

Press Clippings 09/04/2021 – 9/07/2021

---Daily Herald--09/05/2021

Suburban School COVID-19 outbreaks nearly triple this week

by Jake Griffin



COVID-19 outbreaks in Illinois schools nearly tripled over the past week, according to data from the Illinois Department of Public Health released Friday. *Rick West | Staff Photographer, August 2020*

Twenty-two more suburban schools reported COVID-19 outbreaks this week, nearly three times as many as a week ago.

That's according to Illinois Department of Public Health records that show [school outbreaks statewide grew from 26 schools in 14 counties a week ago](#) to 81 schools in 28 counties Friday.

A week ago, eight schools in suburban Cook, Kane and Will counties were reporting outbreaks. Friday, the state reported outbreaks in six more Cook County schools, four more in Kane County schools and six more in Will County, as well as four new outbreaks in McHenry County schools and two in DuPage County.

IDPH defines an outbreak as two or more cases linked through school exposure, whether in a classroom or sports setting. The information is updated every Friday on [the agency's website at dph.illinois.gov/covid19](https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19).

In Northwest suburban Cook County, Hoffman Elementary in Glenview and Lincoln Elementary in Palatine were among the new schools reporting outbreaks. The outbreaks at both schools involved fewer than five students.

Outbreaks at **Glenbrook Elementary School** in Streamwood and Maine East High School in Park Ridge had been previously reported.

The remaining outbreaks occurred in schools in western and southern parts of Cook County, according to IDPH reports.

In DuPage County, Owen Elementary in southern Naperville and Downers Grove South High School reported outbreaks involving fewer than five students. The Downers Grove South outbreak was attributed to sports activities.

In Kane County, **Fox Meadow Elementary** in Elgin reported fewer than five cases among students. Gary D. Wright Elementary in Hampshire reported fewer than five cases among students in that outbreak.

Holy Angels Catholic School in Aurora reported five to 10 students and staff were positive for the virus. And Sleepy Hollow Elementary saw five to 10 staff and students infected in the outbreak.

All four new outbreaks were attributed to classroom exposure, according to IDPH records.

Outbreaks at East Aurora High School and Sugar Grove's Kaneland John Shields Elementary had previously been reported.

In McHenry County, [Conley Elementary in Algonquin saw five to 10 students and staff](#) members test positive this week in its outbreak. Hannah Beardsley Middle School in Crystal Lake is reporting fewer than five students tested positive.

Martin Elementary in Lake in the Hills reported fewer than five infections in that school's outbreak. Spring Grove Elementary reported fewer than five cases among the staff.

In Will County, new outbreaks at schools were reported in Beecher, University Park, Joliet and Mokena. There were two new outbreaks in New Lenox elementary schools, according to IDPH records. New Lenox and Braidwood schools had previously reported outbreaks.

While only those 12 and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines, Gov. J.B. Pritzker urged those who can get an inoculation to do so.

"We're so close to getting over the hump, to getting to herd immunity, if we can just get people past their hesitancy," he said Friday at an event in Chicago. "It's a simple thing to do and available everywhere you go."

Pritzker also announced he is extending the deadline for health care workers and school employees to get vaccinated after discussions with education and hospital leaders. Those workers will now need to receive their first inoculation by Sept. 19 under the new rules.

---Chicago Tribune--09/04/2021
COVID-19 outbreaks in Illinois schools triple since last week, but some take issue with the state's new definition of an outbreak
by Karen Ann Cullotta

Illinois reported 81 COVID-19 outbreaks in schools Friday — more than triple the number from the previous week and spiking exponentially just weeks after students began returning to full-time in-person classes.

The numbers are based on the Illinois Department of Public Health's updated definition of a school outbreak, which tightened the criteria from five related cases to two.

During the virus surge last fall, IDPH increased the outbreak criteria to five, with the exception of some health care settings, "so local health departments could best handle the volume," according to agency officials.

