

## Press Clippings 10/25/2018

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### Boys soccer: Late PK is Dundee-Crown agony, Streamwood ecstasy

By Steve Nemeth



- Dundee-Crown's Kevin Martinez, back, races Streamwood's Alejandro Morales to the ball during sectional soccer at Hampshire High School on Wednesday. Patrick Kunzer | Staff Photographer

Whenever a penalty kick essentially decides a match, the losing side is understandably angry while the victors rejoice in moving on.

That in a nutshell describes Streamwood's 1-0 triumph over Dundee-Crown in Wednesday's second semifinal of the Class 3A Hampshire sectional.

A hard-fought back-and-forth scoreless draw came down to a handling the ball violation whistled on Dundee-Crown with just 4:27 left in regulation. Alex Chavez converted that chance for his 18th goal of the season and fourth game-winner.

That enabled the Sabres (17-4-3) to move on to Friday's 5 p.m. championship against fellow Upstate Eight Conference member Elgin, which was a 2-0 winner over Crystal Lake Central.

That outcome also ends an otherwise stellar season for Dundee-Crown (18-4-4).

"It (stinks) to lose on a call that the official didn't appear to make until their coach (Matt Polovin) kept yelling for it," Chargers coach Reynaldo Vargas said. "It's especially tough because the boys have worked so hard. Unfortunately tight games like this sometimes come down to just one big thing."

That's not to say both sides didn't have notable opportunities throughout the two halves. In fact, Chavez was virtually trying to will a victory on his own as regulation approached the final 15 minutes. He had several absolute cannon shots that Chargers goalie Damian Smiech blocked or caught. If it were a Blackhawks match, you'd hear Pat Foley's patented "BIG SAVE."

With nine solo shutouts and two shared clean sheets, the Fox Valley Conference's premier goalie deserved better according to his coach.

"We've gotten to this point and it feels like a monkey I can't get off my back," Vargas said. "Coming up short despite tremendous effort gets old. But that's the way it goes."

"Coming off a good win for only our second regional title it's disappointing to have the season end this way," senior Arnol Batres said. "We played great in a tight game and to lose on a penalty in the last five minutes is terrible. Obviously we need to finished the chances we had."

As for Streamwood, Chavez simply looked forward to a rematch with the rival Maroons.

"It should be a great game. In this match, I had confidence in our guys getting us through," Chavez said. "In this case I just followed the PK motto which is push the ball past the keeper. It's an amazing feeling to win but it also comes down to what we practice every day."

"No question Dundee-Crown put up a real good fight," Polovin said. "Thankfully our guys simply don't stop. They play hard and then play harder. In the end, we'll take a win any way we can get it, including if it means hitting a PK."

# **South Elgin, West Aurora ready for rematch**

**By Jerry Fitzpatrick**

They meet again.

Eight days after West Aurora tamed South Elgin 48-10 in the regular-season finale, the Upstate Eight Conference rivals rematch in a Class 8A first-round playoff game.

No. 7 West Aurora (8-1) hosts No. 26 South Elgin (6-3) at Ken Zimmerman Field on Saturday at 7 p.m.

What do the coaches think of game planning for the same opponent two weeks in a row?

"I think it's awesome. What a cool thing," South Elgin's Dragan Teonic said of preparing for his first playoff game since he directed Hersey to the Class 7A playoffs in 2013. "How often do you get a chance to do something like this?"

"No opponent in 8A is going to be easy, so you might as well play someone you know so you have a chance to fix some of your mistakes. Hopefully, we can play a little better in the red zone. We have to do a better job."

Finishing drives was an issue for the Storm last week. In four red-zone trips, they scored one touchdown and fumbled twice.

"We moved the ball all night and they certainly moved the ball all night against us, but we lost our composure at times," Teonic said, "We had guys playing out of position and trying to do too much. Meanwhile, they have 17 starters back from a team that was good last year. We obviously don't, but our kids are better than they showed last Friday. The focus has been getting ourselves right and giving ourselves a chance here."

