



# BOYS SOCCER:

## a season to remember



The boys soccer team celebrating their perfect 9-0 season and being NIC-10 champs after their home win against Belvidere. Nikola Kuljanin/PHOTO

Aisha Hill  
Reporter

‘18

The Varsity boys soccer team has undergone a record breaking season, ending a 13-year losing streak against their toughest competitors, Boylan, on Wednesday, September 27, putting them first in conference. The win over Belvidere earned them their first conference title since 2004 and a perfect 9-0 season.

Joseph Battel, senior captain, transferred this year from Boylan, where he played on the varsity soccer team last year.

“It feels great being first in Nic-10,” said Battel. “But I was a Nic-10 champ last year when I played for Boylan, so now I’m just trying to look beyond that and focus on our upcoming tournaments for sectionals and regionals.”

The team has an undefeated record; however, they’ve overcome quite a few obstacles throughout the season.

“It was definitely rough adjusting to

the new players on the team,” said Chase Nickols, senior. “Every player has a different playing style. Some of us play for different club teams, but eventually you just learn to adapt to one another.”

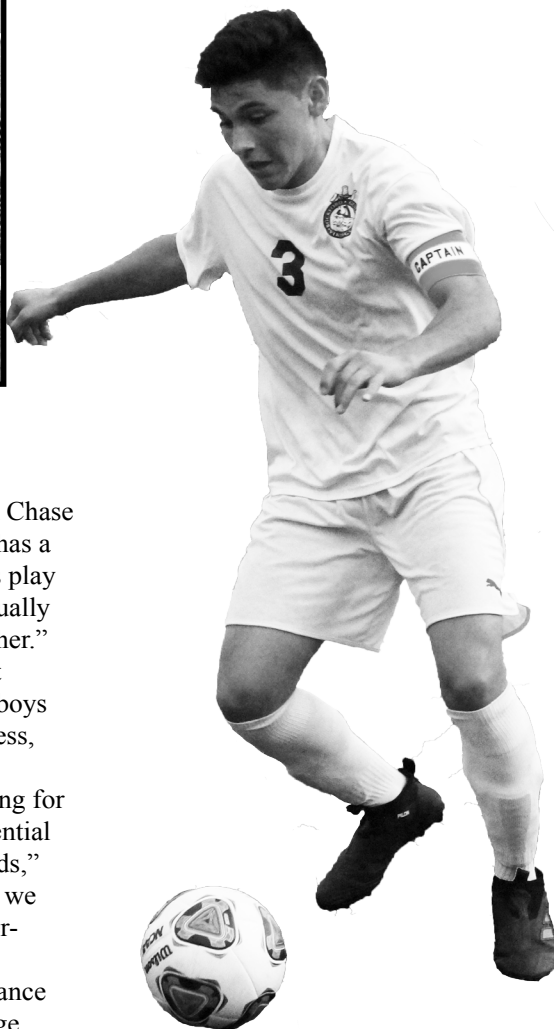
Another tough game was against Jefferson High School, where the boys were down two players; nevertheless, they won with a score of 2 - 1.

“That game was really challenging for us because we were short two essential players on the team due to red-cards,” said Chad Blackburn, senior. “But we were able to push through and overcome.”

Some seniors are looking to advance on to the next level and play college soccer, while others will be making this season their last.

“I will be going to college next year, but right now, playing soccer isn’t something I will keep pursuing,” said Battel. “I enjoyed it all of high school, but once you reach collegiate level, it’s too big of a commitment that I don’t want.”

As soccer comes to an end, seniors are moving forward with school and their futures, leaving the rest of the team with memories of an unforgettable season.



Fabian Perea, captain and left back, dribbles the ball up at a home game against the Boylan Titans. Olivia Hagerty/PHOTO

“All of us on the team were really close, even though we didn’t always get along very well,” said Diego Bolanos, junior. “The seniors taught me to never lose my head during a game; it definitely won’t be the same without them next year.”

## Girls Tennis RECAP

Prycilla Rodriguez  
Entertainment Editor

“G-Vikes on three! 1...2...3...G-G-G-G-Vikes!”

That’s the first thing girls tennis players hear before they’re off to the courts. Well, that and one of Coach Woosley’s infamous motivational speeches. The team is at its all-time high having swept a win at the NIC-10 conference against Jefferson on October 6 and 7.

Lyndsy Martin, senior, has had a remarkable final season. Earlier this month, Martin was featured in Rockford Register Star for her stupendous trait—the ability to play with both hands. This is an advantage that most tennis players do not have, but Martin was lucky enough to inherit after a coach taught her to play right-handed at age nine, even though she is left-handed.

“It was a blast!” said Martin. “I’ve never really been recognized for how I play. I didn’t think it was that different.”

