the varsity level, allowing for more field and weight room time for Upper School athletes.

**SPC cancels fall sports**

Canceled Due to the ongoing safety hazards involving COVID-19, SPC has decided to opt out of all fall sports. This decision left uncertainty among fall athletes and coaches as to whether there will be competition.

Editor's note: *The original story was written before the school's announcement to move forward with fall sports. For more updated information, please view the sidebar on page 25.*

STORY Peter Orsak, Luke Nayfa
PHOTOS Evan McGowan, Evan Lai

It was November 2019. The ball thudded against the Lion's side of the court. There was no time for the team to react. At that very moment, their season had come to an end.

The volleyball squad was looking to complete a back-to-back feat by defeating Trinity Valley in the SPC championship, but after five long sets, the Lions fell just short.

The team gathered around the beloved seniors and reminisced on all of the special moments they shared together throughout the season.

Tears were shed, and hugs were given, but the juniors and sophomores were determined to redeem themselves next year. This loss wasn't the end for them, and in some ways, they were more motivated than ever before because of it.

Many juniors wasted no time in preparation for their senior year and began individual practices the very next week. Eventually, these individual sessions led to team practices throughout the winter and early spring. Their spirits were high and hopeful for what they could accomplish with a new season ahead.

Then, March 12 at 5:20 p.m., everything changed. Members of the community were asked not to return to school the next day as a safety precaution for the rapidly growing COVID-19. What once was believed to be a week-by-week postponement resulted in the rest of the school year being finished online with nobody allowed on campus until further notice.

These safety measures continued through the spring and into the summer, leaving the future of fall athletics in 2020 uncertain.

Before the team knew it, their redemption tour was cut short.

Conference play is canceled.

For seniors, this meant devastation. After years and years of training for their final shot at a championship, they received this heartbreaking news through

Five Athletes to Watch

Charles Wilson, Senior Defensive End

Conor Duffy, Junior Wide Receiver

Tristan Doan, Senior Outside Hitter

Daniel Sanchez, Senior Opposite Hitter

Julian Ivarra, Senior XC Runner

an email. They waited their whole lives to be the 'big dogs' on the court and on campus, but that wouldn't be possible this year.

No practice. No games. No championship.

SPC fall sports will be canceled until further notice, as announced by league commissioner Bob Windham Aug. 21. The SPC Operations Committee and Board of Directors came to this decision after meeting together during the spring and summer.

"When we met in August to make this decision," Windham said, "there were some schools that just didn't see a way to move forward, and there were some schools that felt pretty comfortable moving forward. So, we made the decision not to do the fall SPC season this year. We're still planning on moving forward with winter and spring, as scheduled. We just came to the conclusion that as a conference we would give schools the independence to schedule games if they wanted to."

While other leagues like UIL and TAPPS are moving forward with their fall season, Windham said SPC must operate independently because of its size.

"One of the differences is in TAPPS and UIL, they plan a district schedule, and that district is made up of schools that are in a fairly close geographic area," Windham said. "It doesn't require a lot of travel, and it certainly doesn't require anything overnight. Then, if you look at how we're set up, we've got schools in Oklahoma, Dallas Fort-Worth, Austin and Houston. That, of course, means a lot more travel."

Although Windham hoped to be able to allow athletes on the field this fall, health and safety came first.

"I think there are things that you can definitely do to make it safer," Windham said, "but in the end, when you're in full competition, it doesn't appear to be something I wouldn't be worried about. If you watch those high school games on TV, you saw people playing football; people in contact rolling around on the ground. You saw a lot of things that would probably shock you if you saw people that close together and touching like that."

Headmaster David Dini, a member of the SPC Operations Committee, helped to make this decision with the goal of finding a safe way to compete independently from the conference.

"We've certainly had an active dialogue among the schools in Dallas in SPC amongst St. Mark's, Hockaday, Greenhill and ESD," Dini said. "I think there has been a very similar perspective about our thinking around sports and the potential for competition. So, that's been our goal all along."

While Dini is trying to keep the

school's options open, he understands the health concerns that come with playing sports during a global pandemic.

