

## Press Clippings 11/23/2017

---Daily Herald--- 11/23/17

### **Elgin education collaborative seeks more business, industry partners**

**BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY**

An Elgin-based education initiative is seeking to build more business and industry partnerships to train a future workforce better aligned to market demands.

[Alignment Collaborative for Education](#) -- or ACE, launched in 2015 -- is a partnership among Elgin Area School District U-46, Central Unit District 301, Elgin Community College, Judson University, the city of Elgin, the village of Hanover Park, Advocate Sherman Hospital, the Grand Victoria Foundation, United Way of Elgin, and other nonprofit, business and community groups.

Group leaders shared the fruits of their efforts in recent years with the U-46 school board this week.

Elgin Mayor Dave Kaptain said the biggest challenge for businesses in the region is finding qualified and educated workers.

With a population of 112,000, Elgin is the state's eighth-largest city with "more jobs available than we have people to fill them," Kaptain said.

"That's a tragedy for us," he said. "People leave our community. The jobs are here. We need to put young people into those jobs."

Kaptain, a product of U-46, said he recently spoke to a group of students at Ellis Middle School in Elgin where he studied in 1962.

"I started to talk about opportunities for young people. ... I saw something in those faces that I hadn't seen in a long time -- that was hope," Kaptain said.

ACE's mission is to align diverse community resources in support of public schools to raise student achievement, improve the health and happiness of children, and advance the region's economic and social well-being.

The organization has developed a network of more than 70 business and community partners, including health care agencies, local governments, nonprofits and manufacturers to collaborate on new approaches and initiatives to help students improve.

Local businesses and governments help fund ACE, providing more than \$450,000 in the last three years, including paying the executive director's salary. U-46 leaders will vote at the next school board meeting to grant another \$75,000 to the group over the next three years.

Since July, more than 2,000 volunteer hours have been dedicated to its efforts, ACE Executive Director Nancy Coleman said.

The crowning achievement was its third annual curriculum and career expo in October at Elgin Community College. About 1,000 U-46 students and family members attended the fair, which featured more than 45 businesses and organizations showcasing more than 65 careers, Coleman said.

ACE's goals are focusing on early childhood education intervention, providing trauma-informed care, and supporting and expanding career and technical education opportunities.

Priorities include preparing more students to enter kindergarten and raising the number of third-graders performing at grade level in reading and math. Meanwhile, efforts are underway to provide a trauma-informed care approach for at-risk students at Larkin High School, Abbott Middle School, Highland and Harriett Gifford elementary schools, all in Elgin.

Leaders plan to reach out to communities more through mayors breakfasts, forums and communication "so that everyone understands what needs to be accomplished," Coleman said.

Businesses and organizations seeking to partner with ACE can visit [align4edu.org](http://align4edu.org).

---Courier News--- 11/23/17

## **Elgin honors six volunteers for 'unending giving'**

**BY MIKE DANAHEY**

The [Elgin](#) Area Chamber of Commerce recognized six volunteers whose contributions range from playing Mrs. Santa Claus for the library to taking calls in the middle of the night as a hospital advocate for the Community Crisis Center.

The six who work with various local nonprofits were honored Nov. 21 "for their unending giving to others and for delivering such critical services day after day in our community," said chamber president Carol Gieske at the annual Thanksgiving luncheon at Elgin Community College.

Denise Raleigh, Gail Borden Public Library division chief of public relations and communications, noted that former **School District U46 administrator Karen Fox** has contributed to the library in ways that include coordinating class tours to library exhibits, writing scripts with her husband, Dan, for docents conducting tours of exhibits, training docents and acting as a docent herself. Her picture as Mrs. Santa Claus even is used on the current library newsletter, Raleigh said.

Fox said that the picture actually was taken during a prior Christmas season, when she dressed in costume to read to children. She said she enjoys volunteering with the library to spread excitement about exhibits ranging from dinosaurs to outer space.

Sylvia Hiple volunteers with the Community Crisis Center as a hospital advocate. Raleigh noted she provides emotional support to victims of sexual assault or domestic abuse at local hospitals and informs them of legal matters and opportunities for counseling.

"I believe in what the Community Crisis Center does, and that you do see results from the services they provide," Hiple said. "I am proud to recommend the agency to women, as it can be a life-changing place for them."

Of Hiple and those who volunteer at the Community Crisis Center, its executive director, Gretchen Vapnar, said, "They bring an extra dimension of caring and provide for the welfare of the organization and the people it serves."

Tom's Auto Clinic owner Tom Brockner, "has been keeping Elgin's tires on the road since 1969," Gieske said, and his "service mentality applies to Tom's civic life as well.

Brockner was an original member of the Downtown Neighborhood Association and "has volunteered for nearly every event including the Fourth of July Parade, Downtown Elgin Harvest Market, Winter Wonderland, Car Show, Pub Crawl and more," she said. Brockner also is a long-standing member of the Elgin Noon Kiwanis Club.

"I like to hear the thoughts of people and to see how things and people move forward," Brockner said of why he volunteers. "And the Kiwanis is filled with great people, a lot of good names. It's a good place to hang out."

Former U46 teacher Karen Schock was recognized for her volunteer work with the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, where she has served on its board of directors, and also with the library, where she presides over a team that runs an annual book sale. She recently joined a board that plans special events.

