

# Press Clippings - 8/30/2024

## - Daily Herald - High school scores for Aug. 29 Date: August 29, 2024



Plainfield North's Gia Burton (6) leaps for a block attempt on Naperville Central's Lyla Hope(13) kill during volleyball match between Naperville Central at Plainfield North. Aug. 28, 2024.

Thursday, Aug 29

Boys soccer

Argo 4, St. Charles East 0

Bolingbrook 4, Kaneland 1

Carmel 1, Lake Forest 1

Crystal Lake South 6, Woodstock North 1

Downers Grove North 3, Kankakee 2

Geneva 2, Wheaton North 0

Glenbard North 4, Willowbrook 1

Glenbrook South 3, Dundee-Crown 2

Larkin 2, Sycamore 1

Mundelein 1, Lake Forest 1

Naperville Central 3, Morton 0

Naperville North 1, Lyons 0

North Ridge Prep 6, Schaumburg Christian 0

Plainfield Central 1, South Elgin 0

Plainfield North 0, Neuqua Valley 0

Providence Catholic 7, Westmont 0

Stevenson 2, Leyden 2

Warren 2, Grayslake North 1

West Aurora 6, Glenbard East 1

West Chicago 2, Benet 0

Wheaton Warrenville South 3, Oswego 3  
York 0, Lane Tech 0

Girls tennis  
Bartlett 7, Elgin 0

Wednesday's scores  
Boys soccer  
Huntley 0, Guilford 0  
Prairie Ridge 1, Warren 0  
South Elgin 4, McHenry, 2

Girls flag football  
Schaumburg 40, Streamwood 6  
Upcoming

Friday, Aug 30

Football

Addison Trail at Streamwood, 7 pm  
Aurora Christian at Marquette, 7 pm  
Barrington at South Elgin, 7:30 p.m.  
Buffalo Grove at Hoffman Estates, 7:30 p.m.  
Carmel at Grayslake Central, 7 p.m.  
Cary Grove at Burlington Central, 7 pm  
Chicago Military Academy-Bronzeville at Westmont, 7 p.m.  
Chicago Noble/Rowe-Clark at IC Catholic Prep, 7 p.m.  
Crystal Lake South at Dundee-Crown, 7 p.m.  
Downers Grove North vs. O'Fallon (Illinois Wesleyan University), 7:30 p.m.  
Elk Grove at Maine West, 6:30 p.m.  
Fenton at Elgin, 7 p.m.  
Fremd at Lake Zurich, 7 p.m.  
Glenbard East at Willowbrook, 7:30 p.m.  
Glenbard North at Bartlett, 7 p.m.  
Glenbard South at Wheaton Warrenville South, 7 p.m.  
Glenbrook South at York, 7:30 p.m.  
Grant at Mundelein, 7 p.m.  
Grayslake North at Vernon Hills, 6 p.m.  
Hampshire at McHenry, 7 p.m.  
Harvard at Lisle, 7 p.m.  
Hersey at Warren, 7 p.m.  
Hinsdale Central at Naperville Central, 7 p.m.

Hinsdale South at Wauconda, 7 p.m.  
Houston Second Baptist at Wheaton Academy, 7 p.m.  
Huntley at Crystal Lake Central, 7 p.m.  
Hyde Park at Montini, 7:30 p.m.  
Kaneland at Washington, 7:30 p.m.  
Kenwood at St. Francis, 7:30 p.m.  
Lake Park at Conant, 7:30 p.m.  
Lakes at Lake Forest, 7:30 p.m.  
Larkin at Geneva, 7 p.m.  
Lemont at Libertyville, 7:30 p.m.  
Leyden at Highland Park, 6:30 p.m.  
Lincoln Way Central at St. Charles East, 7:30 p.m.  
Maine East at Aurora East, 7 p.m.  
Maine South at Lincoln-Way East, 7:30 p.m.  
Metea Valley at Downers Grove South, 7:30 p.m.  
Naperville North at New Trier, 7 p.m.  
Neuqua Valley at Oswego, 7 p.m.  
Oak Forest at Marmion Academy, 7:30 p.m.  
Prairie Ridge at Jacobs, 7 p.m.  
Prospect at Lyons, 7:30 p.m.  
Providence Catholic at Wheaton North, 7 p.m.  
Proviso East at West Aurora, 7 p.m.  
Rolling Meadows at Pekin, 7:30 p.m.  
Round Lake at West Chicago, 7 p.m.  
Schaumburg at Antioch, 7 p.m.  
St. Charles North at Palatine, 7:30 p.m.  
St. Edward at Aurora Central Catholic, 6 p.m.  
St. Viator at Riverside University/Meir, WI, 7 p.m.  
Stevenson at Bradford/Reuther, WI, 5:30 p.m.  
Waubonsie Valley at Oswego East, 7 p.m.  
Wheeling at North Chicago, 7 p.m.

