

### **Providence Academy - 3, Hope Academy - 0**

The Providence Academy boys opened the season with a 3-0 win against Hope Academy. PA began the game with intensity, but struggled to settle the ball down and play on the ground through a crowded midfield. Defensively the Lions remained stout, hardly ever letting the Hope boys get an attacking chance. Eventually, PA's offensive pressure won out as Connor Niesen slotted his first varsity goal around the 25th minute mark. The Lion's second goal followed shortly after with the third coming in the second half. In the second half the Lions firmly controlled the game, playing through the midfield with poise. The boys were excited to begin the 2025 campaign 1-0, after a rough start to the 2024 campaign where they started 0-5 and didn't score a goal until the sixth game of the season.

### **St. Paul Academy - 1, Providence Academy - 0**

The PA boys lost a closely contested matchup against the three time defending state champions--SPA. The Lions started off the game with purpose, catching SPA by surprise with quick passing and offensive pressure. The game then equilibrated until the 30th minute when a ball snuck behind an unaware Lion defender to a SPA player who slotted it in. While SPA applied pressure to the Lions they never sustained a continuous attack throughout the game. Even when PA went down a man in the second half, the Lions continued to generate goal scoring chances and hold the majority of possession. The Lion players picked up a lot of yellow cards in this contest. While a couple were questionable calls, many were warranted. PA needs to learn how to play physically but back off when necessary. This was an encouraging start to conference play for PA and I believe could have easily finished in a tie.

### **Breck School - 3, Providence Academy - 1**

PA controlled the first half against Breck, applying pressure, winning the ball, and creating solid scoring chances. Around the 36th minute mark the Lions broke through with a goal off a Connor Niesen corner kick that landed in the box. After some scrambling Xavier Reetz slotted it in for his second goal in three games. Providence was in control of the game heading into half. Breck came out the second half with sustained, relentless offensive pressure and Providence's defense, running low on defensive subs due to Owen Schlickbernd's red card, ultimately broke down by way of surrendering three unanswered goals. Despite the unfortunate end to the game, the Lions have proven in the first two conference games that they are right there with any team and have a chance to get a result in any given matchup. The arrow is pointing up and the boys are enjoying the competition.

### **The Blake School - 2, Providence Academy - 2**

The Providence boys were rewarded with a 2-2 tie for their excellent effort against Blake. PA began the game with a focused game plan to attack Blake in the air on the wings and create scoring chances. Blake controlled most of the first ten minutes of the game, generating some dangerous chances. However, PA struck first with a goal from Rafe West in the 11th minute. PA continued to hold Blake's attack at bay with strong defending. Toward the end of the half, the 34th minute, the Lions won a free kick just outside Blake's penalty box and Connor Niesen went bar-down for his second goal of the season. Blake came out at the beginning of the second half with tremendous, sustained pressure. They quickly evened up the game with goals in the 51st and 55th minutes. PA weathered the storm and managed to regain some control in the last fifteen minutes when the game opened up and both teams had some opportunities. This was an inspiring effort from the PA boys against the #1 ranked team in Class AA and the group is happy to have earned a hard fought first point of the year in conference play.

### **Providence Academy - 5, Mounds Park Academy - 1**

The Providence Academy Lions prevailed 5-1 over the Mounds Park Panthers. The PA boys started fast and furious, generating a quick goal within the two minutes of play by Xavier Reetz. Reetz followed his first brace with two more in route to a first half hat trick. The freshman Reetz now holds a team leading six goals to his name this season.

Mounds Park was not without a fight as they fought for control in the midfield and managed to catch PA on a break, scoring just before the end of the first half. However, PA began the second half by swiftly moving the ball on the ground as senior Connor Niesen snuck the ball through to Ben Mendoza who quickly put away a decisive fourth goal. Niesen now has a team leading five assists to go along with three goals, while eighth grader Ben Mendoza has two goals and an assist.

The Lions never looked back as they added one more goal in the final moments of the match by William Hub to secure their third win on the year and first at home.

Next they will be away on September 11th as they take on SPA @ 4:30.

### **Breck School - 2, Providence Academy - 1**

The PA boys were edged by Breck 2-1 in their soccer contest on September 16th. The Breck Mustangs began the game with solid position and put consistent pressure on the Lions in all areas of the field. While they maintained much control of the ball, Breck couldn't generate quality goal scoring opportunities. About ten minutes into the half, PA fought for more control of the game and found some success pushing the ball down the wings to generate crosses. The Lions, however, couldn't find the connection and continuity they usually have and Breck punished the Lions for being slow to track back defensively with a goal in the 28th minute. Breck then scored again in the last moments of the first half to push their lead to 2-0. (PA's largest first half deficit of the year.)

Faced with a steep deficit against a formidable opponent, the Lions came out in the second half more connected and strung together penetrating passing sequences. PA's defense limited Breck's attack to no second half goals which bolstered PA to continue pressing for a goal. Their chance came at the 76th minute mark with a Breck handball in the box which resulted in a Penalty Kick which Landon Niesen (1) coolly placed past the keeper. The goal boosted the Lions' attack to blitz the Breck defense and PA won two corners, one of which barely missed the far post. The PA boys showed excellent grit and fight to finish a game where they did not play their best and ultimately gave themselves a great chance to tie. They look to continue their strong season (5-4-1) at home against Blake on Thursday, September, 17th.