"Obviously health and safety are fundamentally important, and we don't ever want to do anything that would unjustly put increased risk into any activity that we have at the school," Dini said. "Our goal was to get school back in session first and foremost. And then, as activities are able to be layered on top of that, we would do that at an ever-increasing rate."

With SPC canceling fall sports, the volleyball, cross country, fencing and football teams are unsure whether they will have a season at all. Head volleyball coach Darren Teicher hopes his squad will be able to see the court in some way or another.

"It's a downer for all the guys that are graduating this year," Teicher said. "I have a lot of guys that are really good players and were hoping to win the [SPC] championship this year. On top of that, I have a couple of guys that are Division I talents that were hoping to progress their games and prepare themselves for hopefully playing in college. All of those

I feel terrible for anyone that's missing a season. I played high school sports myself, and if my senior season got taken away, I'd be heartbroken.

Bob Windham, SPC Commissioner

things are now question marks."

Senior captain Tristan Doan remains hopeful that there will be a season in some capacity.

"There were plans to set up grass courts outside and play four on four after school with the coaches there," Doan said, "but there haven't been many developments towards playing other schools or playing indoors."

Teicher says the team was devastated after hearing the news about the season's cancellation.

"We lost in the finals last year and have a lot of returning players," Teicher said. "I had pretty high hopes that we would get back to the finals and take the championship this year, but obviously that's out of the question now. This school has a lot of competitive kids here. They want to compete, and that's been taken away from them. It's a hard pill to swallow."

Junior Sahil Dodda, who was named All-SPC last year for cross country as a sophomore, feels devastated after putting in 65-mile weeks all summer.

"It's a little disappointing; I'm not gonna lie," Dodda said. "When you're putting in all the work over the summer expecting to have a season, then they just cancel it without really trying to make a season happen, it's frustrating."

For runners like Dodda, losing an important junior or senior season could be



BREAKING AWAY Junior Conor Duffy, far left, fights off the the Cistercian tackle in the Lions' first home game of the 2019 season.

SLAMMED Senior Captain Tristan Doan, left, spikes the ball over the net to give the Lions momentum against Greenhill last fall.

FIRST PLACE The cross country team, below, hoists their SPC championship trophy after finishing runner-up the year prior.



leaving athletes unsure

detrimental to one's recruitment process.

"For me, in particular, I didn't have a great sophomore year for cross country, so not having a cross country season my junior year is going to make track season so much more important," Dodda said. "If I have a few bad races during track season, it could really hurt my chances of running in college."

Head cross country coach John Turek wants to see his athletes have a season.

"We are hopeful that we will be able to put together a couple of cross country meets within our schools in the SPC North Zone," Turek said. "These would be very small meets, obviously very distanced and following the guidelines for COVID-19. We have been in talks with Greenhill, ESD, Cistercian, Fort Worth Country Day, Trinity Valley and Hockaday, and hopefully, we will be able to put something together."

For head football coach Hayward Lee, sports are one of the things in life that unite people the most.

"I think there are two things that bring people together," Lee said. "One is music and the other is sports. How many times have you seen two people who have nothing in common hugging and high-fiving because there's something about their love for sports that brought them together? I think more than ever we need things that bring people together during this crazy time."

Lee believes football can not only bring the community here together, but that it also plays a fundamental role in Marksmen's growth.

"I think the football program at St. Mark's has huge value to the school," Lee said. "It has deep value to the lives of kids and their development as great young men. I am a believer to my bone marrow in the unbelievable power of difficult team sports in the lives of people, and what being part of a team can do in the life of a young man."

Junior wide receiver Conor Duffy says the team is terribly devastated after working out all year for the season.

"It's definitely sad because we've been working so hard, and it's not something we have control over," Duffy said. "It's an event that my entire year is circled around. But, we also have hope that we'll eventually figure something out; even if it means just playing one game."

For seniors like Trevor Gicheru, who has multiple offers to play in college, SPC being canceled could mean he won't have an entire year of film for his recruitment.

"If it remains that we're one of the only schools in Texas that doesn't play, it would definitely hurt a lot," Gicheru said. "I don't think I would lose any offers, but there were a lot of schools looking forward to my senior film. It would definitely be a major setback."