Raleigh also mentioned that Schock is a past president of the Elgin Teachers Association, has been a docent for the Elgin Historic House Walks, has portrayed characters from Elgin's past in the Bluff City Cemetery Walk, volunteered at the Boys & Girls Club, and was president of the charter school exploration for School District U46. She also founded a program which identifies promising 8th grade students for mentoring during their four years in high school. If they maintain a 'B' average, they receive two years of tuition and books at Elgin Community College.

Another volunteer honored was Eric Larson, appointed executive director of Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra in October 2016. He oversees the program's nine large ensembles, marketing, development and operations.

As president of the Northeast Neighborhood Association of Elgin, Larson played a big role in bringing the Dennis Jurs bike race to Elgin over the summer. He also serves as board president of Backbones, a nonprofit that helps people with spinal cord injury or disease, and is the current chair of Elgin's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Gieske said.

Larson said he and his family moved to Elgin more than seven years ago, and he enjoys the spirit of volunteerism and the variety of volunteer opportunities available.

"I believe strongly that if you think something in your town needs to be changed, you work to change it," Larson said.

The final honoree of the day was retiree Terry Dunning, who ran Dunning's Auction Service, and whose family has run area businesses since 1896.

Gieske noted Dunning's volunteerism has included a stint as chairman of the board of the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce, a board member of First United Methodist Church, a founding member of the First Community Bank and a long-time member of the Elgin Noon Rotary Club. Dunning helped raise more than \$130,000 for Rotary's [Polio](#) Plus Project and donated to Elgin's Softball Complex Park Project, she said.

Dunning lends a hand at auctions to benefit nonprofits, including the Community Crisis Center, Centro de Informacion and ECC. He is a former chairman of the Sherman Hospital board and still volunteers there, Gieske said.

"It's nice to meet and to help all sorts of people," Dunning said. "I've always felt it was important to give back. From when I was in my 20s and Elgin had a Community Chest which led to the [United Way](#), I've enjoyed going out and doing something. Community is a big thing with me."

## SPORTS SECTION

---Daily Herald--- 11/23/17

### Elgin falls to Schurz in season opener

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK



Schurz's Antwon Brooks and Elgin's Dan Toolsie scramble for a loose ball during varsity boys basketball in West Chicago Wednesday. Mark Black | Staff Photographer

The Elgin boys basketball team came up one bucket shy in a 63-61 loss to Schurz at the Wildcat Turkey Classic at West Chicago Wednesday night.

But were the Maroons actually a bucket shy?

In the middle of the fourth quarter, Elgin asked the referees to double check the scorebook, saying a made basket had not been counted on the scoreboard. The book checked out, so the game continued to the vocal displeasure of Elgin's fans.

The Maroons later used an 8-0 run to trim a 10-point deficit to 63-61. Michael Weatherburn's reverse layup with 26 seconds left drew Elgin within a basket.

The Maroons got the ball back on a turnover in the final seconds, but J.T. Fortmann's shot caromed off the iron and Schurz grabbed the rebound to end the game.

Afterward, Elgin coach Mike Sitter didn't want to comment on the score discussion, focusing instead on his team's spurt to make it a one-possession game at the end.

"We played exactly like we practice. We practice in spurts," Sitter said. "We don't usually put a full two-hour practice together. It kind of goes hard for a while and then guys start taking it

easy. That's kind of how we played tonight and you can't do that if you want to win varsity basketball games."

Dan Toolsie led the Maroons with 20 points. Tre Morris had 12 points, including a pair of 3-pointers, and Weatherburn finished with 10.

Elgin was at its best when it employed its pressure defense.

"That's how we're going to have to do it, rotate guys in," Sitter said. "We have no natural scorers. We're just going to score off our defense, being aggressive and going to the rim. Hopefully, they learned from that and we can do it for four quarters on Friday."

Elgin plays West Chicago on Friday at 4:30 p.m.

---Daily Herald--- 11/24/17

### 'Together We're Elgin' another success

DAILY HERALD REPORT



Rocio Robledo of Elgin, left, offers a smile and a "Happy Thanksgiving!" as she dishes food with fellow volunteer Kevin Martinez, 8, of Geneva for the community Thanksgiving dinner at First United Methodist Church in Elgin on Thanksgiving Day. Robledo's daughters Victoria, 15, and Emma, 9, also volunteered and are working next to Kevin. **Patrick Kunzer | Staff Photographer**

Residents gathered Thursday for the annual "Together We're Elgin" community Thanksgiving dinner at First United Methodist Church in Elgin.

Dinner organizer Jeff Turner has spearheaded the event for nine years and recently added other community dinners around Christmas and Valentine's Day. He also wants to add a summertime event, likely a cookout at a park and ideally in June.

Thursday's dinner was especially significant for Turner, who dedicated it to longtime **Elgin Area School District U-46 teacher Jean Bowen**, an avid supporter of the dinners, who died in September.

"I miss her being a part of this," Turner said.

As for the food, Turner said 1,000 pounds of turkey were donated by nonprofit organization Food For Friends, and staff at the Grand Victoria Casino in Elgin cooked and carved the meat.

Volunteers at First United Methodist Church served the main dish along with plenty of trimmings and several dessert options.

Jerry Hoover from Elgin thoroughly enjoys his time as a volunteer.

