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Boys soccer: St. Charles East edges Streamwood

By: Craig Brueske



Streamwood's Alejandro Morales heads the ball in front of St. Charles East's Luca Avendano in a boys soccer game in St. Charles Wednesday, August 28, 2019.



Streamwood's Jose Ibarra watches the ball over his shoulder against St. Charles East in a boys soccer game in St. Charles Wednesday, August 28, 2019.



St. Charles East goalkeeper Jack Settle makes a save against Streamwood in a boys soccer game in St. Charles Wednesday, August 28, 2019.



Streamwood goalkeeper Antonio Herrera collects the ball as St. Charles East's Sebastian Carranza plays for a rebound in a boys soccer game in St. Charles Wednesday, August 28, 2019.



St. Charles East's Sam Wade redirects the ball against Streamwood in a boys soccer game in St. Charles Wednesday, August 28, 2019.



St. Charles East's Alejandro Mancera tries to control the ball from the turf against Streamwood's Aaron Taboada in a boys soccer game in St. Charles Wednesday, August 28, 2019.



Streamwood's Edwin Peralta and St. Charles East's Geoff Unterberg compete for the ball in the Saints' 1-0 victory Wednesday.

They may not be conference rivals any longer but the boys soccer teams from Streamwood and St. Charles East still share some things in common.

A year ago, both teams captured regional championships -- Streamwood also won a sectional title -- and watched their postseasons come to an end at the hands of eventual 4th-place state finisher Lake Park.

Both squads are expecting big things again this season but the Saints (2-0) capped their first week of regular season play with a 1-0 nonconference victory over the Sabres (0-1-1) Wednesday night at Norris Stadium in St. Charles.

After a scoreless opening half, the Saints notched the game's only goal just 5 minutes into the second half.

Sophomore forward Sebastian Carranza was the beneficiary of a solid attacking play by junior teammate Sam Wade, who got tackled by a Streamwood defender on a play that also upended Sabres goalkeeper Antonio Herrera.

With Herrera still on the ground, the ball squirted through to Carranza, who delivered the ball into an open net for a 1-0 Saints lead.

"That's beautiful work in the midfield to win that and then the counter," said Wade. "All I did was feed it off for Carranza."

Sprawled out on the field, Wade had a picture-perfect view of the empty net.

"It was very relieving -- I'm not going to lie," said Wade, who has missed the majority of the last 2 seasons with injuries.

"You haven't seen the best of Sam Wade -- not even close," DiNuzzo said of the 6-foot-2, 185-pound Wade. "He made our (varsity) team as a freshman. He has just been injured the last couple years and now he's healthy."

The Saints also received their second consecutive flawless performance from senior goalkeeper Jack Settle.

The 6-4 Settle used his reach to get his right hand on a point-blank shot from Streamwood junior Jose Banuelos with 8:30 remaining and thwarted the Sabres' Josh Taboada just 2 minutes later to preserve his second shutout.

"If you think that was good, you should have seen him on Monday (in a 2-0 win over South Elgin)," said DiNuzzo. "There were two saves in particular -- I haven't seen any other goalkeeper in the last couple years that would have made them.

"He's playing lights out -- and we have two other keepers who are capable."

Settle finished with 8 saves while frustrating the Sabres.

"Some nights the better team doesn't win," said Streamwood coach Matt Polovin. "St. Charles East is a real good team but tonight we did every single thing we could possibly do except put the ball in the back of the net.

"We had many, many opportunities inside and around the box. Their goalie made some nice saves at the end there."

With a starting lineup that included 2 freshmen, a pair of sophomores and 4 juniors, Polovin sees a bright future.

"It's early in the season and we're the type of team that is going to keep growing and keep getting better," said Polovin.

South Elgin's showing off some serious upgrades

By: Dave Oberhelman

Lights, camera filming station, action.

South Elgin football fans may have to wait a couple weeks for it -- what's a couple more weeks? -- but it's all coming together for the first time on campus this fall.

Thanks to \$1.4 million dedicated by Elgin Area School District U-46 for the project's cost, the Storm's stadium has been outfitted with LED lighting around the football field, a new permanent press box sits atop the home bleachers and the track encircling the field is getting renovated.

"It's really great, they're investing in the kids and in the community, which is awesome," said Storm football coach Dragan Teonic.

"I like it. I like Friday. Let's be honest, there's just nothing like high school Friday night lights."

Since 2011 South Elgin football had played at home on Saturdays an oft-blazing sun. That in itself was a win after the South Elgin High School Booster Foundation raised the funds necessary to execute Phase I, a home stadium. From its 2006 inception until 2011 the Storm had shared Streamwood's Millennium Field with Bartlett and the host Sabres.

Scheduling-wise that had to be a three-team circus. At a football-centric level South Elgin's new lighting situation lends consistency to the week.

"This is nice," Teonic said, "every single Friday's the same and every single Saturday's the same."

South Elgin folk got a taste of what's to come with the Aug. 23 "Taste Under the Lights" featuring food trucks and a tasty selection of Storm athletic teams. The first home football game is Sept. 13 against Elgin.

"It's a local opponent and we should have a great crowd," Teonic said. "A lot of people are buzzing about it."

End of an era

Or is it an eon? It seems like West Aurora has been playing East Aurora in football forever, and for practical purposes it has.

That ends this season.

West Aurora's move to the Southwest Prairie Conference has the Blackhawks playing their first four games against crossover opponents out of the SPC East division before five straight games in the SPC West. There's no room for an East Aurora on this schedule.

"It'll be sad," said West Aurora coach Nate Eimer. "I think for the communities it's tough but it is kind of what it is."

What it was had become a lopsided affair that saw West Aurora beat the Tomcats 18 straight times. Last year West Aurora won 51-0 at Ken Zimmerman Field.

Interestingly, in a rivalry that debuted in 1893, those 18 straight victories snapped what had been a draw and gave West Aurora a series lead of 66 wins to 48 losses and 12 ties.

Despite the recent domination, "it's absolutely a rivalry," Eimer maintained. "When you've been playing people since 1893 that's a rivalry."

He hopes it will become one again.

"I think we'll renew it and it'll be a good thing," he said.

Less is more

Acclimatization, schmacclimatization. Bartlett got ahead of that curve. It utilized 16 days of summer camp rather than the full 25.

"We want them hungry for when the season comes," said coach Matt Erlenbaugh.

The Hawks didn't just lounge poolside those other nine days. The plan combined mental rest, playbook cramming, planning and steady lifting.

The first two weeks, or eight total days, were spent on football activities. Erlenbaugh introduced his new offense and reintroduced the defense "really quickly so we forced the guys to learn or they'd fall behind," he said.

The next two weeks he encouraged players to attend one-day camps at colleges where they could realistically expect to play and attend given their abilities and intended majors.

The Fourth of July week was entirely free, then the team returned for eight days of football.

Erlenbaugh noted there was lifting and conditioning throughout within Bartlett's Strength and Performance Camp open to all Hawks athletes. Can't get soft.

In 2018, his first year as Hawks head coach, Bartlett went 23 days over the summer. The team won five more games than it had in 2017.

"I think we'll get a pretty decent idea the first few games and see where we're at, and throughout the year, too -- how fresh we are, how long we can go without getting tired," Erlenbaugh said.

He's no cupcake, just sensible.

"Sometimes I feel like it can be overkill a little bit," he said.