#### Boys soccer

Aurora Central Catholic at IMSA, 4:30 p.m.  
Conant, Jacobs, Lake Zurich, Streamwood at Barrington Invitational, 5 p.m.  
Fenton at Elgin, 4:30 p.m.  
Fremd at Lake Zurich, 4:45 p.m.  
Hoffman Estates, Kaneland at Hampshire Quad, 4:30 p.m.  
Mundelein at Wheeling, 4:45 p.m.  
Northridge Prep at Westmont, 4:30 p.m.  
Palatine at Prospect, 6:45 p.m.

Rolling Meadows at Bradley Bourbonnais Invitational, 4:30 p.m.  
Timothy Christian at Hinsdale Central Red & White Classic, 5 p.m.  
Wauconda at Johnsburg Invitational, TBD  
Waukegan at Buffalo Grove, 12 p.m.

*To read the full article please click [here](#).*

## **- Daily Herald - Five high school football games to watch this weekend**

**By: John Lemon**

**Date: August 29, 2024**



Palatine's Jaylen Williams, a Michigan recruit, and the Pirates open their season again against St. Charles North. The North Stars pulled out a 37-34 win last year.

We've got stars, storylines, marquee matchups, new faces in new places, and much, much more to look forward to as another season of Friday Night Lights kicks off.

Every Friday in this space we'll pick out five games to watch, and the toughest part of writing it continues to be narrowing the list to five. You can find much more on all the area matchups on Page 4 and online at [football.dailyherald.com](http://football.dailyherald.com).

### **Hersey at Warren**

This is one of several new nonconference matchups. Hersey has started 10-0 the past couple seasons but lost in the second round of the playoffs. The Huskies wanted to upgrade their nonconference schedule and certainly did by adding the Blue Devils, who return as much talent as anyone off a 9-3 team. Warren coach Bryan McNulty is well aware of Hersey QB and UCLA commit Colton Gumino, comparing him favorably to Nazareth grad and recent NFL first round pick JJ McCarthy.

### **Maine South at Lincoln-Way East**

Another new matchup, this one pitting two tradition rich programs. The Hawks are coming off a 10-2 season; the Griffins even better going 13-1 and reaching the Class 8A championship

game. Lincoln-Way East also debuts quarterback Jonas Williams, a transfer from Bolingbrook and Oregon commit.

#### Barrington at South Elgin

Barrington is coming off its best season since 1998, going 12-1 and returning senior quarterback Nick Piepert. The St. Thomas commit threw for 35 touchdowns and 2,905 yards. South Elgin also returns its quarterback John Ginnan, who threw 20 TDs. Win or lose, the Storm is getting a long overdue step up to its schedule, which has been locked into nine Upstate Eight Conference games. Now with two nonconference dates to play with, South Elgin and new coach Patrik Pistorio aren't messing around, playing Barrington and Batavia — a combined 23-3 a year ago.

#### St. Charles North at Palatine

Ah, finally a rematch, a nonconference matchup that's provided some thrillers the past few years. That included the North Stars' 37-34 win in the final seconds a year ago, giving them a 3-1 edge in the series. They bring back senior quarterback Ethan Plumb, in his fourth varsity year, and running back Joell Holloman. Palatine has plenty of talent again, including defensive end Jaylen Williams (Michigan) and offensive lineman Parker Brault (Marshall).