"The blessings that my wife and I receive in doing this are beyond reason," he said.



---Courier News--- 11/24/17

## **Dual language programs extending to all U46 high schools next fall**

**BY RAFAEL GUERRERO**



District officials present a proposal to the U46 school board members calling for the expansion of the district's Spanish/English dual language program. Nov. 20, 2017. (Rafael Guerrero / The Courier-News)

Dual language English/Spanish programs are set to expand into all five high schools of School District U46 next school year, district officials said Monday.

While no vote was taken at Monday's U46 school board meeting, administrators are committed to growing the program, which is already set up in several elementary and middle schools, they said.

"We have chosen to continue on this path because we fundamentally believe to our very core that this is the logical next step for our students," English Language Learners director Annette Acevedo said.

Acevedo and other administrators presented their high school plan to the board Monday night. According to the proposal, dual-language programs — in which some classes are taught just in Spanish — would expand into all five high schools next year with a projected enrollment of more than 730 students total.

The number of students district-wide would likely increase in 2019-20 to more than 850 students, before dropping back to 2018 levels, according to district projections.

The number of potential students in the high school programs mirror the current number of middle school students; the district's dual-language middle school services are provided at five of the seven schools.

Under the structure of this model, students in dual-language instruction would take three or four classes in Spanish per semester.

The expansion would also impact English as Second Language students, whose first languages are not Spanish. South Elgin and Bartlett high schools would house the secondary ESL programs beginning next school year. English Language Learners initiatives coordinator Patricia Makishima said the two were chosen because most of these students reside within the boundaries of South Elgin and Bartlett.

Since 2011, U46 has expanded Spanish/English dual language from preschool classrooms to more than 30 elementary and middle schools. Last school year, the program marked its entry into the middle schools, with five of the seven now providing services.

While district officials and a majority of the board have praised its expansion, board member Jeanette Ward remains one of its most outspoken opponents. Earlier this year, Ward voted no on the expansion of the middle school program while saying some remarks in Spanish.

While she said she has no issue with students learning other languages, Ward questioned Monday whether the program prevented Spanish speakers from becoming fully fluent in English. Many employers, including hers, communicate only in English, despite it having employees from multiple countries, she said.

"There is no such thing as global citizenship," she said.

Other fellow board members, though, defended U46's ambitious expansion. Traci O'Neal Ellis said students should not "live in a tiny bubble," and welcomed students to learn and immerse themselves in Spanish. From her perspective as a human resources director, Ellis said she knows job candidates versed in Spanish and English are attractive to employers.

Earlier in the presentation, Acevedo shared how the number of online job listings in the Elgin seeking bilingual candidates was 40 percent higher than in the average metropolitan area.

Board member Melissa Owens recalled applying to her current job as program coordinator at an Elgin-area nonprofit. The job qualifications for her current job may not have specified bilingual fluency, but many of the other jobs she applied for did.

"There are components to my job that would be infinitely easier if I had those skills," she said.

---Courier News--- 11/24/17

## **U46 board approves geometry course intended to help students with algebra**

**BY RAFAEL GUERRERO**

Board members at School District U46 moved forward with a new geometry course that will incorporate some algebra instruction.

The vote on the Geometry Bridge course — intended for struggling students at risk of falling behind in algebra — was not unanimous. Board members Jeanette Ward and Phil Costello voted no.

Ward, in particular, took fault with examples attached to the final proposal intended to emphasize the course's potential. The examples in question included math exercises regarding Christopher Columbus, global warming and taxes on sugary drinks — examples that Ward found biased.



"Math should not be about man-made global warming, cow flatulence, politics of banning big-gulp drinks, how Columbus was horrible, or the glories of honoring labor unions," Ward said.

"Math should be about math," she said.

Monday's vote did not mean these examples would be incorporated, officials said. The vote was only for the course; textbooks and materials will be discussed in the spring.

In a letter attached to Monday's board agenda, U46 CEO Tony Sanders answered Ward's questions and concerns regarding the math examples. He wrote that teachers were "brainstorming and sharing websites" that were free to use, sites that teachers may have or can use in class. The district's math curriculum does allow teachers to supplement their instruction with other resources, if need be.

"Yummy Math is something we are not purchasing" tonight, said board member Sue Kerr, referring to the free supplemental math website, Yummy Math, that Ward expressed concerns about. Kerr voted in favor of the proposal.

Under the Geometry Bridge high school course, algebra skills taught at the late-elementary and middle school grades would be embedded into geometry instruction. The goal is to reduce the number of students who fall behind or struggle to pass algebra, which district math officials have previously said is about 1,000 students.

Anywhere from 15 to 20 percent of students fail at least one of the semesters of the first algebra course in high school, officials have said.

---Daily Herald--- 11/25/17

### The ups and downs of U-46 enrollment

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



Lowrie Elementary School sixth-grade teacher Deni Alegria, standing center, and dual language paraprofessional Janet Ibanez, standing right, work in a crowded classroom at the Elgin school. Elgin schools' officials might soon have to address low enrollments in some school buildings, while dealing with crowding at others. **Rick West | Staff Photographer**

Elgin schools' officials might soon have to address the underutilization of some school buildings, while dealing with crowding at others, in the face of declining enrollment.

Enrollment in the state's second-largest school district declined by 506 students -- 39,711 in September 2016 compared to 39,205 on Sept. 29 this year.

