

Memorial > Memorial Sports

Vikings earn first state title

In initial TAPPS campaign, The Village School earns all the marbles

By Jeff Jenkins | March 3, 2015

The **Village School** finally joined the **Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools** this season to provide its athletes with the chance to compete for championships.

After giving up its independent status, the Vikings wasted little time making a memorable first impression, with the boys soccer team claiming the **TAPPS Division II** crown. The Village School edged Bullard The Brook Hill 3-2 in the final to claim the first official team title in school history.



Photo By Tony Bullard 2014/Freelance Photographer

Andy Gaitan (#18) with Westside brings Rodrigo Balmaceda (#10) with The Village School to his knees Tuesday 01/21/14.

The magnitude of the accomplishment wasn't lost on **Joseph Juarez**, the Vikings' first-year head coach.

"The Village School has always been strong academically, but this shows that our sports teams can compete at the highest level in TAPPS," Juarez said. "The fact that boys soccer did it makes it even more special. There's a passion for the sport and we've created some buzz on campus."

"This is a historic moment for our school. Before joining TAPPS, our athletic department couldn't compete for a state championship," said **Dustin Embry**, The Village School's director of athletics. "Now we have advanced and won the TAPPS Division II state title and it's only our first year."

The Vikings (22-3) dominated this season, winning the TAPPS Division II-District 4 crown with a 14-2 mark. They were even better in the postseason, blanking Lutheran South 5-0 and Cypress Christian 10-1 during its first two rounds.

The Village School edged [San Antonio Texas Military Institute](#) 2-1 in the semifinals, with junior forward Ross Brown and junior defensive midfielder Fraser Kidd each scoring goals to send the Vikings to the state finals.

Against Bullard The Brook Hill, three different players – junior [Cailen Sinclair](#), senior midfielder [Rodrigo Balmaceda](#) and freshman reserve midfielder Sebastian Emmen – each scored goals.

Sinclair was the star of the playoffs with nine goals and four assists in four games, followed closely by Brown (two goals, seven assists).

Juarez also credited the Vikings' defense, led by junior center backs [Iker Rodriguez](#) and [Micheal Willie](#) and sophomore goalkeeper [Wassim Ghazi](#).

"None of this happened by accident. It took lots of discipline and countless hours in the film room, weight room and meetings," Juarez said. "I thought this team had the talent to compete for a state championship, but the game isn't always about ability and X's and O's. It's about self-belief."

Balmaceda and Rodriguez were excited to have the chance to play for a title, something their siblings couldn't do when The Village School was an independent.

"I know my brother (Ricardo) would have loved the chance to play for a championship, but he was on the team before we were in TAPPS," Balmaceda said. "I feel very lucky."

Rodriguez also was playing for his older brother, Inigo, another former Vikings standout.

"This means so much to my family and the whole school," Juarez said. "It's incredible."