

Press Clippings 04/01/2019

---Daily Herald---04/01/2019

Tuesday's election: Key races in the Fox Valley

By: Elena Ferrarin



David Kaptain, left, and Carol Rauschenberger right, are running for Elgin mayor in Tuesday's election.

Voters in the Fox Valley will head to the polls on Election Day to settle heated races for mayor and school board seats. Here's a look at the key contests on Tuesday's ballot.

Elgin mayor and city council

- Incumbent Dave Kaptain and Councilwoman Carol Rauschenberger are running for mayor in Elgin.

Rauschenberger said she wants to focus on the city's pension obligations, bring businesses -- especially young, local and small -- and higher residential density downtown, particularly market-rate rental units.

Kaptain said the city has to encourage converting existing buildings into residential units, but it's up to developers to tell the city what ventures they believe will be successful. The two most important issues facing Elgin are the education of youth and the upcoming renegotiation of the city's solid waste contract, he said.

- Seven candidates are running for four, 4-year seats on the Elgin City Council: incumbents John Steffen, Rose Martinez, Tish Powell and Toby Shaw, and challengers Dustin Good, Anthony Ortiz and Fred Moulton.

Baldemar Lopez, Steve Thoren and Jerri McCue are running for a vacant 2-year seat.

The candidates offered different positions on the most important issues facing Elgin.

Steffen said the city needs to maintain adequate services while keeping taxes and fees as low as possible and looking for ways to innovate.

Martinez pointed to a state mandate to fund pensions at 90 percent by 2040. She also wants to expand the Elgin Sports Complex and make the city a destination for sports events and tournaments.

Powell said she wants to address Elgin's negative image with a comprehensive campaign, and continue to address panhandling and homelessness.

Shaw said the city needs a five- to 10-year plan to address infrastructure needs, and needs to use technology to apply consistent code enforcement.

Good said he wants the city to create a civilian review panel for police complaints, and wants to improve transparency of how tax dollars are used with benchmarking comparison with other communities. The city also needs fiber-optic data networks, he said.

Ortiz wants to focus on youth, and pledged to donate his first year's councilman salary to a nonprofit organization he plans to start. He also wants to work with community organizations on college readiness for youth.

Moulton said he wants to ensure the fire department is properly staffed. He also believes Elgin's city hall is suffering from a "talent drain" from people leaving, and attributed that to high-level leadership.

Lopez said he wants to attract businesses to grow the commercial tax base, increase staffing levels at the fire department, and increase investment in after-school programs and neighborhood police patrols.

Thoren said he wants to make sure the city doesn't increase the tax burden on property owners.

He strongly supports continuing the city's historic preservation efforts.

McCue wants to attract a diverse tax base, develop a small business, revolving low-interest loan program, and address mental health needs.

Elgin Area School District U-46

Incumbents Jeanette Ward, Sue Kerr and John Devereux, and newcomers Tina Rio, Kathleen Thomme, Eva Porter, Daniel Hancock and Ina Silva-Sobolewski are vying for four, 4-year seats on the Elgin Area School District U-46 board.

Ward, Rio, Silva-Sobolewski and Hancock were unequivocal about not raising taxes, while the other four candidates said they would have to weigh that decision based on needs.

Devereux, Kerr, Porter and Thommes rejected the idea of arming school personnel, while Hancock, Silva-Sobolewski and Ward qualified their support as long as there is adequate training for employees.

Rio couldn't be reached for comment on this topic.

St. Charles Community Unit School District 303

Incumbent Kathleen Hewell and newcomers Jillian Barker, Michael Bryant, Rebecca McCabe and Garrett Seaman are running for three, 4-year seats in St. Charles School District 303.

Incumbent Nick Manheim is running for a two-year seat against newcomer Poonam Gupta-Krishnan.

The candidates had different thoughts on the fate of Haines Middle School, which will be shuttered at the end of this academic year.

