

# Press Clippings - 9/29/2023

## - Daily Herald -

### Scouting Week 6 Fox football games

By: Craig Brueske and JOe Stevenson

Shaw Local News Network

9/28/ 2023

Glenbard South (5-0, 5-0) at **South Elgin** (5-0, 5-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: **South Elgin** won, 49-27, last year

About the Raiders: Winless in 5 tries against 4-time defending Upstate Eight Conference champion South Elgin since 2018, the Raiders get another crack at the Storm Friday night. Led by electrifying receiver/kick returner Cam Williams, [ running back Drake London, and senior veteran quarterback Michael Champagne, the Raiders are loaded with explosiveness. "Glenbard South has won four of the last six conference Player of the Year awards, so we're very aware that they are, by far, the most talented team in the Upstate Eight annually," said Storm coach Dragan Teonic. "Their QB is seasoned and has had good moments against us in the past, and they have one of the best all-around athletes in Illinois (Notre Dame-bound Williams), so that is a great challenge for us. The challenge for every team that plays Glenbard South is keeping Cam's success to a minimum -- obviously, that's much easier said than done." The Raiders scored 63 points in their 42-point win over Bartlett last week. That game was tied 7-all after 1 quarter, so the Raiders will be looking for a faster start Friday night.

About the Storm: A week ago, South Elgin earned a 49-21 victory over East Aurora behind the play of quarterback Jack Ginnan and tight end/wide receiver Ishmael George, who has been a matchup problem for opponents. "We established the line of scrimmage and executed at a high level," Teonic said of last weekend's victory. "We're close to being a really good team and need to work on consistency moving forward. We've yet to give up a point in the second half in all five games. Obviously, we need to start games with the same attitude and effort." In recent years, South Elgin has beaten the Raiders on the ground. "We've averaged over 400 yards rushing against them over the last 5 seasons and that has kept their great, explosive offensive talent on the sideline," said the coach. "That's a big key to beating teams that are consistently more talented." What will it take to win Friday night? "We need to be exceptional with ball security because extra possessions only help the Raiders," said Teonic. "We must run the ball effectively. Staying ahead of the chains and establishing control of the line of scrimmage is paramount. We must limit the explosive plays Cam Williams and Michael Champagne have because they are exceptional talents and pose major issues for us. We also must win the special teams battle, and that has been a huge component of our success against Glenbard South in the past."

East Aurora (2-3, 2-3) at **Larkin** (2-3, 2-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: **Larkin** won, 29-21, last year

About the Tomcats: Larkin coach Vincent Ray realizes the Tomcats have plenty of explosive-type players to keep an eye on. "Number 4 (Kenneth Cooley), the wide receiver/defensive back, and number 2 (Jeremiah Brown), the nickel/outside linebacker, are some players that caught my eye," said Ray. "It's going to be exciting to watch talent versus talent Friday night."

About the Royals: Both teams enter with 2-3 records, so this is a big one for their playoff aspirations. Larkin looks to win back-to-back games for the first time this season, following last week's 24-14 victory over Fenton. Prior to that, the Royals suffered losses to Upstate Eight Conference co-leaders Glenbard South and South Elgin. "We were in both of those games up to halftime," said the coach. "We must learn how to finish. With respect to the talent Glenbard South has, we held them to 7 points going into the third quarter. We started a sophomore quarterback with two practices against South Elgin and hung tough until half. We can play -- it's learning to win." Against Fenton, the Royals displayed their own big-play ability. "None bigger than Damani Cannon's 103-yard interception for a touchdown," said Ray. "He added another interception in the game. The combo of Jalen Miller, Kevin Malone, and Aden Mora methodically ran the ball, and we had two 40-plus touchdown receptions for touchdowns by Erick Myrick and TJ Boone. We also left some huge plays on the field -- Erick Myrick had an 84-yard punt return and 87-yard touchdown reception (called back due to penalties)."

Fenton (0-5, 0-5) at **Bartlett** (2-3, 2-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: **Bartlett** won, 52-29, last year

About the Bison: Junior quarterback Nathan Stewart and 6-foot-3, 250-pound tight end/defensive end Jordan Wilson look to lead Fenton to its first victory. "Their record doesn't matter -- Fenton has some dudes," Bartlett coach Milan Vuckovich said of the Bison. "They've got a solid line on both sides of the ball, and their quarterback (Stewart) can make plays with both his arm and legs. We'll need to be sound on defense and pursue the ball with relentless effort."

About the Hawks: Against Glenbard South (63-21 loss) last week, the Hawks opened the game with a 10-plus minute drive and tied the game at 7-all after one quarter. Quarterback Vincent Yario connected with Nick Carlos for a 44-yard touchdown pass. Then, the Raiders scored 42 second-quarter points to put the game away. "It's an absolute must to start strong against Fenton," said Vuckovich. "We know they are going to come out ready to play, so we need to play our game and execute efficiently." How do you recover after allowing 63 points to Glenbard South? "We talked about how well we played on our first offensive and defensive possessions," said Vuckovich. "We showed grit and confidence when we went for it on fourth down a couple times during that first drive, and then hit the home run with our play action. We were able to make them punt on their first possession. Then, we made a couple mistakes offensively that put our defense in bad spots and a good team will take advantage of that every time. There's a lot to learn from a game like that and, on the flip side, we kept fighting in the second half -- that's what we love about this team."

