

Press Clippings - 10/06/2023

- Daily Herald - Scouting Week 7 Fox football games

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Geneva quarterback Nate Stempowski (center) carries the sword as he leads the team onto the field last week against Batavia. The Vikings will try to bounce back from that loss with another difficult DuKane matchup Friday at Wheaton North. (Sandy Bressner/Shaw Local News Network)

Bartlett (3-3, 3-3) at **Larkin** (2-4, 2-4)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: **Larkin** won, 21-20, last year.

About the Hawks: Fresh from a 57-20 victory over Fenton last week, Bartlett looks to continue its offensive resurgence against Larkin. Quarterback Vincent Yario directs the Hawks' attack, flanked by receiver Nick Carlos and running backs Filip Szeszko and Nicholas Barton. Carlos ran the opening kickoff back 85 yards for a touchdown last week against Fenton, and later added a 90-yard kick return for a TD. He also returned a free kick 66 yards for a TD, but it was called back due to a block in the back penalty. A year ago, Bartlett and Larkin combined for 3 interceptions, 3 fumbles lost, and 245 penalty yards.

About the Royals: Larkin refused to quit last week against East Aurora, cutting a 13-0 deficit to 13-7 on Jalen Miller's 74-yard interception return for a touchdown midway through the third quarter, and later adding an 8-yard TD run from quarterback Tizairan

Johnson-Williams to trim the deficit to 20-14 in the fourth quarter. With less than 2 minutes remaining, Miller's fumble recovery gave the Royals a final opportunity to pull out a victory to no avail. Kenneth Cooley's punt return for a touchdown was a backbreaker for the Royals last weekend. A year ago, the Royals blocked a PAT attempt late in the fourth quarter on their way to a 21-20 victory over Bartlett. The victory, part of Larkin's 5-game winning streak, helped enable the Royals to reach the Class 8A playoffs. They'll need victories over

Bartlett, Elgin, and West Chicago to become playoff eligible.

Elgin (1-5, 1-5) at **South Elgin** (5-1, 5-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: **South Elgin** won, 49-25, last year

About the Maroons: Junior tailback Fabian Ramirez returned from an injury and scored the Maroons' lone touchdown in last week's 56-7 loss to Glenbard East. "He has been hurt the past two weeks," Elgin coach Anthony Mason said. "He is fueled and ready to be elite." Now, Elgin prepares for a South Elgin team that had its 29-game Upstate Eight Conference snapped during last week's 14-13 nail-biting loss to Glenbard South. "They're always good," said Mason. "Playing them over the years, we realize we must take the focus off them. They are going to do what they do no matter what, and it is our job to stop them and execute at a high level. If we don't do that, it could be a long night for us, but if we do, we will have success that we want to see." What would Mason like to see from his team over the final 3 games? "I would like them to expect progression," said the coach. "I want them to stay together, stay working, and stay loving our culture and program. If we do that and get the right guys in our program and on the field, we will be just fine."

About the Storm: It will be unfamiliar territory for South Elgin after having its conference and homefield winning streaks snapped by Glenbard South last weekend. "We no longer control our own destiny in the conference," said Storm coach Dragan Teonic. "But there are no 3-way ties in our conference -- it comes down to point differential. The good news is that we can still win conference." South Elgin may be without junior quarterback Jack Ginnan, who suffered a lower leg injury late against Glenbard South. Stewart Williams, Jr. and Kevon Brooks, Jr. are capable backups. Defensively, South Elgin is fueled by sophomore lineman Francesco Macaluso, senior linebacker Lucas Noworol, and junior linebackers London Leflore and Brandon Berrios. "We're a young team -- the future is bright," said Teonic. "We need to focus on who we are, handle these next three games, and go 3-0. We can sit and sulk or get better and move on."

Streamwood (1-5, 1-5) at East Aurora (3-3, 3-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: East Aurora won, 34-8, last year

About the Sabres: Coming off a tough 21-17 loss to West Chicago, the Sabres look to bounce back against a dangerous East Aurora team that escaped with a 20-16 win over Larkin last week. Johnny Ray scored on a 1-yard touchdown run, while tailback Taro Ishikawa added lengthy runs covering 38 and 31 yards, respectively, against West Chicago. Aden Strong also caught a TD pass from Alejandro Flores. Defensively, Cris Marquez ran down the Wildcats' quarterback and forced a fumble that was recovered by Ishikawa. "We simplified our game plan a little on both sides of the ball," said Sabres coach Keith McMaster. "We've cleaned up costly penalties and have reduced turnovers." Now, the Sabres must find a way to harness East Aurora receiver/special teams standout Kenneth Cooley. "East Aurora is a well-coached football team with skill in all phases," said McMaster. "We feel some of our previous opponents have put us in a position to compete."