#### Batavia at Glenbard West

We have to wait until Saturday for this one, but that's going to be one wait that's well worth it. Batavia has made back-to-back Class 7A semifinal appearances; Glenbard West has 16 consecutive playoff appearances. These two proud programs under veteran coaches Dennis Piron and Chad Hetlet are meeting for the first time. Both teams have some holes to fill but plenty of talent to do it with.

## - Daily Herald - Scouting Fox Valley Week 1 football games

**By: Craig Brueske**

**Date: August 29, 2024**



Receiver Ishmael George will be a key target for QB John Ginnan when the Storm opens their season Friday

against Barrington.

Proviso East at West Aurora

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: First meeting.

About the Pirates: Proviso East has won just 1 of its last 18 games dating back to 2022. Coach Aaron Peppers' squad includes senior Larry Johnson (TE/LB), and juniors Jarrett Swift (WR/DB), and Curtis Marshall (WR/DB).

About the Blackhawks: Veteran coach Nate Eimer's squad returns 24 players who saw significant playing time last fall as the Blackhawks made a 4-game improvement from 2022 and reached the playoffs for the first time since 2018. The list of returnees includes 6-foot-4 senior WR Terrence Smith (currently has 16 D1 offers) and junior QB Mason Atkins (Toledo offer).

St. Edward at Aurora Central Catholic

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: Aurora Central Catholic won, 34-22, last season.

About the Green Wave: Second-year head coach Shane Finnane is looking for his first win after last year's 0-9 campaign. "A huge focus for us is execution and knowing where we need to be," said the coach. Senior quarterback Brayden Collins-Langfield is a transfer from Elgin Academy, while 2-way player Charlie Elwood returns at WR/DB.

About the Chargers: Last season, Aurora Central Catholic opened with a 12-point victory over St. Edward behind since-graduated quarterback Kevin Stanislo. Junior Trey Siefried, who returns at tailback and receiver, rushed for 92 yards and a TD in last year's meeting against the Green Wave.

Addison Trail at Streamwood

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: First meeting.

About the Blazers: Addison Trail accomplished a great deal last season, posting a 7-4 record and qualifying for the postseason for the first time since 2014. In the process, the Blazers also snapped a string of 8 consecutive losing seasons.

About the Sabres: Don Guindon returns for his second stint as Sabres head coach, having guided the program from 2015-2019. "There's a lot of new things for the players," said Guindon. "Our success will be determined by how quickly we can adjust and buy in to our

system.” Seniors Jace Wolf (RB), Aden Strong (RB), and Alejandro Flores (QB) head the list of returnees.

Fenton at Elgin

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: Elgin won, 24-21, last season.

About the Bison: Nathan Stewart returns for his senior season at quarterback, this time playing for new head coach Mark Farrell, who guided Fenton to a 21-17 record from 2005-2008. The Bison have dropped 10 consecutive games but could find themselves in another 1-score battle against Elgin Friday night.

About the Maroons: Seniors Adrian Jackson (tackle) and Robert Capuzi (center) anchor an offensive line opening holes for tailback Fabian Ramirez, while senior Julian Cortez (safety) leads the defensive secondary. This Upstate Eight crossover features teams familiar with one another, having played together in the former 10-team UEC.

Glenbard North at Bartlett

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: First meeting.

About the Panthers: Last season, the Panthers struggled to put points on the scoreboard, failing to score more than 14 points in any game while finishing without a win for the first time since 2018. This season, the Panthers return several offensive linemen, including Dylan Bradford, Xavier Cantrelle, Teddy Dost, Chase Mora, and Danny Mahoney, and linebackers Lucas Kramer, Tyler Hvorcik, and Dylan Hendee. Kramer also saw action at tailback last season.

About the Hawks: Bartlett returns 14 starters – 7 on each side of the ball, led by tailbacks Filip Szeszko (80 carries, 449 yards, 6 TDs), Joey Caputo (116 carries, 558 yards, 4 TDs), Isaac Harris (76 carries, 517 yards, 3 TDs), and all-conference players Donald Hubbard (44 tackles, 2 ½ sacks), Daniel Jasso (75 tackles, 1 ½ sacks), and Nicholas Carlos (12 catches, 179 yards, 3 TDs, 7 kick returns, 305 yards, 2 TDs).

