

## Press Clippings 04/17/20

---The Courier-News---04/17/2020

### Elgin's 'crown jewel'

Renovation of Memorial Stadium is underway; facility should be ready for use by August

By: Paul Johnson



Renovation has begun at Elgin's Memorial Stadium. As of April 10, replacement of the visiting stands, the track and the playing surface was underway. (Photo provided by Case Aerial Imaging )

Elgin athletic director Paul Pennington recalled playing in Memorial Stadium in the late 1980s.

"I remember when Streamwood, Elgin and Larkin all played here," Pennington said. "The grounds crew did a great job, but you get wear and tear because of all the use with all the teams sharing the field."

Thirty years after graduating from Elgin, Pennington is overseeing the long-overdue renovation of the nearly 60-year-old stadium.

Construction began on the \$4.6 million project in late March. Changes to the bleachers, the press box, the track and the playing surface are among the improvements underway. A new artificial-turf surface will replace the grass surface that got beat up every fall.

The stadium is scheduled to be ready for use by August, with a final completion date of Oct. 3.

"Things started to move this year, and it got approved by the board," Pennington said. "It was time. We're grateful. It's one of the oldest schools in the area. This will enhance our students and our community."

Elgin football coach Anthony Mason is excited about what the project will mean to the students. The Maroons went 5-5 in the fall and returned to the playoffs for the first time in nine seasons.

"I can coach anywhere," Mason said. "I can coach on concrete. It's mainly for the kids. It's great to see that our district has invested in our school in something that is nice. That stadium has been around for quite a long time. I hope (the students) really appreciate and understand it."

The project doesn't affect only Elgin's football and soccer programs, however. The artificial turf will allow for practices on the field. It also will expand the areas of activity for physical education students throughout the school year.

"We will have space that we didn't have before," Pennington said.

"Now we'll be able to have that for athletics, PE, marching band. We'll have more access to highlighting what's going on in U-46. We'll be hosting a lot of stuff in the future."

Larkin still will host its football and soccer games at Memorial Stadium, although the stadium will have a decidedly Elgin feel based on signage and Maroons logos on the field, which Larkin signed off on.

"Initially they wanted something neutral, but my principal and I both agreed that if it is something that will benefit the Elgin High School community, we don't want to stand in the way," Larkin athletic director Ethan Karolczak said.

"It will be a neat upgrade. If and when things get back to normal, it will be a source of pride, especially for Elgin. It's a shared facility, but for all intents and purposes, it's Elgin's stadium. We hope someday to have something similar for ourselves."

Bartlett and South Elgin have had recent stadium upgrades in Elgin Area School District U46. Now it's time for one of Illinois' oldest schools to have its turn.

"It's something that everybody can be proud of," Mason said. "I have the vision of driving down Chicago Street and seeing something that looks like the crown jewel of Elgin. It will be good for the Maroons, for sure."

Paul Johnson is a freelance reporter for The Courier-News.

**---Daily Herald---04/17/2020**

**'Youth of the Year' is from Streamwood**

**By: Elena Ferrarin**



Nya Colvin, left, a junior at Streamwood High School, was named "Youth of the Year" by the boys & Girls Club of Elgin and will receive a four-year scholarship from Judson University. Abigail "Abby" Dunn 13, of Elgin, an eighth-grader at Abbott Middle School, won the middle school "Youth of the Year" title.



Abigail "Abby" Dunn, 13, of Elgin, an eighth-grader at Abbott Middle School, won the middle school "Youth of the Year" title from the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin.

Seventeen-year-old Nya Colvin of Streamwood was named "Youth of the Year" by the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin, an award that goes to club members who show leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to a healthy lifestyle.

Nya, a junior at Streamwood High School, will serve as an ambassador for the club and will receive a four-year scholarship from Judson University in Elgin. Nya said she was overjoyed at the news of the scholarship Thursday, when the club announced the award. She plans to study psychology to help people, she said. "I struggle with anxiety so I understand that perspective."

She joined the club at the encouragement of friends who attended and has enjoyed every day there, she said.

"It's the environment. No matter what kind of day I have, I know if I go to the club, there's always going to be somebody who is there for me," she said. "Everybody is so happy and everybody gets along."

This is the third year Judson University has offered a scholarship to the club's "Youth of the Year."

"We are providing a unique opportunity for her to fulfill her academic dreams at the same time we are fulfilling our mission to shape lives that shape the world," Judson President Gene Crume said.