But on Aug. 9, the state health department shifted back to the two related cases threshold — the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's suggested definition — and on Friday, officials said they have no plans to return to the looser criteria anytime soon.

Now, as thousands of Illinois schools fully reopen for the first time in 18 months, the two-case criteria appears to be fueling a surge of reported school outbreaks this fall. And according to some experts, that is not necessarily a bad thing.

"I was initially surprised to hear that the definition of an outbreak had changed to be less stringent, because decreasing the number of cases to define an outbreak is undoubtedly going to yield more outbreaks in schools," said Mercedes Carnethon, vice chair of preventive medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Carnethon acknowledged the label "outbreak" has consequences, triggering fear among parents and educators, and threatening the ability for schools to keep their doors open to students for in-person learning.

"However, in light of the current surge and the infectiousness of the delta variant, I agree with the decision to lower our threshold," Carnethon said. "I believe it is the right choice because the delta variant is highly infectious and the unvaccinated have experienced the greatest burden of illness."

Children under age 12 make up one of the largest population groups who are unvaccinated, she said.



Students arrive for the first day of school in Chicago on Monday, Aug. 30. (Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune)

“As careful as school districts and teachers have been to try to prevent COVID-19 spread, cases will come into the school while the burden is high in the community,” Carnethon said.

According to the CDC, definitions for COVID-19 outbreaks are relative to the local context, but a “working definition of ‘outbreak’ is recommended for planning investigations,” officials said.

Although school outbreaks can mean more students in quarantine and more interruptions of classroom learning, some educators say remaining vigilant this fall will pay off in the long run, keeping students and staff safe, and ensuring schools remain open.

“We’ve taken the position we don’t want to make these health decisions, and we trust the experts,” said John Burkey, executive director of the Large Unit District Association.

“We respect the fact the state has made these decisions, but all of the quarantines and testing to stay is absolutely overwhelming our schools this fall,” Burkey said.

While officials at Maine Township High School District 207 said they fully support the state’s efforts to report clusters of cases in an effort to halt the spread of the virus, “utilizing the word ‘outbreak’ is problematic and confusing to the public,” District 207 spokesman Brett Clark said.

Clark said the district has reached out to “IDPH multiple times this week to further understand the data,” but has yet to hear back from the agency.

District 207 has been very transparent, Clark said, posting information about COVID-19 cases weekly on the district’s website for all three high schools, but he said the IDPH terminology and determination on what constitutes an outbreak is “problematic for parents, students and staff.”

IDPH currently updates the school outbreak data on its website weekly, and includes a virtual map of Illinois that indicates which counties are experiencing outbreaks.

But while the outbreaks are listed alphabetically by school name, the data does not include the specific district or town where the school is located — an omission that can be confusing, given there can be several Illinois schools with the same name.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior public health medical officer with the Cook County Department of Public Health, said “the lowering of the threshold, and in the midst of delta, means that we are likely to see more outbreaks.”

Nevertheless, Rubin said because the “close contact” definition in schools has changed, “our hope is that, ultimately, fewer children will miss school.”

In addition, Rubin said many Illinois schools are using the Shield test developed at the University of Illinois for regular COVID-19 screening, which is also able to provide “test-to-stay capabilities, again so that kids can stay in school even if they are potentially exposed.”

Despite having to close one classroom at Glenbrook Elementary School in Streamwood due to the new threshold, **Elgin-based Unit School District 46 Superintendent Tony Sanders** said he supports the more stringent outbreak criteria.

“I have no concerns and would rather err on the side of what health experts believe is appropriate to ensure student and staff safety,” Sanders said.

Officials at Arlington Heights-based Township High School District 214 said Friday they have yet to feel the impact of an outbreak at the district’s six high schools.

“We have certainly had our share of positive cases and subsequent close contact quarantines; however, none of our buildings (to date) have been identified as outbreak locations,” District 214 spokeswoman Stephanie Kim said.

While school districts might soon be scrambling to deal with soaring numbers of students in quarantine and a need to pause in-person learning for some classrooms in the coming weeks, experts say the preventive measures are imperative.

