

## **Press Clippings 10/29/2018**

**---Daily Herald---10/28/2018**

### **Closer this time, but West Aurora topples South Elgin again**

**By Jared Birchfield**

West Aurora won its first playoff game in 24 years Saturday night but South Elgin did not make it easy.

The Storm, which was routed by the Blackhawks 48-10 in last Friday's regular season finale, turned this game into a real nail-biter.

West Aurora's 28-20 home win was not decided until the final play of the game.

With 21 seconds left to play, a 37-yard touchdown pass from Storm quarterback Azzavier Salinas to Cristopher Mejia-Gomez cut the Blackhawks' lead to 28-20.

South Elgin recovered the ensuing onside kick. West Aurora's defense thwarted Salinas' three straight passes -- the last one as time expired -- and prevented the Storm from tying the game.

"Its been since 1994, definitely a big hump for the program," said West Aurora coach Nate Eimer of the Class 8A win.

"I think South Elgin came out ready to go. They were very well coached and I thought they did a really nice job getting their team ready. I think our kids battled and they hung in there."

The Blackhawks relied on their ground game to secure the win. Of the team's 329 total yards, 242 were gained on the ground. Hezekiah Salter (83 yards on 13 carries) and JaQuan Buchanan (79 yards on 12 carries) grounded out most of the yardage.

"We got into the position in the second half where we felt like our defense is going to stop them so we just wanted to take some time off the clock," said Eimer.

He credited the defense for keeping South Elgin at bay.

"Defensively we were pretty darn good," Eimer said.

West Aurora (9-1) scored on its second possession of the game to take the lead 7-0 with 2:50 left in the first quarter. Tight end Derek Dodson was all alone in the left corner of the end zone to catch a 17-yard pass from quarterback William Tammaru.

South Elgin (6-4) got on the scoreboard as time expired in the first frame. Salinas lateraled to Shiking Marshall who first swept right and then reversed to the left and sprinted 51 yards for the score. South Elgin was unable to tie the game as the PAT failed.

The Blackhawks widened their lead to 14-6 late in the second quarter. With 2:46 left in the half, Buchanan scampered 24 yards to cross the goal line.

Another Tammaru throw was caught by Aaron Jankovsky in the third quarter, extending West Aurora's lead to 21-6. The junior wide receiver had to jump between two South Elgin defenders in the end zone to catch the pass.

A 2-yard Salinas keeper made the score 21-13 with 6:42 left in the third quarter.

Buchanan scored the Blackhawks' last TD on a 14-yard run with 1:40 left to play.

## **---The Courier-News---10/28/2018**

Football postseason Glenbard West 49, Bartlett 20

### **‘We just never quit’**

### **O’Brien, Hawks battle to the end in first-round loss to the Hilltoppers**

**By Paul Johnson**



- Bartlett's Mathew Young runs for a touchdown against Glenbard West in a Class 8A first-round playoff game at Bartlett on Friday. (H. Rick Bamman/Courier-

News photos) Bartlett's Spencer Konstanzer, left, grabs the arm of Glenbard West quarterback Tommy Blecker.

Under first-year coach Matt Erlenbaugh, Bartlett quickly adopted a new identity this season.

No matter the score, the Hawks were never going to quit.

That's why, in the final seconds of a 49-20 loss to Glenbard West in a Class 8A first-round playoff game, Bartlett quarterback Jonah O'Brien was rushing the offense to the line — desperate to score again before the game ended.

He succeeded with 2 seconds left, hitting Alec Palella with a 4-yard touchdown pass.

"We just never quit," O'Brien said. "It doesn't matter if we're down 50-0, we're not going to quit."

While the Hawks were upset with the lopsided loss, Erlenbaugh took solace that O'Brien was still leading his team until the end.

"He really showed our younger guys how to act, how to prepare," Erlenbaugh said of O'Brien. "That's invaluable. Our young guys are going to take that and continue where we left off."

Glenbard West (8-2) was led by senior running back Tyquan Cox, who scored the first six TDs by the Hilltoppers. He rushed for 191 yards on 19 carries.

That helped Glenbard West take a 49-6 lead late in the third quarter, starting the running clock.

O'Brien lamented that the first five possessions by Bartlett (7-3) resulted in a punt or a turnover on downs.

"That's on me," O'Brien said. "I don't think I stepped up in the first half. I have to be better than that."

It was O'Brien's only year in the program after transferring from Wisconsin before his senior year. He completed 10 of 21 passes for 133 yards and two TDs against Glenbard West.

"They welcomed me and my family," O'Brien said of Bartlett. "This feels like home now. It's been awesome."

Running back Nick Deckard, another senior, also kept things going even for Bartlett as Glenbard West continued to pull away.

Deckard ended up rushing for 146 yards on 18 carries, including a 62-yard TD on the final play of the third quarter.

Following a two-year playoff drought, Bartlett got back on the map this season.

The Hawks' seven wins are the most for the program since 2012. They also got a dose of what is needed to take the next step, thanks to Glenbard West.

"They're just a good team, good program, something that we look to be soon," Erlenbaugh said.

"In a weird way, it's kind of good for our young guys to see that there is a lot more out there. We can get a lot better."

Paul Johnson is a freelance reporter for The Courier-News.

## Urban renewal

Senior outside hitter powers St. Charles East past South Elgin

By Paul Johnson



- St. Charles East players and fans celebrate winning the Class 4A South Elgin Regional championship on Thursday. The Saints won their second straight regional title. (Brian O'Mahoney/Courier-News)

St. Charles East's Sam Urban didn't play club in the offseason. She isn't planning on playing in college.

The senior outside hitter is driven by playing with her friends, and she helped keep the Saints' season — and her playing career — alive Thursday night.

