

One Goal, One Community

By Demi Brown



The Principia Boys Varsity Soccer engages in a warmup activity. In this photo, left to right, Shepherd Thomas, Gabe Gavaletz, Cole Brodbeck, Alik Mboya. (Photo Credit: Demi Brown)

For Principia's Varsity boys soccer team, winning means lifting each other up, both on the field and off. The Principia Varsity Soccer team has had a truly impactful season this year. After interviewing a few upperclassmen and the head coach of the soccer team, they highlighted managing a season as smoothly as this one, especially given the record they have achieved in previous years.

The Principia Soccer team has faced some tough challenges throughout this season, with fierce battles against Lutheran South 1-0, John Burroughs 2-1, Desmet High School 6-0, and Lindberg High 4-2. This has influenced the utmost need for motivation and keeping a steady head whilst playing these matches.

Principia Varsity Coach, Nigel Marples, works to keep his team up and motivated. "Before every game we start with a slow clap, gradually getting faster to get the guys pumped and try to help get rid of any pre-game jitters,

just by being loud and having energy," he said. Nigel also stated that every so often, he gives a speech. "What we as a team turn to is the idea of working," Marples said. He likes to remind players "that nothing in life comes easy. If you wanna have a good life, a good family, if you want to be successful, you have to work for it," he said.

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Rocco Stanley, a left back specialist on the Principia Panthers soccer team, sees community as something that happens on and off the field " We do team lunches on game days, which we found allows us to have more of

a connection with the team, and not just thinking that we have only to be friends or comrades on the field." Of course that sense of community can be found on the field as well "if one of our teammates scores, we come together to celebrate that person, and give them praise," Stanley said, "but we also celebrate the team knowing that its not just up to one person."

Jann Wainaina, a senior center back, expressed how he feels he helps empower his team as not only a leader but also a motivator, he said, that "It's better to lead by example, by me being happy and energetic during tough games, most of my teammates pick up on that energy, which motivates us to push through any game."

Trust also plays a huge role in building the community this team has. Rocco Stanley also states, "I think we've gotten so far in this season because of the amount of trust we have in one another. The fact that we know that everyone has each other's backs, and that we must go through every hardship as a team, even if it means doing after-practice sprints, or not letting one other person take the blame for something. I think just having a sense of trust and just showing that everyone cares for one another on the team has gotten us this far, character-wise and on the field."

This sense of community is heavily evident during Family Weekend, showing Principia families how incorporating trust, loyalty, and support on their team, the boys of Principia Soccer have created something no record or scoreboard can ever measure. The Principia Panthers may not win every game or get to play a perfect 90 minutes, but the foundation they have built is far beyond results. In the end, it's not just about soccer. It's about showing up for one another, every day, not only as a teammate, but also as a friend.