

AS SPRING SPORTS NEAR THE END, PLAYERS REFLECT ON THE SEASON

Baseball



Boys Lacrosse



Boys Golf



Girls Golf



Girls Lacrosse



HAZEL WALTENBAUGH
THE RUBICON

With about half of the spring season left, the boys' varsity baseball team is hopeful about their journey to state. At press time, the team had banked 7 wins and 5 losses, with two games left before playoffs.

"I think we have good chemistry this year. It's good to have a supportive team and I think we all get along for the most part" Junior Nelly Wodarz said.

With a winning record, SPA is currently placed number one in their conference.

"I think if we've ever had a chance [to go to state] this is the year. We're looking pretty good as of right now" Sophomore Johnny Christakos said.

Both Wodarz and Christakos anticipate a successful season, especially considering their winning streak and the overall connection of the players.

"I'm definitely looking forward to playoffs because I think we got a really good shot this year. But, I mean, I'm just looking forward to spending time with the guys on the team and you know, building a good culture here for not just us, but the people after us too" Wodarz said.

HAZEL WALTENBAUGH
THE RUBICON

So far in the season the Trimac Blackhawks Lacrosse, which is a combined team with SPA, Minnehaha, St.Croix Prep, St. Agnes, and DeLaSalle, has won 5 out of 6 games.

The team typically practices at Minnehaha's north campus and is placed second out of the metro athletic conference.

While the team is doing well, the players know there's always room for improvement.

"I think the team really needs to work on our stick skills," junior Joey Stolpestad said.

"There are no classes in lacrosse so we only really have one shot at being in playoffs," he added.

ORION KIM
THE RUBICON

Although golf might appear to be a solo sport, team chemistry is still an important value. Just like any sport, relationships are a principal factor in what makes the hours of commitment worth it.

Sophomore Henri Peltier has been playing golf since he was only four years old, joining the golf team in eighth grade. He has two brothers that are also on the team, freshman Ethan Peltier and captain George Peltier.

His close bonds prior to joining strengthened the team as a whole. "Since [my brothers and I] know how each other plays, when we go out for a round together, it's pretty easy to stay in our groove and guess how each other's rounds are going to go. In terms of the rest of the team, we're all close together," he said.

Being able to have a space to have some fun while spending time with familiar people can be especially valuable. "My favorite part about being on the team is the camaraderie and the ability to just go out and play golf with my friends [and family]," Peltier said.

LEO SAMPSELL-JONES
THE RUBICON

Though the words "golf team" may seem ironic together, the girls' golf team is the definition of a tight-knit community. As a relatively small, sadly unknown team, every player has the opportunity to get to know each other and adopt a unique role on the team.

Junior Nikola Barkwell has adopted the role of co-captain this year. "I am the person that goes between students and the coaches to make sure everyone is heard and provide insight into possible activities," she said.

In contrast, senior Kishori Patel is new to the sport. She doesn't lead as much, but instead uses training times "to watch my other teammates."

The team practices at both Somerset and Highland golf courses to get a sense of what different courses could look like.

Even though golf is a largely individual sport, the culture of the team is very communal. "We work together very well as we all practice together and mix up the groups so everyone gets to know each other," Barkwell said.

Patel agrees- she has felt the team develop a sense of belonging. "I think our team is good at helping each other out and supporting each of our own efforts to improve," she said.

ANNIE BAI
THE RUBICON

After an impressive first game against the St. Paul Bobcats, Spartan Lacrosse had their first win against Hastings, a formidable opponent. The game against the St. Paul Bobcats was the first game for some of the players and they all showed improvement between their first and second game against Hastings.

It is almost as if the team has just begun their season after having to postpone many games and only having two in April. Their current scoreboard is two wins and three losses.

But many players have been getting their first varsity goals, "For next year, individually, everyone just needs to get more confident in themselves and their skills," captain Julia Colbert said.

Because of the number of new players and the rule changes, the team has focused on being inclusive, and not competitive. For post-game rituals, they do "snaps" and players of the game. "Snaps are just calling out someone or something that you noticed on the field. Great to point out so positive things that happened regardless of the score," Thomas said.

"As a captain, I am excited to see our improvement in the rest of the season, as we start having more games," Colbert said.

