



SENTINEL OF THE SAINTS



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Sports: Means of Fostering SAINTS!

Dear Friends, Benefactors, and Alumni of Mater Dei, This is a special edition of our newsletter. It will be dedicated to a topic which seems “worldly” at face-value but at its root is truly Catholic. Sports have been and should be part of a Catholic formation.

“Sport, properly directed, develops character, makes a man courageous, a generous loser, and a gracious victor; it refines the senses, gives intellectual penetration, and steels the will to endurance. It is not merely a physical development then. Sport, rightly understood, is an occupation of the whole man, and while perfecting the body as an instrument of the mind, it also makes the mind itself a more refined instrument for the search and communication of truth and helps man to achieve that end to which all others must be subservient, the service and praise of his Creator.” (Pius XII, *Sport at the Service of the Spirit*, July 29, 1945)

On the 80th anniversary of this document cited, we recall the spirit of this revered Pope, under whose leadership our SSPX schools have chosen to include sports in the formation of our students. Over the years many games have been played. Many moral victories have been accomplished while some official victories were achieved.

Regardless of the latter, the former have been sought and found. We continue to forge the will by means of the tried and true method of physical competition.

Mater Dei has gained a local reputation for its sports teams. It is impressive when you meet the neighbor at the store and they recognize the MD spirit wear and state, “I know your school. You have a great soccer team. The players are skilled, have heart, and are gentlemen. Keep up the good work! You are a joy to watch.”

We hope to continue the tradition of forming souls through the means of sports. This edition will aid by offering the details of how the Academy has accomplished this over the years. We pray your support helps us continue!

Under the Guidance of St. Anthony Daniel,

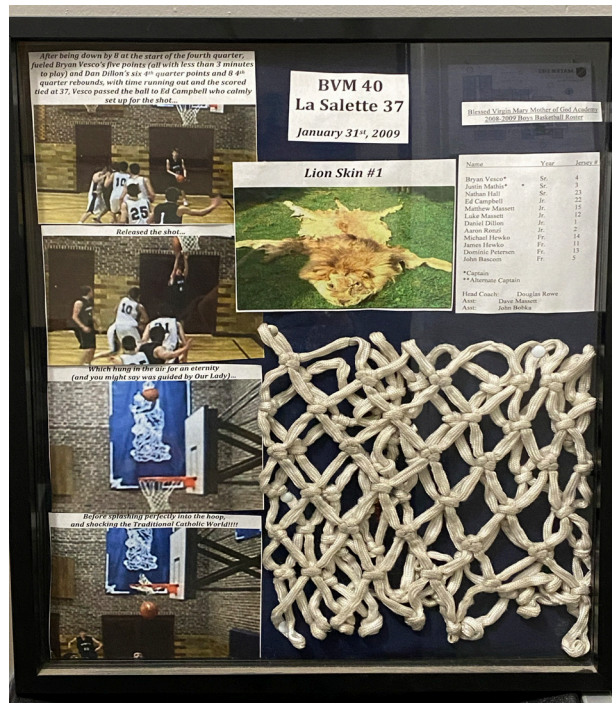
Fr. Richard Boyle

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Principal

David vs. Goliath: A Tale of Two Games

The History (and Future) of Sports at Mater Dei



Above: The Saints take home the victory.

Below: The winning team, fall 2013.



A high school of 60 usually wouldn't compete against a high school of 2600 students. Even if they did, they certainly shouldn't have much chance of winning. That was the case for the first eight years of Mater Dei Saints' history. Time and again, our humble teams would win the victory over more powerful foes. One landmark case occurred in 2013 against a long time rival. Utica Proctor (a high school of over 2600) was happy to use our boys as a little in-season tune-up. Maybe they could practice their formations and work on their passing before they played more serious competition.

But this time was different from the opening whistle. The early goals didn't come for Utica Proctor as the Saints' staunch defense held them scoreless through the first half. Led by two senior defensemen and goalie Michael Simonton's five saves, the Saints held off the early barrage. When senior Nicholas Page broke through the Utica defense and scored an unassisted goal in the 30th minute, the Saints began to believe.

However, Utica wouldn't go down easily. They struck back with a goal of their own on a stunning bicycle kick just a few minutes into the second half. Many other teams would have given up right then, but not the Saints. The defense held and, a few minutes later, midfielder Alex Mills sent a beautiful pass through to striker Carmen Futchi. The small crowd of Saints' fans roared as the ball flew into the back of the net. The boys held on for the final twenty minutes against furious attacks from Utica Proctor, and what once had seemed impossible had happened. The Saints had won!

