

Press Clippings for 10/14/2022

---Chicago Tribune---

Oct. 13, 2022

Elgin teen's Eagle Scout project nets 1,600 pounds of food, other items for FISH Food Pantry in Carpentersville

By: Mike Danahey



Danyal Sulemanjee, of Elgin, second from left, conducted one of the largest drives to ever benefit the FISH Food Pantry in Carpentersville as his Eagle Scout project. He's seen here with some of the volunteers he enlisted to help. (Boy Scout Troop / HANDOUT)

The shelves at the FISH Food Pantry are quite a bit fuller these days thanks to the efforts of one Elgin teen.

Danyal Sulemanjee organized a food drive for the Carpentersville nonprofit as his Eagle Scout project, an undertaking so successful he ended up collecting more than 1,600 pound of donated items — enough to provide more than 1,400 meals, according to FISH President Peter Weldon.

It was one of the largest drives ever done for FISH, Weldon said.

“He did an awesome job. I can’t compliment him enough,” he said.

Sulemanjee, 17, is a senior at the **STEM Academy** at **Bartlett High School** and a member of Boy Scout Troop 32, which is based at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School/Church in West Dundee.

“I chose this project because I wanted to do something that would truly help a lot of people. This project will have a genuine impact on the widespread community, rather than just a select few,” he said.



Danyal Sulemanjee, a 17-year-old Elgin resident, said organizing a food drive for the FISH Food Pantry in Carpentersville as his Eagle Scout project was an unforgettable experience that helped expand his leadership skills. (Boy Scout Troop / HANDOUT)

It comes at a time when there is great need in the community, with many families feeling the bite of inflation and skyrocketing food prices, Weldon said.

“Through September we’ve already assisted as many families — about 5,500 — as we did in all of 2021,” he said.

Sulemanjee contacted the pantry in the spring with the idea for the food drive. Weldon told him, “with a heart-and-a-half, we’d love to get that done.”

He worked out the logistics and received the necessary approvals for the project, which involved knocking on doors in West Dundee and handing out grocery bags to any resident who agreed to donate nonperishable food items, pet food and hygiene products.

“We gave out around 600 bags to homes (Sept. 24) and one week later (Oct. 1) we returned to the same neighborhoods to collect donations that were left on people’s front porches as

instructed,” Sulemanjee said. “In total, I had a group of around 15 people that helped me between two weekends.”

Troop 32 Scoutmaster Tim Pottorff said about 40% of the homes contacted made contributions.



The 1,600 pounds of food and other items collected by Danyal Sulemanjee for his Eagle Scout project is enough to feed 1,400 families, according to Peter Wheldon, president of FISH Food Pantry in Carpentersville. (Boy Scout Troop / HANDOUT)

“The neat part was each bag (on average) weighed about 11 pounds,” Pottorff said.

Sulemanjee said, “I was surprised by the amount of support we received. I hoped that we would get a good amount of support, but I didn’t expect this level of support. Many people even filled two or three bags for us to collect.”

The volunteer crew dropped off the goods at St. Catherine’s, with most put onto a trailer and the rest transported in two carloads to the food pantry in Carpentersville’s Meadowdale Shopping Center. Last week, FISH volunteers stocked shelves with the donated items.

Sulemanjee said the project taught him a lot about leadership and how to adapt when changes need to be made.

“I had to make adjustments to our plans in order to accommodate the number of volunteers we had. It was a great experience and is something I will remember forever,” he said.

Pottorff said the project was a testament to Sulemanjee's leadership skills, which he's been honing. During the pandemic years, the teen was elected by his fellow scouts to serve as their senior patrol leader and under his guidance, the troop doubled from 14 members to 28, he said.

Other Troop 32 members completed community service Eagle Scout projects this year, too, said Pottorff, of West Dundee.

Pottorff's 16-year-old son, Josh, led an effort at Elgin's Bluff City Cemetery to replace the worn and damaged headstones of those who served during the Civil War with new ones provided by the Veterans Administration.

And Anthony Alexandria, 17, also of West Dundee, worked with volunteers to rebuild the playground at First Congregational Church of Dundee in West Dundee.

Sulemanjee said he plans to study engineering in college after he graduates this year but community service will continue to be part of his life.