Martin began the season with her doubles partner, senior Hannah Willis, but to broaden the knowledge between older and younger players, Willis and Martin were split. Dori Russo, sophomore, was partnered with Martin for the rest of the season, whereas Willis was partnered with Alyssa LoTempio, junior.

“Dori is naturally good at tennis and she’s very motivating,” said Martin. “She has potential to be even better within her next two years at Guilford.”

Another senior who has had many accomplishments this season is Nicole Christiansen, who has been on the courts since she was three years old. After playing on varsity her freshman year, Christiansen has defended her spot since then. Christiansen manages to balance AP classes and maintain a perfect athletic status. Most recently, she has officially become a four-time IHSA Girls Tennis state qualifier.

“I’m going to miss team bonding the most,” said Christiansen. “Also bus rides and tournaments. Anything that includes spending time with my teammates.”

## Warming up with Guilford Athletes

Nick Eichstaedt/  
QUOTES &  
PHOTOS

“The team stretches our arms and legs, then we take some practice swings. It gets me loose and ready to golf. This prevents me from pulling muscles while golfing.”



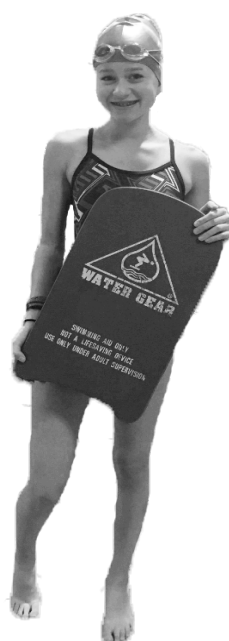
AJ Pruitt,  
Golf

“I stretch my arms out to make sure I’m not sore and I also take some practice swings. It stretches my arms out so I don’t pull any muscles in my body”



Jordan Reeves,  
Bowling

“As a team we do 10 laps of regular swim, 10 laps of kicking, and 10 of just arms. Finally, we do two laps of all our strokes because it relaxes your muscles so you’re ready to swim.”



Brianna Lawson,  
Swimming

“I do stretches and then as a team we do lay-up lines and shooting drills. The stretches help reduce the risk of getting injured during the game.”



Ben Tousey,  
Basketball





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SPORTS 11

# CONCUSSION CRISIS

## High school athletes mirror dangers in professional sports

**Jeffrey Larsen**  
Reporter

It's 4th and goal, state championship hanging in the balance. You're handed the ball. Leaping over the goal line, you meet the helmet of another player. But you're in! A culmination of years of hard work and dedication leaves you on the ground victorious...

...but also unconscious.

You wake up a little later and think nothing of it and celebrate. Years later things start to change. You get more headaches, your temper is shorter, and you just don't feel the same. In one moment a lapse can change your life forever, having you wishing for that 4th and goal back.

A prominent topic among sports pundits is that of concussions, but concussions can happen in more than just football. According to Mayo Clinic, a concussion is when the brain is aggravated, coming into contact with the inside of the skull. The human brain doesn't move with the skull, it moves freely within the skull's confines. This can affect athletes when they suffer head trauma ([www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)). According to Medical News Today, between the years 2002-2012, there was a 200 percent increase in both the number of emergency room visits for concussion

among 8-year-olds to 13-year-olds and the number of reported concussions in those aged 14-19 years.

Concussions can occur anywhere, whether it's laying a big hit on the football field, or playing sharks and minnows in PE.

Although concussions happen in many sports, high school football accounts for 47% of reported sports concussions among high school athletes in the US, according to the Head Case Company. Football can be especially dangerous due to the effects of concussive head trauma.



Girls and boys basketball team members illustrate how they might respond if a teammate had a concussion. Jeffrey Larsen/PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

"I was playing soccer and a girl ran into me and I fell, smacking my head into the turf," said Tessa Slabaugh, sophomore soccer player.

One of the biggest effects of hits to one's head is CTE (Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy). CTE is a degenerative brain disease in which a protein called Tau forms in clumps, slowly spreading through the brain and killing cells. "I would be scared if I got concussions," said Tyrell Thatcher,

senior football player. "I think the trainer should talk to teams as a group about the effects of CTE."

CTE has never been found in athletes

that suffer just one concussion, without experiencing any other cases of head trauma; still several hits—even sub-concussive hits—can cause CTE symptoms with repeated blows.

"I think that student athletes may want to play so badly that they may not report concussions to their trainer or coach, not understanding the potential long term effects it can cause," said Mr. Casey Kilduff, Physical Education teacher.

Football is statistically the most popular sport in the United States. Football helmets are designed to protect players from structural damage to the skull and prevent brain bleeds, but those injuries only affect the outside of the head, not the inside, where a large amount of damage can occur.