**Elgin** (1-4, 1-4) at Glenbard East (4-1, 4-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Glenbard East won, 28-0, last year

About the Maroons: Held to 62 yards rushing last week in a 28-6 loss to West Chicago, the Maroons' highlight was provided by Lamyni Spates, who caught a 40-yard touchdown pass from Darin Ward in the final minutes of the game. "Lamyni is a positive point on our team right now," said Elgin coach Anthony Mason. "It's the first time in his high school career being put at running back, and he had more than 150 total yards and scored our only touchdown. We had two starting running backs out with injuries, and he (Spates) never missed a beat to step up and do what is needed for this team -- the definition of a true commander." Mason remains positive despite his team's record. "Realizing that we are blessed to play this game, we get to spend time with each other on a day-to-day basis," said the coach. "We get the opportunity to improve by doing things correctly and keeping positive reactions to the negative events that surround us. We have dealt with a lot outside of football this year, and this has been our focus from the start. We know our priorities." This week, the Maroons face one of the conference's strongest defensive units. "They are always good," said Mason. "I never focus on the opponent outside of scouting purposes. I try to control what we can control and put the best showing out on the field -- compete and execute at a high level. I feel if you have a team that can do that, you can play with anyone in high school ball to some extent." About the Rams: Defensively, the Rams may have the strongest unit in the Upstate Eight. Through 5 games, the Rams have allowed just 36 points -- an average of 7 points per contest. "Our defense has been pretty solid over the last few years," said Rams coach John Walters. "Again, it's a culture here -- defense and being a defensive player." Last week, defensive linemen Dan Zlatanov, Nick Dillon, Cooper Conliss, and Dakota Smith helped limit Streamwood to just 65 yards of total offense. Meanwhile, quarterback Blake Salvino completed 7 of 11 passes for 156 yards and 2 TDs, while tailback Matt Larson rushed for 122 yards on 9 carries with 3 TDs against Streamwood. Led by offensive linemen Josh Kelly, Jesus Vasquez, Chris Monk, Nate Schram, and Elias Morales, the Rams tallied 4 second-quarter touchdowns last weekend. Walters will have his team prepared for the Maroons. "Elgin is a very skilled team," said the coach. "They have some game breakers. We need to make sure we keep them in check. We've been good in three phases all year. That will be our emphasis Friday night."

**Streamwood** (1-4, 1-4) at West Chicago (3-2, 3-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: West Chicago won, 46-24, last year

About the Sabres: Last week, the Sabres avoided being shut out when Juan Cortes scored a touchdown with 14 seconds remaining during their 41-7 loss to Glenbard East. Now, they'll focus on giving West Chicago a tough time Friday night. "West Chicago is a team similar to our own," said Streamwood coach Keith McMaster. "They run a double wing style offense and run it well. They play smashmouth football on both sides of the ball. We went through the gauntlet the last couple weeks playing the two Glenbards. We're hoping that sets us up for the rest of the season."

About the Wildcats: Senior tailback Vincent Muci rushed for 127 yards on 13 carries and scored 3 touchdowns during the Wildcats' 28-6 victory over Elgin, atoning for last year's 48-20 loss to the Maroons. "It felt really good to get the win over Elgin," said Wildcats coach Adam Chavez. "They beat us soundly last year, so to be able to go there and get a win is big for us. We wanted to play physical on offense and tough on defense. I believe we

accomplished both of those goals." Chavez called last week's defensive effort "the best I've seen since I've been here." Davd Weber forced a fumble that Diego Contreras recovered to stop a potential Elgin drive. Now, they set their sights on Streamwood. "Streamwood always presents a challenge to us," said Chavez. "Like us, they run an offense (double wing) that you don't see much in today's game, so being able to replicate that in practice will be a challenge. It might be one of the fastest games on Friday night with both teams chewing up the clock and running the ball." With unbeaten Glenbard South and improved East Aurora waiting in the wings, the Wildcats need a win to bolster their postseason hopes. "Making the playoffs was one of our goals going into the season," added the coach. "We talk about it but with the mindset of focusing on each week and trying to go 1-0 every Friday."

West Aurora (5-0, 1-0) at Oswego (4-1, 0-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Oswego 45, West Aurora 22 (2022)

About the Blackhawks: Quietly, West Aurora is emerging as quite the success story. The Blackhawks' 17-14 win over Yorkville last Friday was the program's first SPC West victory since joining the league. West Aurora has won its first five games for the first time since the Blackhawks went 9-0 in the regular season in 2016. This game presents an opportunity for West Aurora to further open eyes. Terrence Smith, a Division I prospect in both football and basketball, is a gamebreaker. He had five catches for 165 yards with an 88-yard TD against Yorkville. West Aurora has rotated sophomore Mason Atkins and senior Reece Wagner at quarterback. Atkins completed 10 of 14 passes for 226 yards and two TDs against Yorkville, a win that made the Blackhawks playoff eligible.

About the Panthers: Oswego is coming off its first loss, 10-7 at Plainfield North, in a game that was every bit the game dominated by defenses that the final score would indicate. Mikey Claycombe, Carson Cooney and the Oswego defense was stellar all night, holding Plainfield North to zero first downs and minus four yards in the third quarter alone. That unit has been consistently strong all year, as Oswego has given up a total of 27 points over five games. Junior QB Brett Connolly was 9-for-21 for 183 yards, and Jeremiah Cain had over 100 receiving yards, but Oswego will want to reassert itself on the ground after rushing for just 46 yards against Plainfield North.