About the Tomcats: Cooley, a senior, returned a punt for a touchdown in the Tomcats' win

over Larkin last weekend. East Aurora has finished with a 4-5 record in each of the last 3 full seasons. With two victories in their next 3 games (vs. Streamwood, West Chicago, and Fenton), the Tomcats would become playoff eligible for the first time since 1982.

Hope Academy (5-1, 3-1) at St. Edward (0-6, 0-4)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: First meeting

About the Eagles: The Eagles have displayed the ability to win close games, having beaten Wheaton Academy (30-29) and Marian Central Catholic (28-26). Quarterback Eddie Jenkins, Jr. has thrown 9 touchdown passes, most of them to receivers Jamari West, Ryan Williams, and Jerome Stuckey. Tailback Jamarkus Lofton averages 112.8 yards per contest. About the Green Wave: First-year head coach Shane Finnane is looking for his first victory. Offensive production has been an issue -- the Green Wave have scored just 2 points in their last 3 games

Aurora Central Catholic (2-4) at Wisconsin Rapids Assumption (2-5)

When: 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 7

Last matchup: First meeting

About the Chargers: Last week, the Chargers fell behind in the opening minute on a kickoff return during their eventual 40-15 loss to Eastland-Pearl City. "It makes it very difficult," ACC coach Christian Rago said of the early touchdown. "You lose any momentum you have on that first play and are trying to climb out of a hole from the start of the game." ACC scored its touchdowns on passes from quarterback Kevin Stanislo to Conor Hickey and Grayson Mayerhofer. Two-way senior Zack Dineen recorded 6 tackles for the Chargers' defense. "Zack has been an integral part of everything we do offensively and defensively," added Rago. "He has stepped in as our 'Mike' linebacker and played both guard and center this year. He broke his hand in Week 2 and has been playing with a club ever since. He is a young man that everyone on the team looks up to."

About the Royals: Assumption is led by senior running back Manny Schultz (91.5 yards per game, 2 touchdowns), junior wide receiver Joseph Johnson (57.5 yards receiving per game), and senior defensive tackle Gunner Krause (5 tackles per game). "Assumption is a small, private school in Wisconsin Rapids," said Rago. "They have had a lot of success even though they graduated 22 seniors last year. They're a triple option team looking to establish the fullback."

Huntley (5-1, 5-1) at Cary-Grove (5-1, 5-1)

When: 1 p.m. Saturday

Last matchup: Huntley defeated C-G 17-14 in Week 6 last season

About the Red Raiders: Huntley beat Crystal Lake South 53-43 last week to become playoff eligible. ... The Red Raiders are No. 8 in The Associated Press Class 8A poll. ... RB Haiden Janke has rushed for 656 yards and has 14 touchdowns, most of any area player. ... QB Braylon Bower is completing 77.4% of his passes and has 824 yards with 10 touchdowns. ... WR Jacob Witt leads the team with 24 receptions after a nine-catch game last week.

About the Trojans: C-G beat Hampshire 41-21 last week. ... The Trojans made the playoffs 17

consecutive years before that streak was stopped last year. Now, they are back. ... FB Logan Abrams leads C-G with 635 yards rushing, while RB Andrew Prio is the team's top big-play threat with 423 yards and averaging 12.8 yards a carry. ... QB Peyton Seaburg has seven touchdown passes among his eight completions. ... C-G's defense has allowed 95 points, third-best in the FVC. ... C-G is No. 6 in Class 6A.

Prairie Ridge (6-0, 6-0) at Burlington Central (3-3, 3-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Prairie Ridge beat Central 63-28 in Week 2 last season.

About the Wolves: Prairie Ridge beat Dundee-Crown 50-8 last week. ... The Wolves are ranked No. 1 in Class 5A, and their 68 points allowed are best in the FVC. ... FB Jack Finn has rushed for 667 yards. RB Dom Creatore has 371 yards rushing, and QB Joey Vanderwiell has 283. ... The Wolves are trying to repeat as FVC champs after sharing with Huntley and Jacobs last year.