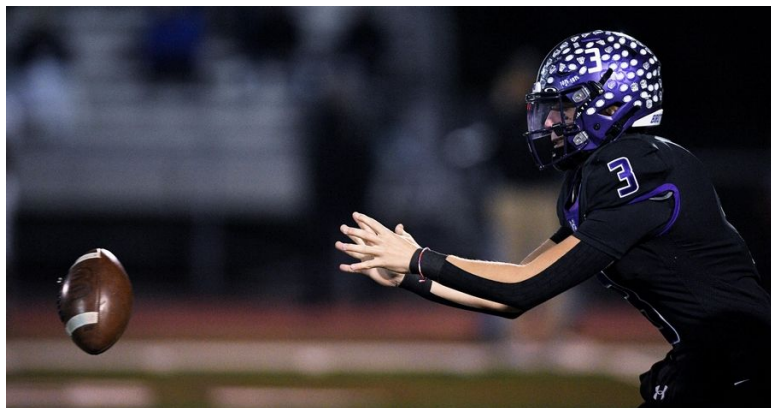
"I hope to continue volunteering and helping people at FISH and other places as well," he said. "I think FISH is a great cause and a great organization."

---The Daily Herald---

Oct. 14, 2022

Five high school football storylines to watch in Week 8

By: Mike Miazga



Rolling Meadows' Evan Grace takes the snap against Elk Grove last week. The Mustangs need one more win for their 11th straight playoff berth. *John Starks | Staff Photographer*

Here are five things to keep an eye on in Week 8 of the high school football season.

Where did the big games go?:

Maybe Week 9 when Batavia and St. Charles North meet likely for the DuKane Conference title. Or St. Francis and IC Catholic Prep square off in a matchup of state-ranked teams, and the best of the Metro Suburban's Red and Blue divisions. And a second Naperville North/Naperville Central game after the Redhawks won the first in OT.

This week, however, doesn't have quite as many marquee matchups. The only game between two Daily Herald Top 20 teams in the MSL: No. 2 Hersey and No. 20 Elk Grove. No. 17 St. Francis puts its 7-0 record on the line against 5-2 Riverside-Brookfield in a game that will decide the Metro Red. On Saturday, No. 5 Glenbard West hosts Lyons in another game that looks good on paper.

Conference races:

That doesn't mean there aren't some important games with two weeks left in the regular season.

In the Central Suburban South, Maine South is 3-0 looking to continue its stranglehold on the title and plays a pair of 2-1 teams, Evanston and New Trier, the final two weeks.

Lake Zurich has Mundelein and Waukegan -- a combined 3-11 -- the next two weeks looking to end Warren's run on top of the North Suburban. Wauconda has a 1-game lead over Antioch and Grayslake North in the NLCC and plays Grayslake North next week.

At 2-1 in the MSL East, Elk Grove gets its chance to catch 3-0 Hersey on Friday. Over in the MSL West, it's looking like a Week 9 matchup between 3-0 Hoffman Estates and 3-0 Palatine will decide things.

The Fox Valley could be headed to a 3-way tie with Huntley, Prairie Ridge and Jacobs all at 6-1 and no games left between each other. St. Charles North has made it through the DuKane at 5-0 a game ahead of Wheaton North and Batavia, but two tough tests await against Glenbard North and the Bulldogs. Neuqua Valley is still perfect to lead the DuPage Valley as is South Elgin in the Upstate Eight, Downers Grove South in the WSC Gold and York in the WSC Silver.

Town Jug on the line:

That's what they play for in **Elgin** every year when the **Maroons** face **Larkin** at Memorial Field. **Larkin** came away with a 30-28 win last year, and a repeat victory will make 4-3 **Larkin** playoff eligible. **Elgin** enters at 3-4 and needs to win its final two games to reach the postseason.

Streaking **Mustangs**:

Like **Larkin**, Rolling Meadows sits at 4-3 looking to become playoff eligible. Meadows has qualified for the playoffs 10 straight seasons and 17 of the last 18.

Cary-Grove, the defending Class 6A state champion, has an even longer streak on the line. At 3-4, the Trojans need to beat Burlington Central and Hampshire for an 18th straight playoff appearance.

Record-setter:

Congratulations to Grayslake North senior quarterback Jake Donohue, now the school's all-time leader in passing yards (4,948) and completions (353).

Tyson Dewey now sits second all-time in the Lakes record books for most catches in a season with 45 -- he needs 18 more to pass Jake Balliu.

---The Daily Herald---

Oct. 14, 2022

Scouting Week 8 Fox football games

By: Mike Miazga



Geneva's Dylan Pratt tries to bring down Batavia's AJ Sanders during the Bulldogs' 35-0 win last week. Batavia looks to improve to 8-0 on Friday when it hosts St. Charles East while the Vikings will try to become playoff eligible when they play at Wheaton North. *Sean King / for Shaw Media*

Fox Valley Playoff Synapse In the playoffs: **South Elgin** (7-0), Cary-Grove (7-0), Batavia (7-0)

Playoff eligible with 5 wins: Hampshire (5-2), Aurora Christian (5-2)

Need 1 win to become eligible: Jacobs (4-3), Crystal Lake South (4-3), **Bartlett** (4-3), **Larkin** (4-3), Geneva (4-3), Marmion (4-3), St. Charles North (4-3)

