

the CITY



CELTICS

The Official Newsletter of St. Paul's Athletics



Issue No.01
December
2025

off and
RUNNING!

IN THIS EDITION



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Welcome to The City Celtics—where growth, teamwork, and community spirit take the spotlight.

Deeply rooted in San Francisco, our name pays homage to the vibrant community we proudly call home. Just like our great city, St. Paul's Athletics is built on resilience, unity, and heart.

This newsletter celebrates the achievements of our young athletes and the lessons learned along the way. Whether it's mastering a new skill, encouraging a teammate, or showing grit during a tough game, every moment contributes to the spirit that defines the Celtics. We honor the progress made this season and look forward with gratitude and excitement to the many accomplishments still to come.

**Here's to our athletes, our coaches, our families, and our community—
together, we are The City Celtics.**



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here



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here



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RUN IN FEET, DREAM IN MILES

By John Montgomery & Amber Divis
Photography by
Cristina DiDonato

“They showed up ready to run—and even more ready to support each other.”

That’s how Coach John described the debut of the St. Paul’s Celtics Cross Country Team, and the energy was undeniable.

Like any good sports movie, the story starts with a group of unknowns—full of heart and untapped potential. On a classic Daly City afternoon, the Celtics made their first competitive appearance, lining up in brand-new singlets and lacing up with determination. With miles of practice behind them from runs through Golden Gate Park, they were ready.

On October 5th, our runners stepped up to the line at the CYO Invitational Cross Country Meet at Westmoor High School, ready to take on their first official race. And they didn’t just show up—they showed out.





Even more exciting, three of our runners brought home medals for finishing in the top three of their divisions:

Maxine Dionello (5th grade) – 2nd place in the 1-mile race for 5th grade girls

William Montgomery (5th grade) – 2nd place in the 1-mile race for 5th grade boys

Jordan Gomez (5th grade) – 3rd place in the 2-mile race for 6th grade boys



And they didn't stop there — William Montgomery went on to compete again in the 7th grade 2-mile race, where he finished 4th overall. Absolutely incredible!



Meanwhile, **William Gomez**, one of our youngest Celtics and a 4th grader, took on the challenge of running in the 5th grade division and impressed everyone with his strong finish and fearless effort.

Jordan: Led the 5th grade 1-mile race before a wrong turn dropped him to 7th — then came back stronger, running in the 6th grade race and finishing 2nd! Talk about determination!



Hugo: A breakout performance!
Hugo powered through the heat and hills to claim a Top 10 finish



From the first stretch to the final sprint, our runners proved that success comes from more than speed — it's built on trust, encouragement, and heart.

Supported by their coaches, teammates, and families, these Celtics ran for each other and discovered just how strong they can be.

FIRST RATE SKILLS

1st Grade Ranks Fundamentals First

By Amber Divis

Photography by Christian Divis

St. Paul's Celtics Class of 2033 recently completed the Fundamentals First Academy (FFA) Basketball Skills Camp, an eight-week program designed to help young athletes strengthen their dribbling, shooting, and agility skills.

Thanks to Lisa Perez Monterrosa, parent to Trinity, the class connected with FFA this season for basketball training. "It's so nice to see the class play together before they split off when they enter CYO," said Lisa.

The first graders had a blast building their skills and teamwork throughout the camp. They enjoyed playing together so much that they've decided to continue as a co-ed team this winter season. Nick Breisach, parent to Olive, will be stepping up as coach, inspired by the impressive growth and enthusiasm the players showed during weeks of drills and skill progression.





First grader Trinity Monterrosa (pictured Left) shared:

“My favorite thing about camp has been when I make scores! I like warming up and playing with my friends!”





When they're not together in the classroom, this energetic first grade class is already showing their team spirit—logging hours on the soccer pitch during their kindergarten season and now taking their talents to the basketball court as they prepare for winter play.



FIRST SERVE, BIG ENERGY

Photos by
Cristina DiDonato

Third Grade Digs In

Words by
Amber Divis

The 3rd Grade Girls Volleyball season started like no other—these volleyball newbies made their court debut at the SFFD Flame Tournament. With just a few hours of practice (and brand new knee pads!), the Celtics were catapulted into the start of their CYO journey.

With each practice and every set, the team gained confidence and determination—focused on getting their serves over the net and returning the ball with growing skill and teamwork.

Olivia Brown (#12), pictured above, enthusiastically shared:

“My favorite thing about volleyball is serving and sliding!”