Normally, the winner would compete in the statewide Boys and Girls Club "Youth of the Year" contest, but Nya is ineligible because she has been a club member for less than two years.

Thirteen-year-old Abigail "Abby" Dunn, of Elgin, an eighth-grader at Abbott Middle School, won the Elgin club's middle school "Youth of the Year" title, also announced Thursday.

Abby has been attending the club for almost two years.

"I love the Boys & Girls Club because it gives all kids the space and the chance to be who they are and gives them the space and chance to be great," she said.

The other nominees for the “Youth of the Year” awards were: Jesus Torres and Isaac Gilman of Elgin High School; Desiree Morgan of Streamwood High School; Cristian Cruz of Larkin High School; Saraïd Aguilera of Kimball Middle School; Amori Israel of Canton Middle School; David Taveras of Tefft Middle School; Leonor Nevarez of Ellis Middle School; and Jayla Flourney of Larsen Middle School.

## **Goldie Hawn shares wellness tips with U-46 students and families**

**By: Madhu Krishnamurthy**



Oscar-winning actress Goldie Hawn has recorded a special message for Elgin Area School District U-46 students about resilience, now posted on the district’s website.



Elgin Unit District U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders reached out to actress Goldie Hawn to share her insight about mindfulness with students and families dealing with the stress of staying at home amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Don’t forget to breathe,” Oscar-winning actress Goldie Hawn says in a special video message to Elgin Area School District U-46 students and families.

In it, Hawn shares wellness tips for coping with stress and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The video, which was requested by U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders, is posted on the district's new wellness webpage and on YouTube, and has garnered more than 4,000 views.

Hawn is the founder of The Goldie Hawn Foundation, a not-for-profit whose MindUp program provides children with tools to manage stress, regulate emotions, and face challenges with optimism, resilience and compassion.

In her video message, Hawn talks about bringing positivity into the home during these tough times, reassuring adults they "have the power and the resilience to be able to parent appropriately."

It begins with training the brain to relax, she says, "... because stress is not a good thing for your brain. It's not a good thing for your body. It's not a good thing for how you relate to each other."

Hawn urges taking "brain breaks" and suggests feelings of anger and fear in children and adults can be mitigated through mindful breathing.

"Sit in a circle with your children. Hold hands ... twice a day ... we will breathe in and breathe out together as a family. Hold tight. Things are going to change. Please believe it."

Sanders reached out to Hawn after being introduced to her foundation. The two had been corresponding since last fall, but it wasn't until Sanders heard from U-46 families struggling due to the pandemic that he solicited Hawn's help.

"Our families are really hurting," he said. "The amount of food that we are distributing says it all. So many families are without work now.

"(Students) just miss the human interaction with their friends. I feel the stress myself. Sometimes we do just forget to breathe and breathe deeply."

Sanders connected with Hawn over Zoom video conferencing and recorded the message on Tuesday. Her foundation "does amazing work to encourage breathing and mindfulness activities," he said.

U-46 is providing wellness resources by grade level, and for parents and guardians on its website, [u-46.org/wellness](http://u-46.org/wellness).

District principals, administrators and teachers also are reaching out to check-in with families whose children are not engaging fully in distance learning to see if they need additional supports, Sanders said.

The Illinois Department of Human Services has launched a support line called Call4Calm where people can text a mental health professional with the word "TALK" or "SPEAK" (for Spanish speakers) at 552-020, he added.

# From Rose Bowl to Super Bowl, it's been a good run for Larry Nemmers

By: John Radtke



Former Elgin High School principal Larry Nemmers reached the pinnacle of his NFL officiating career when he was the side judge for Super Bowl XXV in 1991. The New York Giants defeated the Buffalo Bills 20-19.



Seattle Seahawks coach Mike Holmgren talks with referee Larry Nemmers, center, and field judge Mike Weir (50) in 2005 in Seattle. Nemmers is the former Elgin High School principal who was the side judge for Super Bowl XXV in 1991.



Buffalo Bills kicker Scott Norwood misses a field goal on the last play of Super Bowl XXV in Tampa, clinching a 20-19 win for the New York Giants. Larry Nemmers, the side judge in the game, calls Norwood "One of the nicest guys ever."