Declining enrollment has been a trend over the past several years. Factoring in underutilization of buildings and the prospect of losing students to a planned Elgin charter school, Elgin Area School District U-46 officials have said they might be forced to consider closing elementary schools. Officials say they will discuss building use at a future school board meeting.

Declines largely were seen in the elementary grades. Total enrollment among District U-46's 40 elementary schools fell by 503 students -- 526 including special education students. Some of the larger decreases among elementary schools are at Century Oaks and Creekside in Elgin, Glenbrook in Streamwood, Laurel Hill in Hanover Park and Lincoln in Hoffman Estates, officials said.

Eleven elementary schools had enrollment gains. The largest is at Otter Creek in Elgin with 47 students, mostly due to the dual language program, which draws students from Fox Meadow in neighboring South Elgin.

Two elementary schools -- Wayne and Prairieview in Bartlett -- have enrollments of less than 50 percent of their operating capacity.

"It's primarily the aging of the population," Chief Operations Officer Jeff King said. "Most of what we are seeing is because of the declining birthrates in the state of Illinois. Our smallest group is K-2 ... it will be a while before some of that declining trend hits the middle schools."

A total of 2,582 students are enrolled in the district's full-day kindergarten program -- down from 2,715 last year.

Most of the underutilized elementary schools are in the northeast part of the district -- Wayne, Prairieview, Spring Trail in Carol Stream, and Hawk Hollow and Centennial in Bartlett.

Twelve elementary schools operate at 50 percent to 65 percent of their capacity, while 21 are in the 66 percent to 81 percent range. Only seven schools operate within 82 percent to 100 percent utilization, King said.

"We do need to look at, 'Are we being as efficient as we could be in using the space?'" he said. "We haven't had a conversation about it as of yet."

Crowding and the continued use of mobile classrooms is a concern at some elementary buildings, such as Otter Creek, which has a growing dual language program.

"We are in every nook and cranny in the building," King said. "We even use the teachers lounge for music because we don't have any space in the building. We've had to completely eliminate the preschool (there)."

It's the same situation at Huff in Elgin, where preschool was eliminated this year due to enrollment increases.

Class sizes also are a concern at the elementary levels -- the highest is 34 students in a classroom. Of 880 elementary classrooms, 44 have 30 to 34 students each.

Overall demographic trend data shows enrollment is expected to decline 2 percent yearly during the next three years.

Meanwhile, U-46's early childhood program enrollment increased by 33 students over last year. Enrollment at its eight middle schools rose by 24 students, including special education. At the five high schools, overall enrollment is down 50 students; ninth grade is the largest segment with 3,342 students.

## **SPORTS SECTION**

---Daily Herald--- 11/25/17

### **South Elgin downs Sycamore to reach title game**

**BY STEVEN NEMETH**

South Elgin's offense was initially like a drizzle.

It's a good thing the Storm's boys basketball team was able to focus on defense because that's what fueled the 58-41 victory over Sycamore, the host of the 55th edition of the Leland G. Strombom Holiday Tournament.

South Elgin won all three pool play games in order to advance to Saturday's 7:30 p.m. championship against Burlington Central, which swept its pool thanks to a 65-41 win over Rochelle.

With Peyton Wiegmann, one of Sycamore's trio of 6-foot-3 players and the lone double-figure scorer from the first two games sidelined, the Spartans (0-3) employed a very deliberate style of ball, trying patiently to work for optimal shots.

Combine that with South Elgin missing nine shots and committing a series of unforced errors and the tourney hosts led 7-4. Thankfully for the Storm (3-0), Drake Montgomery stepped up by scoring 9 of his game-high 22 points in the opening quarter. Actually Montgomery was the South Elgin offense until David Binion followed a steal with a dunk to produce an 11-7 first-quarter lead.

"Since it was such a slow start, my aim was to just get us going," Montgomery noted. "I was looking for openings and taking shots when I had them. As a team, we just needed to cancel out the bad shots by focusing on the next one."

The last seven points were the start of a 13-0 surge for a 10-point lead. Sycamore answered with a 9-0 spurt to pull to within one (17-16), before Vincent Miskiewicz got his first bucket for a 19-16 halftime tally.

"We came out really slow and didn't shoot particularly well," Storm coach Brett Johnson said. "Sycamore played really good defense and with our shots not falling, it made for an exciting first half. Thankfully we had six or seven guys play some lock down defense. We'd run 30 or 40 seconds off the clock and Sycamore got impatient at times and we did a great job rebounding. We kept shooting and finally found a rhythm and the shots fell."

The Spartans continued to hang in with Payton Picolotti's old-fashioned three-point play -- part of his team-high 11 points -- pulling the hosts to within 25-23. Jace Warrick's right corner trey was followed by three additional bombs -- one by Trace Ashby and two more from Montgomery -- to give South Elgin a 14-point lead. Sycamore had a lone free throw in what amounted to a 15-1 Storm surge. That included the first field goal after the third quarter ended with South Elgin up 41-24.

"Adding a three is kind of my specialty," said Warrick, who also hit 2 free throws for his 5 points that boosted the Storm's third quarter. "Coach wanted us to focus on defense during the run and we did that, plus Drake kept finding open shooters."