Barrington at South Elgin

When: Friday, 7:30 p.m.

Outlook: Barrington is coming off its best season since 1998. And although graduation hit the Broncos hard, they still return quarterback Nick Piepert. The senior, who has committed to St. Thomas, threw for 35 touchdowns and 2,905 yards. Jack Burzynski, who has a trio of D-1 offers, leads the defense. Barrington changed contracts this season and matched up with South

Elgin. The Storm will now have as the ability to schedule non-conference opponents, thanks to a revamped Upstate Eight Conference. South Elgin is led by WR Ishmael George and quarterback John Ginnan, who threw for 20 touchdowns last year.

Cary-Grove at Burlington Central

When: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Trojans: C-G won the Class 6A state championship – the program’s fourth state title overall and third since 2018 – with a 23-20 win over East St. Louis last November. ... Fullback Logan Abrams returns after totaling 1,590 rushing yards and 26 TDs. The Trojans return six offensive starters and three on defense. ... QB Peyton Seaburg, who ran for 747 yards and six scores, is back under center for the Trojans. He was 16-of-17 passing for 340 yards, 11 touchdowns and one INT last season. ... Lucas Burton returns at center, along with OL Jack Hissong, TE Luca Vivaldelli and RB Holden Boone.

About the Rockets: Central has gone 4-5 in back-to-back seasons, last year almost reaching the playoffs for the first time since 2014. The Rockets’ last winning season was in 2017. ... QB Jackson Alcorn returns for his third year on varsity. ... LJ Kerr (20 catches, 239 yards) and Caden West (22 catches, 466 yards, four TDs), both three-year starters, also return. ... Central lost seven defensive starters to graduation. ... “We look fast and physical across the board, and I’m excited to see some young guys step up,” coach Brian Iossi said.

Prairie Ridge at Jacobs

When: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Wolves: Prairie Ridge won the FVC title with a perfect record and then lost to eventual Class 5A state champion Nazareth Academy in the first round of the playoffs. ... Mike Frericks takes over as head coach for Chris Schremp, who finished with 187 wins at the school. Frericks, a 2009 Crystal Lake South grad, played at NCAA Division II Sioux Falls. ... RB Luke Vanderwiell (561 rushing yards, eight touchdowns last season) will get a lot of work out of the backfield, and Jack Finn (950 yards, 11 touchdowns) will be the team’s starting fullback. ... Jace Kranig returns at linebacker after leading the Wolves with 72 tackles, eight tackles for loss and two sacks. ... Gavin Tinch and Walter Pollack will anchor a strong Wolves defense that allowed an FVC-low 11.6 points and 129 yards a game.

About the Golden Eagles: Jacobs qualified for the Class 7A playoffs for the third straight year. The Eagles lost to Prairie Ridge 6-0 in last year’s opener. ... Jacobs will rely on a strong run game, led by FB Caden DuMelle. As a sophomore, he was fourth in the area last year with 1,277 rushing yards and 12 TDs. RB T.O. Boddie had 696 yards and six scores. ... LB-S Luke Gormsen is the “general” of the defense, Jacobs coach Brian Zimmerman said. P.J. Barnes will play multiple key roles, including at tight end, running back and defensive end.



Luke Gormsen makes a tackle last year against Brother Rice for Jacobs, who opens the season against Prairie Ridge.

### Huntley at Crystal Lake Central

When: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Red Raiders: Huntley qualified for the Class 8A postseason in back-to-back years under coach Mike Naymola and was runner-up to FVC champion Prairie Ridge. Senior QB Braylon Bower completed 128 of 178 passes for 1,467 yards and 16 TDs, also adding 638 yards and six scores on the ground. ... Zach Rysavy will be one of the team's top receiving options. ... "The competition we saw this summer better prepared us for the season than any other summer I've been around for," Naymola said.