“When outbreaks happen in school, they often start outside of school because of activities that families are engaged in that pose some risk for contracting COVID,” said Carnethon, with Northwestern. “The fear and concern that will naturally arise when a school is labeled as having an outbreak and may have to shut down in whole or part could result in some positives. Namely, experiencing an outbreak should serve as a reminder to families about their responsibilities outside of school in keeping the community and our schoolchildren safe.”

---Daily Herald--09/04/2021

Elgin police chief notes car burglaries near Larkin High School

by James Fuller

The month of August saw several car burglaries near **Elgin's Larkin High School**, Police Chief Ana Lalley said during her weekly radio show Friday.

The police department's crime stats show at least seven car burglaries within a half-mile radius of Larkin High. Police believe many burglaries are happening in the overnight hours and being discovered and reported to police as residents go out to their cars to leave for work.

The burglaries occurred in the 1500 block of Maple Drive, the 0-100 block of N. Jane Drive, the 0-100 block of S. Lyle Ave., the 200 block of Maureen Drive and the 100 block of N. Weston Ave. In most incidents, the vehicles were left outside and unlocked.

Lalley reminded residents to not make themselves an easy target for crime.

"If you like it, lock it," she said. "Please lock your car doors. When (burglars) see an opportunity that's easy, that's what happens sometimes."

Police posted a city alert about the burglaries on social media and followed up with a foot patrol of the area this week to remind residents to lock their car doors.

Lalley said sometimes if nothing too valuable was taken, residents don't report the burglaries to police. She encouraged residents to report those burglaries regardless of what was taken so police can identify trends and beef up patrols when necessary.

---Chalkbeat--09/04/2021

What's keeping Illinois school district leaders up at night?

Finding bus drivers

by Samantha Smylie

As Illinois districts grapple with a school bus driver shortage, they are finding creative ways to fill vacancies: from using federal emergency funding for sign-up bonuses to hanging out at school bus stops to recruit drivers from neighboring districts.

Elgin U-46, the state's second-largest district, even tried to lure job applicants with a summer recruiting event where curious members of the public could practice driving a bus in a parking lot.

Even so, the district, where the school year started on Aug. 16, still has 40 bus driver vacancies.

"Every district is struggling," said Beth Lapa, the assistant director of transportation.

Illinois districts, in the midst of reopening schools after in-person learning had been suspended for over 18 months due to the coronavirus pandemic, are now also facing a bus driver shortage that has hit districts across the country

According to a national survey by the National Association for Pupil Transportation and two other school transportation organizations, half of the almost 1,500 school transportation coordinators surveyed described their driver shortage as "severe" or "desperate." About 78% said the shortage is getting "much worse" or "a little worse"

A number of factors have contributed to the shortage, the survey found, including route changes because of COVID-19, a lengthy hiring process, and the rate of pay for drivers.

In Illinois, a wave of early retirements and resignations contributed to the shortage, Lapa said. Some bus drivers burned out after an increase in summer routes due to summer school. Vaccine mandates may also be impacting demand, she said.

The shortages have already impacted thousands of students in schools around the state.

On the first day of school in Chicago, that district was left scrambling to find transportation for almost 2,100 students because 10% of bus drivers resigned. The district plans to give \$1,000 to families to cover the first two weeks of school and the mayor said she reached out to Uber and Lyft for help. Some school bus driver companies that work under contract with Chicago are offering sign-up bonuses of as much as \$3,000.

It's not just a big city problem. In central and southern Illinois, districts have flagged the need to fill permanent bus driver positions and substitutes.

Bloomington District 87 has 12 vacant bus driver positions. McLean County Unit 5 is looking for substitute drivers. Granite County School District 9 is down 32 bus drivers, with many drivers calling out sick.

In the west suburbs of Chicago, Bellwood School District 88, which serves about 2,300 students, has given some parents gas cards, while mechanics employed by the district have also stepped up to drive bus routes.