Christ the King (3-2, 1-2) at Aurora Christian (4-1, 3-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Aurora Christian won, 56-0, last year

About the Gladiators: Following a 3-0 start, the Gladiators have lost back-to-back games against Kankakee McNamara (26-12) and Marian Central Catholic (55-0).

About the Eagles: The Eagles are coming off a 51-0 victory over Bishop McNamara, as quarterback Jalen Carter completed 29 of 42 passes for 307 yards and 3 touchdowns. Drew Kegebein gained 76 yards on 13 carries with 3 TDs, while Jonan Miceli caught 9 passes for 124 yards and a touchdown. Defensively, Lamari Hall recorded 7 tackles, including 1 1/2 sacks and a pass defended. Eagles coach David Beebe realizes his team has plenty of room for improvement heading into the final 4 games. "We are playing well but have a lot to work on," said Beebe. "Precision, physicality, and decision making are our constant focus. We have some tough games coming up, so we must keep getting better."

St. Edward (0-5, 0-3) at Chicago Christian (2-3, 0-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Chicago Christian won, 35-13, last year

About the Green Wave: Smarting from a 48-0 loss to Wheaton Academy, the Green Wave search for their first victory of the season.

About the Knights: Looking to snap a 3-game losing streak, the Knights have outscored opponents by a 121-91 margin. However, you also must consider last week's 1-0 forfeit loss to Hope Academy.

Burlington Central (3-2, 3-2) at Jacobs (2-3, 2-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Jacobs won 35-30 in Week 6 last season

About the Rockets: Central defeated McHenry last week 17-7. ... The Rockets started sophomore Landon Arnold at quarterback last week with starter Jackson Alcorn and backup Ryder Bergemann both out with injuries. Arnold completed 13 of 21 passes for 136 yards and a clinching touchdown with 25 seconds remaining. ... RB Joey Kowall also missed last week with an injury and was among the area's top rushers before he was hurt.

... Brady Gilroy (21 receptions), Michael Person (20), LJ Kerr (16) and Caden West (11) are the Rockets' leading receivers. ... DL Bryan McGladdery (27 tackles, two sacks) and LBs Zach Adamo (26.5 tackles, three sacks) and Zach Samaan (31.5 tackles) lead the defense.

About the Golden Eagles: Jacobs won its District 300 rivalry game over Dundee-Crown 55-26 last week. ... The Eagles got a huge game from sophomore RB Caden DuMelle with 13 carries for 252 yards and four touchdowns. ... RB Tyvon Boddie returned a kickoff 86 yards for a score and ran eight times for 111 yards. ... Jacobs has played the FVC's top three teams (Prairie Ridge, Cary-Grove and Huntley), but it needs to win three of its last four to become playoff eligible.

Cary-Grove (4-1, 4-1) at Hampshire (1-4, 1-4)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Hampshire beat Cary-Grove 24-10 in Week 9 last season

About the Trojans: C-G lost to Prairie Ridge 21-20 last week. ... The Trojans battled back after Prairie Ridge took a 21-14 lead with 2:09 remaining and scored with 55 second remaining, but the extra point was wide left. ... FB Logan Abrams has rushed for 549 yards.

... RB Andrew Prio has 359 rushing yards on 27 carries with five touchdowns. He also has three receptions, two of which went for touchdowns, and averages 14.7 yards on every touch from scrimmage. ... QB Peyton Seaburg is 7-of-15 passing with six touchdowns, two of which came last week. ... The Trojans' defense has allowed 74 points for the season. ... C-G is No. 5 in The Associated Press Class 6A poll.

About the Whip-Purs: Hampshire lost to Huntley 34-7 last week. ... The Whips rely heavily

on RB Cole Klawikowski, who has 520 rushing yards, despite missing most of one game. He has seven rushing touchdowns. ... QB Luke Lacke has thrown for 606 yards, and WR Ari Fivelson leads Hampshire with 13 receptions.

Crystal Lake South (2-3, 2-3) at Huntley (4-1, 4-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Huntley beat South 27-19 in Week 9 last season

About the Gators: South lost to Crystal Lake Central 34-0 last week. ... That was the first time the Gators had been shut out since their 35-0 loss at Deerfield in the second round of the 2019 Class 6A playoffs. ... WR Colton Hess has 24 catches with five touchdowns, RB AJ Demirov has 26 grabs. ... RB Jake Christensen has 439 yards rushing, and QB Caden Casimino has passed for 942 yards.

About the Red Raiders: Huntley beat Hampshire 34-7 last week. ... Raiders QB Braylon Bower has been on fire the past three games completing 35 of 40 passes. Against Jacobs in Week 2, he was 11 of 11; against Hampshire he was 9 of 9. His completion percentage is 78.9.

Dundee-Crown (1-4, 1-4) at Prairie Ridge (5-0, 5-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Prairie Ridge defeated Dundee-Crown 35-14 in Week 7 last season

About the Chargers: D-C lost to Jacobs 55-26 last week. ... QB Zach Randl and WR Torrion Bell connected four times for 170 yards and two touchdowns last week. Randl has 770 passing yards for the season. ... RB Kadin Malone leads the Chargers with 372 rushing yards.

About the Wolves: Prairie Ridge defeated Cary-Grove 21-20 last week. ... The Wolves are No. 1 in Class 5A and the last unbeaten team in the FVC. ... Prairie Ridge's defense has allowed an FVC-low 60 points.

