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SPORTS

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Boys soccer: Energized West Chicago overtakes Streamwood

By: Chris Walker

Energy, team chemistry, communication and a strong desire to win aren't things you can load up and bring on the bus with you when you hit the road for an Upstate Eight Conference soccer game.

West Chicago was without them during the first half of Wednesday's game at Streamwood, but the Wildcats somehow found all of them during halftime and they accounted for the difference in the second half of a 3-1 victory.

"It was evident to us in the first half that we weren't even close to our expectations so we got on them at halftime about not fulfilling them," West Chicago coach Jose Villa said. "Our first half was the first 40 minutes of soccer that we've played this season where the energy was down, the team energy was not there, our communication was not there and we were just making careless mistakes."

Streamwood (3-3-2, 1-1) somewhat took advantage of West Chicago's lethargic start, capitalizing just five minutes into the action when Aldo Jimenez assisted Alejandro Morales.

The Sabres had some other scoring chances, including a near miss from Jose Banuelos midway through the half that caromed off a post, but had to settle for just the 1-0 lead at the break.

"After the first 5 to 10 minutes, I thought we controlled the first with our chances, our overlapping runs and guys getting involved," Streamwood coach Matt Polovin said. "It's nice to finally get that goal and we had a few other chances, and (West Chicago) really couldn't keep up with us."

That changed in the second half.

"So at halftime I told them to keep your foot on the pedal and they almost did the opposite," Polovin said. "They had a little bit more of the run of play and it's just one of those games, I guess. It's unfortunate and West Chicago has a nice team, but were they better than us today?"

They certainly were over the course of the final 40 minutes, as the Wildcats seized control of the game, starting with Alejandro Cadena's header from Jahir Martinez early in the second half.

"We talked about how we had to change our energy and we just went in there and did what we know how to do with the pass and to attack the spaces," Cadena said. "That led to our first goal and from then on our energy kept increasing."

This has the makings of being one of the most special seasons in a long time for the Wildcats and they are hungry for success. In the second half, they played like they were hungry.

"I was kind of hungry for that goal because I knew we needed it," Cadena said. "Our energy just had to change so I tried my best to help my team and after that goal I knew we were going to keep on going at it until we took the 'W' home."

The Wildcats (7-0-1, 3-0), who have already won more conference games than last year, deposited the game-winner with 7:46 left to play when Diego Cortes unselfishly slotted a pass ahead to Isaias Palacios. The feed was just out of the reach of Streamwood's all-everything defender Jose Ibarra and Palacios punched it in for the 2-1 lead.

"Diego had a chance to score the goal but he told me he saw me in a better position," Palacios said. "Then he gave me the ball and I just tapped it in."

Palacios then dumped a pass to Moises Morfin with 33.7 seconds left to give the Wildcats some insurance.

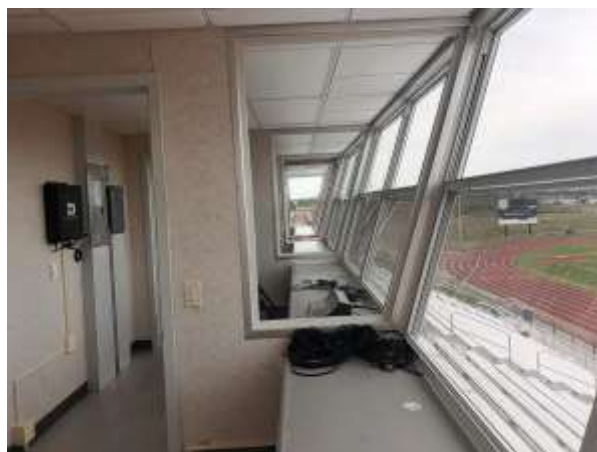
"This was a big test for us," Villa said. "I think we've been down twice now and this was a big test to overcome. Responding in the second half was huge for us. I'm super proud of this group."

Friday Night Lights arrive at South Elgin

By: Jerry Fitzpatrick



South Elgin has replaced its track, installed lights and put in a press box.



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South Elgin football is ready for prime time.

Thanks to a \$1.4 million investment by Elgin Area School District U-46 to install four banks of LED lights, a large press box and replace the track, South Elgin will play the first on-campus night football game in the 15-year-old school's history Friday at 7:30 p.m. against Elgin.

"Everyone is excited -- the kids, the teachers, the whole community," athletic director Mike Jezioro said. "There's an extra pep in everybody's step this week. Everyone is extremely excited about Friday night."

The South Elgin varsity hosted several night games at Streamwood's Millennium Field, which it called home from its 2006 inception through 2011.

A fundraising campaign directed by the South Elgin High School Booster Foundation culminated in the construction of an on-campus stadium that opened in 2012. Lights were not included in the first phase of the plan. Thus, the football team spent the next seven seasons playing home games in the Saturday sun.

The advent of home night games is particularly welcome news for the players. Senior linebacker/running back Vince Clinite, a three-year varsity performer, played in 10 day games over the past two seasons.

"It's not the same," Clinite said of Saturday matinees compared to Friday night lights. "You've got to wake up and play right away. It's not the same as being able to wake up, go through school and get pumped all day."

Senior Shiking Marshall said fans can expect more energy from their team.