Transportation has always been a complex issue for Illinois districts, but the pandemic has made it worse.

Schools are mandated to provide transportation to students in foster care, those facing homelessness, and students with disabilities. In Illinois, some districts are required to provide free transportation to all students; others must offer service to students who live more than one-and-a-half miles away from their school.

Bellwood has seen bus routes running behind schedule, according to Victoria Hansen, the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. The district has to create bus routes and stops for six suburbs where students live — Broadview, Maywood, Bellwood, Hillside, Melrose Park, and Stone Park. Already, the school district has seen

Another concern for suburban school districts is meeting transportation requirements for students with Individualized Education Programs. All Illinois districts are responsible for providing bus service to therapeutic day schools and picking and dropping students at their home address instead of a bus stop.

Hansen said that wondering if the school buses will run on time keeps her up at night.

“When I say every minute counts and every moment matters with transporting students,” said Hansen, “it truly does.”

The Illinois State Board of Education has sent guidance to districts on how to spend federal emergency funds to deal with the bus driver shortage. Districts can use funding for bus recruitment activities, sign-on bonuses, and stipends to parents who transport their children.

The state board also suggested that school districts create before- and after-school programs for working parents whose work hours clash with drop-off and pick-up times and work with community organizations to transport students to after-school programs.

One of the state board’s other recommendations is for districts to use federal funding to contract with local mass transit agencies. That, however, may not work for the state’s estimated 500 rural school districts.

While some large and suburban school districts can turn to public transit to transport some students, rural school districts rely on bus transportation, according to Dave Ardrey, executive director of the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Districts.

“Communities and schools rely on buses. They drive hundreds, if not thousands, of miles a week to move kids,” said Ardrey. “Buses are critical.”

Cassie Walker Burke contributed to this report.

---Daily Herald--09/05/2021

Former U-46 teacher scholarship foundation sends Kenyan kids to school

by Eileen O. Daday



Brett Weiss of Naperville, who created the HOPE Weiss Scholarship Foundation to help children in Dago, Kenya, talks to Phancy at Kadika Girls High School in Kenya. They are reviewing her report card and talking about ways to overcome her challenges. *Courtesy of Brett Weiss*

Brett Weiss taught social studies for more than 12 years at **Bartlett High School**, where he lined his classroom walls with meaningful quotations from around the world.

Among his class load was teaching international relations, and now, in retirement, he is promoting what he taught: that children around the world need access to a quality education.



Preschool children in Dago, Kenya, hold up new toothbrushes that were donated by a local dentist. - *Courtesy of Brett Weiss*

While Weiss was still teaching, he took what turned out to be a life-changing trip to the small, rural village of Dago in southwestern Kenya. Visiting one of its schools and meeting the students haunted him until 2011, when he set out to help them.

For the last 10 years, Weiss, a Naperville resident, has run the [HOPE Weiss Scholarship Foundation](#) that enables children in this poor village to attend high school.

"The village of Dago is home to around 3,000 people -- virtually all of whom are among the poorest on earth, with an average family income of less than \$2 per day," Weiss said.

"Most children quit school around the fourth grade because they do not see the point in continuing an education that will not extend past primary school.

"Instead of attending school," he added, "they try to get a job working in the fields, making around \$1 daily."



Retired Bartlett High School teacher Brett Weiss talks to Julius at Awendo Boys High School in Kenya about how well he's doing after reviewing his report card. - Courtesy of Brett Weiss

Weiss created the foundation with the goal of sending the village's children to high school. Since its creation, more than 70 children have continued their education. Each scholarship provides not only their tuition, but room and board, books, uniforms and associated costs. Weiss's goal is to provide an equal number of scholarships to girls and boys.

He promotes the scholarship tirelessly in appearances before local organizations, libraries and faith communities. This summer alone, he drew members of the [Rotary Club of River Cities](#) -- which takes in Des Plaines, Mount Prospect and Prospect Heights -- to sponsor a student.