She added, “**I want to serve more overhand next year!** I loved watching my teammates play and do their best.”



COACH ELAINA REFLECTED ON THE TEAM'S DEBUT PERFORMANCE:

“First and foremost, I want to take a moment to congratulate our girls on their very first CYO volleyball game together! **They did such an amazing job out there.** After each set, we took time to reflect on what was working well and what we could continue to improve. But the thing that stood out the most was how proud they were of themselves. Every time they came back to the bench, they were smiling and ready to give high-fives. **It was truly inspiring to feel their positive energy and see their teamwork shine through.** I can't wait to see what the rest of the season brings!”



Big efforts lead to sweet rewards—and Elena Glab (#51) proved that with her grit and determination. She stayed upbeat and relentless with every attempt to serve over the net.

With encouragement from Coach Olivia and the support of her teammates on her home court, it happened—Elena made three consecutive serves over the net! The crowd erupted, and Celtic fans couldn't cheer loud enough for her big moment.

"I felt so happy to help my team! I remembered what Coach Olivia said: 'Look at the target, look at the ball, and **PUNCH IT!**'" Elena said.

NOT SO

NEW ANYMORE!





The 3rd grade Celtics served up a season full of smiles, teamwork, and plenty of serves that sometimes went exactly where they were supposed to! From bumping and rallying their way through every game, these girls learned that volleyball is as much about laughing together as it is about winning points.

Looking ahead, they're excited to keep rallying as a team and make overhand serving their big goal for next year—ready to spike, serve, and laugh their way to even more fun on the court!

MOMENTUM MEETS UNMATCHED DRIVE

By Veronica Keating
Photography by Amber Divis

The Underdog Run That Led 4th Grade to the Championship

This season, the 4th Grade Girls Volleyball team embarked on a journey that became bigger and far more exciting than anyone expected. The roster combined all four girls from St. Paul's 4th grade class and six players from the surrounding community, each bringing a distinct personality to the court.

Their early goals were simple: win a game and put together solid rallies. But as the season unfolded, their potential stretched far beyond those first ambitions. Serving improved dramatically. Passing and communication sharpened. Confidence took root. And the players learned to finish plays with intention and follow-through. The team slowly carved out an identity built on persistence and grit.



By the end of the regular season, they secured 3rd place in their division and a spot in the playoffs, an achievement that already exceeded expectations. But the true highlight came in their playoff match.



“This team may have started with modest goals, but their season ended with something far greater: a thrilling postseason push, a defining upset win, and a well-earned spot in the championship. .”



Facing an opponent who had beaten them badly earlier in the year, the girls entered the game as clear underdogs. What followed was a remarkable performance defined by intense teamwork and long, hard-fought rallies that kept the entire gym locked in. The team delivered multiple-touch plays, impressive diving saves, and even a spike that took everyone by surprise. It was the kind of match where effort turned into momentum, and momentum turned into belief.



When they won, the reaction was pure elation. The players jumped for joy, shouting, hugging, and absolutely glowing with pride. They had earned their place in the championship, and it was obvious how much the opportunity meant to them—especially after the battle they had just fought.

Championship day carried a different kind of energy. The team was noticeably nervous, aware of the stakes and the eyes on them. Even so, they played with determination, pushing through tough points and relying on the skills they had built throughout the season. Although they didn't take home the title, they finished as the 2025 4th Grade CYO Championship Runner Ups, holding their heads high.





A special part of their journey was the unwavering support from the stands. Game after game, their crowd showed up in full force - loud, loyal, and larger than any other. That support lifted the players through the toughest moments and added a heartbeat to their playoff run.

This team may have started with modest goals, but their season ended with something far greater: a thrilling postseason push, a defining upset win, and a well-earned spot in the championship. Their determination and joy told the real story— one of growth, courage, and a season none of them will soon forget.





SERVE, SET, MACARENA

5th Grade Girls Bringing Rhythm to Every Rally!

By Leslieh Creary
Photography by
Cristina DiDonato

Do you ever feel the need to do the “Macarena”? The 5th grade volleyball team does! Whenever the girls need to lift their spirits—whether they’re down a few points, after the loss of a set, or just wanting to keep their energy high—they’ll take a minute to do the “Macarena” together.

It’s their way of resetting their minds and bodies before heading back onto the court, ready for the next point.