About the Tigers: Central returned to the playoffs after a 2-7 finish in 2022, losing its Class 6A first-round game to Lake Zurich. ... The Tigers no longer have QB Jason Penza (2,052 yards, 21 TDs) and WR George Dimopoulos (42 catches, 774 yards, seven TDs). Also gone is leading rusher Griffin Buehler (853 yards, eight TDs). ... WR Carter Kelley had 24 catches for 347 yards. ... Tommy McNeil, a two-way player on the line, enters his fourth year on varsity and last season helped lead the FVC's best passing offense. ... Central coach Dirk Stanger said the team has to replace about 90% of its offensive production lost to graduation.

### Crystal Lake South at Dundee-Crown

When: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Gators: South missed the playoffs for the first time since 2017 and suffered some big losses to graduation – 17 starters overall. The Gators will have to replace QB Caden Casimino. ... Senior AJ Demirov, a basketball standout, will be used in a variety of ways to utilize his athleticism, Gators coach Rob Fontana said. ... A giant loss on defense was DL Andy Burburija, who earned Illinois High School Football Coaches Association Class 6A All-State honors with 92 tackles, six sacks and 22 tackles for losses.

About the Chargers: D-C is coming off a 1-8 season, with its lone win over McHenry in Week 4.

D-C last went to the playoffs in 2013 and has reached four wins once since 2018. ... The Chargers bring back seven players on defense with varsity experience. Graduate Zach Randl was among the FVC's top passing leaders last year with 1,355 yards and 12 touchdowns. ... RB Terrion Spencer led the team with 497 rushing yards.

Hampshire at McHenry

When: 7:15 p.m. Friday

About the Whip-Purs: Hampshire went 2-7 last season, with its two wins against McHenry (34-0) and Dundee-Crown (23-20). ... RB Cole Klawikowski rushed for 1,118 yards and 11 touchdowns. He added 166 receiving yards and three TDs. ... WR Ari Fivelson was the team's top receiver with 28 catches for 377 yards and two scores.

About the Warriors: McHenry is coming off of an 0-9 season after going 4-5 in 2022. ... RB-LB Jacob Jones ran for a team-high 454 yards and four TDs last year. ... The Warriors return five offensive linemen in Chase Miller, Eli Guardyak, Cayden Behrendt, Aiden Ramirez and Joseph Saavedra.

Batavia at Glenbard West

When: 1:30 p.m. Saturday

About the Bulldogs: Batavia has made back-to-back Class 7A semifinal appearances and has won two of the last three DuKane Conference championships. The Bulldogs have some big holes to fill to return to those levels, but nobody doubts the program's pedigree to do just that. Batavia did graduate the conference's offensive MVP in quarterback Ryan Boe and defensive MVP in Ben Fiegel. Nathan Whitwell, who scored nine touchdowns last year, looks like the top back while Isaiah Brown the top target for new QB Bodi Anderson. Joshua Hecht and Ryan Myers are two Division I prospects up front. Defensively, Malachi Smith heads an explosive defensive line while Josh Kahley, Chase Osborne and Jacob Jansey are leaders of an experienced secondary.

About the Hilltoppers: Glenbard West has made 16 consecutive playoff appearances under head coach Chad Hetlet, and has won at least eight games in every full season during his time as head coach. Expect more of the same. Like Batavia coach Dennis Piron, Hetlet has touted this Hilltoppers' group as one of his fastest. It starts with senior running back Teyion Oriental, last year's West Suburban Conference Offensive Player of the Year. Iowa State recruit Mason Ellens, a third-year varsity player, is back at safety and could get time on offense at receiver or running the ball, and in the return game. Michael O'Connell, a 6-foot-7, 285-pound Northwestern recruit, anchors the Batavia offensive line. This is the start of an extremely difficult early schedule for Glenbard West. The Hilltoppers host defending Class 8A champion Loyola in Week 2, then start league play in Week 3 at defending Class 7A runner-up Downers

Grove North.