Even with no season currently in sight, Junior quarterback Alex Nadalini and the rest of the team continue to train as they did all summer.

"Since we didn't have access to St. Mark's," Nadalini said, "one of the players gave us the opportunity to use the Cooper Fitness Center, which has a very nice weight room. They graciously gave us a place to work out for strength and conditioning. We've also been throwing routes on any open field we can find, trying to stay on top of our game and stay ready for whenever the season does roll around."

Without a football season, the cheerleaders have also been left unable to preform.

"It is very disheartening to think that I may miss out on my senior year of cheering on the Lions," Hockaday Senior Sasha Schwimmer said. "I would have never thought the ESD game last year would be my last game to cheer, so I hope our football players can get a season."

The football team not having a season would also result in no Homecoming game or any Homecoming celebrations. Student Council President Blake Hudspeth says the Student Council has been planning Homecoming since May.

"We figured it's better to have a plan and not need it than need a plan and not have it," Hudspeth said. "We decided on a theme. We decided on decorations. We had our king nominations down in the books. We had everything in line to start ordering stuff and start making bookings. But now that it's looking like it may not happen, all we can do is wait."

Above any events that may be canceled, several coaches here would be without work, including TJ Millward and Carl Jackson.

Since these coaches are not employed by the school, a canceled season would result in an absence of their coaching jobs.

Often overlooked, Middle School sports were canceled even before any official announcement from SPC. Eighth-grader Lawrence Gardner, who started at quarterback last year, feels just as devastated as anyone else.

"I understand why they did it because

of safety and the community guidelines," Gardner said, "but of course it's annoying for everyone because we all just wish we had a season to compete against other schools and show all the hard work we've been doing. I think a lot of boys are disappointed, but we understand why they had to do it."

Seventh grade football coach Greg Guiler is missing out on his only opportunity to coach his son, seventh-grader Cooper Guiler, until high school.

"Coaching varsity sports in both winter and spring, it's a reality that I won't get to watch him compete," Guiler said.

"This was potentially the one season during his middle school career where I would get to be an observer for pretty much all of his games, so I was excited about that."

Dini, who was a competitive tennis player in high school, understands the importance of sports for young men and the community.

"It was terribly disappointing and frustrating in the spring when we had our season cut short," Dini said, "and it's really disappointing

not to be in full steam ahead mode right now. I have a tremendous amount of empathy and compassion for those guys that are seniors for whom this is their capstone experiences as Marksmen, and I want them to be able to compete, and I want them to be able to play."

Update: Lions move forward despite SPC cancelation.

As of now, sports are moving forward in hopes of finalizing an independent schedule for the fall season. The current timeline, depending on any possible outbreaks or breakthroughs with COVID-19, will most likely consist of ever increasing rates of activity and contact all abiding by the current safety guidelines.

The football, volleyball and cross country teams began their training sessions Sep. 14 in hopes to gradually progress until the first week of October, when normal practices are scheduled to begin. This progression is all in hopes to finalize a non conference schedule for all three sports.

For the football team, non-contact unpadded training sessions began, consisting of four position groups that rotate between on field workouts and weight room sessions. The team hopes to be wearing helmets by Sep. 28 and be in full pads by Oct. 5.

For the volleyball team, distanced training sessions began on grass courts on the northwest corner of campus. These sessions consist of two-on-two and three-on-three scrimmages, focusing mostly on skill training.

For the cross country team, runners have been training by doing full campus loops and by using the track. These runners have trained entirely on campus, in hopes to return to a more normal practice schedule with runs off campus.

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The ReMarker
Sports

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At a Glance



Football

- 2019 Record: 3-5
- 2019 SPC Finish: 5th
- Three players from last year went to play football in the Ivy League in 2020

Volleyball

- 2018 SPC Finish: 1st
- 2019 SPC Finish: 2nd
- Senior Tristan Doan has a max vertical reach of 10'11"

Cross Country

- 2019 SPC Champions
- Returning two of the top five runners this year
- Coach Turek returns for his 17th year coaching the Lions