The Blackhawks make a school-record fourth straight playoff appearance under coach Nate Eimer, a 2001 West Aurora graduate.

"It never gets old, especially around here," Eimer said of playoff inclusion. "I'm extremely proud of our players and coaches and proud for our community."

As for facing the same opponent back to back?

"I don't think playing anybody in Week 10 is bad," Eimer said, "but I think it's scary because, obviously, they've got great film on us and they probably have a good idea of what they want to do differently this time. You could spend the whole week thinking of what to do differently here or there. I'm sure both teams will come out with different wrinkles."

Several Blackhawks stood out on offense last week. Hezzy Salter rushed for 95 yards and 3 touchdowns, fullback Trevon Tittle ran for 93 yards and a score and wide receiver Moshe Rogers made 4 catches for 113 yards, highlighted by a 63-yard touchdown catch and run.

Staying over: St. Charles North players won't need to shake their legs out after a long bus ride when they play at Normal Community in a Class 7A first-round playoff game on Saturday at 1 p.m.

Instead, the North Stars will travel to Normal on Friday night and stay in a hotel.

"We decided it would be better to invest a little and make it like a collegiate experience for our guys," St. Charles North coach Rob Pomazak said. "We felt this was the best way to get them focused. We'll wake up, get ready and do our thing."

From North Star to Golden Domer: St. Charles North sophomore running back Nick DeMarco has been an important offensive component since big brother Sam DeMarco was sidelined by injury three weeks ago.

## **Boys soccer: Elgin's two-goal surge enough to beat Crystal Lake Central**

**By Steve Nemeth**



- Elgin's Omar Lopez celebrates following a first-half goal against Crystal Lake Central during sectional soccer at Hampshire High School on Wednesday. *Patrick Kunzer | Staff Photographer*

Elgin had many chances go unfinished, but there were two successful opportunities early and that was enough.

Rafael Perez's corner kick prowess connected with Maroon scoring sensation Omar Lopez twice in five-minute span for Wednesday's 2-0 victory over Crystal Lake Central in the opening semifinal of the Class 3A Hampshire sectional.

"It's another step forward," Elgin coach David Borg said after his squad earned a first appearance in a sectional final. "We had a tendency today to play in spurts, we put together a great 10 minutes. If we could only put together 60 or more, it could be really impressive, but a win is a win."

Elgin (17-1-3) advances to Friday's 5 p.m. championship to face a familiar foe in fellow Upstate Eight Conference member Streamwood. The two sides battled to a 2-2 draw during the regular season.

There was 6:09 gone when the Maroons got a penalty kick and Perez served the first of two setups that up his assist total to 11. Lopez timed a jump to make a one-touch volley into the left side of the goal for the lead.

Just over five minutes elapsed when the duo teamed up again, this time with Lopez heading it home from 11 yards bringing his season total to 41 goals and six game-winners.

"Rafael delivered beautiful balls on both. The first one I saw the keeper leaning and I just placed it where he couldn't get to it," Lopez said. "I don't care so much about how many goals as long as we play well and get the W. We train to win and that's our plan for Friday."

"Every day at practice I work on placing the ball the best I can," Perez explained. "It's always about communicating with my teammates."

Since a number of other chances went unfinished, it was no wonder Borg had particular praise for the Maroon back line of Olaoluwa Ajayi, Alex Kunicki, Manuel Ramirez and Julian Garfias. They combined with goalie Martin Jimenez to record an eighth shutout for the year and a fourth straight.

"Omar deserves the press he gets but so does our back line," Borg said. "Kunicki did a great job in locking things down along with Manny, Olaoluwa, and Julian."

The loss ends a surprising late-season run by Crystal Lake Central (8-9-2), which posted back-to-back upsets to capture the DeKalb regional title, including a 1-0 victory over the host Barbs.