"If I got a concussion I think I'd be more cautious," said Thatcher, "I would be more aware of my surroundings and change how I approach the game."

Athletes who suffer concussions without any long-term damage still face a serious risk of Second Impact Syndrome (SIS). SIS is when someone suffers a second concussion. It can lead to dangerous swelling and brain bleeds and more serious cases of CTE.

"I don't really have a fear of developing CTE," said Nick Albers, senior football player, "But I haven't been playing as long as some other players."

# CAN'T STOP WON'T STOP

## Athletes work hard to accomplish their individual and team goals

**Olivia Hagerty**  
Editor-In-Chief

Athletes often hear the advice, "Follow your dreams," from a coach or a parent. Ambitions vary between athletes' minds; some aspire to make it to state, others to reach their personal best, or maybe to have an unforgettable season with their teammates. Through every practice and game, athletes develop dreams and missions for themselves and as a team. Maintaining goals helps athletes keep on track and motivates them.

Mackenzie Pass, senior soccer player, cross country runner, and Valkrie, is prepared to make sure her long term target is accomplished for her senior year.

"If you apply goals it allows you to always want it better," said Pass. "Having goals is dedication; it shows you want to play. For soccer it's a big senior group and we have been playing with each other for four years now. It has always been the goal for this season to be our year. Our long time goal has been to build up this team over a course of all four years."

Nikola Kuljanin, senior soccer player, reflects about how important it is to keep expressing his personal and team goals throughout the sea-

son.

"We constantly remind ourselves of where we want to be and never settle for anything less than that," said Kuljanin. "Goals are very important and motivate us to put everything on the field every time we are out there."

Some athletes play by an expression their coach uses, some even write it down to help them stay focused. The football team used the saying "WAO," which stands for "We Are One" this year. The girls' basketball promotes, "Never Settle" on their posters, t-shirts, and as their team motto for the past seasons. Coaches communicate these goals in the beginning of the season to motivate their players.

"For my freshmen team, my goal is to make people better

so that they are ready for the Junior Varsity or Varsity level," said Riley Kontek, freshmen girls' basketball coach. "I want to take where they are now and move them to the next spot. The goal for the girls' basketball program is to play cohesively as a team good enough that we can get past our goal from last year, which was getting to the regional finals. This year we are pushing to win a regional final."

Just about every sport lends itself to the possibility of injuries. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), high school athletes account for an estimated 2

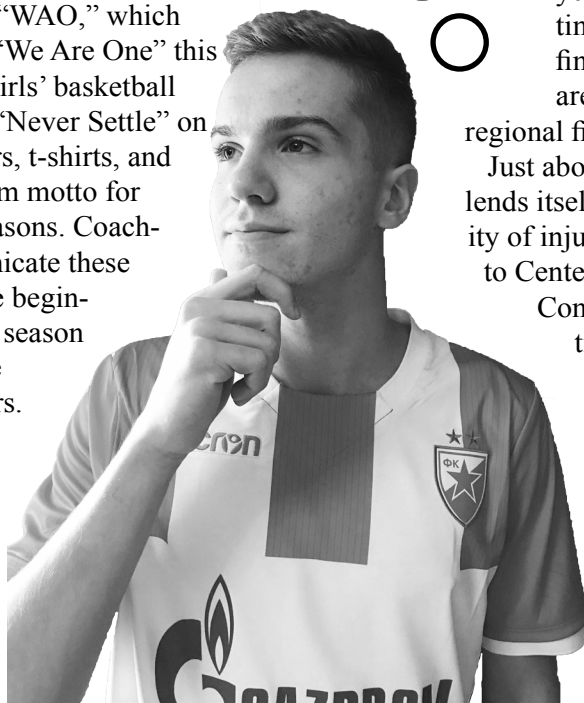
million injuries, 500,000 doctor visits, and 30,000 hospitalizations annually. Even though athletes have to face the possibility of getting injured, it doesn't stop their goals from being accomplished.

"You take the right precautions before practices and games (stretching) to make sure we don't obtain any self-inflicted injuries," said Kuljanin. "You go 100 percent. Focusing on getting injured can be detrimental to earning the right result for our team; you can't go in with that attitude."

According to an excerpt from "Fundamentals of Sport and Exercise Psychology" by Alan S. Kornspan, The goal-setting process helps athletes understand where they are currently and also where they want to go.

"If you don't make goals for yourself as an athlete you lose the drive," said Pass. "Making goals is necessary because you aren't playing just to play."

"Goals are very important and motivate us to put everything on the field everytime we are out there."



Nikola Kuljanin ponders about how setting goals have helped him while playing soccer. Nikola Kuljanin/PHOTO