"That was probably our best defensive effort of these first three games," Miskiewicz added. "Coach wanted us to hold them under 40 and we just missed."

---Daily Herald--- 11/25/17

## **Elgin can't solve West Chicago**

BY KEVIN MCGAVIN

Jason Gimre was not about to turn down a freebie.

The West Chicago guard converted all 11 of his free-throw attempts in scoring a game-high 21 points; the senior led two other teammates in double figures as the Wildcats rolled over Elgin 66-44 Friday afternoon.

The Wildcats will face Chicago Public League member Schurz Saturday in the final game of their four-team boys basketball Thanksgiving Tournament for the outright title.

"You have to take advantage when the referees are calling all those fouls," said Gimre, who scored 12 of his game-high total in the opening quarter. "(Free-throw efficiency is) going to be the difference when we play some tough teams down the stretch. We shut them down pretty well in the second half."

West Chicago (2-0) had a 15-2 run after the Maroons' team-high man, Dan Toolsie, scored the first 4 points of the game.

The Maroons (0-2) never came within four the remainder of the game.

Gimre drained two of the Wildcats' four 3-pointers in the first quarter.

But fouls would haunt Elgin.

The Maroons ended with 17 field goals to the Wildcats' 18, but West Chicago enjoyed a 26-7 discrepancy in made free throws.

"We were behind the eight-ball because we were a step slow," Elgin coach Mike Sitter said of the 22-point spread. "We are not very talented. We need to come out with more energy. The fouls were on us for not moving our feet and reaching."

West Chicago seized command in the first half as a result.

Entering the second quarter with an 8-point lead, West Chicago duplicated the result to enter the break with a 37-21 lead.

The Wildcats' Sam Ricci had back-to-back possessions to epitomize the West Chicago 16-point lead at halftime.

The junior forward followed a 3-pointer with a tip-in to account for the Wildcats' final 5 points of the second quarter.

"I just have to get what I can," said Ricci, who had his own foul issues in scoring 15 points. "You have to find shots. I can't afford to be out of the game."

Ricci was the only West Chicago player to score from the field in the third quarter, including another tip-in off a missed free throw.

West Chicago ultimately scored a mere 12 points from the field after halftime, but 16 free-throw conversions in the second half more than kept Elgin at bay.

"I have been around this game a really long time," West Chicago coach Bill Recchia said. "The officials are part of the game. You have to adapt."

Isaac Nelson added 11 points for West Chicago.

Toolsie had 14 for Elgin.

---Daily Herald--- 11/25/17

## **Bartlett's Hare, St. Charles North's Davern have milestone days**

**DAILY HERALD REPORT**

Kayla Hare joined some elite company on Friday afternoon.

The Bartlett senior erupted for 34 points in the Hawks' 77-55 win over Rockford Auburn at the Naperville Central Thanksgiving tournament and in the process became the 10th Bartlett girls basketball player to eclipse 1,000 points for her career.

The Missouri-St. Louis recruit now has 1,003 career points.

Freshman Lexie Sinclair added 22 points for Bartlett (2-2), which concludes tournament play against St. Joseph on Saturday.

St. Charles North 54, Proviso West 53: Anna Davern scored a career-high 32 points to lead the North Stars (2-2) to a win at the Hoffman Estates tournament. Annie Tate added 15 points to the win.

West Aurora 58, Oswego 51: Kiyanna Rodgers had 15 points, 10 rebounds, 4 assists and 6 steals while Skylar Doby scored 17 points to lead the Blackhawks (4-0) into Saturday's War-Hawk tournament championship game at Waubonsie Valley against Marian Catholic. Keva Thomas added 7 points and 11 rebounds for West Aurora.

Benet 59, Batavia 42: Geddy Rerko (12 points), Erin Golden (10 points) and Ava Sergio (9 points) led Batavia (2-2) in this loss at the Naperville Central tournament.

Stevenson 44, St. Charles East 29: At the Schaumburg tournament, Sara Rosenfeldt led SCE with 9 points.

Cary-Grove 59, Johnsburg 49: Late Wednesday, Katie Sowa scored 22 points and Vanessa Morris added 17 for Cary-Grove (3-2). Sowa is now 22 points shy of 1,000 for her career.

---Daily Herald--- 11/25/17

## **Larkin pushes Whitney Young to limit before falling by 6**

**BY JOHN RADTKE**

ROCKFORD -- The Guilford High School gymnasium became a land of lost opportunity for the Larkin boys basketball team Friday afternoon.

The Royals went toe-to-toe with defending Class 4A state champion Whitney Young for 32 minutes but in the end, missed free throws, a couple of missed shots and an untimely turnover cost Larkin in a 70-64 loss to the talented Dolphins in the Tip-Off Classic.

"Win or lose we told our guys we've got bigger goals than winning one Thanksgiving tournament game," said Larkin coach Deryn Carter. "We wanted to be a better team leaving the locker room."



For the most part the Royals (2-1), who came back to beat Rockford East 69-61 in their second game of the day, can say they came away with more positives than negatives against Young, even though the scoreboard didn't say so at the end.

Trailing 24-12 early in the second quarter, junior Pierre Black and senior Anthony Lynch ignited a 12-0 Larkin run that tied the game at 24 with 4:15 left in the first half. Black hit two of his six 3-pointers in that stretch and Lynch added 6 points to forge the tie.

