

Press Clippings 02/19/2019

---Kane County Chronicle---02/19/2019

Geneva High School hosts regional college fair

Fox Valley high schools invited to meet more than 160 higher ed reps

By: Kane County Chronicle



GENEVA – Geneva High School will host an Illinois Regional College Fair with representatives from more than 160 in-state and out-of-state colleges and universities who will be available to meet students and answer their questions from 6 to 8 p.m. April 4 at 416 McKinley Ave., Geneva, officials announced in a news release.

The event is open to students from Geneva, Batavia, Kaneland, St. Charles East, St. Charles North, West Chicago, South Elgin, Burlington-Central high schools.

Geneva High School Director of Counseling and Advising David King stated in the release that the regional college fair was “an amazing opportunity for our students to learn more about colleges and universities from admissions experts.”

“These professionals are extensions of the campus and this is a great way for our students to show their true interest in a school while also determining their ‘best fit’ university or college,” King stated in the release. “It’s also so close to home, this is a can’t-miss opportunity.”

The Illinois Regional College Fair is a project of the Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling.

More than 40 public and private Illinois colleges have confirmed attendance, and more than 120 schools from other states and international schools will also be represented.

Those planning to attend can register online at www.strivescan.com.

“Students should treat this like an initial interview,” King stated in the release. “They are interviewing the school as much as the representatives are learning about their educational passions. They should come prepared with two to three specific questions and a game plan of schools to visit. There are only two hours allotted for the fair, and each visit should be meaningful.”

South Elgin High School is also hosting a regional college fair from 6 to 8 p.m. April 16 open to all U-46 and neighboring Fox Valley school districts.

---The Courier-News---02/17/2019

Administrator supports teacher's military service

Pentagon awards assistant superintendent for her efforts

By Rafael Guerrero



- Larkin High School teacher William Fleischer presents School District U46 administrator Melanie Meidel on Feb. 8 with a plaque from the Department of Defense.

In the six years he has taught at School District U46, William Fleischer has had to find a way to balance his work as an educator with the demands of a military career.

The Larkin High School health teacher is a major in the U.S. Air Force Reserve and has been deployed for military service on multiple occasions, leaving his classes to substitute teachers until he returns.

It would be stressful if not for the help of Melanie Meidel, U46's assistant superintendent for special projects, Fleischer said. She's worked with him over the years to coordinate his replacements in the classroom, secure teaching work upon his return, and facilitate his transition from military to teaching and back, he said.

"She was willing to help me come up with a plan together, not have me figure it out on my own," said Fleischer, who is primary instructor for officer training in Montgomery, Ala.

Meidel's willingness to accommodate Fleischer's military duties prompted him to nominate her for recognition from the U.S. Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program. Last week, Meidel was surprised with a "Patriotic Employer" award.

The plaque from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program recognized Meidel "for contributing to national security and protecting liberty and freedom by supporting employee participation in America's National Guard and Reserve Force."

"I was totally surprised, flabbergasted by all that happened," said Meidel, whose work with Fleischer was done when she was U46's assistant superintendent for human resources.

More than 10,000 such awards were presented to supervisors last year, a spokesman for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program said.

They recognize people who have assisted National Guard or Reserve members by creating flexible schedules, allowing for time off before and after deployment, caring for families and granting leaves of absence.

Fleischer said he submitted a nomination for Meidel last year out of gratitude for her efforts to accommodate his civilian and military duties. Once he received confirmation that she was going to receive it, he plotted to surprise her Feb. 8 while she was meeting with other U46 officials.

"I wanted to recognize you," Fleischer said during the presentation, joking that he initially "wanted to get you a lot of money. ... I wanted to get you a car."

Fleischer said not all human resources directors are willing to let an active-duty officer leave for extended periods of time and then return to their jobs.

Meidel said she has never questioned that she needed to help Fleischer.

"It's always important to support our military servicemen and women," she said. "Sometimes there can be glitches here and there, but the benefits (Fleischer) can provide to the students when he's in the classroom would be hard to match."

SPORTS

---The Daily Herald---02/19/2019

South Elgin gives itself a shot at UEC title

By: Bill Stone

When South Elgin senior guard Trace Ashby became wide open in the left corner of the basketball court Monday, he didn't worry about his past shooting, only the Storm's hopeful shot at program history.

