

## Press Clippings 02/28/2019

### **SPORTS**

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### **South Elgin breaks free from Hampshire**

**By: Jerry Fitzpatrick**

Vincent Miskiewicz and host South Elgin answered Hampshire's third-quarter run with a push of their own to win 53-41 in a regional semifinal Wednesday.

No. 3 South Elgin (23-8) jumped to a 22-11 halftime lead over No. 5 Hampshire (15-17), but the Whip-Purs opened the third quarter on a 17-7 surge to draw within a point.

Junior Collin Woods, who did not play in the first half for disciplinary reasons related to Hampshire's final regular-season game, sparked his team. The 6-foot-5 guard scored all 8 of his points during the third-quarter run, which was capped by a Jackson Milison 3-pointer that drew the Whips within 29-28 with 2:12 left in the period.

Miskiewicz responded with a putback, resulting from one of his 12 rebounds, thereby igniting a 10-1 run that put the Storm in control for good.

The highlight of the night came with the Storm leading 41-31. Miskiewicz and a Hampshire player were chasing a loose ball at midcourt. The 6-foot-7, 205-pound South Elgin senior made a full dive to reach the ball first, tapping it ahead in one motion to senior guard Trace Ashby for the bucket.

"He's a hustler and that's a big play," South Elgin guard Drake Montgomery said of his teammate. "For him to step up and make that dive -- I didn't even think he was going to get it, personally -- but he put his effort on the floor."

"Anything to help my team win," said Miskiewicz, who finished with 19 points, 5 blocks, 4 assists and three thunderous dunks. "In regionals we have to play as one team. If we do that, we can go pretty far."

South Elgin regained a 5-point lead early in the fourth quarter after a three-point play from Montgomery (15 points).

The Storm then switched to a 2-3 zone defense. The Whips shot 4 of 12 in the fourth quarter, 2 of 9 from 3-point range.

Hampshire didn't fare any better in the second quarter against man-to-man. The Whips were held without a field goal on 14 attempts and scored 2 points on Kenyan Davis free throws.

"We felt like we were able to get to the paint the whole first half, but we were just so concerned about Vince blocking every single shot that we were rushing or we were going up slower than usual," Hampshire coach Ben Whitehouse said. "We were just out of rhythm at the rim."

Though the first-round loss was disappointing, Hampshire made strides as a program year over year, winning 10 more games than in 2017-18.

"It's tough to end the way it did, but to play as a team at the end and to be as competitive as it was, that's a big step forward for us," Whitehouse said.

South Elgin advances to play No. 1 Cary-Grove (21-7) for the regional title on Friday at 7 p.m. The Trojans defeated South Elgin 70-62 on a neutral court on Dec. 22.

"We just need to play tough defense, move the ball and get everybody involved," Montgomery said. "We've got home court, so we have to take advantage of that."

Junior forward Jeremy Rosa Jr. led Hampshire with 14 points and 9 rebounds.

## **Fox Valley area bowlers shine at state tournaments**

**By: Mike Miazga**



- South Elgin's girls bowling team finished 11th at the state tournament two weeks ago. Pictured, from left to right, are coach T. A. Wierschke, McKenna O'Donnell, Monica Darrow, Mia Rivera, Breanne Augustine, Karlea Ceasario, Kaylee Mann, and coach Nicole Maciorowski.

The Fox Valley area always has enjoyed a healthy roster of top-notch boys and girls bowlers.

Way back in the day when I first started covering sports in this area, my first glimpse at this came in the form of Larkin bowler Lisa Stack, who was a multi-time state qualifier and was a consistent big-game bowler, finishing fifth, third, fourth and then winning the state title in 1995.

A year later, Streamwood's Stacy Shapiro won the state title and it's been 19 years since Bartlett's Jamie Calusinski took home the top honor.