But Young (4-0) finished the half on a 12-6 run that gave the Dolphins a 36-30 lead at the break.

"We were on the ropes there in the first half," Carter said. "We talked about playing in big games against big teams. We showed we can take the punch."

Young, which returns three starters from its state title team, extended its lead to 45-36 in the first three minutes of the third quarter but again Larkin took the punch and punched back.

Senior Jalen Shaw scored in the paint, junior Victor Perez hit a 3-pointer, Black nailed a trey and Lynch took a feed from Shaw to bury a runner in the lane and suddenly the Royals, who finished 22 of 48 from the field after shooting just 9-for-26 in the first half, led 46-45 with 2:29 to play in the third. Senior Javon Freeman quickly put Young back ahead 16 seconds later and Shaw made 1 of 2 free throws at the 2:05 mark to tie it at 47. But then the Dolphins went on an 8-0 spurt to take a 55-47 lead into the fourth.

Larkin's demise in the third quarter was 1 of 6 free throw shooting.

"Some of the free throw issues, I think, were fatigue," Carter said. "Shaw played a lot of minutes in that game. They're trying to make them -- maybe a little more mental concentration."

The Royals wouldn't go away in the final quarter, though. They chipped away at the lead and trailed 67-62 after 2 free throws from Shaw with 1:59 to play. Young turned the ball over on the next possession but Larkin missed two shots in the paint. The Royals again got the ball back when Young missed the front end of a one-and one but Larkin turned the ball over with 1:06 left then failed to grab a rebound when Young missed from the line again.

Those missed opportunities allowed the clock to run down and Young made 3 of 4 free throws in the final 50 seconds to hold on for the win.

"I looked up with about 1:20 to go and we were down five and had the ball," Carter said. "Maybe if we score there ..."

Shaw, who scored only 6 points in the first half, ended with a game-high 21 to go along with 19 rebounds as the Royals owned a monstrous 40-19 advantage on the boards. Black added 19 points and Lynch had 16.

Freeman led Young with 19 points and Myles Baker added 14 while Keenan Jones had 12.

In the win over Rockford East Lynch had 25 points to lead the Royals. Shaw added another double-double with 13 points and 15 rebounds while Black added 14 points.

Larkin will conclude play in the tournament at 1 p.m. Saturday at Rockford Jefferson against the host school.

## Press Clippings 11/26/2017

---Courier News--- 11/26/17

### **South Elgin all-girls engine teardown team takes 5<sup>th</sup> in national competition**

**BY RAFAEL GUERRERO**



Members of South Elgin High School's all-girls auto team work on a small-block engine during a competition in Las Vegas earlier in the fall. The team finished fifth in the competition. (School District U46)

It comes as a surprise to many when the teenagers in South Elgin High School's engine teardown team take apart and reassemble a car motor in less than 30 minutes.

It may be an even bigger surprise for some because the team is made up of all girls, making them stand out in what remains a male-dominated hobby and profession.

Their success in one recent national semifinals competition in Las Vegas caused excitement among the members of one of the teams they faced off against — the only other all-girls squad to participate in a contest featuring two dozen schools.

"When they were talking to us, their moms, the whole team told us that they really look up to us," said Jacquelyn Espinoza, a South Elgin senior. "It meant a lot to us. They were acknowledging our work."

The other all-girls team even took photos with the South Elgin team and took down contact information, she said.

South Elgin took fifth place at the Hot Rodders of Tomorrow Engine Challenge, just one spot from advancing to the final-eight national competition.

"Even though there can be chaos, we push it aside and just focus on the motors," said Leanne Driscoll, the team's coach. "We all want to do this. We all want to be part of this wonderful team because it's not something you hear of every day."

The all-girls team was started by Driscoll, who graduated from South Elgin in 2016 but came back to coach the team.

This year, the team focused on one goal: to improve its teardown times. It requires significant practice, Driscoll said, to reduce the time to break down and rebuild an engine from 60 minutes to 40 minutes and eventually into the 20s.



The South Elgin High School all-girls engine teardown team recently finished fifth in the Hot Rodders of Tomorrow Engine Challenge semifinals competition in Las Vegas. (School District U46)

The team's performance in taking apart and rebuilding a Chevrolet 350 small-block engine earned it the trip to Las Vegas last month. The team's average time during three runs at the competition was 25 minutes, 37 seconds. That was more than two minutes behind fourth place but three-tenths of a second ahead of sixth.

"Everyone has to be in sync. It's almost like a difficult, choreographed dance," Driscoll said.

School District U46 has embraced its winning team, live-streaming its engine teardown and rebuild as part of the district's annual expo at Elgin Community College.

That's not to say an all-female team has not resulted in some pushback from men. The live stream triggered some vulgar comments. Team members recalled one of the comments telling them to go back into the kitchen; another called them good "wife material."

South Elgin senior Rachael Walden said those types of comments do get to them and can be "rough" to read, she said.

But they can also help energize team members to show what they can do, Driscoll said. "Even though there are some negative feelings toward us because we are girls, people looking down on us, it gives us strength. ... They're already underestimating us. Once they see us do (our work), then they're proven wrong."

The number of women working in the auto repair industry remains small, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Just 1.4 percent of automotive service technicians and mechanics in 2014 were female, data shows.