Need to win out to become eligible: St. Edward (3-4), **Elgin** (3-4), Kaneland (3-4), West Aurora (3-4)

Out: Aurora Central Catholic (1-6), Dundee-Crown (0-7), Huntley (2-5), Burlington Central (2-5), St. Charles East (2-5), **Streamwood** (1-6)

St. Charles East (2-5, 1-4) at Batavia (7-0, 5-0) When: Friday, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Batavia High School

Outlook: Senior night at Batavia. A win here by the Bulldogs guarantees a home playoff game. Highlights from last week's 35-0 win over Geneva include Batavia extending its series winning streak to 11 games in a row, while holding Geneva without a point in the last five meetings. Senior Jalen Buckley ran for 191 yards and scored 4 touchdowns (3 rushing and 1 receiving).

Junior linebacker Jack Sadowsky had 11 tackles. Batavia's defense allowed no first downs in the second half and six for the game. Batavia piled up 249 rushing yards and had 23 first downs. Batavia leads the DuKane by a game over Wheaton North, which plays Geneva Friday. A Batavia win and a North loss would sew up the conference title for the Bulldogs. "St. Charles East is a really proud program that in the past has been one that has given us some trouble," Bulldogs offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Sean Anderson said. "We know they will come into the game Friday ready to battle us. As a team, we need to continue to play lights-out defense and take care of the football. On offense, we want to maintain drives and grind out first downs." Anderson noted Batavia is running about 50-50 run-pass, which with a 7-0 record, is working for the team. Also clicking for the Bulldogs is their defense, which is limiting teams to around 50 rushing yards per game. "We close the season with both St. Charles schools," Anderson said. "We know they are going to give us everything they have. As a team, our first goal is to close out the regular season undefeated and win a conference title."

South Elgin (7-0, 6-0) at **Bartlett** (4-3, 4-3) When: Friday, 7:30 p.m.

Where: **Bartlett High School**

Outlook: Rivalry week as **Bartlett** coach Matt Erlenbaugh calls it. "The ability to control the emotion of the night while executing under pressure will be key," he said. Junior corner Jalen Davis had an interception against Glenbard East, while senior inside linebacker Gabriel Bemont leads the Hawks in defensive points earned. Erlenbaugh noted **Bartlett** has seven different players with more than 50 yards rushing, plus the team has enjoyed a sharp uptick in tackles for loss this year. "This is a critical time for the Bartlett program," he said. "Playoff eligibility and playoff seeding will both be determined in these final two weeks." **Bartlett** needs a win to become playoff eligible and two to be guaranteed a 10th game. "Whenever we play **Bartlett**, I feel you can throw the records out the window and you better be ready to strap it up," **South Elgin** coach Dragan Teonic said. "The game is always physical and nasty and the epitome of high school football. We have to be able to handle the ball better than they do because the game is at their place and we don't have the luxury of playing on a great surface." Teonic has been thrilled with the efforts of Dominic Cianciarulo up front and Alex Rios on the defensive side of the ball. "Dominic has been steady for us the past two seasons and his a big

reason we have rushed for more than 200 yards in 13 straight games," he said. "Alex has been fun to watch grow and improve through his work ethic. He's been a consistent player for us on defense. I am so proud of these two young men."

Larkin (4-3, 4-3) at **Elgin** (3-4, 3-4) When: Friday, 5 p.m.

Where: Memorial Field, Elgin

Outlook: The stakes are high in this annual much-looked-forward-to city matchup. **Larkin** needs one win to become playoff eligible, while **Elgin** has to win out to earn that moniker. Plus, there is the bragging rights factor. "This school is playing well," **Elgin** coach Anthony Mason said of **Larkin**. "They have been together for three years and it is coming together for them. I have known most of these guys since seventh grade and have seen them grow into good football players. In order to be successful against them we have to execute on all sides of the football. They have been playing well and they fly to the ball. How we block offensively, tackle the ball the first time on defense and take advantage on special teams will be key for our success. The team with their best four quarters will be successful." Adam Lambaz has been a huge plus for Mason on the line. "He's becoming a great lineman for us," the coach said. "He is driving people out of the play and requiring double teams on the line of scrimmage on defense. He has made big plays and we are looking for him to have a big game Friday." Clem McCullough has 15 total touchdowns for **Elgin**. "We need these two," said Mason of the final two games. "We let some games get away from us and can make it all up with two victories in these last two weeks." Larkin coach Grant Dietz is well aware of McCullough's potential impact. "To be successful against **Elgin** we have to be aware of him at all times," he said. "They have other really good players too and are soundly coached. He is a dynamic player that you have to account for wherever he lines up on offense, defense and special teams. They scheme up to his strengths and we will have to be ready. With rivalries, records are thrown out the window. This game is big on both sides. We will have to approach it the same way -- prepare the best we can. Know where McCullough is and get them before they get going, be ready for anything tricky, run to the ball and gang tackle on defense. Offensively, we have to execute the offense, minimize mental mistakes and play hard for all four quarters. In the final two weeks of the season there is a lot to play for that we haven't played for in awhile. Each game means

something. The big rivalry with **Elgin** for the jug, plus playoff implications and both want to play spoiler against each other."