Second of two parts

Former Elgin High School principal Larry Nemmers, a longtime Illinois High School Association football and basketball official, also was a Big Ten football official for nine years before he was hired as an NFL official in 1985. He was promoted to referee and crew chief in

1991, the same year he worked as the side judge for Super Bowl XXV. He retired from the field in 2007 and finished his career as replay official, working Super Bowl XLVI in 2012.

Nemmers, 76, lives with his wife, Sherry, in Springfield, Missouri.

In today's final Q&A installment, Nemmers reflects on his career after graduating from Upper Iowa University.

DH: You tried out for the Bears in 1965, the same year they drafted Dick Butkus and Gayle Sayers back-to-back in the first round. Ever get hit by Butkus or have to race Sayers?

Nemmers: I was a defensive back and all I remember is you did not want to try to tackle Gayle. He was an unbelievable talent. I played defense, so I never had to worry about Butkus, but I remember him being huge and menacing.

Q: You worked the 1984 Rose Bowl and went to the NFL in 1985. Did you know you were on the shortlist for the NFL?

A: I kind of did. I thought I was going to get in the year before. I was a finalist. It's based on what positions they need, so I had a pretty good idea I'd get in, but you never really know.

Q: Tell us a little known story about Super Bowl XXV.

A: One story from that game no one ever heard about was about George Toma. He was the Kansas City Chiefs' groundskeeper and for many years he has been the groundskeeper for the Super Bowl. The night before the (1991) Super Bowl, the main in the middle of the field broke and the ground between the 45s had sunk about 10 inches and he worked all night to repair the field.

Q: When you were officiating high school and college football, did you ever think you'd wear the striped shirt for a Super Bowl?

A: I never even thought about the NFL, much less a Super Bowl. I just wanted to be a Big Ten referee.

Q: You wore No. 20 throughout your NFL career. Any significance to that number?

A: No, they just handed me the jersey with No. 20 on it. We got to ask for one number and I wanted 14, but Gene Barth already had it so I didn't even ask for it. So I just took number 20 when they handed it to me.

Q: You were an alternate for Super Bowl 35. Do you have one or two Super Bowl rings and where are they now?

A: I do have two Super Bowl rings, one for 25 and one for 46. Alternates don't get rings, but I got one for 46 for being a replay official. I don't wear them out very much unless my wife makes me. I also have four Super Bowl watches.

Q: What's your best memory of officiating Super Bowl XXV?

A: Whitney Houston singing The Star-Spangled Banner. That was during the Persian Gulf War. On Saturday, we had to practice the coin toss and we got to see her sing it a half dozen times and that was incredible. I have a picture of myself with Whitney. I can remember standing on the sidelines next to Bruce Smith of the Bills and we both had tears during The Star-Spangled Banner. I had one foul in the game. I was the deep official. Over the years, I've always said Buffalo had a better team but sometimes it's just not written in the stars. Scott Norwood, who missed the field goal (with eight seconds to play that could have won the game for the Bills), was one of the nicest guys ever.

Q: After retiring from the field, you became a replay official for the NFL. Tell us about that experience.

A: When replay came out I was against it. It came out my first year as a ref and then they canceled it the next year to iron things out and came back with it the next year and now it's just part of the game that everyone accepts. Every game has a minimum of eight cameras. The toughest calls always involved a catch. The NFL has always struggled with what is a catch.

Q: If there were one rule you'd like to see changed in the NFL, what would it be?

A: All the NFL referees have an opportunity to recommend rule changes and every year I recommended the tuck rule. It's OK now but back then if the arm was going forward with control it was considered a forward pass. The other one was stopping the clock on a quarterback sack. I always wrote the NFL and asked why do we stop the clock on a quarterback sack? What I'd like to see changed now is that when there's illegal contact with a receiver it's a 5-yard penalty and an automatic first down, and I've always said it shouldn't be an automatic first down. Also, pass interference being reviewable. I think that's a travesty.

Q: When you think back on your officiating career, what are a couple of things that come to mind above all others?

A: My officiating career allowed me to meet people who became friends for a lifetime. We'd spend two days a week together for almost half a year and because you do it with so many people you make bonds that last a lifetime. Even now a couple times a week I'll talk to someone I worked with back then. You're only as good as the people you surrounded yourself with, and I was surrounded by some really good people.

Q: What are you doing today?

A: My wife and I are self-quarantined (due to COVID-19). I'm the oldest of nine and I spend time on Zoom with my siblings. I'm hoping to be able to get back to playing golf soon. I thank the good Lord every night for the life he's allowed me to live.