"This is a catalyst" that can take the girls anywhere they want to after high school, said Steve Schertz, team organizer and South Elgin auto instructor. Learning about and working on cars will help the girls should they wish to pursue a career in the automotive industry, engineering, another STEM field or something else, he said.

Of the nine years he's led teardown teams at the high school, "this is our most successful team," Shertz said. "This is the most fun group I've had."

## SPORTS SECTION

---Daily Herald--- 11/26/17

### **South Elgin downs BC for Strombom title**

BY STEVEN NEMETH

South Elgin's ability to counterpunch in a championship slugfest denied the Burlington Central boys basketball team its hopes for a third straight title in the 55th edition of Sycamore's Leland G. Strombom Holiday Tournament.

South Elgin hit free throws and rebounded Central's late misses to secure a 64-56 victory Saturday making the Storm the 16th school to capture the annual Sycamore event which dates back to its 1963 inception as the King Corn Tournament.

The Rockets (3-1) rallied for a 44-all tie entering the fourth quarter and pulled to within one (51-50) when South Elgin's Drake Montgomery initially fed Vince Miskiewicz for a second consecutive resounding dunk and then added a 3-pointer to put the Storm (4-0) up 58-50 with 1:22 remaining.

Despite the best efforts of Zach Schutta -- who has made the Sycamore tourney his personal showcase -- and his Central teammates, a variety of shots simply failed.

The Storm triumvirate of Miskiewicz (19 points), Jace Warrick (16 with four 3-pointers), and Montgomery (13) -- who each earned all-tournament acclaim -- proved to be the 1-2-3 combination that denied Central.

"(Central) was figuratively throwing punches and landing them, but we'd land them back," Storm coach Brett Johnson maintained. "We made some big shots and a lot of guys stepped up in big roles against a great team that put us under some obscene pressure."

Central began with a 4-0 lead only to have South Elgin go on a 13-0 run. Then came an 8-0 Rocket counter attack leading to a 19-17 Storm lead after one quarter. South Elgin closed the second with a 7-1 spurt for a 33-25 halftime lead, but Schutta tallied 8 of his game-high 23 and Patrick Mayfield added 6 of his 17 during the third quarter to pull the Rockets even to start the last quarter.

"The tough defense we needed against Sycamore carried over into this game," Johnson insisted. "And what no one can see looking at the box score, Noah (Rohr) struggled against Sycamore and had no field goals, he had only two today, but those were four huge points. They came when Central rallied."

"We knew they were hungry for a third title," Miskiewicz noted. "But we really wanted it more in every facet of the game. In a championship game you can expect a lot of runs."

South Elgin helped its cause with a perfect 13-for-13 showing at the foul line. Montgomery had a trio of 3-pointers and 7 assists, the majority going to Miskiewicz.

"I try to pride myself on being an all-around player, maybe a mini-LeBron, so yes those assists matter," Montgomery said. "Especially if they lead to some of (Vince's) great dunks."

While Warrick considered his 3-point prowess as the payoff to hard work and extra gym time, it was his and David Binion's defensive efforts that drew compliments from Johnson.

"(Schutta) is simply a phenomenal player. David and Jace guarded him tough and he still scored a ton," Johnson said.

"No question he's a very special kid, on and off the court," Central coach Brett Porto said, as if running out of adjectives. "He's versatile on offense and defense, but still willing to learn. Tonight we struggled around the rim, especially early, part of it may have been their length, but we just have to finish stronger."

From his perspective, Schutta accepted being constantly shadowed more so than the outcome.

"Not winning this tourney does feel like something is missing, so it hurts a little. Then again, South Elgin is a real good team and should show it in the postseason," Schutta said. "Being guarded constantly, I simply have to deal with it or better yet, use it to my advantage."

Historically, Central has won the Sycamore tourney four times total, including 1995 and 1997. The Spartans were the first to win back-to-back (1965-66) followed by three straight for DeKalb, six consecutive for John McDougal-coached West Aurora, and two in a row for DeKalb in 1987-88.

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## **Elgin pulls away from Fenton for first victory**

**BY ALLEN OSHINSKI**

At one point, Elgin's boys basketball team scored 15 straight points against Fenton Saturday.

The Bison answered with 14 in a row to get within 1. No matter, the Maroons came right back with a 13-4 run to lead by double digits again. This time, they made it stand up and slowly pulled away for their first win of the year, 49-32, in the West Chicago Thanksgiving Classic

Dan Toolsie poured in 23 points for Elgin. Mike Weatherburn ripped down 13 rebounds as Elgin outrebounded the Bison 32-27.

Diamon King had 8 points and 13 rebounds for Fenton (0-3).

The game was tied at 4 before Elgin reeled off the last 11 points of the first quarter. They scored 4 more to start the second and led 19-4.

"We held them to four in the first quarter," said Elgin coach Mike Sitter. "That's what happens when you come out with that kind of intensity on defense."

But just as quickly, the Bison flipped the script and scored 14 in a row themselves. Five different players scored during the run that got Fenton within 19-18.



A bucket by Trey Morris and a 3-pointer by J.C. Fortmann got Elgin back on track and made it 24-18 at halftime. The Bison, who start four sophomores, never made another run as Elgin steadily pulled away.

"Their pressure is really good," said Fenton coach Chaz Taft. "When you have that pressure when you have freshmen and sophomores as your main ballhandlers it's kind of tough."