A group of the preschool children in Dago excitedly hold up new toothbrushes donated by a local dentist. -
Courtesy of Brett Weiss

Weiss also drew the support of the Viatorians, who stepped up to sponsor five students to attend high school.

"We've been doing interfaith work together for about 10 years," said the Rev. Corey Brost, a Viatorian priest who founded the Children of Abraham Coalition to build understanding, respect and relationships between Christians, Jews and Muslims. Weiss serves on its board.

"The scholarship offers these kids an opportunity for everything I took for granted -- an education and opportunity," Brost said.

Andrew Ullman serves as international service chair for the Rotary Club of River Cities. While Rotarians traditionally concentrate on projects that involve health, education, promotion of peace and the environment, their recent projects have focused on education.

"We see this as a way to leverage our resources in an efficient way to create long-term, sustainable changes in people's lives," Ullman said.

The club is sponsoring a young girl named Vans Sheryl Olouch to attend a private high school for the next four years; however, they are doing more than writing a check.



Vans Sheryl Olouch is being sponsored by the Rotary Club of River Cities to attend a private high school for the next four years. Rotarians plan to mentor her as well as contribute financially. - Courtesy of Brett Weiss

With their broad skill sets among its members, they hope to provide her with mentoring as she considers career options and possibly pursuing higher education.

"Last month we had a Zoom meeting with her and we expect to have regular meetings with her throughout the term of her high school education," Ullman said. "Our goal is to have an active role in her education and development rather than just sending money for her education and having no further involvement."

To find out more about the Weiss Scholarship Foundation and how to support its mission, visit weissscholarshipfoundation.org.

---Daily Herald--09/04/2021

Bartlett wins wild one over Streamwood

by Craig Brueske

Held scoreless in its season opener 7 days earlier, **Bartlett's football team** lit up the scoreboard with 59 points Friday night against **Streamwood**.

And the Hawks (1-1, 1-1) needed every one of them.

Quarterback Jacob Searce's 34-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Gabe Bemont with 1:39 remaining in the fourth quarter, and Krish Agrawal's extra-point kick provided the winning points during the Hawks' improbable 59-58 Upstate Eight Conference victory over the Sabres (1-1, 1-1) in Bartlett.

Linebacker Dominic Harris' fumble recovery at the Sabres' 42-yard line with 1:10 left sealed the deal for the Hawks, as the two teams combined for 117 points and 40 first downs.

"I haven't experienced anything like that," said Hawks coach Matt Erlenbaugh. "It was good to come out with a victory in that one."

Trailing 58-45 with 5:19 remaining, the Hawks closed the gap to 58-52 on Bemont's 20-yard TD catch of a Searce pass with 4:25 left.

Following a defensive stand -- one of the few in the game by either team -- Bartlett marched 70 yards in 6 plays to take the lead for good on Searce's 4th touchdown pass of the night.

Bemont finished with 5 catches for 114 yards and 3 TDs as the Hawks celebrated an emotional win.

Two students, including junior starting offensive lineman Alex Czerwik, were killed in an automobile crash last month.

"The first thing I said yesterday when we were talking as a team was that this wasn't for us," said Bemont. "It was to prove our love for Alex (Czerwik) is stronger than what we show on the field."

"I don't know what happened. I guess some miracle happened. Alex touched his hand down on us."

The win overshadowed an amazing performance from the Sabres' triple-option offense.

Backs Isaac Martinez (29 carries, 226 yards), Michael Estrada (33 carries, 196 yards) and Taro Ishikawa (18 carries, 87 yards) combined for 509 of the Sabres' 515 yards rushing.

"We took them to within two yards of winning that game," said Streamwood coach Keith McMaster, whose team was denied its first win over Bartlett since 2002. "We were right there.

"But that's not our end goal. Our goal wasn't beating Bartlett. Our end goal is to make the playoffs. We've got to learn from it and get better."

Bartlett's James Knight finished with 6 carries for 208 yards and 3 rushing touchdowns, while adding another on an 83-yard kickoff return in the opening quarter.

