

WINTER WRAP-UP

Winter sports seasons come to a close

Reporting by Emma Dowd, Nyan Clarke, Jacob Brown, Isabella Cohen

VARSITY & JV ICE HOCKEY

Varsity Regular Season: 8-10-1
District Games: 0-1
JV Regular Season: 3-16
Districts: Did Not Qualify

“We grew as a team together. Each game led us to new opportunities to discuss what works and what doesn't work, and we got better with each game.”

Alternate Captain Hunter Luboff (28)

MEN'S VARSITY WRESTLING

Regular Season: 9-8
Districts: Did Not Qualify

“Overall, I would say that our season went almost exactly as expected so far, if not better, up to this point, and I hope that we will make it to States.”

Starting Heavyweight Juan Werner

WOMEN'S JV BASKETBALL

Varsity Regular Season: 8-5

“We definitely got way better throughout the season and it showed by us coming back and beating teams that beat us by a lot in previous games.”

Co-Captain Victoria Nuñez (4)

WOMEN'S VARSITY SOCCER

Regular Season: 13-5-2
District Record: 9-3-1

“Our goal is always to work hard. We want to be the very best that we can be by constantly teaching and evaluating ourselves. We are preparing for Districts and are excited for them.”

Coach Laura Rountree

MEN'S VARSITY SOCCER

Season results in story on page 32

COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING

1st Place: 1 Placement
2nd Place: 3 Placements
3rd Place: 2 Placements

“We had a very fun and productive season. I loved my teammates and all the competitions we performed in, and I can't wait for next year.”

Sophomore Olivia Prochilo

MEN'S VARSITY BASKETBALL

Regular Season: 10-10
Districts: Did Not Qualify

“The season was a bit rocky and of course we had our ups and downs like every team. Although it was not the best of our season, I'm overall proud of how we finished.”

Point Guard Joshua Raphael (3)

MEN'S JV BASKETBALL

Regular Season: 10-8

“The season was overall really good. We all got better as a team and had a lot of fun. My coaches were really great by helping us improve as a team.”

Point Guard Nicolas Joseph (1)

WOMEN'S JV SOCCER

Regular season: 5-3-1

“The team worked very hard this season, but it is difficult when the we finish on a loss like we did this season. I love the team they're a great group to coach. The girls worked hard, trained and focused for the games, but we ended up falling short overall.”

Coach Laura Rountree

WOMENS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Season results in story on page 33





Pass the Puck. At the Panther's Ice Den on Oct. 31, left wing Matt Horowitz (81) accepts a pass from a fellow teammate. The men's varsity team tied South Broward High with a final score of 4-4. "I had a blast this season, the team overall did really well. I'm proud of the boys," Horowitz said. *Photo by Emma Dowd*

SCORING A PLACE IN HISTORY

Men's soccer makes school history, advances to Regional Finals

Coming off a Regional Semifinal exit in last season's playoffs to the eventual state champion, Boca Raton High School, the men's soccer team was anxiously waiting to push the limits on their success in the following season. Now, having gone farther than ever before in team history, they've done just that.

Before head coach Phillip Lamarre and his staff signed on to the program four years ago, the men's soccer team at MSD had not made District Finals in nearly four years—since the mid-2000's when the staff were players themselves. Yet Lamarre and his staff, as well as the fresh influx of talented players, have all brought the team into another era of prosperity.

In the last four years, the team has gone to three District Finals, winning two, and advanced to the Regional Semifinals both times. This year, the team made it the farthest they ever had—the Regional Finals, where a quick swing in momentum at the end of the game led to a deflating 2-1 loss to Vero Beach High School—just a few minutes away from States.

"The boys made school history, and even almost made States for the first time ever," Lamarre said. "Although it hurts to lose like this, it truly shows how far we have come together, and just how much closer we are to where we want to be."

The team was near an unprecedented second consecutive undefeated season, coming into the season set on blazing through their district, forcefully taking six wins in a row, scoring a 4-0 win over Deerfield Beach High School and a 3-1 win over Atlantic High School.

Yet in the end, fatigued, having lost co-captain Felipe Mendes (10) to a three week suspension and multiple injuries led to a loss of momentum. On Jan. 12, the Eagles suffered their first loss of the year to district opponent Atlantic, 2-1; in these last three games of the season, the team lost twice and tied once.