Ashby's biggest 3-pointer this season with 2:31 left gave the Storm the lead for good in their key 51-48 Upstate Eight Conference victory at Glenbard South.

"That was nice. I actually wasn't even feeling my shot today at all," said Ashby, who put the Storm ahead 44-43. "But I knew it was a big-time moment. I knew I needed to make that so it went in, luckily."

With five starting seniors, the Storm (22-7, 15-2) can capture a share of the first conference title in program history with a victory Wednesday at current leader West Aurora (23-4, 16-1) in the UEC finale. The Blackhawks won their Dec. 12 meeting 65-61.

"We've been wanting it all year. We really put that on our mind (Monday). That really drove us to get this win," Ashby said.

"We talked to each other. We're like, 'We've got to do this right now. We've got four minutes to do what we've got to do to be successful.' "

The Storm's Vince Miskiewicz had another great all-around game with 20 points, 6 rebounds and 4 blocks and assisted two big 3s down the stretch with kick-out passes from the paint. Ashby, Drake Montgomery and Jace Warrick each had 8 points.

For Glenbard South (20-6, 13-4), third in the UEC, seniors Tommy Powers and Cole Hardtke and junior Nick Plaso each had 12 points and senior Ryan Harrington had 8 points.

"A big one (Wednesday). It's an opportunity to win the conference championship," South Elgin coach Brett Johnson said.

"I've told the kids you control your destiny, so tonight's game was that mentality. You decide how hard you want to play. You never know what can happen when you put forth effort. The effort in the third quarter by my team was phenomenal, the defensive effort."

The Storm's Alex Errington followed Ashby with his 3 from the corner for a 47-43 lead. Glenbard South closed to 49-48 on Cole Hardtke's 3 with 2.5 seconds, but before the inbounds pass, Miskiewicz was fouled and made two free throws.

The 6-foot-7 Miskiewicz then stood at the baseline and swatted away the Raiders' inbounds pass as time expired.

"It was a grinder, very physical game. We executed at the end and that's what mattered," Miskiewicz said.

"I've been working with (Ashby) since freshman year. He's got a lot of confidence in himself and I knew he was going to hit (the 3) at that moment."

The Raiders gave an inspired performance in their first game without starting senior guard Tavion Keith, who suffered an apparent broken left wrist Thursday in practice.

Coach Wade Hardtke said there still an outside chance that Keith could return for the Class 3A regionals. Key reserve guard Cade Hardtke also has been out the past couple of weeks.

"A great effort. We keep talking about doing the little things and it's going to put you there down the stretch," Wade Hardtke said.

"Tons of positives. I hadn't seen that effort in a few games. That's probably the best start (11-3 lead) we've had in about five games. We played a solid first half. It was that spell in the third quarter that kind of cost us."

After chasing throughout the first half, the Storm gained confidence from their strong third quarter, in which they allowed just 6 points and held the Raiders scoreless for 5:42.

Trailing 25-23 at halftime, the Storm's 7-0 run resulted in their first lead at 30-27. South Elgin led 35-34 entering the fourth quarter.

"We knew the only way we were able to play (for first) Wednesday was to play defense," Miskiewicz said. "We played phenomenal defense and when you play defense you can go a long way."

Bartlett knocks out 2-time defending state champs

By: John Lemon



- Bartlett's Lexi Sinclair scored 26 points in a 60-52 win over Geneva during sectional semifinal action at Batavia Monday night.



- Bartlett's Lynsie Gallagher, right, drives against Geneva's Cassidy Navigato during sectional semifinal girls basketball action at Batavia Monday night.



- Bartlett's Alexis Sinclair goes to the hoop against Geneva during sectional semifinal girls basketball action at Batavia Monday night.



- Bartlett's Alexis Sinclair goes to the hoop against Geneva during sectional semifinal girls basketball action at Batavia Monday night.



- Bartlett coach Brad Hunt and his players get revved up after an early run against Geneva on Monday.



- Bartlett's Teagan Noesen, right, and Geneva's Lindsay Blackmore battle for the ball during sectional semifinal girls basketball action at Batavia Monday night.



- Geneva's Grace Hinchman goes to the hoop against Bartlett during sectional semifinal girls basketball action at Batavia Monday night.