About the Rockets: Central lost to Jacobs 28-7 last week. ... The Rockets have battled some injury problems with RB Joey Kowall out for most of the past three games. QB Ryder Bergemann, the backup to start the season, went out, but returned last week. Sophomore Landon Arnold stepped in when Bergemann was out. ... Whoever is at quarterback has plenty of targets with Michael Person (24 receptions), Brady Gilroy (22), LJ Kerr (17) and Caden West (13).

Jacobs (3-3, 3-3) at Crystal Lake Central (4-2, 4-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Jacobs defeated Central 35-14 in Week 2 last season.

About the Golden Eagles: Jacobs defeated Burlington Central 28-7 last week. ... The Golden Eagles need two more wins to reach the Class 7A playoffs for a third consecutive year. Their past three opponents (Central, McHenry and Crystal Lake South are a combined 6-12). ... Sophomore RB Caden DuMelle leads Jacobs with 640 rushing yards, RB Tyvon Boddie is next with 334.

About the Tigers: Central beat McHenry 42-0 last week. ... The Tigers have a 10-quarter scoreless streak on defense. The last team that scored on them was Burlington Central in the second quarter of Week 4. Central's 72 points allowed are second-lowest in the FVC to Prairie Ridge's 68. ... QB Jason Penza has thrown for 1,759 yards with 19 touchdowns and three interceptions. ... WR George Dimopoulos has 33 catches, Tommy Hammond has 25, and Drake Tomasiewicz and Carter Kelley each have 13. ... RB Griffin Buehler has rushed for 613 yards. ... The Tigers have won four consecutive games.

McHenry (0-6, 0-6) at Crystal Lake South (2-4, 2-4)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Crystal Lake South beat McHenry 41-14 in Week 7 last season.

About the Warriors: McHenry lost to Crystal Lake Central 42-0 last week. ... RB Jacob Jones is McHenry's leading rusher with 305 yards. ... The Warriors have struggled to score with an FVC-low 33 points.

About the Gators: South lost to Huntley 54-43 last week. ... QB Caden Casimino set the FVC

record with 551 passing yards in last week's loss. He completed 36 of 65 passes with four touchdowns. Casimino has thrown for 1,493 yards. ... WR Colton Hess has 32 receptions and 8 touchdowns. ... RB Jake Christensen has 489 rushing yards.

Hampshire (1-5, 1-5) at Dundee-Crown (1-5, 1-5)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Dundee-Crown beat Hampshire 36-30 in Week 2 last season.

About the Whip-Purs: Hampshire lost to Cary-Grove 41-21 last week. ... The Whip-Purs led C-G 14-13 at halftime, but the Trojans scored 34 consecutive points. ... RB Cole Klawikowski rushed for 192 yards and now has 725 for the season. ... WR Ari Fivelson has 20 receptions to lead the team.

About the Chargers: D-C lost to Prairie Ridge 50-8 last week. ... The best news for the Chargers was the return of WR Kali Freeman, their best playmaker, who missed two games with a leg injury. Freeman has 19 receptions and three touchdowns. ... WR Terrion Spencer leads the team with 21 catches. QB Zach Randl has 891 passing yards and is completing 62.6% of his throws.

Marian Central (3-3, 3-1) at Aurora Christian (5-1, 4-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: This is the first time the teams have played each other.

About the Hurricanes: Marian lost to Chicago Hope 28-26 last week. ... The Hurricanes felt like a win slipped away against a quality team last week, and now they need two wins in their final three games to become playoff eligible. ... QB Cale McThenia has thrown for 2,078 yards with 25 touchdowns and four interceptions. ... WRs Christian Bentancur (48 receptions, 882 yards, 15 touchdowns) and Rylan Dolter (39, 396, two) are the top receivers. RB Quinn Brady (28 receptions) also gets the ball a lot. ... Marian is trying to reach the playoffs for the first time since 2017.

About the Eagles: Aurora Christian beat Christ the King 56-6 last week. ... The Eagles lead the CCC by themselves and beat Hope 27-22. ... Aurora Christian became playoff eligible last week and will be in the postseason for the sixth straight year. ... The Eagles were one spot from cracking the Class 1A top 10.

Marengo (3-3) at Kaneland (3-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Kaneland beat Marengo 44-3 in Week 7 last season

About the Indians: Marengo lost to Rochelle 47-0 last week. ... The Indians had several starting players on the sideline last week with injuries, which did not help against a tough Rochelle team. ... RB Isaac Anthony has run for 528 yards, RB Connor Sacco has 160, and QB David Lopez has 150. ... Marengo needs two wins in its last three games to extend its playoff streak to five consecutive seasons.