"James played like a man tonight," said Erlenbaugh. "Our entire offensive unit was outstanding."

---Daily Herald--09/04/2021
Dietz wins 1st game at Larkin
by Jared Birchfield, Daily Herald Correspondent

Grant Dietz will remember his first win as **Larkin's head coach**.

It was all Royals in the team's Friday night Upstate Eight matchup with Fenton in Bensenville.

Larkin (1-1) scored 49 unanswered points in the first half on its way to a 56-0 win over the Bison.

"It was a very impressive win," Dietz said. "For the players to play like they did tonight in my second game as varsity coach, it makes me very proud of them."

The Royals' defense accounted for the first two touchdowns posted on the scoreboard. Jamarion Stubbs picked off a Nathan Stewart pass and returned it 18 yards for the first TD five minutes into the game. The pick-six atoned for an opening Larkin kickoff return touchdown that was called back due to a penalty.

On Fenton's next possession, Larkin linebacker Jalen Miller scooped up a fumbled pass reception and scrambled for 25 yards to put the Royals up 14-0 at the 4:11 mark of the first quarter.

After an unproductive first possession, Larkin's offense game alive, scoring on the team's five other first half possessions.

Quarterback Dontrell Maxie's passing drove Larkin's offense in the first 24 minutes of play. The senior completed eight of 11 pass attempts for 204 yards. Three of the completions resulted in TDs: an 18-yarder to Tim Scott; a 54-yard bomb to Chevelle Clements; and a 37-yard toss to Erick Myrik.

Maxie scored one of the TDs himself on 1-yard scamper.

The final Larkin score of the half was also a pass. DeArrius Clary replaced Maxie for the Royals' final drive of the second quarter. He ended the possession with an 11-yard strike to Stubbs.

In addition to converting all of his PATs, Hector Flores helped set up a Larkin score when the junior intercepted a Stewart pass.

Larkin finished the night with 319 yards gained. Jalen Miller was the team's leading rusher with 38 yards on five carries.

Clardy finished the team's scoring with a 27-yard run in the third quarter.

"All three phases of the game came together," said Dietz. "Offensively, we made plays. Defense gave us good positions and it was a downhill fight for us all. It was a quality Fenton team, a very tough Fenton team. They have a lot of youth and will be good in a couple of years."

"It was a good win. We played as a team. We played good defense and our offense was flowing," Stubbs said. "I hope we can carry it over to next week."

The Bison were unable to get their offense on track. Larkin held Fenton to a total of 36 yards. Fenton played its first game after it had to cancel last week's matchup against South Elgin because of COVID concerns.

"Larkin put one on us," said Fenton coach Matt Lynch. "Some of our kids played OK, played decent and were able to get some experience. We have a lot of young kids."

---Aurora Beacon-News--09/04/2021
‘One I’ll tell my kids about’: Gabriel Bemont’s touchdown catch with 1:39 left lifts Bartlett to 59-58 win against Streamwood
by Paul Johnson

With the game on the line Friday, Bartlett senior receiver Gabriel Bemont had the perfect read.

Bemont saw the safety bite on a play fake and took off, and quarterback Jacob Searce found him for a 34-yard touchdown with 1:39 left to give Bartlett a wild 59-58 Upstate Eight win against Streamwood.

“We have a play that is designed for me to crack in and James (Knight) to go outside,” Bemont said. “Rarely do we ever do a crack pass. As soon as I saw the safety come up, I just split down the middle, and it was a great ball by Jacob and a touchdown.”



Bartlett's Gabriel Bemont (19) pulls in a long pass in front of Streamwood's Isaac Martinez (4) during a game at Bartlett on Friday, Sept. 3, 2021. (Brian O'Mahoney / The Courier-News)

It was one of Searce's four touchdown passes in the second half. Three went to Bemont.

The Hawks (1-1, 1-1) trailed 58-45 with 5:12 left. Searce started the comeback against Streamwood (1-1, 1-1) with a 20-yard TD pass to Bemont.