This is my third year coaching this group of girls and observing the camaraderie that they have developed through volleyball is one of my favorite things. At the end of every rally, they come together to celebrate or motivate each other to “get the next one.”

At practice they encourage each other to practice the overhand serve, and when the ball finally clears the net – the cheering is deafening! They are a “can you show me how...?” bunch, always curious and eager to learn how to do something new: overhand serve, hit, set, tip, you name it, they want to learn that new skill.





We finished 4-4 in our division, and I could not be more proud of how the girls played this season, especially in the last few games.

Over and over the girls have heard: “progress over perfection” and “how you practice is how you play”, and the team did just that. The girls put in the work at every practice.

Game after game you could see the team fall into a rhythm – and I’m almost certain the “Marcarena” played a part in finding it.



GROWTH, GRIT, AND GOOD TIMES!

It's What Keeps 6th Girls Grade Volleyball on Point



By Thuan Le
Photography by
Cristina DiDonato,
Mark Platosh

The 6th Grade Girls Volleyball Team wrapped up their season with smiles all around—winning their first and last games of the season! While they didn't make it to playoffs, the team showed incredible progress from their first serve to their final match.

Coach Veronica and Coach Olivia kept the energy high and the focus on fun, helping the girls build confidence and teamwork with every game. The season ended on a high note with a celebration party and one last practice to mark how far they've come. Each player received an award from Coach Veronica to celebrate their effort and growth this season. Go Celtics!



*St. Paul's Celtics Class of 2028
2025 Girls Volleyball*





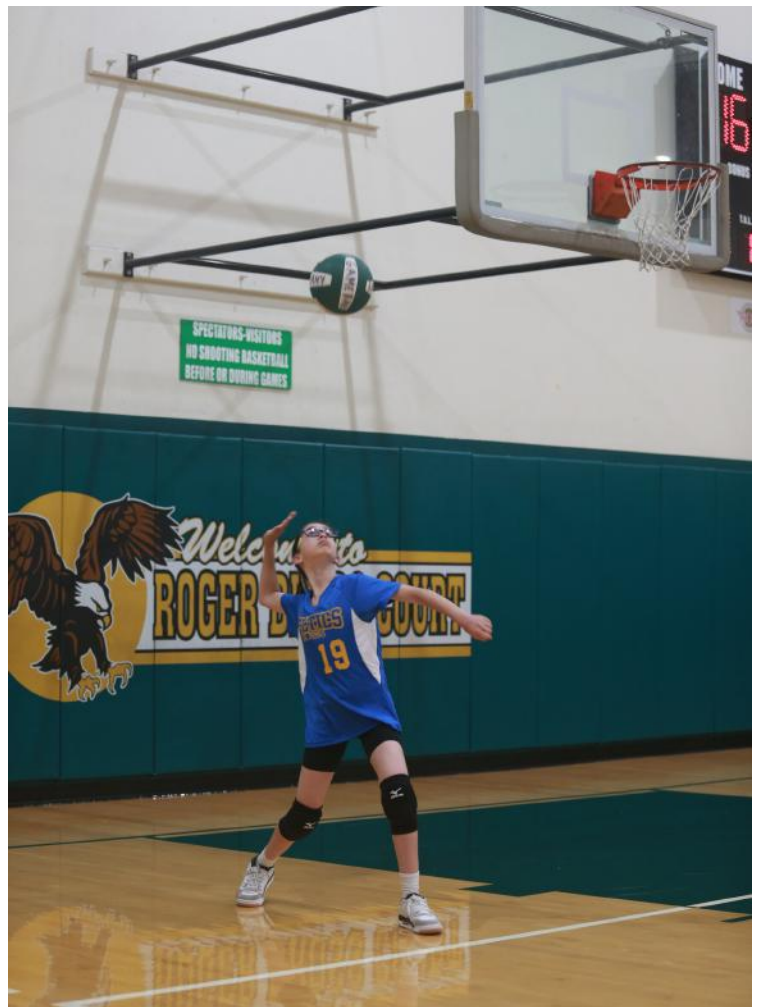
LEARNING TOGETHER, PLAYING AS ONE

The 7th Grade Girls Volleyball Team Grew Through Teamwork, Learning, and Shared Determination

By Mary Landeros
Photography by Jose Manzano

This year's 7th grade girls volleyball team demonstrated what it truly means to grow together as athletes and as a community. With each practice, match, and team huddle, these players proved that hard work, heart, and unity can shape not only a successful season, but lasting confidence and character. Their journey showcases the power of inclusivity and dedication—values that shine brightly through every Celtics team.