- Geneva's Lindsay Blackmore moves the ball during sectional semifinal girls basketball action at Batavia Monday night.



- Geneva's Katherine Palmer shoots against Bartlett during sectional semifinal girls basketball action at Batavia Monday night.



- Geneva's players get revved up during sectional semifinal girls basketball action against Bartlett at Batavia Monday night.



- Bartlett's Teagan Noesen, front, and Geneva's Lindsay Blackmore scramble for the ball during sectional semifinal girls basketball action at Batavia Monday night.



- Geneva's Cassidy Navigato takes a shot during sectional semifinal girls basketball action against Bartlett at Batavia Monday night.

Bartlett threw the first punch, deflected a counter blow from Geneva, and left the Class 4A Batavia sectional semifinal with a 60-52 victory Monday night, meaning there will be a new state champion after the Vikings had brought home the last two.

As they have all year, a sophomore, Lexie Sinclair, and a freshman, Mackenzie Hare, led the way for the Hawks. Sinclair scored the first 6 points leading to a Geneva timeout just 90 seconds into the game.

She finished with a game-high 26 points. Hare added 15 points and three 3-pointers, and Bartlett never trailed in front of a nearly packed Batavia gym with large turnouts from both fan bases.

"We had a lot of energy coming out," Sinclair said. "Coach (Brad) Hunt has told me I have to be a leader on the team. And if I make my first couple shots, my teammates do a really good job finding me."

No. 3 seed Bartlett (29-4) will play for the sectional championship at 7 p.m. Thursday against fourth seed Wheaton Warrenville South (22-8), a 39-28 winner over Lake Park in the first semifinal Monday.

Savannah Standefer chipped in 7 points off the bench for Bartlett and Dani Hedeem's 6 points included a key baseline jumper in the fourth quarter with Geneva (20-12) trying to come back.

"We all kept our composure and know how to execute at the right times," Standefer said. "This whole night was just great energy."

After Sinclair's 6 quick points to start the game, Hare knocked down back-to-back 3s for a 12-3 lead.

Geneva turned the ball over on its first four possessions for a similar slow start to its regional title win Thursday over Glenbard West. Bartlett led 16-10 after one quarter.

"We started off slow and in a sectional semi you can't do that," Vikings coach Sarah Meadows said. "You can't do that against good teams."

Standefer opened the second quarter with a 3-pointer after the Hawks kept the possession alive by hustling for two long rebounds. Sinclair capped the half with a floater in the lane to go to halftime up 28-20.

Geneva appeared to take the momentum back in the third quarter when Katie Montgomery, who had to be helped off the court late in the second quarter after a hard fall, returned and scored the first four points of the half to pull her team within 28-24.

Geneva had a chance to pull closer but missed 2 free throws and a couple shots under the basket. While Lindsay Blackmore sank all 10 of her free throws, the rest of the Vikings hit just 9 of 21.

Sinclair stopped the Geneva run with a 3-pointer, Hare drove from one end to the other for a conventional 3-point play, and Sinclair's spin move helped the Hawks weather Geneva's rally and lead 41-34 after three quarters.

"We tried to come back in the third quarter," Meadows said. "They held us off. They hit shots when they needed shots."

The Vikings got as close as 41-36 in the fourth before another big shot from Sinclair, this time a 3 from the top of the key. Hare's shot from nearly the same spot with 5:02 remaining opened up a double-digit advantage at 49-38.

Despite some shaky free throw shooting of its own (16 for 29), the Hawks never saw their lead shrink under 7 points -- and that came with 9 seconds to go.

"My girls know how to be composed," Hunt said. "We pride ourselves on defense and for the most part we did a good job."

As for a sophomore leading the way?

"She's got 60 games under her belt," Hunt said. "She's not inexperienced and she's the real deal. She's really good."

Blackmore led Geneva with 19 points and 17 rebounds. Montgomery added 12 points, and Cassidy Navigato, the only senior in Geneva's lineup, scored 7.

While Geneva won't spend early March at Redbird Arena like the last two seasons, the Vikings will have four starters back who helped this year's team win 20 games and play in the sectionals for the 11th straight season.

"It's fine," Meadows said. "We return a bunch of kids and we'll learn from this. It's a great experience for them. Good luck to Bartlett."