The competition between the Saints and the LaSalette Lions at its peak was the most frenzied sports rivalry in Mater Dei's school history. In the first year of the competition, Father Tim Pfeiffer drove a few fifteen-passenger vans full of boys halfway across the country to compete against the LaSalette Lions in basketball and chess competitions. That first attempt fell short in both areas but left everyone wanting more.

The anticipation had reached a fever pitch by the following year's trip. A year of practice and hard work had the Saints feeling confident that this would be the year they slayed the lion. The Colosseum seemed like it was about to burst at the seams as the LaSalette student section beat their drums and cheered on the home team. The smaller Saints crowd tried their best to keep up, but the opposing side kept steadily pulling ahead on and off the court. A one-point lead after the first quarter rose to two by the end of the half, and by the start of the fourth quarter, the Lions were up by five.

The LaSalette Crazies roared louder, seemingly tasting victory, but the Saints weren't done yet. The defense stepped up in the fourth quarter, holding the Lions to only eight points. With the clock winding down and the roof of the Colosseum about to blow off, the Saints sprinted down the floor on their final possession. The ball swung around the court a few times before finding its way into the hands of Eddie Campbell just beyond the three-point line. Campbell stepped back, throwing up a shot that seemed to hang in the air for an eternity. The fervent Saints' cheering section erupted as the ball fell through the hoop, and the final seconds ticked off the clock. The Lions had been slain, and a moment was made that will forever echo in Mater Dei's sports history.

Many of you are familiar with Mater Dei Academy's humble beginnings in the basement hallways on Wilkinson Street. From the beginning, there was a belief that an athletics program was necessary for the school to thrive. But in those early days, there were no sports facilities, uniforms, or equipment with which to work.



Illustration by Miss Maria Simonton, Class of 2020

The first soccer and football games took place at Leavenworth Park, a few blocks down the road from the church on Wilkinson. Many a cold winter morning was spent running through snowbanks or muddy grass playing football before the school had any organized sports. Every year, the boys would play in a regional soccer and basketball tournament against other schools and churches, and the Mater Dei boys pretty routinely got beaten by the teams from Nicholville.

When the school moved to the old Warners High School in 2007, the new sports fields, and undersized gym seemed palatial to the Mater Dei students. Sure, the soccer field was a little hilly, and a basketball game couldn't actually be held on the school's court, but it was better than we'd had before. Now the school could finally begin to build a sports program and hold soccer games on its own campus. As the sports facilities grew, so did the school's sports success. By 2013, the Academy would compete in soccer, cross country, basketball, and lacrosse.

However, as sports teams and fields expanded, upgraded facilities were needed. An ambitious building project was launched over a year ago, leveling the old farmers' fields behind the school and replacing them with a new home for the Saints' sports teams. The new complex includes two soccer fields, a baseball field, sand volleyball courts, and seating for Saints' fans. The project's next phase includes the important task of providing equipment for these new facilities. Still needed to complete the complex are: baseball backstops, dugouts, and infield skins. Soccer goals, lawn equipment, bleachers, and much more are needed to make the fields ready for this coming season.

This project will be completed only with the help of the Saints' Alumni. All of you who ran down Wilkinson Street at 8:00 am to go to PE class, hopped into the van to use the gym at the Boys' and Girls' Club, had to play on the sloping soccer pitch, or slid in the gravelly part of the baseball diamond know how valuable the new facilities will be to our future students. You can help build the future of Mater Dei Athletics. With your generous contributions, we will finally build a home worthy of the Saints.

ALUMNI NEWS

Mater Dei Welcomes New Alumni Staff



Miss Theresa Mariani, Class of 2018, is now a staff member at her Alma Mater. She is enjoying her work as a Teachers' Assistant in the Elementary school.



Miss Genevieve Page, Class of 2019, after spending a few years perfecting the art of chocolate making (and working part-time at the school), is now a full-time staff member, teaching our First Grade class this year.



Mr. Kyle Edwards, Class of 2019, recently graduated from Barry University with his Master's Degree in Bio-medical Science. In January, he joined the Academy staff as a high school science and math teacher. He will continue his education in the fall at Boston University (DMD class of 2029).

A FIELD OF DREAMS

Please support the future of Mater Dei Sports by participating in the Alumni Athletic Fields Campaign. If you are an alumnus or alumna, your class is counting on your participation to carry them to the win! If you are not a past student but still want to contribute, your support is welcome and appreciated! Please visit the website below for details on the needs, goals, and ways to contribute. We thank you in advance for all that you do to support our Academy!

MDFields.MaterDei.Academy

Are you an alumnus? Email alumni@materdei.academy to reconnect and share your news!
We like to hear from our SAINTS in the world!

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