Message from Coach Mary

I am extremely proud of our 7th grade girls volleyball team! This was the third year in a row that our team made the playoffs. Each year the team lost a couple players and gained a couple new teammates. We welcome all who want to play, because it builds confidence, cooperation & support. Inclusion that leads to dedication & perseverance—to build something bigger than oneself—a TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More!

Our mantra: I never lose, I either Win or Learn.

If we did not win a match, we discussed what we learned at our next practice & worked on it. I believe competition is 80% mental & 20% physical. As everyone makes mistakes, it is pivotal to lift up a player after a mistake is made to keep their head in the game & it's a beautiful thing to see the support these girls have for one another. Because teamwork isn't just a word—it's our foundation: The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.

WE...ARE...CELTICS!!! 🇺🇸🏐🍀

FRONT RUNNERS

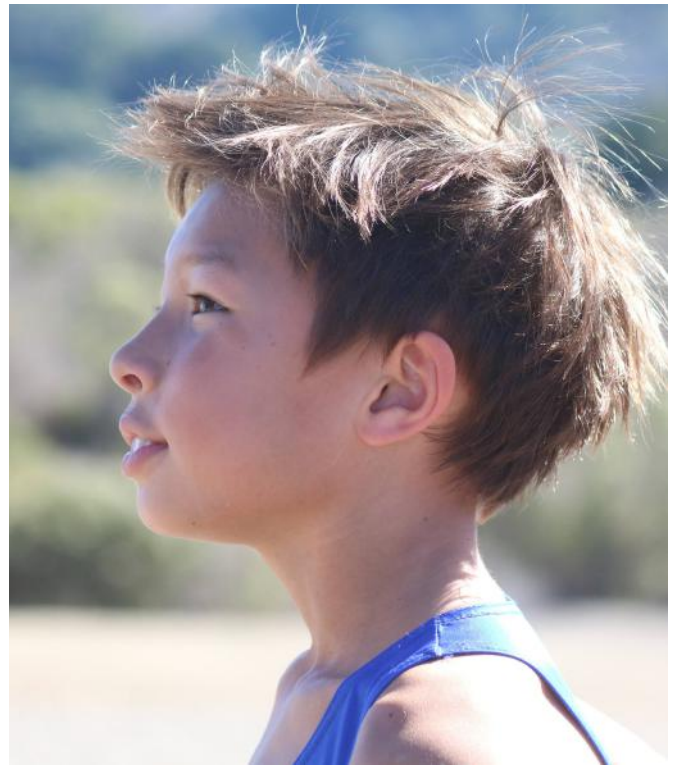
Brutal, Grueling, and Crushing It!

By John Montgomery &
Amber Divis
Photography by
Cristina DiDonato



The St. Paul's Cross Country team made history this fall, taking on their very first season — and what a debut it was! Their toughest challenge yet came at the historic Crystal Springs Cross Country Course in Burlingame on November 2, where the sun blazed, the trail was dusty, and our Celtics left everything they had out on that course. From start to finish, it was a true test of endurance, determination, and heart.

Every runner on this brand-new team gave it their all. They battled steep climbs, dry heat, and endless hills — but nothing could stop them. Each athlete crossed the finish line with grit, pride, and that trademark St. Paul's spirit that defines our Celtics.



1.1 Mile Races

Our 4th graders set the tone early, with William Gomez (7th) leading the way for the boys, followed by Henry (17th). In the girls division, Sasha (6th) and Delilah (9th) both earned top-10 finishes — an incredible start for their first-ever race!



The 5th graders continued the momentum. Jordan pushed from the front, with William charging up at the halfway point to claim 1st and 2nd in their division.

Meanwhile, Maxine battled through the heat and the hills to finish an impressive 5th in the girls division.

Their combined efforts helped St. Paul's capture the 5th Grade Team Championship, earning the lowest overall score of the day!

"I am so incredibly proud of what this team accomplished—not just at the championship, but all season long. That race day was hot and that course was tough, but our runners were tougher. They trusted their training, ran smart, cheered on their friends, and pushed themselves harder than ever before.



The results from the race were fantastic, but the real win isn't just about the medals. The real win is that every single one of these athletes learned how to dig deep, work as a team, and break through perceived mental and physical limits.

That is a lesson that lasts a lifetime."