Fast forward to present day and this area still lacks not for quality high school bowling. Look no further than over the last month where three area teams (St. Charles East and North boys and South Elgin girls) toiled on the lanes at Cherry Bowl near Rockford for the girls and St. Clair Bowl in O'Fallon for the boys.

Of course on the boys' side, St. Charles East freshman Edgar Burgos won the state title in O'Fallon and bowled a 300 during the process (the second time he was perfect this season), helping the Saints place third as a team (more on Burgos in an upcoming column). Burgos is the first boys state champion in the Fox Valley area, besting Jacobs' Brandon Biondo's second-place finish in 2014.

Town neighbor St. Charles North took eighth.

With the girls, Jacobs junior Brianna Schmidt finished eighth individually and has her sights clearly set on the state individual title in her swan song high-school season next year. South Elgin took 11th as a team on the girls' side.

While we're talking South Elgin, the Storm girls turned in quite the overall body of work. The Storm won an Upstate Eight Conference title and went unbeaten in 17 three-game matches (conference and non-conference) where they never lost a single game.

Since coach TA Wierschke took over the team two years ago, the Storm has lost but one game in all their 3-game matches.

The secret sauce for the Storm?

"We all grew together," said South Elgin's Karlea Ceasario, who averaged in the 180s this season and rolled a 2,231 series at state. "We became close as a team and as a family. We all support each other whether or not we throw a bad ball. We encourage each other and cheer on each other as best we can so when we go to throw the next ball, we are reset and focused."

In addition to Ceasario, Mia Rivera also averaged in the 180s, while Breanne Augustine and Monica Darrow were in the mid-170s this season. Wierschke, who was part of the 2016 St. Charles East team that took third in state, labeled Darrow "the catalyst of the team," he said. "She is our team's spirit leader."

"We've been bowling since we were young," added Augustine, whose high game this season was a 268. "We've been around each other awhile. They are such amazing girls. We worked hard and we had a blast. We had so much fun this season."

Augustine, who paced South Elgin at state with a 2,302 series, added the group had an inkling it was onto something special this season. "I feel like we knew we could be pretty solid as a team," she said. "We knew we could go somewhere. We had that kind of a feeling."

Staying on the girls' side, Jacobs' Schmidt said a big improvement in the mental part of her game paid major dividends this season.

"I stayed calm and collected (at state), even though I had two bad games," said Schmidt, who logged a 2,480 series at state thanks in part to high games of 277 and 235. "I was able to regroup. I was a lot more focused this season and was able to stay calm when things did not go well."

Schmidt, who bowled a 289 this season in a game, picked up the game from her parents at a younger age. "My parents bowled and I said I wanted to do it, too," she said.

Schmidt already has her sights set on the 2019-2020 season. "There is a lot of motivation," she said. "I plan to keep practicing and keep getting better, hopefully so I can win state next year."

I asked her to clarify her winning state remark.

"That's my goal," she said.

Five of the top eight girls in the state were seniors this season.

As long as we are touching on team chemistry, St. Charles North boys bowler Brian Belzey said that very thing helped the North Stars reach greater heights this season.

"Our overall attitude changed this year," said Belzey, who finished 28th in the state with a 2,511 series. "There were more connections with guys outside of bowling that reinforced the whole teammate aspect. When someone was lacking a little bit on the lanes, the rest of the team stepped up and helped that person. It balanced everything out. That made the season very much enjoyable. We really pushed ourselves. Overall, it was fun."

Belzey said last year's state experience acted as a springboard of sorts into this season. "The experience last year helped us," he said. "We knew what to expect and what we could do. At sectionals we took first against some other teams that placed higher at state. That was the wakeup call that we can beat them. There's no reason why we couldn't do it again. We tried to stay really relaxed at state. We went out and did the best we could and we had fun. We knew it was the last time we'd bowl with this special group."

The North Stars also were bolstered by Blake Miller's efforts in O'Fallon. He finished ninth in the state with a 2,661 series, a year after taking 10th in the state individually.