Hunt's Hawks have now beat three of the top teams in the DuKane Conference -- Batavia, Wheaton North and Geneva -- and will get a crack at the conference champ WW South on Thursday.

The Hawks said beating the two-time defending state champs meant a little extra.

"They are a different team than the two state champion teams but Sarah does an amazing job and that staring five is legitimate and four of them are coming back next year so she'll be just fine for a long time," Hunt said.

"I'm just proud of my girls."

---The Daily Herald---02/17/2019

Neuqua Valley overtakes South Elgin in second half

By: Jerry Fitzpatrick

The Neuqua Valley boys basketball team left nothing unchallenged in the second half of a 58-48 victory over South Elgin at the Upstate Eight-DuPage Valley Shootout at East Aurora Saturday.

The Wildcats won their fourth straight game and snapped South Elgin's 9-game winning streak by obstructing passing lanes, sticking hands in shooters' faces and accounting for more deflections than a professional spin doctor.

Neuqua Valley (13-16) trailed 27-24 at halftime but limited South Elgin (21-7) to 21 second-half points. The Wildcats forced 14 second-half turnovers.

"We locked in on defense and it showed," said Neuqua Valley senior guard Sentwali Nalls, who finished with 17 points on 5-of-7 shooting. "Coach always preaches defense and everyone is buying in at the end of the season. Games are going to be tough now, so everybody has to lock in on defense and get stops."

South Elgin led 20-11 in the second quarter but bumping bodies with the Wildcats exacted a toll over 32 minutes.

"They're a very physical team and we haven't played a team like that all year," said South Elgin senior Vincent Miskiewicz, who led all scorers with a 20-point performance that

included a pair of 3-pointers and a pair of dunks. "It was great to help us prepare for regionals. I think we just have to work on little things: cut better, set better screens and communicate better. If we can do that, we'll be better for the postseason."

The Wildcats led 38-37 at the end of three quarters and won the fourth period 20-11. They took a 6-point lead for the first time on an inside bucket from 6-foot-5 senior Nonso Obguefi with 3:31 left and sank enough free throws in the final two minutes to hold off the turnover-plagued Storm.

"When you turn the ball over 23 times in a game with limited possessions, you're not going to win," South Elgin coach Brett Johnson said. "I can say I'm proud of our guys for how hard they played. I told them no one likes to lose but this was a really good opportunity for us to see where we're really at moving into the postseason. So we take a lump from a quality team that has struggled all season, we learn from it and we get better from it moving forward."

Nalls dished 6 assists to spark the offense with leading scorer John Poulakidas sidelined.

"He's just playing great," Neuqua Valley coach Todd Sutton said of Nalls. "For the last month he's been passing that ball and getting us easy shots left and right. He had one great, long pass to Justin Blazek against the press that was like, wow, how'd he see it? I didn't see it."

Jace Warrick scored 13 points for the Storm. He and Miskiewicz both fouled out late in the fourth quarter. Drake Montgomery added 8 points and 4 assists.

Obguefi finished with 13 points and sophomore Connor Davis added 12 points for Neuqua Valley.

---The Daily Herald---02/16/2019

Bartlett overcomes slow start, wins regional crown

By: Craig Brueske

It wasn't exactly the start Bartlett girls basketball coach Brad Hunt envisioned.

After watchin'g his team fall behind Wheaton North 12-3 in the first 3-plus minutes, Hunt called a timeout in order to regroup.

The Hawks then went on a 9-0 run to tie the game at 12-12 after the opening quarter.

"I think that made the girls realize, 'It's OK, we belong -- we're supposed to be here,'" said Hunt, "and then it was just a dogfight."

The finish nearly worked to perfection as the 3rd-seeded Hawks (28-4) outscored the Falcons 42-33 in the second half during their 61-51 Class 4A regional championship triumph in Bartlett.

"We finished the deal at the end," said Hunt, whose team will face 2-time defending 4A state champion Geneva (20-11) in Monday's 7:30 p.m. Batavia sectional semifinals. "We made free throws (12 of 16 in the 4th quarter) -- which has been something we've struggled with. It was great to see."

