

TOP OF THE WORLD

VARSITY TEAM TAKES FIRST STATE TITLE SINCE 1997

BY ROBERT DICKER, LAIRFN SANCHEZ & CATE VENARIE

"I GET NERVOUS BEFORE EVERY GAME. IF THE NERVES GO AWAY, THEN YOU DON'T CARE ANYMORE." HEAD COACH MARK HAMPSHIRE said. "I wanted it so bad for the

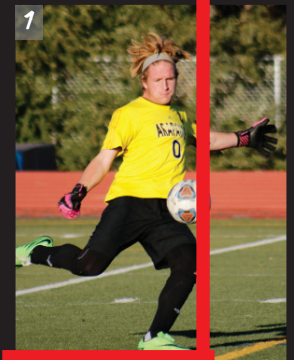
players because they had been through so much and accomplished so much. [But] At some point in time, the coaching stops and the fan show up." As the game neared the 90th minute with the varsity team leading the Grandview Wolves 2-1, the fans began to anticipate the team's victory, surging forward towards the edge of the stands. The final buzzer sounded and the crowd exploded. The varsity team was victorious.

"Immediately following the game there was a childlike exuberance. I think there were some tears of joy mixed

in with some tears of total exhaustion. For me it was very surreal, it was difficult to explain because the journey there is such a roller coaster. When it finally happens, it's kind of hard to wrap your head around," Hampshire said. As the varsity team gathered around the state championship trophy for a photo after the game, there was a sense of pride and fulfillment in the air. "I wouldn't say that the trophy is the most rewarding, that's just the icing [on the cake]. The most rewarding thing is watching a group of guys who make a commitment and follow through with their commitment. It's rewarding to watch people finally walk the walk, and not just talk it," Hampshire said. An assembly was held in the team's honor on Nov. 27, to celebrate the first boys soccer state championship since 1997.



3. UNDER THE LIGHTS AT LPS STADIUM, NOAH CARL, 12, takes a touch up the field. The varsity team went on to a 4-3 win against Greeley Central. "What motivates me is my idol Conner Casey. I have always been a huge fan of him. The best part about playing for this team is definitely playing with my buddies and beating some arduous teams," Carl said. Photo by D. Palmer. 4. WITH EYES FIXED ON THE BALL, CAPTAIN ALEXANDER "ZANDER" HAHN, 12, clears the ball upfield. Arapahoe won the game against Greeley Central 3-0 at LPS Stadium. "We all pushed each other to our limits, and got frustrated with one another. But we realized, that in order to achieve our goals, we needed everyone. We had a very special group of guys and that's exactly what it takes to accomplish what we did. Everyone on our team was so committed," Hahn said. Photo by L. Sanchez. 5. SUSPENDED IN MID AIR, GARRETT LYLES, 11, leaps over his opponent. After being cut from his club soccer team Lyles was able to learn valuable lessons about teamwork. "The most important factor is playing with my friends. Having chemistry and liking the people around you is very important. I believe our team has real good chemistry. I love doing it with my friends and for my high school," Lyles said. Photo by L. Sanchez. 6. SEVERAL FEET OFF THE GROUND, CAPTAIN JACOB VOGEL, 12, intercepts a Heritage pass. "The most rewarding part of being apart of the team is just the brotherhood that we have as a team through the good times and the bad. These are friendships that I will cherish," Vogel said. Photo by D. Palmer.



1. SAWYER TRAVIS, 12, celebrates with NOAH CARL, 12, AND GARRETT LYLES 11, after the varsity team's state championship win at Dick's Sporting Goods Park. This was Travis' first year playing for the program. "The most rewarding part of being a part of the team is the brotherhood that we have as a team, through the good times and the bad. These are friendships that I will cherish," Travis said. Photo by D. Palmer. 2. CHERRY CREEK, CAPTAIN SPENCER COBB, 12, punts the ball. Cobb played soccer for over 12 years and was the captain of the varsity team for two consecutive seasons. "My love for the game and my competitive spirit motivates me to play more. There is still so much to gain from the game I love, and it is such a huge part of me. I like the high expectations we have as captains and I've always been very vocal, so I've been able to use that strength as a captain," Cobb said. Photo by C. Venable.



THIS TRIUMPH 86

WHAT ARE YOUR PREGAME TRADITIONS?

I like to go put on an episode of The Office while drinking an orange Gatorade. I like to also listen to my music, which includes Drake, Lil Wayne, and Playboi Carti." -EWAN SWEETLAND, 12



7. IN THE MIDDLE OF A PASS, ZACHARY MILLER, 11, propels the ball upfield. After tearing his ACL and not playing for 10 months, Miller felt overjoyed to join the team. "It felt so nice being able to do something that I've always loved. It was pretty hard because I was really out of shape. This is my first year on varsity and it just feels like there's more of a point to [prove] something. Something that you're always striving for and I think that's a really good motivator," Miller said. Photo by L. Sanchez.

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CAMERON GAIL TOTAL CAREER POINTS, SEASON GOALS, SEASON ASSISTS, GOALS PER GAME

BOUNCING BACK RETURNING TO THE GAME AFTER INJURY



CONNOR CROOKHAM, 11, broke his collar bone during the first game of the regular season. "I never missed [attending] a practice or a game besides when I was in surgery. I was kind of just disappointed. I was in so much pain at the time, that I didn't care that it was broken. I was just hoping they would give me more drugs," Connor Crookham, 11, said. Crookham was unable to get back onto the field until the last game of the regular season. Photo courtesy of Tim Bourke.

"My main pregame tradition is listening to the same music playlist I made last year for the soccer season. It helps remind me back to success that both the team and I had last year and I see it as being a superstition of mine." -CAMERON "CAM" GAIL, 12

"On game day I like being around my teammates and feeding off their energy which helps me get excited and prepared for the game." -LIAM ANDERSEN, 11

SPORTS BOYS' VARSITY SOCCER 87

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