Batavia (4-1, 3-0) at Geneva (5-0, 3-0)

Time: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Batavia 33, Geneva 7 (2022)

About the Bulldogs: This is a matchup Batavia hasn't lost since 2010. Geneva's seven points scored last year were the first against the Bulldogs in several games. Batavia's offense had a pair of touchdowns called back due to penalties last week versus Wheaton North, so it could have been a wider margin of victory. The defense is largely healthy, and QB Ryan Boe has his offense running very smoothly with a fantastic spread of players to spread the ball to.

About the Vikings: Like mentioned above, this is a matchup that Geneva hasn't won in quite some time, but this could very well be the team that breaks the streak. How Geneva's offensive line holds up against a fantastic Batavia front seven is a huge area to watch, but QB Nate Stempowski, WR Talyn Taylor and RB Michael Rumoro will have their chances to put points on the board.

St. Charles North (3-2, 1-2) at St. Charles East (1-4, 1-2)

Time: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: St. Charles North 38, St. Charles East 7 (2022)

About the North Stars: St. Charles North picked up a huge conference win last week in an overtime victory over Wheaton Warrenville South. Standout TE Jake Furtney caught four TDs from QB Ethan Plumb, and Plumb's monster junior year is continuing to roll right ahead. WR Jake Mettetal also has 41 catches for 589 receiving yards and six touchdowns, so he should get the football plenty.

About the Saints: While a team that plays with pride, the Saints have simply struggled to both put points on the board and limit opposing offenses from doing the same. The Saints

have gotten outscored 59-35 over the past three weeks. With St. Charles North needing to add to its win total for playoff eligibility, St. Charles East has a chance to put a dent in those hopes.

Kaneland (3-2, 2-1) at Sycamore (5-0, 2-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: The Spartans won 28-7 last year in Maple Park.

About the Knights: The Knights have had the lead in the fourth quarter of both games they've lost -- to Morris and Washington, a combined 9-1. First-year coach Michael Thorgesen said he expects the Knights to start strong, as they have all year, but they have to finish against good teams. It's also a battle between Kaneland's offense, second in the conference at 38.2 points per game, and Sycamore's defense tops in the conference, having allowed only 19 points all year. Troyer Carlson tossed four touchdowns last week in a win over Ottawa. Josh Mauthe added two touchdown runs.

About the Spartans: Sycamore goes from playing a Rochelle team last week (a 21-6 win) that runs the ball a ton to the full-on spread passing attack of the Knights. Coach Joe Ryan said run or pass, the approach is the same -- both teams can make you pay if you are undisciplined and not in the right fits. Ryan said he's liked the way his passing attack has come on, with junior quarterback Burke Gautcher settling in under center. Gautcher found York on a highlight reel catch last week, showcasing what Ryan called the explosive-at-times nature of the efficient Spartan passing attack. Gautcher has completed 60% of his passes for 412 yards and seven touchdowns. He hasn't thrown an interception. York has eight catches for 182 yards and three touchdowns, while Teague Hallahan has six catches for 107 yards and three scores. Gautcher also leads the team with 31 tackles.

Marmion (2-2, 0-1) at St. Patrick (1-4)

Time: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Cadets: Marmion has a chance to get back on track after a couple of difficult weeks being outscored 70-14. The Cadets had to rely a lot on QB Jake Sullivan last week, who was 14 for 20 passing and had 63 yards rushing.

## **- Shaw Local News Network -**

### **Suburban Life area preview capsules for Week 6**

**By: Joshua Welge**

**September 28, 2023**



York's running back Jake Melion celebrates after making a touchdown during the second quarter while taking on Nazareth Academy in Elmhurst. (David Toney/David Toney for Shaw Local)

### West Suburban Silver

York (5-0, 2-0) at Downers Grove North (5-0, 3-0)

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: York 24, Downers Grove North 17 (2022)

About the Dukes: York ran its regular-season win streak to 16 games dating back to the 2021 season with its 38-10 win over Hinsdale Central last week. The Dukes piled up 467 yards of offense with quarterback Sean Winton throwing for 196 yards and two TDs, one each to Chris Danko and Luke Mailander, and Jake Melion rushing for 213 yards and three TDs. Defensively, Cole Ostendorf and Jack Trautmann each had seven tackles, 3.5 of them for loss. While York has emerged as the top dog in the West Suburban Silver the last year and a half, the Dukes were pushed quite a bit by Downers Grove North in last season's game.

About the Trojans: Downers Grove North is 5-0 for the first time since 2003. Now it takes on its biggest challenge in a showdown of West Suburban Silver unbeaten teams that could decide the league title. The Trojans are coming off a 38-6 win over Oak Park-River Forest. Sophomore QB Owen Lansu threw for two TDs and ran for one. Noah Battle has been the workhorse out of the Trojans' backfield, but Jake Gregorio ran for over 100 yards with a 71-yard TD last week.

FND Pick: York

Glenbard West (3-2, 1-1) at Hinsdale Central (1-4, 0-2)

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Glenbard West 45, Hinsdale Central 15 (2022)

About the Hilltoppers: Glenbard West's offense, which has struggled to put up points all season, broke out in a big way last week in a 55-13 win over Leyden. Teyion Oriental ran for three TDs, including a 66-yarder, and Aidan Murphy ran for an 80-yard TD and caught a score. While the Hilltoppers' offense picked up the pace last week, the defense has been for the most part a constant – a total of 29 points allowed in Glenbard West's three wins.