Overall, they ended the regular season with an overall record of 12-5-2, taking the top rank in the district for the second year in a row with an 8-1-3 record. They also held the best defense in the district and one of the best in the entire state, allowing only an average of .81 goals each game, and also placed third in offense with 2.01 goals scored per game.

Several individual players stood out, including midfielders Mendes and Daniel Medeiros (8) who led the team and the whole district with 10 goals each. On top of that, midfielder Gabriel Carvalho (9) also led the team and district with 11 assists, and defender Casey Conn (12) finished second on the team with 7 assists.

With the regular season behind them, the Eagles now faced a competitive District Tournament without a key player in Mendes. Despite the season's rough ending, the team bounced back after their bye for the District Quarterfinals and defeated Atlantic 1-0 in the Semifinals and Coral Springs High School 2-1 in the

Finals, earning them a bid in Regionals, but this time as District champions.

"It's such a great feeling to win the District," Carvalho said. "We've proved that we're the best team [in the district], and now we're looking to do the same in Regionals."

Playing with the home-field advantage and their fans, friends and family cheering them on with the familiar green turf under their cleats, the Eagles were ready to go against opponent Wellington in the Regional Quarterfinals.

The team's signature defense came out energetic, constantly stealing passes and tiring out the Wellington offense. Soon after the second half began, Carvalho broke through the opposing defense and scored a goal in the 46th minute.

And just as he did over and over again during the season, goalie Jared John (0) delivered a shutout, saving multiple shots on goal in the second half. With the defense keeping up its intensity, the lead held, and the game ending brought about joyous screams from both Eagles fans and players, who now walked off the field with a solid 1-0 victory. They were back in the Semifinals.

"I think the team has surprised everyone with how well we played this year," Mendes said prior to his return on Feb. 4 in the Regional Semifinals. "Everyone doubted us, saying that we had no chances after losing seniors over the summer. But by now, it's clear that we've proved ourselves."

With Mendes back on the field, the team came into Cumber Stadium that Saturday night with an energy that Coral Springs simply couldn't match. In the 17th minute, Conn skied to put in a header off a corner kick, and just like that, the Eagles were up 1-0.

Having worn the defense down early on, the second goal came just seven minutes later from Carvalho—the second game in a row—putting them up 2-0 in just the 24th minute.

Yet again, their defense held strong, confusing the Coral Springs offense throughout. Despite John, the main goalie, being out of the country, backup goalie Ryan Irwin (0) took over for the game, bringing them their second consecutive shutout win. As the match ended, the players piled on top of each other, overjoyed not only at their victory, but about making school history. It was the farthest men's soccer had ever gone; they were in the Regional Finals.

"Having made school history together this year is incredibly special to me," Conn, who is co-captain with Mendes, said. "This season being my last—and my first as a captain—makes this all the more meaningful. It's just such an amazing thing to be a part of."

With the state championship series within reach and history made, Vero Beach came to Cumber Stadium for the fateful Regional Final match. Yet,



Lock Down. Midfielder Diego Hernandez (11) chases a long pass down the field against the Wellington High School defense in the Class 5A Regional Quarterfinals. The Eagles held on and won the game 1-0. Photo by Liam Hutton

despite the ongoing momentum and hype backing the team, and possession of a 1-0 lead after a goal by midfielder Diego Hernandez (11) sailed past the goalie in the 69th minute, the team was unable to seal the game. A hurried offensive rush by the opposition left the Eagle defense vulnerable, allowing Vero Beach to tie the game at 1-1 in the 75th minute, after the now-returned John failed to stop consecutive shots.

Then, just before the beginning of stoppage time in the 80th minute, a Vero Beach midfielder was awarded a free kick

just outside the penalty box on a questionable call—as not only were both sides confused, but it was also unclear why the call was made.

Using the great field position provided, the kicker sent the ball soaring over John's outstretched hands, and just like that, Vero Beach had swiftly taken the lead.

Urgently trying to send the game to overtime, the Eagles rushed down the field in an attempt to score another goal in the remaining stoppage; they actually managed to get a shot on goal, which ended up going too far left. They were called for a deflating offside after gaining an open field near the penalty box with a 2-on-1 advantage on the opposing goalie.