Seaman says he wants to hold public forums, and any proposal should prioritize students.

Bryant said the district needs to have a long-term facilities plan to best determine how the space is used.

Hewell said the building could hold the special education transitions program and programs in partnership with the park district.

McCabe said the board can't let the building sit empty and wishes a decision had been made sooner out of courtesy to neighbors.

Barker supports creating more centralized administrative areas but is concerned about a proposal to use Medicaid money for renovations rather than for physical, speech and occupational therapy.

Gupta-Krishnan said she wants a more comprehensive evaluation of all options, including the sale, lease or renovation of the property.

Manheim said schools are community assets and anything done to the building must better the district.

To view candidate profiles, visit dailyherald.com/news/politics/election.

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Streamwood High's growing student internship program to expand next school year

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Streamwood sophomore Hannah Jennie gives a high-five during an internship at the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin on Thursday as part of the Streamwood Career Exploration Program.



Streamwood High School juniors Wero Pytel, left in the background, and Tori Covington work with kids at the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin as part of the Streamwood Career Exploration Program on Thursday.



Streamwood High School students, from left, Victoria Bajorek, Anna Rataj, Damali Nazario, Diego Castillo, Streamwood Behavioral Healthcare System business development director Eric O'Brien, Mariane Salgado-Roman, Miriam Salas, Jessica Ramirez, and Ariana Benitez participate in the Streamwood Career Exploration Program this week.



Sophomore Emily Kuehl, left, helps Carly, 8, at Boys & Girls Club of Elgin Thursday. She was among 39 students participating in the Streamwood Career Exploration Program which places students with local businesses and community agencies to get internship experience.



Streamwood High students -- Joseph Crumlett, left; Brandon Garduno, second from left; Joshua Vallejo, center; and Andrew Pfeifer, right -- work with precision manufacturing instructor Matt Erbach, second from right, during a mini-internship this week as part of the Streamwood Career Exploration Program.



A group of Streamwood High School students got to learn about precision manufacturing during a mini-internship this week with instructor Matt Erbach, right.

From a young age, Alyssa Zuno saw her single mother struggling and was able to ease that burden by taking care of her two younger siblings.

The experience developed Alyssa's love for children and her passion for becoming a teacher.

"I've been wanting to do this since I was in second grade," said Alyssa, 16, a Streamwood High School sophomore who spent spring break teaching children at the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin. "It fills my heart. I love it so much. You have to have patience ... lots of patience because kids will be (bouncing) off the walls. You have to know how to stay calm."

Alyssa was among 39 Streamwood High School students participating in weeklong mini-internships this week as part of the Streamwood Career Exploration Program, now in its fifth year.

The program is a collaboration between Streamwood High School, Elgin Area School District U-46, and Streamwood's Community and Economic Development Commission. Students are placed with local organizations to learn about business, early childhood education and new manufacturing technologies. Officials plan to expand the program offering internships in new career pathways next school year.

This week, students interned with Streamwood Behavioral Healthcare System, Heidner Properties of Hoffman Estates, Gold Rush Gaming, the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin,

Trelleborg Sealing Solutions, BBS Automation, Otto Engineering and the Technology and Manufacturing Association. They helped develop a business marketing plan for a new service and a promotional plan for a gambling cafe, worked on an in-school precision manufacturing project, and created new or modified after-school curricula.

All Streamwood High School students can apply for the program, which started off with 15 participants in each of the first three years, when the focus was on manufacturing jobs and business. Early childhood education was added two years ago.

"(Participation) has grown quite a bit, and they are expecting it to grow more," said Barb Thomas, Streamwood High business teacher and career exploration program coordinator. "The goal is to expose these students to the real world by having them work on industry-based projects with the potential for implementation. It has provided the students an understanding of what to expect once they leave high school."

Brooke Cidonio said she got to "see how different ages function" working with students from kindergarten through sixth grade at the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin.