"The game is going to be much faster on a Friday," the cornerback/slot back said. "Everybody is going to be explosive, hitting hard, all that stuff."

That's a two-way street, of course. Elgin (0-2), which lost to defending Upstate Eight Conference champion Glenbard East 27-18 in Week 1 and to Glenbard South 21-12 in Week 2, likewise hopes to feed off the atmosphere against the unbeaten Storm.

"We want to put on a good show this Friday," said Elgin coach Anthony Mason, a former NIU defensive back. "I think this is really our test here after being beat last year 55-0. This is such a big game for them with Friday night lights for the first time. They want to keep their dominance. How we come out could really define the type of team we are."

Jeziro said he expects the largest crowd in program history due to the unique circumstances. A packed house is precisely what the players hope to see.

"It's going to be amazing," Clinite said. "I just can't wait to play. It's going to be great."

He's No. 1: West Aurora senior quarterback Will Tammaru certainly would have preferred the victory last week over Plainfield East, but he did leave the field having set a Blackhawks program record.

Completing 17 of 33 passes for 244 yards and 3 touchdowns in West Aurora's 27-25 loss at Plainfield East, the three-year starter set the school record for passing yardage in a career with 3,188 yards.

He completed passes to eight different receivers and threw 2 touchdowns passes to receiver Logan Mont and a third to tight end Shawn Fichtel.

According to Blackhawks records Tammaru's 244 yards passing was his third-highest total. He passed for 287 yards against Glenbard South in 2018, and for 255 yards in West Aurora's 2018 playoff loss to Edwardsville.

Tammaru's career total eclipsed Mark McGary's mark of 3,122 yards achieved during the 2004-05 seasons.

"Will is everything you'd want in an high school athlete," said West Aurora coach Nate Eimer, a former Blackhawks tight end. "He shows up, does his job, gets better every day."

Hosting Joliet Central on Friday, the quarterback is likely to set another career passing record. His 187 completions rank second to Jim Bennett's 191 from 1982-83 seasons.

Eimer stressed that setting records is not a motivating factor to the 6-foot-3, 200-pound senior.

"He's a team-first guy," Eimer said. "If he ends up having to throw one pass for us to win Friday night he'll do it. He wants to win, that's what makes him special."

He said it: Jacobs coach Bill Mitz on the battle between Jacobs junior center George Trojanek and Huntley two-time all-conference defensive tackle Matt Burba in Jacobs' 14-7 win: "That was a battle all night. If you like to watch offensive line play, those were two really good football players going at it."

Boys soccer: Larkin leads Elgin heading into weather delay

By: Jared Birchfield



Larkin's Kevin Espinal, right, and Elgin's Eduardo Berrum battle in varsity boys soccer at Memorial Field in Elgin on Wednesday.



Larkin's Cristian Maldonado, right, along with Elgin's Agustin Chavez, left, and Jayrell Garcia, back, battle for the ball in varsity boys soccer at Memorial Field in Elgin on Wednesday.



Larkin's Cristian Maldonado, left, and Elgin's Nicholas Lopez race for the ball in varsity boys soccer at Memorial Field in Elgin on Wednesday.



Larkin's Kevin Reynoso, right, and Elgin's Brandon Tavira, left, and Agustin Chavez, back, battle for the ball at Memorial Field in Elgin on Wednesday.



Larkin's Omar Olivo, back, tries to get around Elgin's Eduardo Berrum in varsity boys soccer at Memorial Field in Elgin on Wednesday.

Once again this week the weather got the upper hand on Larkin.

Wednesday's Upstate Eight Conference game against archival Elgin at Memorial Field was suspended due to lightening late in the first half.

Monday's game with Dundee-Crown was also postponed due to lightening.

With 4:24 left before intermission and Larkin leading 1-0, play was stopped. After completing the 30-minute required waiting period, the match was about to restart when officials spotted more lightening and postponed the game. Action will resume Thursday at 4:30 p.m. at Memorial Field.

Larkin (2-3-1, 0-0-1) will also have to wait another day to see if it can snap the Maroon's 4-year winning streak in the annual grudge match. The last time the Royals beat Elgin (3-3-1, 0-1-1) in boys soccer was 2014.

It was a scoreless contest until the 17:56 mark of the first half. Jorge Nava's 22-yard free kick from the left side of the pitch found the back of the net to put Larkin ahead.

"It was a typical Larkin-Elgin game. Records don't matter, who is playing doesn't matter," said Larkin coach Ken Hall. "It's the most important game of the year for everybody, so everybody plays hard and goes nuts out there."

Most of the action in the first half of the period was on Larkin's side. Elgin made five shots on goal that either went wide or sailed over the cross bar.

"We started off pretty good," said Elgin assistant coach Victor Camarena. "Then one of our players got injured (Jean Padilla) and we kind of went down a little bit."

Padilla was taken out after colliding with a Larkin defender in the 10th minute. He returned to the pitch after five minutes of play.

"I thought we were a little rushed at the beginning. I think we settled down after the first 10 minutes or so and got into it," Hall said. "I felt we were getting better as the game progressed."

Neither side plans to make any changes when the match resumes.

"No, we are pretty much going to go with same," said Hall.

"The main goal here is to get the W and that's what we are going to go for," Camarena said.

"They are just going to get a good night's sleep."