Larkin at Geneva

When: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Vikings: Coming off a season where they saw their highest win total since 2015, Geneva is looking to get off on the right foot once again. Georgia commit Talyn Taylor is back for his final season with the Vikings, and looks to be a threat on the offense all season long after missing four games last season with an injury. The Vikings will also be with a new quarterback after the graduation of Nate Stempowski, with either senior Tony Chahino or junior Brock Phillips expected to fill that role. The main question will come on defense after losing some key players like Charlie Winterhalter and Tommy Diamond. Marmion transfer Gavin Burt is expected to be a key piece of that defense, but the Week 1 matchup will show where they stand.

About the Royals: The Royals will be facing their first non-Upstate Eight opponent since 2017 when they take on the Vikings. Larkin went 3-6 in their first season under Vincent Ray, missing the playoffs for the first time in three seasons. But with a good majority of players from last season returning, the Royals could put up a good fight.

St. Charles North at Palatine

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

About the North Stars: The North Stars won last season's opener against the Pirates 37-34 for their third victory over Palatine in four seasons. Quarterback Ethan Plumb is heading into his fourth varsity season as the starter and is hoping that his experience will be what's needed to get North going early on in the season. That experience will also be important for the receiving corps, which was gutted by graduation. Junior Keaton Reinke is expected to lead the young group, while Marmion transfer Braden Harms looks to be a key addition on the squad. The lack of receiving experience will also open the door for running back Joell Holloman, who finished with 673 rushing yards and seven touchdowns last season. The linebacker duo of Matthew Plumb and Aidan McClure will look to be the backbone of the North Stars' defense, while Declan Smith, who mainly played offensive line last season, is expected to be a key addition to the defensive line to replace stars like Jake Furtney.

About the Pirates: Palatine was stopped just short of winning their second-straight Week 1 matchup against the North Stars, with their last drive ending with 54 seconds left on the clock. The Pirates will be without running back Dominik Ball, who had 140 rushing yards and two touchdowns, both for 64 yards, in last year's contest.

Lincoln-Way Central at St. Charles East

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

About the Saints: The Saints' 1-8 record was their worst in a nine-game season since 2003. With it comes a sense of urgency to get St. Charles East back to its winning ways and quickly. While the Saints are expected to have a new quarterback in JT Padron to step in for Mac Paul, he'll have a reliable option to go to in wide receiver Sheko Gjokaj, who was on the receiving end of nearly half of Paul's passes last season. On defense, it's a very similar situation, especially after giving up 294 points throughout the season. The returns of linebacker Luke Herrera and defensive back Sean Keegan will help a bit, but the back end talent will need to step up and fill the holes left by players like Bodey McCaslin and Charlie Bolsoni.

About the Knights: The Knights had a turn-around year in their first season under David Woodburn to make the playoffs for the first time in five years and finish second in the Southwest Suburban - Red conference. The Knights will look a little different on offense, especially after losing star running back Anthony Noto to graduation. On defense, the Knights will have linebacker and Northwestern commit Josh Veldman leading a defense that only gave up an average 17.7 points a game last year.

Kaneland at Washington

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

About the Knights: The Knights hit the road for the lengthy Week 1 trip to central Illinois to battle the Panthers. And for the first time since before the pandemic, they'll have a quarterback other than Troyer Carlson as the regular starter. Senior Chase Kruckenberg won the starting job, and coach Michael Thorgesen said the offense is in good hands with Carlson's understudy calling the shots. He beat out Carter Grabowski for the job, but the junior is still expected to be on the field at running back. Thorgesen said this lineup lets the Knights get their 11 best weapons on the field. Vinny McDonald will have time hauling the rock as well. While those are all new faces, the offensive line returns Jack Parker, JR Warfel and Jake Buckley. After the 118-mile Week 1 trip, the Knights have home games against Wauconda and DeKalb before Interstate 8 play begins.

About the Panthers: The reigning Mid-Illini champs went 11-2 last year, bowing out in the playoffs to 6A runner-up East St. Louis. They've qualified for every postseason since 2007, making at least the quarterfinals nine times in that stretch. The coach for those runs, Darrell Crouch, retired after last season. Todd Stevens takes over.

Oak Forest at Marmion

When: 7:30 p.m.