Teaching runs in her family, said Brooke, 16, a sophomore who's debating whether to become an elementary school teacher or teach chemistry to high schoolers.

"I love the little kids, but I also love chemistry. I'm still leaning toward high school," she said.

Senior Anna Rataj, who helped produce a business proposal for Streamwood Behavioral Healthcare's new service line, said participating in the program the last three years has helped hone her communication skills.

"It's not the kind of experience you can get in a classroom," said Rataj, who plans to attend University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign this fall to study museum management.

Over 8,000 students to attend ESO Ainsworth Concerts for Youth April 2-5

By: ESO



Claire Arias Kim, 17-year-old violinist, will perform on the Elgin Symphony Orchestra World Tour Ainsworth Concerts for Youth April 2-5 at the Hemmens Cultural Center in Elgin.

On April 2-5, more than 8,000 area students will attend Elgin Symphony Orchestra's Ainsworth Concerts for Youth at the Hemmens Cultural Center in Elgin.

It will include every fourth-grade student in Elgin Area School District U-46, thanks to the generous support of the City of Elgin, the Snodgrass Family Fund, Elgin Cultural Arts Commission, EFS Foundation and the Ainsworth Family.

This year's program is "ESO World Tour," highlighting music from around the globe.

Resident Conductor Stephen Squires is the Captain who "pilots" a program featuring 17-year-old violinist Claire Arias-Kim. Diane Handler returns as the ESO World Tour host.

Claire Arias-Kim, 17, studies violin with Almita Vamos and is a Merit Scholarship Fellow at the Music Institute of Chicago's Academy, a training center for advanced pre-college musicians. Claire began her violin studies with Betty Haag at age 3.

At 6 years of age, she had the opportunity of performing on tour with the Magical Strings of Youth in Prague and had solo performances on the California tour. Claire was the winner of the Jacobs School of Music Summer String Academy Concerto Competition as well as winner of the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Concerto Competition.

Other achievements include first place in the Sejong Music Competition and Granquist Music Competition as well as prizes in the Music Festival in Honor of Confucius Competition and DePaul Concerto Festival.

Last year, Claire performed Lalo's Symphony Espagnole with the Lakeview Orchestra after winning first place in their concerto competition.

For two consecutive summers, Claire was one of 12 violinists selected to be part of the Brian Lewis Young Artists Program, a fully funded program made possible through the generosity of the Dorothy Richard Starling Foundation for 10 to 12 highly gifted violinists. There she had the opportunity to perform the Mendelssohn and Saint Saens violin concertos with the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra. She was selected as a 2018 semifinalist for the 21st annual Sphinx Competition.

Claire has had violin master classes with Ilya Kaler, Vadim Gluzman, Kristof Barati, Yair Kless, Gerardo Ribeiro, Peter Herresthal, Rachel Barton-Pine and Olga Kaler as well as piano master classes with Dr. Brian Lee and Angela Yoffee.

During the summer of 2017, she was a participant of the Bowdoin International Music Festival and this summer she attended the Aspen Music Festival under a merit scholarship studying with Robert Lipsett.

The ESO youth concerts are named in honor of longtime sponsor Sterling "Stu" Ainsworth of St. Charles, who died last May.

For more information about a class field trip to the Hemmens Cultural Center in Elgin to hear the ESO, contact Wendy Evans, director of community engagement, at w.evans@elginsymphony.org or (847) 888-0404, ext. 238.

The ESO Ainsworth Concerts for Youth, led by Resident Conductor Stephen Squires, are designed to introduce children in grades 2-8 to the fundamentals of music. Teachers are given educational materials in advance to help enhance learning.

The ESO partners with U-46 schools to provide complimentary tickets to the concerts, offering access to many who otherwise would not have a classical music concert experience.

