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Elgin, Larkin field own teams after years of co-op

by Mike Miazga, Daily Herald Correspondent



St. Charles East's Sophia Mruk would have qualified for the state meet in two events last year. *Daily Herald file photo*

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Call it the dawn of a new era.

Elgin High School and **Larkin** will field separate teams this fall after a long-standing co-op relationship between the two U-46 schools.

"We are starting a strange season. This is the first season we will be without our long-standing co-op member Larkin," Elgin coach Carl Metzke said. "We are excited and ready to begin the

process of making a team of just Elgin Maroons. We wish Larkin all the best moving forward and hope to stay competitive with them and our other schools in the conference."

Elgin will be led by seniors Ariadna Escobar, Abby Joyce, Charlisa Mao and Myka Suarez.

"Last year was really something and we are still digesting everything that happened," Metzke said of the pandemic-altered season. "We will be working hard day in and day out to get faster in the water."

Larkin is under the direction of first-year coach Oscar Chavez.

The Bartlett-Streamwood SabreHawks co-op team, which won Upstate Eight titles in 2018 and 2019 and was league runner-up a year ago, returns conference medalists in diving school recordholder Taylor Gehrke (UEC diving champion as a ninth grader last fall), Rosemarie Erban (conference runner-up in 200 and 500), Melanie Croix (fourth in breast) and Desiree Oliveros (third in back and fourth in 100).

"We have a fairly young team this year, so it will be exciting to learn and grow as the season goes on," coach Jeremy Meserole said. "We are looking forward to what will hopefully be a normal girls swimming season this year."

St. Charles North is stacked with championship talent and will be in the noise-making conversation when the Nov. 12-13 (state finals dates) time frame rolls around. Angelina Messina and Paige Armstrong are returning double individual sectional champions for the North Stars, while Jillian Wilson and Elizabeth Bawolek also won sectional titles last fall.

Sectional runner-up St. Charles East and coach Adam Musial also are not short in the talent checkbook. Senior Katie Kempff won the sectional diving title last year, while senior Sophia Mruk would have qualified for state in two events (100 and back; and took fourth in the IM). Sophomore Payton Dorman turned in a pair of fifth-place sectional showings in the 200 and 500 as a freshman. Junior Tess Walsh won the fly conference title, while senior Alena Spaniol was conference runner-up in the 200 for the Saints.

"We graduated a big senior class last year so we have some underclassmen who might not necessarily have had the chance to take on starting roles in the past, but are ready to step up and perform in those starting roles this year," said Musial, who added the Saints could have three strong relay teams.

In the Fox Valley Conference, Huntley welcomes back senior Ella Young (IM, fly; 2019 state qualifier) and Jillian Cherwin (IM, 500). Freshman Rebecca Rocks is a name to keep an eye on for the Red Raiders, who won the 2019 FVC title, going forward.

"We have a very solid and talented team with a very strong group of seniors that played a big role in the team's accomplishments over the last several years," Huntley coach Jenna Gaudio said.

Cary-Grove returns Maddie Dolezal (500, 200), Lizzy Fournier (fly, 200) and Molly Gilbert (50, 100).

The Hampshire-Jacobs co-op features senior Abby Murphy (Hampshire) and sophomore Katelyn Mumper (Jacobs).

"Both are role models to the many new swimmers we have this year by their leadership and determination during practice," coach Rebecca Dziubla said. Dundee-Crown is led by junior Alison Fitzgerald (7th sectional breast) and welcomes promising freshman Margaret Nowak (fly).

West Aurora senior Annabel Olivo was third in the sectional in the 100 and back a year ago, while junior Kylee Blaha (500) and divers Addison Salach and Grace Weisse will help the Blackhawks as well.

Rosary difference-makers include senior Sara Jass, juniors Kennedy Grosklaus and Meghan Eng, sophomore Lauren O'Connor and freshmen Becky Rentz and Elizabeth Nawrocki. The Beads won a conference title a year ago.

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Prep football: Fenton-South Elgin game canceled because of COVID

by John Lemon

Updated **8/23/2021 9:14 AM**

The season opening football game between **South Elgin** and Fenton scheduled for Friday night has been canceled.

"Yes, we had to forfeit week one due to COVID-19 concerns," Fenton coach Matthew Lynch said.

Storm athletic director Mike Jezioro said South Elgin is looking for a new opponent so they can still play Friday.

"As of right now, we do not have a varsity game for Friday," Jezioro said. "We are working on getting a replacement game."