Softball



Boys Tennis



Track



Trap



Ultimate



CHARLOTTE GOINGS
THE RUBICON

In the inaugural season of the new softball co-op with SPA, TCA, SPCPA, and Great River they are currently 5-4 with 7 games remaining in the regular season followed by playoffs. The team is having a successful season despite having to overcome the challenges of starting a new co-op. Sophomore Poppy Ploen noted how far the team has come this year in terms of bonding.

"We're kind of all like siblings. It took a little bit for the two schools to mesh but now we're all great friends and it's really fun."

Ploen's favorite memory was winning their first game. "All the SPA players were really excited because it had been a while since we had won a game," she said.

ORION KIM
THE RUBICON

Hard work, belief, and trust are three necessary aspects of a comeback story. On Apr 27, the boys' tennis team took on Egan, a talented tennis program. The Spartans had momentum going into the game, with high aspirations for what wouldn't be an easy feat. "We were undefeated, so we knew it would be an important and challenging match," senior Alex Moore said.

Prior to the final two matches, things weren't looking hopeful. "We trailed 2-3 meaning we needed to win 2 straight matches in order to clinch a well-earned victory," sophomore Baasit Mahmood said.

After a hard-fought win to tie up the score, the team had to muster up hope finishing the last match. In the second set, Moore and eighth grader Allan Wang felt the weight of the team as they trailed 2-4 in the final set after an incredible comeback in the second set. Despite the slim odds of achieving yet another comeback, the duo battled with grit.

Their hard work didn't go to waste, as they managed to overcome 3 match points. "It was pretty amazing to take the final point, especially because we had the entire team and parents there cheering us as I made the last shot," Moore said.

CHARLOTTE GOINGS
THE RUBICON

The track and field team has grown closer and competed hard in meets while overcoming undesirable weather conditions to create a successful season.

Freshman Sawyer Bollinger Danielson described the season as "fast because it's three weeks and because we're running fast." The SPA track and field team started strong this season, with senior Jack Hlavka placing second in the boys' 800 and freshman Taylor Barkwell placing second in the girls' 3200 and has continued to see success throughout the season.

Sophomore Ingrid Johnson explained that the team grew closer through the difficult weather. "I think everyone bonded through like the bad weather we had because there were a few times where we had to kind of go on runs in the rain, and I think everyone had a lot of fun," Johnson said.

The team has continued their success from earlier in the season with high-placing finishes in many races and events. The girls track team has their final meet was May 19 at Providence Academy. The boys team wrapped up their season May 23.

LEO SAMPSELL-JONES
THE RUBICON

Despite its odd name, a clay pigeon is not a statue of a bird. Rather, it's a round, usually orange target which is blown to bits by members of SPA's trapshooting team.

"I've been trapshooting for as long as I can remember," junior Autumn Spaulding said.

Compared to other high school sports, the trapshooting team follows an odd schedule. The team mostly spends their time alone, has Saturday practices, and, since there are no seniors on the team, is led by juniors. Meets are low-key, creating a relaxing environment.

In addition to shooting, Spaulding enjoys watching her newer teammates improve. "[At first] some of them might only hit four to five clay pigeons, [compared] to their more recent shoots where they might hit fourteen or fifteen."

Spaulding believes it's helpful to have a community around, especially if you have a "bad shooting day" and that "even just talking about bad scores" can help lift one's spirits.

Overall, Spaulding appreciates the calm environment that the team has to offer. Though individual, there is still a community element to shooting ranges, ear protection, and watching clay pigeons explode into dozens of shards.

ANNIE BAI
THE RUBICON

Through teamwork and leadership, the ultimate frisbee team has overcome a lack of inexperienced players due to minimal recruiting during the pandemic.

The team has a culture of encouragement; they are focused on having fun but are also very competitive. The team bonds through listening to music before games.

"We have a few chants we do before the games, and I'm working on playing classical music during drills before every game. We also stand in a circle after each game with the other team to share our favorite moments from the game and exchange "spirit gifts," said captain Per Johnson.

After graduation, they will face the challenge of losing many valuable players next season. However, the team remains optimistic. "We will mostly have to work on our fundamentals and leadership as the now-sophomores and juniors will have to step up," Hilton said.

Aside from training more, the priority for the next season is to focus on recruitment, so they have enough players for a full team. "It would also be great if we had enough girls for a girls team, which we, unfortunately, didn't this year," said Johnson.