But this time, as the whistle sounded to end the game, it wasn't the Eagles on the field screaming in joy. This time, it wasn't the MSD students and families in the stands proudly cheering them on. The players collapsed to the grass in sadness and exhaustion as Vero Beach celebrated, and as they left the field, onto the walkway outside, those same MSD students and families gave them a rousing, long round of applause. But this time, it wasn't because they had won—it was because of all they had accomplished this season.

To end the season, the team attended the Broward County Athletic Association

Awards Ceremony on Feb. 22, where Conn was crowned the county's Most Valuable Player, and both he and John were named First Team All-County for men's soccer. Both were elated to be able to represent the team. But for Conn, the award meant much more than just that.

"The three years I spent on this team have been incredible; the only thing I wish had gone differently would be us winning a state [championship] title," Conn added. "It would have meant so much to me, because I had wanted to win one for my late cousin Jordan [he passed away in 2007], who is the reason I started playing soccer, and who made me who I am on and off the field."

It was an emotional end to the season, and the senior players were hit the hardest—for them it wasn't just the end of the season, it was the end of their careers. Even though they had made school history in their final year on the team, it was still difficult to comprehend that this would be their very last game as an Eagle.

"Out of my four years on the team, this one has by far been the greatest to me," midfielder Felipe Linares (18), who missed much of the of the season due to mono, said. "The team felt and played like a family. It's so emotional as a senior knowing that we won't be Eagles anymore. We have definitely changed the culture of Douglas soccer for the better, and I know that this team is set to accomplish big things."

Lamarre, who will now be returning next year to a noticeably different team, also echoed a similar sentiment.

"The main thing we really want is for these boys to leave the program understanding above all that our team is and always will be a family," he said. "They come in as boys, but we do our best to make sure that they leave as men."

With many experienced players staying on, a returning coaching staff and history made, the MSD men's varsity soccer team looks to be back next season strong as ever, with their sights once again set on States. Story by Amit Dadon

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SHOOTING FOR THE RECORD BOOKS

Women's basketball team makes history; advances to Regional Finals

On Feb. 17, the women's varsity basketball team cemented themselves in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School record books. For the first time ever, the Lady Eagles varsity basketball team had reached the Regional Finals.

The season was not too much of a shock for the team and the coaches. Since their 2014-2015 season, the team has increasingly improved their end-season rankings. Over the course of the last two years, their winning percentage swelled from 43 percent to 93 percent. However, the team solidified their presence in the district and increased the active fan base in a school somewhat unaware of their success.

"What these talented young women have managed to accomplish this season is really something special," Assistant Coach Veronica Ziccardi said. "Everything about this season was absolutely remarkable."

The team finished with an impressive overall record of 28-3, and were virtually unbeatable in the district finishing in first with a dominating 9-1 record. Along with a tremendous 15-game win streak to start the season, the team went undefeated at home, handily beating each opponent, and were ranked the 12th best team in the entire state come season's end.

Their most impressive victory came against Pompano Beach High School on Dec. 12, where the girls triumphed 65-16. This was one of six games where the Lady Eagles held their opponents to less than 20 points in a game, even holding Monarch High School to a poor performance of 12 points in their Dec. 7 matchup.

Through 31 games, the team's offense averaged a total of 55 points per game, while restricting each unlucky opponent-of-the-night to only 35 points per game. In other words, each opponent was being outscored by an approximately 25 points each night.

The Eagles' offense and defense respectively dominated the district placing second in district play for both, allowing 317 points on defense—only six points more than rival Deerfield Beach High School. Their total offense, in games both within and outside the district, however, was far and away the best in the district. At just under 1,800 points the team's offense was the second best in the statewide 9A Division.

Shooting guard Abigail Hsu (35) expressed a happy surprise at the team's record-setting achievements.

"I honestly wasn't expecting for us to get as far as we did this season," Hsu said. "Considering that we lost a lot of seniors over the summer, there was definitely a question of whether the chemistry would still be there; it's fair to say that we have answered that question."

The team breezed through their regular season and most of their playoff competition. Unfortunately, the season ended for the Lady Eagles in the Regional Finals at the hands of Boca Raton High School with a score of 55-70, getting outscored in the final three quarters.

In the game, Hsu racked up 15 points to lead the team, with junior Taylor Thompson close behind, scoring 13. And just like that, their hopes of a state title was deflated. But nonetheless, the Eagles understood just how much they had accomplished.