2.2 Mile Races

In the longer races, Joseph and Gabriel powered through the full two-mile course, staying strong and finishing side by side in 29th and 30th. Hugo continued his impressive season, steadily moving up the field and finishing 6th in his division.

Wrapping up the day, Isla and Aiko ran together in their first cross country race, pushing one another through the hills to finish 11th and 12th in the girls division — the perfect ending to an incredible day for this brand-new team.

Coach John Montgomery couldn't be prouder of what his runners achieved:

“I am so incredibly proud of what this team accomplished—not just at the championship, but all season long. That race day was hot and that course was tough, but our runners were tougher.

They trusted their training, ran smart, cheered on their friends, and pushed themselves harder than ever before.

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That is a lesson that lasts a lifetime.”





Crystal Springs Tested Them — The Celtics Passed with Flying Colors!





As the school's first-ever Cross Country team, these runners have set the bar high — not only with their performances but with their perseverance, sportsmanship, and heart. One thing's for sure: when the course gets **brutal and grueling**, the **Celtics will keep on crushing it**.

ONE TEAM ONE DREAM

8th Grade Girls Volleyball: A Final Serve, An Unforgettable Team!



Words By Thuan Le, Olivia Jensen
Photos by Cristina DiDonato and Amber Divis

The 8th Grade Girls Volleyball Team capped off an incredible season with six wins and an unforgettable playoff run that took them all the way to the championship game.





In a nail-biting final match, the Celtics scored more total points but narrowly fell short in the last set, 15–13. It was an inspiring display of grit, focus, and teamwork from start to finish. Every player made tremendous strides this season—serves were stronger, passes more precise, and communication on the court seamless. Coach Olivia and Coach Elaina challenged the girls to keep improving and play with heart every time they stepped on the court. It was a powerful send-off for this amazing group as they head to high school—ready for new challenges, both as athletes and teammates.



As the final serve dropped and the season came to a close, so did an era of volleyball at St. Paul's for this remarkable group. What began years ago with eager learning and shaky first serves ended with confidence, composure, and a playoff run that will be remembered for years to come. Their journey was more than a championship push—it was the culmination of dedication, teamwork, and countless moments that shaped them into the athletes they are today. The Celtics' eighth graders leave the court with pride, gratitude, and a legacy that inspires every young player who follows. And as they move on to new courts and new challenges, we can't wait to see all that there is to accomplish from our Celtic volleyball players.



At the close of every season, CYO celebrates our 8th graders with a special Achievement Game- a tradition that honors the hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship of our graduating athletes. Each school is invited to send one 8th grader to represent their team and the Class of 2026 in this exhibition game.

This event isn't about competition, but about celebration- a moment to reflect on the friendships, growth, and memories these players have built throughout their CYO journeys.

During tonight's practice, the girls thoughtfully voted to choose who would represent St. Pauls Celtics this year. It was a touching process where every player expressed both humility and team spirit, willing to step aside for one another. That in itself speaks volumes about the heart of this group.

I'm thrilled to announce our representative for this year's Achievement Game: Congratulations to Kayla!



Student Spotlight: Sophia – 8th Grade Volleyball

Sophia, an 8th grade volleyball player, is someone many younger athletes look up to — including 6th grader Natalie, who has been inspired by her skill and leadership on the court.

Natalie shared:

“I’ve been to some of the 8th grade games, and Sophia’s serve is so incredible — she inspires me to work on my own serve. I’m proud to cheer her and her team on.”

The 8th graders set a great example, and Sophia continues to inspire the next generation of players.





**With gratitude and pride, we celebrate
our 8th grade girls volleyball team and
all you've achieved on and off the
court**

BIG PLAYS BIGGER SEASON

Boys 3rd/4th Grade Soccer Rises in a Breakout Run to the Playoffs



By Siobhan Cullen, Mike Ballard & Wendy Carrillo

Photography by Cristina DiDonato, Rachel Keuler & Bela Dharia-Ozgediz

The 3rd/4th Grade Boys Soccer Team kicked off the season with a brand-new combined roster, a mix of returning players and first-time athletes who quickly bonded on and off the field. What began as a group still learning one another's names soon grew into a unified squad full of energy, heart, and determination. Week after week, the boys impressed their coaches, their families, and themselves—battling through a competitive league, showing tremendous growth, and earning a well-deserved spot in the playoffs.