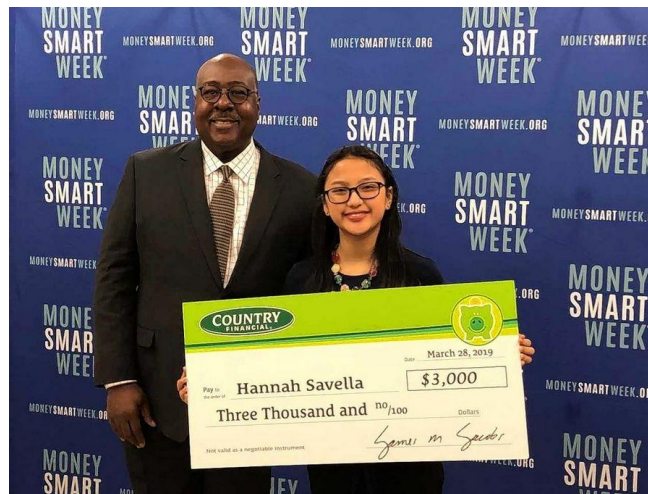
The 2019 concerts includes works by Leonard Bernstein, Li Huanzhi, Percy Grainger, Henryk Wieniawski and Alex Shapiro. Also featured is the Suite from the movie "Frozen," arranged by Krogstad.

The concerts are named in honor of longtime sponsor, ESO board member and 2017 Illinois Council of Orchestras' Volunteer of the Year Sterling Ainsworth.

For more information, see ElginSymphony.org.

7th grader from Hoffman Estates is 'Money Smart Kid'

By: Elena Ferrarin



Hannah Savella of Hoffman Estates, a seventh-grader at Larsen Middle School in Elgin, was named "Money Smart Kid" on Thursday. She is pictured with Mike Fisher, Country Financial's vice president of community business development.

A 13-year-old from Hoffman Estates won a \$3,000 college scholarship and the title of "Money Smart Kid" after writing an essay about income volatility.

Hannah Savella, a seventh-grader at Larsen Middle School in Elgin, was selected among 45 students from fifth to seventh grades from the Chicago area who wrote essays on the topic. The contest was part of [Money Smart Week](http://MoneySmartWeek.org), a national campaign that offers free events to help people better manage their finances. It runs Saturday through April 6.

Hannah earned a \$3,000 scholarship from sponsor Country Financial. She and five other finalists were interviewed by a panel of judges and she was named the winner during a "Money Smart Week" kickoff breakfast Thursday at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

Hannah stood out thanks to her research, passion for the topic and "strong knowledge of personal finance concepts," said Carrie Skogsberg, public relations specialist for Country Financial.

"Income volatility is defined as the variance of income which can be measured by the amount of significant rises and dips in income over the course of the following month or year," Hannah wrote in her essay. "High volatility means higher concern about what the value of an asset will be in the future."

Hannah said she learned about the contest during a school announcement and thought, "might as well do it."

She wasn't familiar with the topic of income volatility, so she did a lot of research, she said.

"My idea is to get as much information as possible and then condense it," she said. "What I really like doing is, once you find that information, there's always more resources."

Her mother, Rosalie Savella, said the family is grateful for the scholarship and its sponsors.

Hannah always has been curious and loves books, and learned a lot about money and finances during frank family conversations, her mother said.

"From the beginning as a family, we tried to raise her with her knowing where money is coming from and how it really works," said Rosalie Savella, who works as an emergency room nurse. Hannah's father works as nuclear medicine technician.

"I think she learned from a practical way, instead of from books. ... In the community there are a lot of houses for sale, and it's an opportunity for us to talk to them about, 'Why is it happening?' and 'Why is a neighbor all of a sudden moving out?'"

Hannah said she plans to enter a STEM field -- science, technology, engineering and math -- possibly aeronautics or robotics.

"My favorite subject is mathematics. I like seeing how things work and such. I've always loved seeing definitive answers come out of things," she said. "My favorite class is English, because it's really fun and I like my teacher."