Sophomore guard Lexie Sinclair paced the Hawks with 20 points, hitting her last 5 field-goal attempts, including a 3-pointer that put the Hawks in front for good at 30-27 with 3:17 left in the third quarter.

"Tough players make tough shots -- I play by that motto," said Sinclair, who added 3 assists and 3 steals. "When I see an opening, I'm going after it."

"I can't tell you how special Lexie is," said Hunt. "She put us on her back and that number 1 (the Falcons' Julia Simon) is an elite defender."

The Hawks also received big-time performances from Teagan Noesen (12 points) and Justina Hernandez (12 points, 6 rebounds).

Noesen, the team's lone senior starter, canned four 3-pointers, including back-to-back long-distance shots after the Hawks fell behind 23-19 early in the third quarter.

"Oh, my goodness, those were huge 3s," said Hunt. "It was awesome for her."

"My teammates did a really good job of finding me," said Noesen. "We caught the momentum and kept rolling."

Hernandez, a sophomore, scored 10 fourth-quarter points, including 6 of 6 from the free-throw line.

"Justina played a great game," said Hunt.

The 5th-seeded Falcons (19-7) were led by their lone senior starter, Nikki Baird, who tallied 19 of her game-high 22 points in the second half.

"What an unbelievable career she had," said Falcons coach David Eaton of the Belmont recruit. "She came up as a freshman and was a starter for all four years and played fantastic."

Freshman Claire Hyde finished with 11 points and sophomore Simon added 10 points, 5 rebounds and a pair of steals for Wheaton North.

"We're proud of our kids for how hard they played," added Eaton. "They (the Hawks) earned that win tonight. They made plays. The last time we played (Bartlett won 78-70 in OT on Dec. 28), we were up four with 50 seconds left and turned it over."

"They played great and deserved to win tonight. They hit big shots across the board."

Freshman Mackenzie Hare added 9 points for the Hawks.

"No one (Bartlett team) has ever lost a regional on our home court (now 5-0 since 2004) so it's nice to keep it going," said Sinclair.

---The Courier-News---02/17/2019

South Elgin secures regional title

Waichunas' layup in second overtime key to victory

By: Paul Johnson



- South Elgin's Megan McClure (23) makes a pass against Barrington's Anna Mae King in the Class 4A Elgin Regional championship game Thursday.

When Madison Waichunas gave South Elgin a one-point lead in double overtime Thursday night, she knew the moment was significant.

The junior guard's layup sent the Storm ahead of Barrington, and the Fillies didn't score again. South Elgin then went 8-for-10 from the free-throw line to ice a 60-51 victory in the Class 4A Elgin Regional championship game.

"I knew it was a game changer, and we were getting pumped up from that," Waichunas said. "That really amped up our speed the rest of the game. We were all just staying focused the whole game. We knew we were going to win this game, and we did."

South Elgin (20-11), which won its first regional title since the 2013-14 season and third in program history, advanced to a 6 p.m. Tuesday semifinal of the Belvidere North Sectional against Rockford Boylan.

The Storm trailed 51-50 before Waichunas' basket, their lone field goal of the second OT. Freshman guard Caroline Croft pulled down the defensive rebound and set up Waichunas for the decisive layup.

"Madison has come such a long way," South Elgin coach Dan Mandernack said of Waichunas. "She was on the sophomore team last season. She really brought her game up."

"Her confidence is really high. She's smaller, but she boxes out and is strong with the ball."

South Elgin struggled from the 3-point line, which kept the game close. The Storm shot only 3-of-20 from 3-point range, so they had to find other ways to score.

Their final five baskets of regulation all came from the lane. Waichunas' layup with 10 seconds left gave South Elgin a 45-43 lead, but Barrington's Sydney Granby nailed a shot at the buzzer to force OT.

"We had to adjust," Mandernack said of South Elgin's struggles from the outside. "Other kids had to step up, and they did."

Junior forward Megan McClure scored a game-high 19 points for South Elgin. Waichunas added 15 points, and Croft had 11 points, eight rebounds and five steals.

Mandernack's teams had been 0-for-3 in regional championship games. Now, the Storm will attempt to win the program's first sectional title.

"This is what it's all about," Mandernack said. "They never doubted it. You could see it in their eyes. They were going to get it done. They never flinched. I'm overwhelmed with the heart they showed."