About the Red Devils: Hinsdale Central has played an extremely difficult schedule up to this point, reflected in the team's struggles. The Red Devils were held to just 58 yards rushing against York while giving up a total of 467 yards. Hinsdale Central has had some



fierce battles against Glenbard West in recent seasons and will need to summon that competitive spirit in another difficult matchup.

FND Pick: Glenbard West

Lyons (3-2, 2-1) at Oak Park-River Forest (1-4, 1-2)

When: 6 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Lyons 38, Oak Park-River Forest 13 (2022)

About the Lions: Lyons bounced back from its tough Week 4 loss to Glenbard West in a big way with a 49-0 win over Proviso West last week. Ryan Jackson passed for 183 yards and five touchdowns. Jackson has thrown for 857 yards and 10 TDs on the season. Travis Stamm caught two TDs and Jack Grigus had a 75-yard interception return for a TD. This will be Lyons' third straight road game, and an important one with matchups against unbeaten Downers Grove North and York the next two weeks.

About the Huskies: OPRF is coming off a 38-6 loss to Downers Grove North, a game in which the Huskies lost senior linebacker/running back and co-captain Sam Gray to an apparent serious injury late in the half. Johnny Nelson threw for 147 yards and a TD in the loss. Jeremiah Jenkins had eight catches for 74 yards. The Huskies have given up a total of 94 points in losses to York and Downers North the last two weeks.

FND Pick: Lyons

West Suburban Gold

Downers Grove South (2-3, 2-0) at Hinsdale South (2-3, 2-1)

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Downers Grove South 26, Hinsdale South 6 (2022)

About the Mustangs: Downers Grove South is coming off a 34-0 win over Morton, the Mustangs' second straight win after an 0-3 start. Fraja Maggitt, Will Potter, Cameron Kasper, Max Cherep and Anthony Smith each scored TDs in Downers Grove South's win. About the Hornets: Hinsdale South comes off a 37-34 loss to Willowbrook that snapped a two-game winning streak. Junior Langston Love had 188 yards passing and three TDs in the loss. This Friday's game provides a second opportunity for the Hornets against an upper crust opponent in the Gold.

FND Pick: Downers Grove South

Willowbrook (3-2, 2-1) at Proviso East (1-4, 0-3)

When: 1:30 p.m. Saturday

Last matchup: Willowbrook 42, Proviso East 6 (2022)

About the Warriors: Willowbrook comes in off a wild one, a 37-34 win over Hinsdale South last week. Senior QB Arthur Palicki was 16-for-24 passing for 273 yards and three TDs, and ran for 115 yards and two TDs. The Warriors' next four opponents currently feature 1-4 records so an opportunity certainly exists to run the table.

About the Pirates: Proviso East comes in off a 42-12 loss to Addison Trail. The Pirates' defense has struggled to stop anybody this season. Proviso East has given up a total of 155 points in its four losses, the lone win over district rival Proviso West.

FND Pick: Willowbrook

Leyden (1-4, 1-1) at Morton (1-4, 1-1)

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Morton 30, Leyden 29 (2022)

About the Eagles: Leyden comes in off a 55-13 loss to Glenbard West. The opportunity is there for a much more competitive result back in the Gold with an opponent in Morton that is also having its share of struggles.

About the Mustangs: Morton comes in off a 34-0 loss to Downers Grove South. The Mustangs' defense has had difficulty containing other teams, in victory or defeat. Morton has allowed a total of 199 points in five games. Morton has won its last two matchups with Leyden.

FND Pick: Morton



Wheaton North's Walker Owens carries the ball during a game at Batavia on Friday, Sept. 22, 2023. (Sandy Bressner)

DuKane Conference

Wheaton North (3-2, 2-1) at Wheaton Warrenville South (2-3, 1-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Wheaton North 8, Wheaton Warrenville South 7 (2022)

About the Falcons: Wheaton North comes in off a 23-17 loss to Batavia. Despite the outcome, the Falcons cannot feel too bad about things. Max Howser threw for 241 yards and a TD and Rich Schilling had nine catches for 110 yards and a score. Walker Owens is a two-way threat to watch at running back and defensive end. The Falcons have won their last three meetings with the Tigers, but they've come by a total of six points.

About the Tigers: WW South comes in off a tough 42-35 loss in overtime to St. Charles North, a game in which the Tigers led 21-0 in the second quarter and 27-14 entering the fourth quarter. Senior running back/linebacker Matt Crider was spectacular in defeat, with 293 yards and four TDs on 37 carries in only his second game back from injury. The Tigers could very much use a crosstown win here to keep their playoff hopes alive.