Second place went to Torrey Rayford of St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Elementary School in River Forest, and third place went to Charlotte Foster of John W. Garvy Elementary School in Chicago. Both won a \$1,000 scholarship from Country Financial. The fourth-through sixth-place winners received laptops from Woodforest National Bank.

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Teenagers mentor younger students

Bartlett High School program helps get kids involved

By: Rafael Guerrero



Bartlett High School students Ronan Shah, from left, Harsh Chheda and Sareena Shah set up a scavenger hunt for Spring Trail Elementary School students.

Bartlett High School senior Ronan Shah believes a mentor — especially one close in age — can do wonders for a child.

He introduced school principals in 2016 to the concept of a teen mentors program, and it began that year with 10 Bartlett students working with children at one local school. This year, mentors number about 40 and serve three schools.

“We’re not just looking for passionate students [as mentors], we’re also looking for those who are compassionate,” Shah said.

The Mentors for Tomorrow program offers younger students a chance to work with, and be around, teenage mentors. Program leaders believe it has the potential for expansion into other communities in School District U46.

“It really is important to have a role model to relate to,” Shah said.

The teen volunteers go into Sycamore Trails Elementary School and Eastview Middle School in Bartlett, and Spring Trail Elementary School in Carol Stream on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Each teen works for about two hours with students on homework and educational activities that are mostly STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) focused. The activities are eye-openers for both teens and children, the mentors said, citing as an example that the younger students succeeded at a STEM activity that high school students struggled with.

“We want to challenge them, have them be the best they can be,” said Sareena Shah, a teen mentor who helped initiate the program in 2016. “We’re not here just to give them answers.”

“If you show them the STEM fields earlier, they may know what to pursue in high school,” said Harsh Chheda, another mentor.

Mentoring has helped teens with patience, communication, and learning skills, they said. Chheda improved his communication with adults as he interacted with teachers, after-school program officials, principals and others. Sareena Shah said she learned to “never underestimate” others.

“There’s so many things, so many joys that we lose as we get older. They’re so curious, they’re so energetic,” added Ronan Shah, president of the program’s student board of directors. “The minute we come in, they start yelling for us. I think that energy, that curiosity, I want to keep having and not lose as I get older.”

Ginny Ryan, director of Spring Trail’s after-school program, said the high school students not only help the children with homework, but they have fun with them. On a recent day, the tutors challenged students to an Easter egg scavenger hunt.

“The kids love having them here,” she said.

Over the past three years, Mentors for Tomorrow has worked with children in four different schools in the Bartlett area, and at a recent U46 high school student summit, Sareena Shah talked about the program to other interested students. The mentors believe promoting STEM activities and careers at an earlier age fits into the district’s mission, builds positive relationships between schools and students, and instills the value of helping others.

“Volunteering gives you a path of guidance ... helps you learn more about yourself,” Chheda said.

Music to the kids’ ears

U46, D300 named among best for music education

By: Rafael Guerrero



Elgin Symphony Orchestra Director Andrew Grams guest conducts Larkin High School students in early 2018. Elgin-based School District U46 and Algonquin-based School District 300 were named in March as being among the best communities for music education.

School District U46 and School District 300 are among the best in the state for music education, according to a release of a nationwide list this week.

The National Association of Music Merchants Foundation released its annual list of Best Communities for Music Education – and the Elgin-based and Algonquin-based districts earned recognition. The two were among 13 Illinois districts that made the list.

Local school and arts officials welcomed the news as a recognition of efforts to promote music education inside and outside the schools. At U46, Fine Arts Coordinator Jaimie Giraldo said students are “blessed to have supportive communities” encouraging appreciation and education in music.

Giraldo said the recognition is not only based on a district’s music offerings but what is available outside of school. In the Elgin area, the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, the

Chamber Music on the Fox, private lesson opportunities, music courses at Elgin Community College are among the options families have in generating and nurturing musical interests for their children, she said.