"Of course we would have loved to be regional champions and advance to States, but for us to be able to make it here,



Lock Down. Point guard Halie Murphy (20) gets into defensive stance as opponent Boca Raton High School brings the ball up the court in the Class 9A Regional Finals. MSD, who had the second best defense in their district, ended up losing the game, 55-70, capping off a historic season. Photo by Makayla Manning

when we didn't even win Districts last year—that in itself is an accomplishment to be truly proud of," Ziccardi said. "It's an experience that not many teams get to have. We strived to go as far as we could together, and I think that it's clear that we did just that. With how hard these girls always work on their game, I know that we will be back next year."

Though their record-breaking season was cut short, it was apparent too that the players along with their coaches, fellow students, families and even devoted fan Principal Ty Thompson, were still extremely proud of all that they had done.

"Truthfully I was disappointed with how the season ended [because of missing out on States]," point guard Halie Murphy (20) said. "But considering how this was the best performance for women's

basketball in school history, I'm quite proud of how we played, and I wouldn't change any of it. I'm very confident about our chances in 2017."

The team has already set its sights on states for next season. And with the majority of players from this past historic season remaining on the team, the blow of losing a few of their key seniors will be somewhat lessened. All in all, it's clear that the Lady Eagles view their season in a remarkably positive light.

They have done what no other women's basketball team has done in school history. They dominated their district, and made it within arm's reach of States. But most of all, they made our student body proud to be Eagles. Story by Amit Dadon. Reporting by Jacob Brown and Nyan Clark

HOFFMAN'S HOMECOMING

MSD Alumni returns to coach water polo teams

This season, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School water polo teams welcomed back former player Andy Hoffman as their new coach. Hoffman graduated in 2014 and worked as the assistant coach during the 2015 and 2016 seasons. After Lauren Rubenstein, the previous coach, stepped down for the 2017 season, Hoffman took her place in his first year as head coach of both the women's and men's teams.

"Almost all of my coaching strategies came from Coach Rubenstein," Hoffman said. "She was my coach for most of my water polo career."

Hoffman started out his high school years as a member of the swim team. He became interested in water polo when his upperclassmen friends convinced him to be on the team. Once he joined, he instantly fell in love with the sport.

"The water polo team is unlike any other," Hoffman said. "All of the teammates get along so well. Even though practices and teamwork can get tough at times, I feel like I've made a second family here with these players."

His most memorable year on the team was during the beginning of his junior year. Hoffman scored the winning goal in double overtime against Coral Springs High School. It was the men's water polo team's first win after an all losing season the year before.

"It is a totally different role being a coach rather than a player on the team," Hoffman said. "The transition is not the easiest, especially being so young, but by giving respect to my players, I get a lot of respect back."

Since he was also a player on the water polo team, he feels that he receives more trust from his players. There are members that have played on the same team as him and recall his success as a player.

"I've known Coach Hoffman since my freshman year when he was captain at the time," Joey Wong (21), captain of the men's team, said. "He's a great player, and has experience coaching. That past experience makes him the perfect successor to Coach Rubenstein."

Women's captain Connie Sadar (21) has high hopes for the new coach. She has seen his skills, and knows that he teaches

from experience, not just from what he has seen or heard.

"In my opinion, I think he's one of the best players Douglas has ever had," Sadar said. "He was a really fast swimmer and aggressive player. He was also a really strong shooter."

After seeing the team for the first time this year, Hoffman had mixed emotions. He felt that while the team has potential, that there is still room for improvement. In this regard, Hoffman believes that the main problem is communication.

"Although the team looks very strong, we need to work on our team chemistry and 'man-down' situations," Hoffman said.

The new season comes with new hopes, with Hoffman setting high goals for the teams to strive towards.

"My number one goal for this season is to take home the District Championship title for both the boys' and girls' team. It's something the boys have never done,



Diving in. Water polo coach Andy Hoffman reviews plays with both the men's and the women's team at practice on Tuesday, Feb. 16. Photo by Lily Skopp

and that the girls haven't done in about a decade," Hoffman said.

Both Sadar and Wong have expressed their faith in Hoffman to make the necessary improvements to the team. As captains, they have also made their own goals to help the team for this season.

"I want to have a team that dominates both this year and beyond," Sadar said.

Hoffman feels he has formed a bond with the team members as a fellow player. Coaching gives him the opportunity to strengthen that bond as the new coach, his past experiences as a guide to his methods. Story by Anna Dittman