About the Knights: Kaneland lost to Sycamore 22-21 last week. ... The Knights' other losses came against Washington, No. 3 in Class 6A, and Morris, No. 2 in 4A. They have led in the fourth quarter of all three losses. ... RB-DL Josh Mauthe leads the team with 492 rushing yards and also is a defensive leader.

Geneva (5-1, 3-1) at Wheaton North (3-3, 2-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Wheaton North 20, Geneva 13 (2022)

About the Vikings: Geneva's first loss, 21-18 Friday to Batavia, in some respects was further affirmation that the Vikings could be a force to be reckoned with the rest of the season and into the playoffs. Senior QB Nate Stempowski was 17-of-28 passing for 103 yards and ran for 84 yards on 13 carries with two second half TDs as Geneva nearly rallied from a 14-3 halftime deficit. Stempowski will want to reestablish his connection with Talyn Taylor; the standout junior receiver had just three catches last week. Linebacker Tommy Diamond, a leader of the Geneva defense, was injured in the second half against Batavia and did not return.

About the Falcons: Wheaton North, which has won a combined 22 games the last two seasons, is in a dogfight to return to the playoffs for the third straight season after a 20-17 loss to Wheaton Warrenville South on Friday. The Falcons will likely need to at least split with Geneva and Lake Park to earn a playoff nod. Wheaton North was plagued by four turnovers against WW South. Matt Kuczaj continued a stellar season with seven catches for 154 yards and quarterback Max Howser was 22-of-39 passing for 330 yards in the loss. St. Charles East (1-5, 1-3) at Batavia (5-1, 4-0)

Time: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: 41-14 Batavia (2022)

About the Bulldogs: Last week, Batavia made enough plays down the stretch to stave off Geneva from what would've been a considerable upset, given the recent history. At this point, it's about staying healthy and doing what they do best: running the football and controlling the clock as they're looking at a probable postseason-clinching win ahead.

About the Saints: SCE was competitive last week against St. Charles North. After surrendering a 17-0 lead, the Saints pulled within three, but the North Stars were able to get the ball to their top skill positions and ran away with it. QB Mac Paul completed 25-of-38 attempts for 200 yards and ran for 69 yards last week.

Glenbard North (0-6, 0-4) at St. Charles North (4-2, 2-2)

Time: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: 14-7 SCN (2022)

About the North Stars: SCN is hitting a second gear, and has a great chance to reach postseason eligibility with a win. SCN has won consecutive games against Wheaton Warrenville South and St. Charles East. Could this week be a trap game? Anything is possible, but the offense is playing too well with Ethan Plumb to expect any sort of a letdown. Plumb has four games of over 300 yards passing and can put a team on his back. About the Panthers: It's just been a difficult season for GBN. The Panthers' highest point total is 14 points, which has been reached twice.

Marmion (2-4, 0-2) at St. Laurence (5-1, 2-0)

Time: 7 p.m. Friday

About the Cadets: Marmion is juggling a plethora of injuries, but fighting to remain competitive. The Cadets built a 14-0 lead last week, which St. Patrick answered with three touchdowns. Despite retaking a lead, St. Pat's closed the deal with a touchdown late.

Marmion ran for a combined 143 rushing yards. QB Jacob Sullivan had 70 passing yards and 47 rushing yards and a touchdown.

About the Vikings: St. Laurence is cruising in recent weeks, outscoring opponents 80-14 with wins over Benet and Leo. Running back Aaron Ball had three touchdowns last week, while QB Evan Les was an efficient 8 for 11 for 99 yards.

Oswego East (2-4, 0-2) at West Aurora (5-1, 1-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Oswego East 21, West Aurora 3 (2022)

About the Wolves: Oswego East is coming off its second straight loss, 14-10 to Plainfield North, but the Wolves can be heartened by a much more representative result than their Week 4 loss to Minooka. That said, Oswego East's back is to the wall, as the Wolves need to win out against West Aurora, Yorkville and Oswego to become playoff eligible and earn the program's eighth straight postseason bid.

About the Blackhawks: West Aurora is coming off its first loss, 35-13 to Oswego last week, but the Blackhawks are still enjoying their best season since joining the SPC West. Michael Williams ran for two TDs in the game, but the Blackhawks struggled to generate much of anything offensively. Williams has rushed for 357 yards and seven TDs on the season.

Sophomore QB Mason Atkins has thrown for 629 yards and five TDs. The man to watch is Division I football and basketball prospect Terrance Smith, a 6-foot-4 junior with 26 catches for 445 yards and seven TDs.