FND Pick: Wheaton North

CCL/ESCC Orange

IC Catholic Prep (5-0, 1-0) at St. Francis (3-2, 0-1)

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: IC Catholic 25, St. Francis 14 (2022)

About the Knights: Spartans coach Bob McMillen, who was a standout football player in his days at IC Catholic Prep for legendary Knights coach Jack Lewis, knows the task at hand. "IC has been one of the top teams for the past 10 years," McMillen said. "They always seem to be competing for a state championship. You can't make mistakes against them because it's so hard to recover. They have a lot of weapons – we are just hoping we can slow them down." The Knights have won back-to-back nailbiters – 36-34 in overtime over Nazareth, and 28-21 over Marist last week. Against Marist, Joey Gliatta scored a pair of touchdowns in a four-minute span – a 42-yard catch from quarterback Dennis Mandala that tied the game at 21-all, and a 15-yard run that gave the Knights a 28-21 lead with 4 minutes remaining. Mandala completed 18 of 30 passes for 259 yards and three touchdowns, while KJ Parker had nine catches for 114 yards. Due to their resilience, the Knights can never be counted out of a game. "To play close games against teams like Naz and Marist is incredible," Knights coach Bill Krefft said. "The atmosphere at IC has been electric, and it has energized our whole school." Now, they prepare for another tough foe in St. Francis. "I think St. Francis is another powerhouse football program," Krefft said. "It will take everything we have to compete with them. They are physical and resilient. This game is the same it has been the last five years or so – rivalry week. It is a conference opponent we look forward to having the opportunity to compete against."

About the Spartans: Trailing Joliet Catholic by 14 points in the second quarter last week, the Spartans rallied for a much-needed, 33-28 victory behind senior quarterback Alessio Milivojevic (20 of 29, 322 yards) and tailback TyVonn Ransom (157 yards, two TDs).

Milivojevic can spread the wealth to his talented receiving corps, headed by Ian Willis, DeShaun Williams, and Alessio's younger brother, Dario. The IC-St. Francis rivalry, once a staple from their Suburban Catholic Conference days, has continued to blossom in recent years. "We have been fortunate to play IC the last five years when we were in the Metro Suburban Conference together," McMillen said. "It has turned into a nice rivalry during that time, and it always turns out to be a good football game. That's what it's all about."

What are the Spartans' keys to the game? "Matching their physical play, not giving up the big scores, and not starting behind the sticks on offense," McMillen said.

FND pick: IC Catholic

-- *Craig Brueske, Daily Herald Media Group*

Fenwick (4-1, 1-0) at Nazareth (1-4, 0-1)

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Fenwick 28, Nazareth 17 (2021 playoffs)

About the Friars: Fenwick, coming off a 24-13 win over Notre Dame last week, can become playoff eligible with a win here. The Friars' last meeting with Nazareth came in the 2021 quarterfinals en route to Fenwick's Class 5A state title. Marek Hill threw for 323 yards and three TDs in last week's win. Nathaniel Marshall caught one of those TDs and the high Division I prospect was also a key part of Fenwick's defensive effort. Emmett Romeus had 130 receiving yards and a 40-yard TD.

About the Roadrunners: Its back to the wall, playoff hopes wise, Nazareth came through with a big 21-13 win over St. Ignatius last Friday. Can the Roadrunners keep momentum going at home? Logan Malachuk was 27-for-34 passing for 286 yards and three TDs last week. Garrett Reese had 10 catches for 104 yards and a TD and Trenton Walker had eight catches for 106 yards.

FND Pick: Fenwick

CCL/ESCC White

Montini (5-0, 1-0) at Providence (3-2, 0-1)

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Providence 33, Montini 0 (2022)

About the Broncos: Montini has quickly put the past few years of disappointments behind them and has already made itself playoff eligible. It's been an adventure at almost every step to this point. Last season the Broncos struggled to finish games with a largely young core. Now experienced, Montini has had several successful late rallies including a come-from-behind victory over upstart Marian Catholic in Week 5. Montini QB Gaetano Carbonara has thrown for 1,014 yards and 13 TDs. Alex Marre has rushed for 546 yards and three TDs and Santino Florio has 17 catches for 324 yards and seven TDs.

About the Celtics: Providence survived a substantial scare from DePaul Prep and managed to stay above the .500 mark on the season. The Celtics continue to look for some more consistency on offense and it is a riddle they will have to solve in a hurry as the next three opponents on the Celtics schedule have a combined record of 14-1.

FND Pick: Providence

St. Laurence (4-1, 1-0) at Benet (3-2, 0-1)

When: 7 p.m. Saturday

Last matchup: Benet 21, St. Laurence 17 (2019)

About the Vikings: St. Laurence comes in off a 50-8 win over Leo. The Vikings, who have one win by forfeit, have put up huge numbers offensively on the field, averaging 46.5 points in those four games. St. Laurence has already surpassed last year's win total, a 3-6 finish. A big reason is the return from injury of senior running back Aaron Ball. Ball, who has offers from South Dakota and Western Illinois, ran for 140 yards and four TDs last week. Senior Corey Taubr, a wide receiver and defensive back, is in his third season as a two-way starter. About the Redwings: Benet bounced back from back-to-back losses with a 20-12 win over DeLaSalle. Rocky Rosanova caught a TD pass from Ryan Kubacki Jr. and added an interception return for a TD in the fourth quarter. Kubacki Jr. also ran for a score. With games remaining against Loyola and Providence Weeks 8 and 9, this is a pivotal one for Benet's playoff hopes.

FND Pick: St. Laurence

South Suburban Blue Conference

Hillcrest (4-1, 2-0) at Lemont (3-2, 2-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Lemont 42, Hillcrest 8 (2022)

About the Hawks: Hillcrest has seemed to find its offensive stride over the last few weeks, posting back-to-back 40-plus point efforts during its current three-game winning streak. This typically tends to be the hypothetical South Suburban Conference championship game and might end up being it again, but Hillcrest is going to have to ratchet up its level of play several notches to have a legitimate chance of toppling Lemont here.