To read the full article click [here](#).

---Chicago Tribune--

Oct. 13, 2022

Column: Chevelle Clements-led Larkin accentuates playoff positives under second-year coach Grant Dietz. 'We believe in him.'

By: Rick Armstrong



Larkin's Chevelle Clements (6) avoids South Elgin's Shawn Clausen (11) to gain extra yardage during an Upstate Eight Conference game on Friday, Sept. 16, 2022. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Accent? What accent?

Senior safety/running back Chevelle Clements and his Larkin teammates don't even think twice about the southern accent of second-year coach Grant Dietz, a Virginia native.

The voice may sound different, but they speak the same language — football.

"We kind of accepted him from day one," said Clements, a third-year varsity player. "We gave him a chance, you know, and he took us to the playoffs last year.

"After doing something like that, we believe in him."



Second-year Larkin coach Grant Dietz, whose team last week became playoff eligible, reacts to a play against South Elgin during an Upstate Eight game on Friday, Sept. 16, 2022. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Indeed, the Royals do.

Larkin finished 5-5 last year and qualified for the playoffs for the first time since 2006, losing to eventual Class 7A state champion Wheaton North in the first round.

Dietz, who teaches mathematics, came to the U-46 school after several years teaching and serving as an assistant coach at Rockford East.

He was subbing in the district when he joined the staff of first-year coach Matt Gehrig in 2019 to oversee special teams and help with the offensive line.

One season later, Dietz moved up to head coach following Gehrig's departure, but he still remembers his first meeting with players in the weight room.

"Guys said, 'Wait a minute, you aren't from around here, are you?'" Dietz said, chuckling.

Dietz met his wife, who grew up in the south suburb of South Holland, when both were high school teachers at Chancellor in Fredericksburg, Virginia. They came to Illinois to be closer to her family.

Dietz had played NCAA Division II football at Frostburg State in Maryland.



Larkin's Chevelle Clements (6) breaks up a pass intended for South Elgin's Mason Montgomery (8) during an Upstate Eight Conference game on Friday, Sept. 16, 2022. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

“That helped build a little trust in him, that he knew what he was talking about,” Clements said. “Some players may tell you he runs us a lot, but to me, he wants what’s best for us.”

It also seems to be working.

Seven weeks into his second season, Dietz appears to have the Royals (4-3) poised to make a second straight trip to the playoffs.

Larkin’s remaining games are Friday at home against Elgin (3-4) in the annual battle for The Town Jug and then next week against West Chicago (1-6).

One win makes them playoff eligible. A second win clinches a playoff spot.

The 5-foot-10, 170-pound Clements, who knows something about making a name for himself, has helped lead the way along with junior running back [Jalen Miller](#).

Clements ran for two touchdowns and Miller added one last week — all in the second quarter — as Larkin beat Bartlett 21-20. The Royals batted down a pass in the end zone on the final play to secure the win.

“I’m the fifth in my family,” said Clements, who shares first, middle and last names with his dad and three brothers. “People always say, ‘You remind me of a muscle car.’ That’s a compliment to me.”

Opponents know Clements, according to Dietz.

“Chevelle and Jalen are the two horses we ride,” Dietz said. “We count on them offensively and defensively. They’re our thunder and lightning.”

Larkin struggled early in the season, hurt by graduation losses, and lost to Glenbard East, Glenbard South and South Elgin in the first four weeks.

“Those are the top three teams in the conference,” Dietz said. “After that, anybody can beat anybody. We wanted to compete early and then try to win out.”



Larkin's Chevelle Clements (6) returns a punt against South Elgin during an Upstate Eight Conference game on Friday, Sept. 16, 2022. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

So far, so good, especially with new talent emerging.

“I have 13 seniors, and seven of them are first-year players,” Dietz said. “We have a bunch of first-year juniors, too.”

Last year’s success is helping improve program numbers, which now exceed 80.

The results delight Clements.

“At the beginning of the season, we had people telling us we weren’t going to win any games at all,” Clements said. “When you have haters like that, that’s motivation to prove everybody wrong.”

“We’ve got other weapons.”

It’s not a dynasty, but it’s a start, no matter the accent.