From Coach Mike

“The 3rd and 4th grade boys’ soccer team had an exciting and successful season, finishing second in the table despite a 3-way tie for best record of 6-2. The postseason run ended in a hard-fought, but heartbreaking playoff loss in penalty kicks following a rollercoaster of a game against the ultimate champions that saw us go up 1-0, then down 1-3, then tie it in the last minute to force overtime where we scored first only for them tie it again and send it to a disappointing result in penalties.

The whole team showed incredible progress over the season and kept the large and supportive parent section cheering at the top of their lungs! Many new additions to St. Paul’s made huge contributions this year. Captain and MVP Jayden (JJ) Rodriguez dominated the pitch, averaging nearly 3 goals/game, and even notching 2 ‘olympicos’!



The returning 4th-graders remained the team’s backbone. Henry Sherk was a defensive machine, and Ryan Ballard, Ronan Manlapaz, Jacob Taylor, and Jonah Habib all made critical plays that strengthened the squad. The 3rd-graders also shined in their first year competing up a division.

It was such fun to coach these boys, even if practices could get a little out of control! We loved seeing how much they developed individually and, more importantly, how they learned to play as a team.”



From Coach Siobhan

What a season for our 3rd/4th Grade Boys Soccer Team! With a brand-new combo roster and plenty of young, first-time players, this group came together faster than anyone expected. By mid-season, they were clicking—passing, communicating, and truly playing as a team.

Our new 4th graders lit up the field with incredible offensive bursts, while our defense stood strong week after week. We had some absolutely thrilling games, powered by the loudest, proudest parent super-fans on the sidelines.

The season ended with a heart-pounding finale: two overtimes and penalty kicks. The grit and determination these players showed was unforgettable.

“We’re already excited for next year—this team has championship energy written all over it. Go Celtics!”





A Note of Thanks from the Parents

Third- and fourth-grade parents would like to thank Coach Mike and Coach Siobhan for guiding our kids through an amazing season. You not only helped our boys grow as individual athletes, but taught them teamwork, perseverance, and confidence. The boys fought their way through every game, and we loved watching every minute of it.

We also extend a special thank you to Marie Taylor for assisting at practices—patiently wrangling the boys after school, keeping an eye on them during drills, and getting them safely back to school afterward. We look forward to next season. Go Celtics!

Though their playoff run ended in a dramatic first-round match that stretched through two overtimes and penalty kicks, the season was marked by progress, pride, and unforgettable moments. The boys learned to trust one another, push through challenges, and play with true Celtic spirit. The future is bright for this rising team—and with the passion they've already shown, there's no doubt they'll be a force next season.

STRONGER AS ONE

**How the 5th/6th
grade boys soccer
team joined forces for
a competitive season**

By Sharon Singam
Photography by Jim Valencia

This year, St. Paul's teamed up with nearby schools St. Philips and St. Johns to form a strong CYO soccer team. This collaboration allowed athletes to compete against other 6th-grade teams, enhancing the competitiveness of the experience. It also provided a fantastic opportunity for the boys to expand their friendships across different grades and schools. Under the coaching of Christina from St. Philips, the team grew to over 25 members. Despite facing some tough games, the team's resilience earned them 5th place out of 8 competing teams, with three wins and five losses.

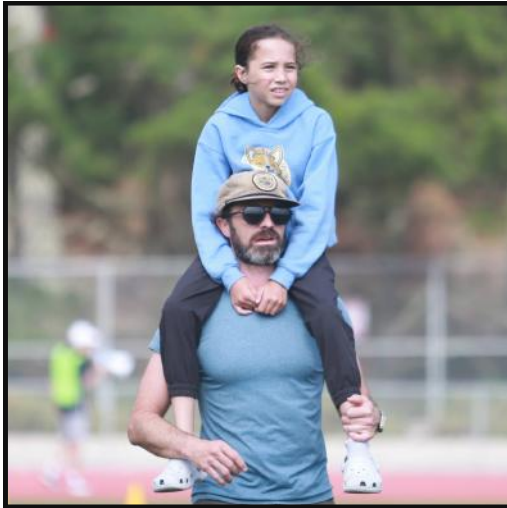








Sorry, Not Sorry...



Our Superfans Are Better Than Yours!

WINTER IS COMING

Celtics Gear Up for a Great Winter Season!

Winter is right around the corner, and the St. Paul's Celtics are ready to hit the courts and the pitch for another exciting season!

Our girls' soccer program is growing strong this year with two teams taking the field.