“The students who are involved in school, particularly those involved in fine arts, are more engaged in their education,” she said. “Students are looking for a connection to make school more individualized for themselves. A lot of times, it is the music classes that encourage them to do well.”

Wendy Evans, the Elgin Symphony Orchestra community engagement director, said the orchestra is always looking for ways to connect students with music. For instance, the more than 3,200 fourth-grade students in U46 will attend one of its Ainsworth Concerts for Youth performances the week of April 2. The performances are free of charge to the students.

“The staff and teachers in the district understand the positive impact attending an Elgin Symphony performance has on the students, especially to inspire fourth-graders to learn to play an instrument in school orchestra, band and choir programs after they have seen and heard a live professional symphony orchestra in concert,” Evans said.

In a news release, School District 300 officials said districts had to submit an application to the foundation for consideration. The application includes data on the district’s music programs, the number of students enrolled in music courses, funding, its facilities, and other things.

“This award recognizes that District 300 is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act,” according to the release. “(The Every Student Succeeds Act) recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children.”

The NAMM Foundation — an arm of the 10,400-member National Association of Music Merchants promoting active involvement in music — works with researchers at The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas to make its selections, according to the foundation. This year’s Best Communities for Music Education list recognized 623 school districts in 41 states.

“We have some school communities that have received this recognition year after year. A few have been there for 20 years,” said Mary Luehrsen of The NAMM Foundation in a news release. “But every year, new schools and districts are upping their game when it comes to music and the arts, often despite intense budget pressures.”

SPORTS

---Daily Herald---03/31/2019

Boys volleyball: Bartlett brings home U-46 title

By: Craig Brueske



Bartlett's Garrett Jurina, 21, and Toiyon Walton, 20, attempt to block a shot by Streamwood's Joseph Huizar, 9, Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.



Elgin's Ivan Garcia, 3, returns a Streamwood shot Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.



Streamwood's Roberto Sanchez, 2, returns an Elgin shot Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.



South Elgin's Eugene Gueco sets up a teammate against Elgin Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.



Elgin's Ivan Garcia passes from the back row Saturday.



South Elgin's Mandeep Sangha, 13, with a shot against Elgin Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.



South Elgin's Daniel Skrzypchak, 12, digs a ball Saturday.



South Elgin's Mandeep Sanghar, 13, from left, Daniel Skrzypchak, 12, Christian Ayar, 4, and Raul Correa, 19, celebrate their win over Elgin Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.



Bartlett's Sohum Desai, 1, sets up a teammate against Streamwood Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.



Bartlett's Toiyon Walton, 20, watches the ball drop on Streamwood's side of the net Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.



Bartlett's Martin Radomski, 6, with a shot past Streamwood's David Flores, 5, Saturday during the U46 boys volleyball tournament at Larkin High School in Elgin.

Expectations have been raised this season for Bartlett's boys volleyball team.

Fielding an experienced group -- 9 of the 11 players are seniors -- the Hawks (8-2) relied on that familiarity while sweeping 4 matches on their way to capturing the annual U-46 tournament title Saturday in Elgin.

Bartlett, which didn't lose a single set on the day, sealed its 4-0 record with a 25-22, 25-14 afternoon victory over Elgin.

Seniors Martin Radomski paced the Hawks in their final match with 7 kills while teammate Toiyon Walton added 6 kills and a block.

"Most of the people that are on these teams, we've played on the same club together," said Walton, a 6-foot-1 outside hitter who displayed his leaping ability against the Maroons. "When we play each other, it's kind of like a fun scrimmage but it was a great day."

Jacob Bush (3 kills, block), Carter Burzlaff (2 kills, 2 aces), Matt Tomasek (2 kills, ace), Garrett Jurina (1 kill, ace) and junior James Ballance (12 service points, ace) helped provide support for the Hawks.