About the Cadets: Head coach Adam Guerra takes over the program after former coach Dan Thorpe stepped down after 19 seasons at the helm. The last time Guerra was in charge of a

program, he led St. Patrick to its first quarterfinal appearance in 2021. He'll try to replicate that success with the Cadets, starting with their Week 1 match against Oak Forest. Senior running back and linebacker Michael Roche, senior defensive back and wide receiver Bryan Scales along with junior running back and defensive end Joey Favia all return after earning All-CCL/ESCC honors last season. Senior lineman Mateusz Nycz is expected to bring back much-needed experience on both sides of the line as well.

About the Bengals: After making the playoffs in 2022, the Bengals are coming off their worst finish under head coach Anthony Malopsy, but hope to get back to the playoffs for the second time in three years this season. Oak Forest returns all but four players from a season ago, including all of their offensive skill players, meaning an experienced roster this time around.

Houston Second Baptist at Wheaton Academy

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: First meeting.

About the Eagles: The Eagles finished 8-5 last fall, advancing to the TAPPS Division II state semifinals before dropping a 34-7 decision. Juniors Canon Toon (QB) and Langston Davis (RB) lead the list of offensive returnees. "They've won 9 of their last 10 district championships," Warriors coach Jim Johanik said of Second Baptist. "We have our work cut out for us, but I love the fact that we schedule out-of-state opponents Week 1. It exposes our players to regional differences in the style of football that college players regularly see."

About the Warriors: Wheaton Academy returns a solid core of playmakers, including Jeremy Johanik (C/MLB), Brandon Kiebles (RB/OLB), and Gino Spinelli (WR/DB). Senior Nathan Downey takes over at quarterback after the graduation loss of Brett Kasper, now at Illinois State. "Nathan came to us last year and immediately bought into the system and the coaching of JR Rexilius, Jr., our quarterbacks coach," said Johanik. "Nathan has stepped up and can fill the big shoes of Brett Kasper. We really liked what we saw from Nathan during our scrimmage against St. Francis."

Kenwood at St. Francis

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: First meeting:

About the Broncos: Chris Goffer debuts as Kenwood's head coach, replacing Sinque Turner, who guided the Broncos to a 7-year record of 44-22, including a Class 6A state quarterfinal appearance in 2022.

About the Spartans: St. Francis begins another grueling schedule that features 7 Illinois state playoff qualifiers and a pair of state champions. Senior Brady Palmer and junior Jalen Carter

battled for the starting quarterback spot this offseason after the departure of Daily Herald DuPage All-Area Captain Alessio Milivojevic – now at Michigan State. TyVonn Ransom, Ian Willis, Zach Washington, and Dario Milivojevic return with game-breaking ability.

## **- Daily Herald - Scouting Fox Valley Week 1 football games**

**By: Craig Brueske**

**Date: August 29, 2024**



Batavia's Nathan Whitwell (28) celebrates his touchdown against Wheaton North in the fourth quarter of a DuKane Conference game in Batavia on Friday, Sept. 22, 2023.

Batavia, St. Charles North, Barrington, Aurora Christian and Oswego are picks to click in the season openers.

Batavia (11-2) at Glenbard West (8-3)

Kickoff: 1:30 p.m. Saturday.

Matchup breakdown: Week's best game in the area features two powerhouses making everyone's rankings. Only thing that has kept Hilltoppers out of Class 8A playoffs in coach Chad Hetlet's 17 seasons was the pandemic. The same is true for Batavia in coach Dennis Piron's 13 seasons. Both coaches have won two state titles and took second once.

Batavia has to replace Ryan Boe (Northwestern), a three-year starter at quarterback, and his offensive line. Piron believes this offense may be his fastest in recent years. Senior running back Nathan Whitwell and senior receiver Isaiah Brown could headline in early going.

Glenbard West lost 48-14 to Edwardsville last season in the second round of the playoffs. Bulldogs lost 64-26 to Mount Carmel in a Class 7A semifinal.

X-factor: Bodi Anderson, Batavia, junior, quarterback.

Rick Armstrong's prediction: Batavia.



St. Charles North's Ethan Plumb (10) walks the sideline before the start of a DuKane Conference game against Geneva in St. Charles on Friday, Oct. 20, 2024.