The 3rd & 4th grade combo team will be led by Coach Monica Moody, who's stepping into a coaching role for the first time this season. She's bringing great enthusiasm and a love of the game to our youngest players.

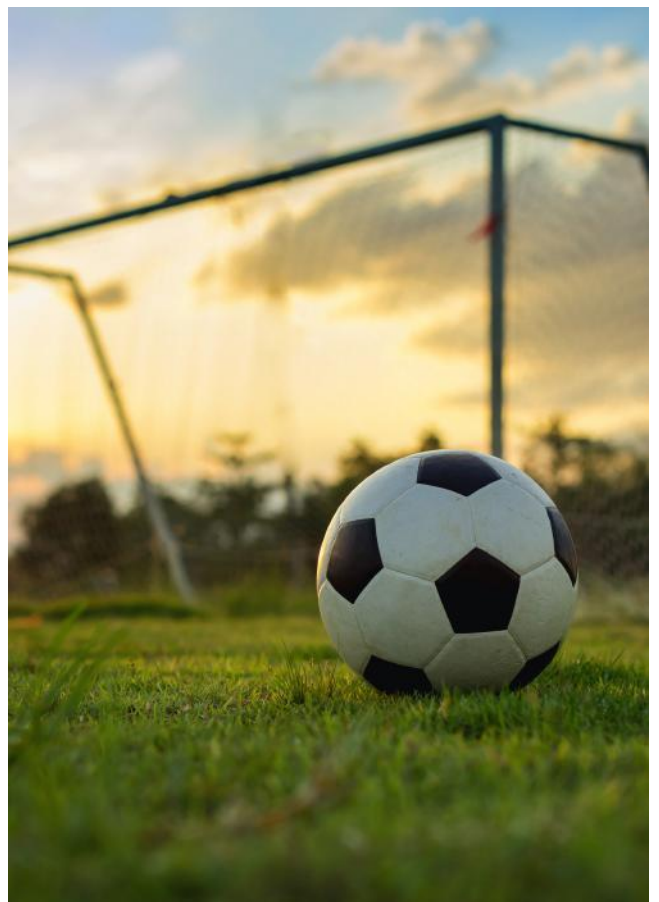
Meanwhile, the 6th & 7th grade combo team looks to build on their skills and teamwork as they take on some tough competition this winter.

Our boys' basketball program is full this winter, **featuring six CYO teams, one for each grade from 3rd through 8th. First grade will be represented with a co-ed FFA team and 2nd grade girls too!** Each squad has been putting in the work to prepare for an exciting season ahead. A special spotlight goes to our 5th grade boys, who went undefeated in the regular season last year and have now moved up to Division 1, the highest level of competitive play. Across all grades, Celtics players are developing their fundamentals, teamwork, and leadership. It's shaping up to be an exciting season of growth and great basketball for all our Celtics athletes.

Both seasons will run from December through early February, with a short break for the holidays. It's sure to be a fun few months of school spirit, skill-building, and plenty of cheering from the sidelines.

Let's go Celtics — bring on the winter season!

– Veronica Keating, Athletics Director



2026 CRAB FEED SAVE THE DATE



**SAT
FEB 7**

**Fr. Mario P. Farana
Parish Center**

ALL FUNDS RAISED WILL SUPPORT THE
ST. PAUL'S ATHLETICS PROGRAM

ATHLETICS@STPAULSF.NET



FROM THE EDITOR

Amber Divis

With this first edition of **The City Celtics**, we're officially off and running. From first graders learning their very first basketball skills to the steady strides of cross country, the grit on the soccer field, and the teamwork at the volleyball net—including our 8th grade girls proudly closing out their final season at St. Paul's—what matters most isn't the final score. It's the learning, the effort, and the growth we see in our students every time they show up.

And they never do it alone. This ride would not be possible without the unwavering support of our coaches, players, parents, and parish. The City Superfans bring the energy, the signs, and the rally cheers that define the Celtic spirit. Your dedication is what makes every moment on the court, field, and course meaningful.



As fall gives way to winter, a new season of possibility begins to take shape. Fresh teams, fresh challenges, and fresh moments of growth await our athletes. With every practice and every game, the story of our Celtics continues to unfold—and we look forward with pride and anticipation to the accomplishments still ahead. Because no matter the season or the challenge, **The City Celtics rise—driven by the city we love and the community that lifts us.**

the CITY



CELTICS

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