

1996-1997: Year in review in varsity sports

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NCSSM proved to be as competitive in athletics this year as it is with academics, practicing hard and improving despite many obstacles.

Both cross country teams had an excellent season this year. Runner Erin Strauss, Stephanie Jilcott, Katy Thalmann, and Marcia Eaddy medaled at Regionals. At states, the men's team placed 11th and the women's team placed 6th.

The women's tennis team placed second in the conference

with a record of 7-3, aided by All-Conference players Betsy Dorsett, Sara Eslinger, and Rekha Perumallu.

The men's soccer team had an equally impressive season, finishing 9-1 in their conference.

After a difficult start, the women's volleyball team produced a record of 11-7, giving them a three-way tie for second in their division. Senior All-Conference players Nora Wilson and Krista Duran were big contributors to the team.

This winter, the men and women's basketball teams both received new coaches. Andy Andrews coached the

women's team while SLI Eddie Hanes assisted men's head coach Anthony Myles. Both new coaches introduced new plays and different drills which improved the teams' overall skills.

Individuals on the wrestling team also worked hard to improve their skills. Almost all of the eight wrestlers who participated in the conference tournament placed third or higher, although several wrestlers were plagued with injuries and could not compete.

The swim team had a strong season despite the difficulties in finding a pool for the team to practice in.

"We had to sport our school pride while sharing the pool with other schools," junior Paul Robichaux said.

Spring sports such as baseball and softball had a difficult time finding coaches at the beginning of the season, but still managed to compete well.

The women's soccer team worked hard all season, finishing 6-4 in their conference, but came just short of heading to the playoffs.

The track team competed strongly at states. Both 4 by 800 relays placed, as well as Jilcott and Jeff Boyd in the mile and two mile and Edi Ntuen in the 400.

Bartkovich coaches final NCSSM soccer game

ALTON PATRICK

When NCSSM women's soccer coach Kevin Bartkovich walked off the field after his team's 9-1 victory over Northern Vance, he knew it was for the last time.

At the end of the school year, Bartkovich will leave his job as a mathematics

teacher at NCSSM, as well as his position as head coach of the men and women's soccer team. Bartkovich will move to Uganda to open a missionary school there.

His last game was a memorable one. After coaching the team to a 9-0 lead at half-time, Bartkovich refused to let the women run up the score in the second half.

"We weren't allowed to score in the second half," said senior Betsy Dorsett. "After a while, [Bartkovich] told us we could score off our heads, but that didn't happen."

However, the final 9-1 conference victory over Northern Vance was not enough to earn a playoff berth for the Unicorns, who finished 9-6, 6-4 in the conference.

Bartkovich does not feel that his team deserved to be shut out of the playoffs. "Even though we won't make the state playoffs, we're as good as a lot of teams going to the playoffs, and really

better than a lot of them," said Bartkovich.

Despite playing well against top opponents, the women were kept out of the state playoffs by two other strong teams in their conference. The Unicorns beat Durham Academy, ranked tenth in the state, 1-0. They also lost two close games to East Chapel Hill High (1-0 and 2-1), which was consistently ranked in the top ten.

However, being in a conference with two other high-powered teams hurt NCSSM. East Chapel Hill High School and Wake Forest High School

finished first and second in the conference and earned the right to go to the playoffs.

The women may have been overlooked as far as post-season play, but Bartkovich has a lot of respect for them. "I couldn't ask for a better group of girls to be my last team," said Bartkovich.

Coming from someone who jokes that he's been coaching "forever," that's saying a lot. But Bartkovich remembers all his teams fondly.

"It's been a great thing to coach here," said Bartkovich. "I've had a lot of good memories from all the teams. Every team I've coached has been special in its own way."

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-Coach Kevin Bartkovich



Julie Byrd defends the soccer team against Wake Forest High School.

Leonard Tran

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