Bartlett began the day with a 26-24, 25-15 triumph over eventual second-place South Elgin (3-2) before knocking off Streamwood (25-23, 25-19) and tourney host Larkin (25-20, 25-14).

"We went to the limit twice against Streamwood and South Elgin," Bartlett coach Bob Schwantz said. "I also know that against Streamwood we had 19 errors in the first set -- and they scored 23 points.

"That's going to be our biggest challenge. Teams make mistakes, I get that, but we just made a lot of them today."

Their final match against Elgin was no exception as the Hawks committed a total of 16 service errors -- 8 in each set -- mostly on jump-serve attempts.

It's a risk-reward approach for Bartlett.

"That's what I tell the guys," said Schwantz. "I can't have it both ways. I can't say, 'get all your serves in but still be aggressive.'"

Elgin, led by Trey Yarber (3 kills, block), Jesse Quinones (2 kills) and Luis Ramos (2 kills, ace), cut a 17-10 opening-set deficit down to 24-22 following the Hawks' 8th service error.

However, Walton delivered a middle kill off a picture-perfect pass from Burzlaff as Bartlett grabbed the first set.

"I think we're still working on our timing," said Schwantz. "We're also working on distributing the ball more.

"We have goals. We want to win conference and try to win a regional but we can't play like we did in set one (vs. Elgin). All day today, it seemed like we couldn't get our feet under us."

Coming off a 4th-place finish at last weekend's Hoffman Estates tournament, the Hawks face one of their busiest stretches of the season next week, capped by Saturday's Rolling Meadows Invite.

"We have eight matches next week," said Schwantz, whose team visits Glenbard North Monday.

"We're looking forward to the Glenbard North game because they knocked us out of the regionals last year," said Walton. "Rolling Meadows will be one of the hardest tournaments we'll have so we've got to make sure we're ready to come out strong."

South Elgin won 3 of 4 matches at Larkin, while Elgin, Larkin and Streamwood each finished 1-3.

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Softball: South Elgin slams Conant

By: John Lemon



Conant's Janessa Gonzalez, left, is tagged out by Geneva Pollman of South Elgin at third base Friday in South Elgin.



Conant's Amanda Santangelo attempts a catch in right field in action against South Elgin softball on Friday in South Elgin.



South Elgin catcher Sammy Jimenez gets the ball at home plate, but Conant's Emily Taucher scores in fourth inning during softball on Friday in South Elgin.



South Elgin's Casey Brennan makes a catch in the outfield during softball against Conant on Friday in South Elgin.



Conant's Katie Maize pitches to South Elgin during softball on Friday in South Elgin.



South Elgin's Sidney Strama held Conant to 5 hits Friday

South Elgin went 3-2 on its trip to Tennessee last week, a pitch or two away from 5-0.

The Storm returned to their home field Friday and made sure things didn't come down to the wire in a 14-2 win over Conant.

McKenna Eichholz ended the game early when she laced a ball down the left-field line with the bases loaded in the bottom of the fifth.

"We had a good trip. This team should be 7-0 probably," South Elgin coach Brad Reynard said. "We're deep so we're happy with any of the lineups we throw out there."

The Storm (4-3) were missing shortstop Sami Koss (wisdom teeth) Friday which gave freshman Cara Cruthers a chance to play second. They also had a different catcher but it didn't stop Sidney Strama from throwing her drop curve and screwball while watching her defense make a number of plays.

Strama allowed 5 hits in 5 innings, walking just one while striking out two.

"I just throw to my spots," Strama said. "I rely on my defense. I think everybody can play pretty much every position which is super nice on a team like this because sometimes in high school we don't get the correct positions for everybody."

South Elgin jumped ahead 1-0 in the first when Geneva Pollman doubled and scored on a single to center by Sammy Jimenez. The Storm scored in every inning, adding three runs in the second, one in third, four in the fourth and five in the fifth.

Pollman, a fourth-year varsity player, went 2-for-4 -- one of six South Elgin players with at least 2 hits.