Behind 13 kills from Urban, St. Charles East pushed forward with a 25-19, 25-20 win over the host Storm in the Class 4A South Elgin Regional championship match.

"I love being with them," Urban said of her teammates. "They're the main reason that I'm here. It's really fun to experience this with them and see how good we're doing and get this far."

Urban keyed the offensive attack for the Saints (22-14), who picked up their second straight regional title. Nearly half of McKenna Slavik's 28 assists led to Urban kills. "Sam had a great match," East coach Jennie Kull said. "She's having the time of her life. She's just done an amazing job. She just loves it.

"She doesn't get frustrated. She's doing it for the joy of it. That's been a real positive."

South Elgin (27-10) didn't allow St. Charles East to run away, however. Every time the Saints padded the lead, the Storm countered.

In Game 2, East took an 18-14 lead, only to see South Elgin force a 20-20 tie. The Saints scored the final five points to win the match.

"My team played as hard as they could," South Elgin coach Joni Plach said. "At the end of the day, they're a better team physically than us.

"I'm very proud of the way they played. They're sad, but they know they did all they could."

It was a historic season for the Storm, who set a program record for wins with Tuesday's semifinal victory over Bartlett.

South Elgin went from 20 wins three years ago to 26 last year and 27 this season.

"It creates a culture of being competitive, and the younger levels see what it takes at the varsity level to be a winning program," Plach said.

St. Charles East advanced to the Huntley Sectional. The Saints will face Belvidere North at 5:30 p.m. Monday.

Huntley and St. Charles North will follow at 6:30 p.m.

"We're going to have to bring our best," Kull said. "They're a very good team. We're just going to have to make sure that we're taking care of business on our side.

"Being an underdog at this time of year is always nice. I feel that the kids are relaxed and playing well."

Urban isn't ready for her run with the Saints to come to an end just yet, either.

"I'm a little nervous because obviously I want to keep going and do the best we can," she said.

"I'm really excited with how we're doing and I feel positive that we can go really far."

## **---Daily Herald---10/27/2018**

### **Boys soccer: Streamwood outlasts Elgin for sectional crown**

**By Steve Nemeth**

Converting four straight shots from the mark enabled Streamwood to do what 100 minutes of soccer didn't achieve -- get past Elgin.

The Sabres, who were thinking victory until Elgin got an equalizer with just 3:56 left in regulation, saw the 1-1 draw continue through the two additional 10-minute extra sessions forcing the shootout to determine the Class 3A Hampshire sectional champion.

Alex Chavez stepped up and calmly converted his attempt much the same as he had done two nights before late in a semifinal to defeat Dundee-Crown.

Streamwood goalie Hector Alfaro dove to his right to stop Ramon Orozco's shot. Jesus Limon's effort caromed off the underside of the crossbar and down. Alfaro dove to his left to deny Elgin's Jesus Millan sending Streamwood's hopes sky-high.

Sophomore Jose Ibarra, the youngest participant in the shootout, made it 3-for-3 for the Sabres. Elgin junior Almanza Albert kept the Maroons' hopes alive scoring to his right.

Jorge Bracamontes drilled his shot giving Streamwood an insurmountable 4-1 lead to keep the Maroons' last two shooters from even having an opportunity.

Streamwood (18-4-3) advances to Tuesday's 6 p.m. Hoffman Estates Conant supersectional to face a Lake Park squad (20-3-3) that earned its slot thanks to pulling off back-to-back, sudden-death shootouts, the later on Friday night over Benet.

Last year the Sabres were beaten in a shootout for the sectional title match when Jacobs got a save when the "PKs" became sudden victory after both sides went 5-for-5. As a result, this year's sectional becomes the second in Streamwood school history to go with one in 2014 when that unit went on to finish fourth in the state finals.

"This feels great because we should have one last year. We wanted to redeem ourselves," explained Limon.

"That was a great game and once again it comes down to these guys never give up," Sabres coach Matt Polovin insisted. "We thought we had it but one tiny mishap and Omar (Lopez) punished us."

The narrow gap between Elgin and Streamwood is virtually a tradition. Since the Sabres won the regional they hosted in 2014 by beating Elgin, the next four meetings all ended in draws -- 1-1 in 2015, 1-1 in 2016, 1-1 in 2017, and 2-2 back on Sept. 19 of this year.

Was it any wonder that the previous 320 minutes or the first 40 of Friday night still had the two teams even? Alejandro Morales' third assist of the year enabled Chavez to crank a 21-yarder from the left wing that curved inside of the far right post just 5:04 into the second half. It was the first time in four postseason matches that a shot eluded Maroon goalie Martin Jimenez.

The combination of Elgin pushing for an equalizer and Streamwood in full defensive mode led to a number of Maroon threats. While Ibarra and the Sabres' defense were succeeding in limiting Maroon standout Lopez's touches or shots, that ended at 76:04. As he had done twice two nights before in a 2-0 semifinal win over Crystal Lake Central, Rafael Perez had a textbook cross to the far post.

Lopez sprinted to the ball and despite a tough angle, slotted the ball back from the left to the inside of the right post. As a result, the stretch of actual minutes without a winner between the two Upstate Eight Conference foes led to the overtimes and what is now 420 minutes of stalemate, if not for the shootout.

"I hate PKs," Elgin coach David Borg understandably stated. "It's so frustrating because I thought we had the ball in their half of the field about 70 percent of the time. Even though we didn't pass well in the first half, we still controlled things. In many ways I believe we outplayed them and had opportunities. Because it's been such a good season, it's still bittersweet."

Elgin (17-2-3) won the inaugural St. Charles tournament, earned a UEC banner for the second straight year and followed up with a regional plaque.