About Lemont: Things appear to be back to normal for Lemont once it returned to the familiar surroundings of the South Suburban Conference. Three easy conference victories have followed after those early back-to-back nonconference losses to Libertyville and

Geneva. This contest will probably require a bit more finesse than other South Suburban foes this season but it still appears Lemont is a substantial favorite.

FND Pick: Lemont

Upstate Eight Conference

Glenbard South (5-0, 5-0) at **South Elgin** (5-0, 5-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: **South Elgin** 49, Glenbard South 27 (2022)

About the Raiders: Winless in five tries against four-time defending Upstate Eight Conference champion **South Elgin** since 2018, the Raiders get another crack at the Storm Friday night. Led by electrifying receiver/kick returner Cam Williams, running back Drake London and senior veteran quarterback Michael Champagne, the Raiders are loaded with explosiveness. "Glenbard South has won four of the last six conference Player of the Year awards, so we're very aware that they are, by far, the most talented team in the Upstate Eight annually," Storm coach Dragan Teonic said. "Their QB is seasoned and has had good moments against us in the past, and they have one of the best all-around athletes in Illinois (Notre Dame-bound Williams), so that is a great challenge for us. The challenge for every team that plays Glenbard South is keeping Cam's success to a minimum – obviously, that's much easier said than done." The Raiders scored 63 points in their 42-point win over Bartlett last week. That game was tied 7-all after 1 quarter, so the Raiders will be looking for a faster start Friday night.

About the Storm: A week ago, **South Elgin** earned a 49-21 victory over East Aurora behind the play of quarterback Jack Ginnan and tight end/wide receiver Ishmael George, who has been a matchup problem for opponents. "We established the line of scrimmage and executed at a high level," Teonic said of last weekend's victory. "We're close to being a really good team and need to work on consistency moving forward. We've yet to give up a point in the second half in all five games. Obviously, we need to start games with the same attitude and effort." In recent years, **South Elgin** has beaten the Raiders on the ground. "We've averaged over 400 yards rushing against them over the last 5 seasons and that has kept their great, explosive offensive talent on the sideline," said the coach. "That's a big key to beating teams that are consistently more talented." What will it take to win Friday night? "We need to be exceptional with ball security because extra possessions only help the Raiders," Teonic said. "We must run the ball effectively. Staying ahead of the chains and establishing control of the line of scrimmage is paramount. We must limit the explosive plays Cam Williams and Michael Champagne have because they are exceptional talents and pose major issues for us. We also must win the special teams battle, and that has been a huge component of our success against Glenbard South in the past."

FND pick: **South Elgin**

**Elgin** (1-4, 1-4) at Glenbard East (4-1, 4-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Glenbard East 28, **Elgin** 0 (2022)

About the Maroons: Held to 62 yards rushing last week in a 28-6 loss to West Chicago, the Maroons' highlight was provided by Lamyni Spates, who caught a 40-yard touchdown pass from Darin Ward in the final minutes of the game. "Lamyni is a positive point on our team

right now,” **Elgin** coach Anthony Mason said. “It’s the first time in his high school career being put at running back, and he had more than 150 total yards and scored our only touchdown. We had two starting running backs out with injuries, and he (Spates) never missed a beat to step up and do what is needed for this team – the definition of a true commander.” Mason remains positive despite his team’s record. “Realizing that we are blessed to play this game, we get to spend time with each other on a day to day basis,” said the coach. “We get the opportunity to improve by doing things correctly and keeping positive reactions to the negative events that surround us. We have dealt with a lot outside of football this year, and this has been our focus from the start. We know our priorities.” This week, the Maroons face one of the conference’s strongest defensive units. “They are always good,” said Mason. “I never focus on the opponent outside of scouting purposes. I try to control what we can control and put the best showing out on the field – compete and execute at a high level. I feel if you have a team that can do that, you can play with anyone in high school ball to some extent.”

About the Rams: Defensively, the Rams may have the strongest unit in the Upstate Eight. Through 5 games, the Rams have allowed just 36 points – an average of seven points per contest. “Our defense has been pretty solid over the last few years,” Rams coach John Walters said. “Again, it’s a culture here – defense and being a defensive player.” Last week, defensive linemen Dan Zlatanov, Nick Dillon, Cooper Conliss, and Dakota Smith helped limit **Streamwood** to just 65 yards of total offense. Meanwhile, quarterback Blake Salvino completed 7 of 11 passes for 156 yards and 2 TDs, while tailback Matt Larson rushed for 122 yards on 9 carries with 3 TDs against Streamwood. Led by offensive linemen Josh Kelly, Jesus Vasquez, Chris Monk, Nate Schram, and Elias Morales, the Rams tallied 4 second-quarter touchdowns last weekend. Walters will have his team prepared for the Maroons. “**Elgin** is a very skilled team,” said the coach. “They have some game breakers. We need to make sure we keep them in check. We’ve been good in three phases all year. That will be our emphasis Friday night.”

FND pick: Glenbard East

Chicagoland Christian Conference

Bishop McNamara (3-2, 1-2) at Wheaton Academy (4-1, 2-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Wheaton Academy 47, Bishop McNamara 0 (2022)

About the Fightin Irish: Bishop McNamara has experienced some offensive issues, having scored 40 points in four games and having been blanked twice. Last week, the Irish suffered a 51-0 setback at the hands of Aurora Christian. “We’re looking at McNamara as just another opponent and one who, if we defeat, gets us to playoff eligibility (five wins),” Warriors coach Jim Johanik said. “They have a significant weapon in RB (Jaydon) Wright that we have to address to be successful against them.” Wright is a bruising 6-foot, 230-pound senior committed to Minnesota.