Morris and Roy Panthier added 6 points apiece for the Maroons (1-2), who could have won more easily if not for missing 13 of 19 free throws.

Joel Rodriguez and Amari Reed scored 6 each for Fenton.

Elgin led 36-26 after three quarters, then opened the fourth quarter by scoring 10 straight. An old-fashioned 3-point play by Morris and a layup by Evin Jorgensen got the run going.

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## **BOYS BASKETBALL: Toolsie's Time**

BY PAUL JOHNSON



Elgin's Dan Toolsie, right, drives past West Chicago's Raed Haroon at Friday's West Chicago Thanksgiving Tournament. (Jon Cunningham/The Courier-News)

As Elgin's top returning scorer coming into the season, senior guard Dan Toolsie knew he would be relied upon to provide offense.

Through two games, he has done just that, leading the Maroons in scoring both games.

But following a humbling 66-44 loss Friday against the host Wildcats at the West Chicago Thanksgiving Tournament, Toolsie was looking for even more from himself and his teammates.

"I thought about it since last year, that this year was going to have to be me," Toolsie said of scoring. "I've been trying to shoot more."



Toolsie paced Elgin (0-2) with 14 points against West Chicago, the lone scorer in double figures for the Maroons. He scored 20 in a two-point loss to Schurz in Wednesday's season opener.

Toolsie, who battled foul trouble throughout the game, fouled out with 4:30 left in Friday's game.

"He's our top returning scorer, so we knew we'd have to rely on him for points," Elgin coach Mike Sitter said of Toolsie. "His energy needs to improve. It's not all about the points. He needs to get rebounds for us.

"He did a lot more of that stuff Wednesday. He got into passing lanes. He got a bunch of rebounds for us. That wasn't there (Friday). Hopefully, we see a different Dan (moving forward)."

Toolsie agreed when Elgin gets into foul trouble, it takes away one of the things that they do best: create offense from their defense.

"When we get a lot of fouls early, that just messes up the rest of the game," Toolsie said. "Personally, it's hard for me to come back from it too, and I lead by example. When they see me not coming back, they're not going to come back either.

"It's hard, but I have to step it up. The fouls were a big thing last year that I tried to fix, but I'm still working on it this year. Once I fix that, I think we'll be all right."

West Chicago (2-0) was in the bonus early all game, getting there in the first and third quarters. The Wildcats finished 26-for-35 from the line.

"It got in their heads," Sitter said. "All of a sudden, we thought we were playing eight-on-five. We weren't. The fouls were on us for not moving our feet and reaching. We just have to play through that."

West Chicago had 16 turnovers, but Sitter didn't see the same tenacity he saw from his team in the opener.

Jason Gimre led all scorers with 21 for West Chicago. Sam Ricci added 15 points and nine rebounds.

Tre Morris scored seven off the bench for Elgin.

"We came out Wednesday and we brought the energy," Sitter said. "We were the most energetic team on the court. I know we lost by two, but at least we battled and were competitive. (West Chicago) was more energetic. They played harder than we did."

---Daily Herald--- 11/27/17

### U-46 to spend nearly \$15 million on 2018 building projects

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



Senior J.J. Meyer uses an oxygen-acetylene cutting torch during a welding class at Elgin High School last spring. Elgin Area School District U-46 plans to spend \$643,000 renovating the school's welding lab. **Rick West | Staff Photographer**

Elgin Area School District U-46 officials expect to spend roughly \$14.7 million on capital projects in 2018, including renovation of the welding lab at Elgin High School and building a new stadium at Bartlett High School.

The largest expense is \$5 million for upgrading the district's food service facility at 1150 Bowes Road in Elgin. The building will be operational by summer, officials said.

A majority of 2018 capital projects is being funded through what is leftover from \$40 million in loans taken out in 2015 to fund much-needed maintenance work.

"The list is still a little bit fluid. It's still subject to change depending on resources at this point," said Jeff King, deputy superintendent of operations. "There is no paving being done next summer. We just don't have the resources to do it."

Some parking lots that need to be paved will be patched up in the interim, until the district can find the means to fund them, King added.

The school board earlier this week awarded the welding lab renovation bid to Happ Builders Inc. of Waukegan for \$643,700.

Officials said the renovations are required to align the newly approved welding curriculum with industry standards. It will help students learn industry skills leading to American Welding Society certification.

U-46 is in the process of instituting a comprehensive college and career pathways model, building on a network of career and technical education (CTE) programs within six schools.

Welding is the top industry in the region, according to a report issued by the Kane County Department of Employment and Education.

"In order to meet the diverse welding hiring needs, the implementation of a career pathway with a focus on core welding understanding and an opportunity for electives of interest is essential," officials said in a memo.

Students will be trained using state-of-the-art equipment that meets the demands of local employers, improving their chances of finding jobs in the manufacturing field.

Work on the project is expected to begin next month with completion by mid-April.

Construction on a roughly \$1.75 million project involving the first phase of the Bartlett High School Activities Complex also is expected to start soon and be completed by August. It includes installing bleachers seating 1,500 people, a press box and stadium lighting.

That project largely is funded through \$925,000 in donations from the Bartlett High School Booster Club. The district will cover remaining costs through more than \$700,000 in tax revenues and by borrowing about \$466,000 to be repaid by booster club, officials said.