St. Charles North (6-4) at Palatine (6-4)

Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. Friday.

Matchup breakdown: Four-year quarterback Ethan Plumb leads what coach Rob Pomazak feels will be an explosive offense highlighted by a top target in senior wide receiver Keaton Reinke and senior running back Joell Holloman. Three starters return on offensive line.

Senior Aidan McClure, a 6-3 safety/outside linebacker, leads a defense with great length, especially at linebacker and in secondary. North Stars lost 38-21 to Bradley-Bourbonnais last year in the first round of Class 7A playoffs.

Palatine graduated just four starters, with senior defensive end Jaylen Williams (Michigan) leading returnees from team that lost 31-17 to Neuqua Valley in a Class 8A first-round game.

X-factor: Declan Smith, St. Charles North, junior, offensive lineman/defensive lineman.

Rick Armstrong's prediction: St. Charles North.



South Elgin's Ishmael George (83), makes a catch as Lane Tech's TJ Harper defends during a Class 8A first-round playoff game in South Elgin on Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023.

Barrington (12-1) at South Elgin (11-2)

Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. Friday.

Matchup breakdown: This one could feature quite an air show, with returning Storm coach Pat Pistorio planning to open up the offense against a formidable foe in Barrington, which reached the Class 8A semifinals last season before losing 49-6 to Lincoln-Way East.

South Elgin bowed out in the second round with a 51-21 setback to Warren.

Senior quarterback Jack Ginnan started seven games last season and has four senior receivers led by Ishmael George, who totaled 908 yards receiving a year ago. Senior quarterback Nick Peipert (St. Thomas) threw for nearly 3,000 yards last season for Barrington.

X-factor: Jack Burzynski, Barrington, senior, defensive end.

Rick Armstrong's prediction: Barrington.



Aurora Christian's Asa Johnson (5) throws a touchdown pass in the third quarter against St. Edward during a Chicagoland Christian Conference game in Elgin on Friday, Sept. 15, 2023.

Aurora Christian (8-3) at Ottawa Marquette (7-3)

Kickoff: 7 p.m. Friday.

Matchup breakdown: Eagles' bid for seventh straight playoff appearance took offseason hit with transfer of four returning junior starters in quarterback Jalen Carter (Wheaton St. Francis), defensive end Lamari Hall (Oswego East), offensive lineman David Avitia (Geneva) and running back Drew Kegebein (Wheaton St. Francis), a nationally ranked long snapper.

Aurora Christian coach David Beebe, however, is encouraged by a strong summer from 6-3 junior quarterback Asa Johnson. Senior JT Anderson and junior Dominic Klimpke, a pair of returning linebackers, lead the defense.

Payton Gutierrez, a three-year starter at running back, leads Ottawa Marquette's wing-T offense that included 500 yards passing from quarterback Anthony Couch, now a junior. The

Crusaders are aiming for a 12th straight playoff appearance under coach Tom Jobst.

X-factor: Jonan Miceli, Aurora Christian, senior, wideout/defensive back.

Rick Armstrong's prediction: Aurora Christian.



Oswego quarterback Brett Connolly takes a hit against Yorkville during a Southwest Prairie Conference game in Oswego on Friday, Oct. 6, 2023.

Neuqua Valley (7-4) at Oswego (6-4)

Kickoff: 7 p.m. Friday.

Matchup breakdown: Here we go again, with the fourth straight year for these teams to meet in the season opener. Neuqua won the first two, 37-27 and 28-3. Last year, Oswego prevailed 13-0.

Senior Nick Pape and junior Andrew Hoffmann, a pair of all-conference defensive backs, are among five returning defensive starters for Wildcats. Four returnees on offense are led by senior running back Will Beaman.

Defense should be a strong suit for Oswego, with three returning senior linebackers in Carson Cooney (Iowa), Mikey Claycombe and Easton Riley. Senior Brett Connolly is back at quarterback.

X-factor: Jeremiah Cain, Oswego, senior, wide receiver/cornerback.

Rick Armstrong's prediction: Oswego.