About the Warriors: Johanik has been impressed with the play of senior quarterback Brett Kasper, who completed 11 of 12 passes for 132 yards and a pair of touchdowns in the Warriors’ 48-0 win over St. Edward last week. “Give me the name of another athlete in the state who transitioned from WR last year at QB this year and has been as effective as Brett has,” Johanik said. “On top of that, he has four interceptions on defense. In a day when the quarterback position has become as technical and specialized as it is, Brett has embraced

being a technician at quarterback the same way he has at receiver and at defensive back. That's hard to do, but he has done it. On top of it, he's a leader. He's the real deal, just like his brother, Eddie, who played for us a few years back and is now a starting WR at Illinois State."

FND pick: Wheaton Academy

Chicagoland Prairie Conference

Westmont (1-4, 0-3) at Dwight/Gardner South Wilmington (4-1, 3-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Sentinels: Westmont looks for its first Chicagoland Prairie Conference victory during this road clash in Palos Heights.

About the Trojans: After dropping their opener, 20-19, to Fieldcrest, the Trojans have compiled a 4-game winning streak that included a 70-0 triumph over Walther Christian. Dwight/Gardner South Wilmington has already doubled last season's entire win total (2-7 record last year).

FND pick: Dwight/Gardner South Wilmington

Nonconference

Thornton (1-4 at Riverside-Brookfield (3-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Wildcats: Thornton is coming off its first win, 33-20 over winless Thornridge.

The Wildcats have scored a total of 20 points in their four losses. Thornton has a 5-23 record since Dontrell Jackson resigned as head coach after leading the Wildcats to an 8-3 record in 2019, his fifth and final season.

About the Bulldogs: R-B suffered its second straight blowout loss after a 3-0 start, losing 42-7 to Crete-Monee last week. Now the schedule lightens considerably, with the Bulldogs' next three opponents currently featuring a 1-14 combined record. Diego Gutierrez connected with tight end Luke Kumskis for a 25-yard TD for R-B's lone score against Crete-Monee.

FND Pick: Riverside-Brookfield

## **- Chicago Tribune -**

**Who is that big guy at tight end? South Elgin's Ishmael George, you mean? 'I definitely came out of nowhere.'**

**By: Paul Johnson**

**Sep 27, 2023**



Junior tight end Ishmael George, who has emerged as a top target in South Elgin's passing game by catching nine touchdown passes through the first five games, poses before practice on Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2023. (Paul Johnson / The Beacon-News)

People outside of **South Elgin's** football program didn't really know much about junior tight end Ishmael George coming into the 2023 season. And understandably so.

While he was on the varsity roster last year, George only touched the ball a few times.

Over the summer during a camp at Lake Zurich, however, the 6-foot-2, 200-pound George started to realize that he had a surprise in store for everybody — and himself.

"I was balling out," George said, fondly looking back at the memory. "And I was like, 'I'm going to have a year this year.' I just knew it was going to be a great year."

So far, it has gone better than anyone could have expected for the Storm (5-0, 5-0).

In the process, George has emerged as one of the area's breakout stars, hauling in 24 catches for 371 yards and nine touchdowns. He only plays the first half in lopsided games.

"I definitely came out of nowhere," George said. "I just try to stay incognito and stay quiet. It's a great feeling, and now people have to scheme for me."

"I see people double-teaming me a lot. It's like, 'Wow, I'm the focal point of the offense.' It's crazy that they scheme for me."

At his size, George is a tough matchup at the high school level. He has taken advantage of that, becoming dominant in the red zone.

"He's just got smooth, great hands," **South Elgin** coach Dragan Teonic said. "We thought we could lean on him. He's a really tough kid, exceptional blocker."

"He can also play wide receiver, play in the slot. He's got a big frame. He has surprising speed. He uses his body well to shield defenders from the ball. That is dangerous."



George also plays basketball. He's settled in at shooting guard, but growing up, he was usually the tallest so he played in the post. That has served him well as a tight end.

"When I was a big man, boxing out was the most important part of the game," George said. "It definitely helped me with football, especially on a slant."

Junior quarterback Jack Ginnan spoke about his bond on and off the field with George earlier this season. That connection has only deepened as the games have gone on.

Ginnan also is off to a fast start, completing 42 of 72 passes for 613 yards and 17 TDs with only two interceptions. George has accounted for nearly half of that production.

"I didn't really put a goal on how many touchdowns he'd have," Ginnan said. "He's just always open. He's my safety valve. He's always going to be a mismatch."

"I wouldn't say it's shocking, but it's up there. It's exciting to see what we're doing, and we're only juniors."

According to Ginnan, as the wins have piled up, he has felt a buzz surrounding the team.

That will be put to the test Friday as the Storm host the Upstate Eight Conference's other unbeaten team, Glenbard South, which is led by Notre Dame recruit Cam Williams at receiver.

"I don't think anybody expected anything great with our offense this year, especially passing," Ginnan said. "It's pretty exciting to see what we've done and how the community has responded to us,"

Through it all, George has remained himself while experiencing a breakout season. He plays a determined style with a quiet confidence.

But even he knows, though, what's on the line Friday — both for himself and the Storm.

"A game like this week, I love being the game of the week," George said. "Two undefeated teams, I like games like this. Everybody is watching."

"I'm going to put my name on the map right here, right now."