"The pitcher (Katie Maize) had drop movement. Everyone on our team communicated well. We had to bend our knees and lower our strike zone," Pollman said.

"We have a lot of new girls as well and having some more seasoned girls helps everyone get acclimated. I just tell them to relax and not be afraid to make mistakes. I try to assure them it's OK to make mistakes and everyone has each other's back. We have very high expectations for our group this year."

The Storm pounded 17 hits. Casey Brennan (2-for-3, triple, 3 RBI), Jimenez (2-for-3), Eve Hartmann (3-for-4, 3 runs), Strama (2-for-4) and Morgan Meinicke (2-for-3) all had multiple hit games.

South Elgin hosts Batavia on Saturday.

The Cougars (0-3) scored single runs in the third and fourth innings. Ali Falcone, Hannah Oh, Emily Taucher, Maize and Janessa Gonzalez each had a base hit.

Maize pitched the first 3 and 2/3 innings before Kayleen Sebo finished up.

"I've been talking to our girls the importance of getting out early and attacking," Conant coach Allie Bauch said. "This is a new group of girls and we're still learning about each other and how we tick as a group. We're learning each game and just have to get back to work. It's super early. We definitely have a lot to work on."

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Toiyon story

Walton's five kills lift Bartlett past Elgin en route to repeat U-46

Invitational title

By: Paul Johnson



Bartlett's Toiyon Walton looks to hit the ball during the second game in a match against Elgin at the U-46 Invitational on Saturday.



Walton and his teammates celebrate after defeating Elgin at the U-46 Invitational.

Because of players like senior middle hitter Toiyon Walton, this is the season Bartlett has been pointing toward for a couple of years.

The Hawks have nine seniors on their 11-player roster, many of whom saw action on the varsity as sophomores.

And it shows.

Walton helped power the Hawks to the U-46 Invitational title Saturday at Larkin, a step toward where Bartlett would like to be at the end of the season as conference and regional champions.

The 6-foot-1 Walton notched five kills and a block in the Hawks' 25-22, 25-14 victory over Elgin that capped a 4-0 performance and a repeat of last year's tourney title.

"We have high expectations," Walton said. "Most of the people on these teams, we play on the same club team together, so when we play each other, it's fun. It was great that we were able to get this two years in a row."

While Walton is often undersized in the middle, he's efficient and lethal thanks to his jumping ability.

"Toiyon at one point was hitting 1.000 in one of our games," Bartlett coach Robert Schwantz said. "And I was like, 'Yeah, we might just want to get him the ball.'"

"I ask them to feed the middles. That's a team thing we're working on more. We're working on distributing the ball more."

The win that wound up clinching the title came in the first match of the day against rival South Elgin (3-2).

The Hawks pulled out a 26-24, 25-15 victory. South Elgin won its next three matches, including a 25-21, 25-16 win in the finale against Larkin.

“That’s how we thought it might go,” South Elgin coach Adam Plach said. “Bartlett is usually a really strong team. They have the same core from last year, so I expected them to be the top team. Our goal was to be competing with them.”

That win over South Elgin, however, highlighted a problem Bartlett (8-2) had Saturday — slow starts.

The Hawks struggled in the first game all day, something Schwantz knows they will have to clean up in order to be where they want to be by the end of the season.

“We have goals,” Schwantz said. “We want to try to win conference. We want to try to win regionals. We can’t play like we did in set one all day.”

The Hawks will test their mettle this week. They play eight matches, ending the week with the tough Rolling Meadows Tournament. Bartlett plays Monday against Glenbard North, which knocked the Hawks out of the playoffs last season, and follows with a rematch Tuesday against Elgin. The Hawks also travel Thursday to Benet.

“We just have to make sure we come out strong,” Walton said. “We’re really looking forward to the Glenbard North game. We play Elgin too, so I’m pretty sure they’re going to want their revenge.”