

## BHS soccer players gain year-round training through club soccer organizations

NEIL PICKERING

*Sports Editor*

Throughout the spring and fall, Bloomington High School hosts its seasons for mens and womens soccer. These seasons generally last about three to four months giving the BHS soccer players a rather lengthy off-season. However, some student soccer players sign up for club soccer organizations over their off season to stay in shape or gain recognition from colleges with their own soccer programs.

The two most common club soccer organizations that BHS soccer players participate in are the Little Illini program in Champaign and the Fusion program in Bloomington. The Fusion team includes several BHS soccer players from both the men and womens teams. The boys Fusion program includes Bloomington juniors Alec Hindman, Matt Speer and senior Jordan Fryer. The girls fusion team possesses sophomores Arin Calamari, Kiki Anderson, juniors Emily Kissel, Sadie Delashmit, and senior Haley Biggs. The Little Illini contains seniors Liz Ficek, Beth Walther, and Emily White.

"There are many benefits from being in club soccer," said Alec Hindman. "It's a great way to stay in shape for next season and it allows you to play other soccer



Junior Emily Kissel dribbles the ball away from defender junior Sadie Delashmit during practice.

Mykael Smith  
players that perform more close to your skill level."

The Fusion and Little Illini compete with other teams from across the state and sometimes in states bordering Illinois. Most commonly these two club soccer teams play games against teams from the Chicago suburbs. However, in the summer of 2007 the womens Little Illini team was given the privilege of playing some highly competitive tournaments in Sweden, where they played

teams from around the world.

"Going to Sweden will be an experience I'm never going to forget. It was really interesting to see and play teams from all over the globe, not to mention that Sweden was pretty awesome too," said Ficek.

One of the bigger reasons why players will get themselves involved in club soccer organizations is because it attracts the attention of colleges. Players can contact universities and request for a scout to come and watch them perform in a game or practice if they have time.

"I have asked several colleges to come and watch me play in a game, other times I will see scouts from schools at practice. Either way it's a good way to get noticed if you want to play college soccer," said Kissel.

The Little Illini and the Fusion have several different age groups that divide up the skill level for the players so that they can play with athletes closer to their abilities. These clubs allow for ages eight to 18 to compete against other teams.

"Playing for the Fusion has made me a stronger player," said Kissel. "Club soccer has been a key to my success in my soccer career."

These BHS soccer players hope to benefit from their participation through club soccer on to their next raider soccer season.

Cross country team is given hope for state from new class 2A ranking

JOHN LAWRENCE

*Student Life Editor*

This year the cross-country team has been changed from its IHSA 3A status to a 2A status. The team has also been working hard to improve and take full advantage of their new situation.

"We've done well," said sophomore runner Kyle O'Daniel. "We could have been doing better, but for the work we've put in we are seeing good results."

In years past, the cross-country team has always been classified as a 3A team. The team class depends on the size of the school and what scale IHSA is using. The scale was changed this past year, which caused Bloomington High School to become a 2A school meaning the cross-country team now competes with smaller schools. This works out to the team's advantage due to the fact that the team was the second smallest school in the 3A last year and now is the third largest school in 2A this year.

"This year they changed the scale so now we're 2A so it's easier for us to place in sectionals and state," said O'Daniel.

The team plans on using their new class ranking to compete with more schools at their own skill level, which has inspired them to work hard during prac-

tice.


"We have worked hard in the work outs and even the coaches are impressed," said junior runner Brian Meyer. "We have a really good chance to go to state."

"Our number one goal is to make it to state," said O'Daniel. "We're trying really hard and I think we can get there."

While the girl's team has suffered a loss with the absence of last year's seniors including all-state runner Ashley Verplank, they are positive and ready for what the season has left to bring to them.

"Last year we had a lot of seniors and now they're gone," said sophomore Shelby Wiist. "That's why we're glad to have a lot of new girls. We'll have a team for years to come."

The team has been training harder than usual in order to succeed later in the season. Many members of the team think this is the reason they performed poorly at intercity. Fatigued by training, both the boy's team and the girl's team took 5<sup>th</sup> place, which is much worse than they usually do. The team hopes that the rigorous training that they have been doing will pay off later in the season during sectionals and state.

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