After recovering a Streamwood fumble, Bartlett faced a fourth-and-5. Knight broke off a 16-yard run to get the first down, and on the next play Searce hit Bemont for what turned out to be the game-winner.

"It was just crazy because we were down and that play was amazing," Searce said. "The captains just told the guys to have faith in the team, keep your heads up. Senior year, to come back from two touchdowns, that's something really to remember."

Streamwood ran for 271 yards on 48 carries in the first half. But Bartlett held a 25-24 lead halftime largely due to special teams. Knight had an 83-yard kickoff return for a touchdown. On the ensuing kickoff, Streamwood coughed the ball up, and Jalen Davis took it 15 yards for another TD.



Streamwood's Isaac Martinez returns a kickoff during a game at Bartlett on Friday, Sept. 3, 2021. (Brian O'Mahoney / The Courier-News)

Bartlett ran just 15 offensive plays in the half and had possession for 14:43 over the course of the game as Streamwood dominated the line of scrimmage offensively.

The Sabres ran for 526 yards and eight touchdowns on 79 carries, attempting only two passes. Michael Estrada and Isaac Martinez, who had four TDs, each ran for 225 yards.

"Our offense, everything for these guys, is meant to be a team effort," Streamwood coach Keith McMaster said. "If you see our offense is running, our quarterback makes blocks. Everybody is part of the plays."

Streamwood was aiming for its first win against Bartlett since 2002 but came up just short.

"We're right there," McMaster said. "That's not our end goal. Our end goal isn't beating Bartlett. Our end goal is to make the playoffs. We have to learn from it and get better."



Bartlett's James Knight returns a kickoff for a touchdown during a game against Streamwood at Bartlett on Friday, Sept. 3, 2021. (Brian O'Mahoney / The Courier-News)

Knight wasn't involved in the game-winning play for Bartlett, but he took advantage of his limited touches. He ran for 208 yards and three touchdowns on just six carries.

"He's one of the fastest guys I've ever seen, and he's an electric player," Searce said.

"Everything he does is at full speed. He's just really good."

The two teams combined for 996 yards of offense. There were seven lead changes.

"This is one I'll tell my kids about," Bemont said.

---Daily Herald--09/04/2021

Glenbard East's all-around effort too much for Elgin

by Allen Oshinski, Daily Herald Correspondent

A big second quarter was all Glenbard East needed.

The Rams' 23 second-quarter points broke open a previously scoreless game and provided all the offense they needed in defeating **Elgin** 37-6 Friday in an Upstate Eight contest at Memorial Field.

Connor Cerkas threw 4 touchdown passes, 3 of them to Tyrese Buffkin.

The Rams (2-0) scored 16 points in less than 4 minutes to break open the game. On the second play of the second quarter, Cerkas found Buffkin in the end zone from 8 yards out.

On the ensuing possession, the Rams sacked Elgin quarterback James Syrek on back-to-back plays. On the second Demontay Mack dropped him in the end zone for a safety.

Following the free kick, Cerkas found Dailen Zollicoffer for 36 yards to the 8-yard line. Zollicoffer ran it in on the next play.

Cerkas found Buffkin again late in the half to make it 23-0 at the break.

The Rams were solid in all 3 phases. The defense limited the Maroons to 29 yards and came up with 4 turnovers and 4 sacks.

"Playing 3 phases [was key]," said Glenbard East coach John Walters. "That was kind of a big deal for us, being able to score the ball on offense 5 times. I thought we played really well and were more physical than they were, trying to attack them offensively. And the special teams were big for us tonight."

Offensively, the Rams spread the ball around. Two quarterbacks threw to 7 different receivers, and 3 running backs -- Nick Kostov, Dimitri Hritz, and John Seybold -- ran for at least 40 yards.

Elgin (0-2) struggled to get going on offense in the first half, but Clem McCullough gave the Maroons a spark after the break. He took over at quarterback and led Elgin's lone scoring drive. He completed 2 passes to Dawayne Evans for 39 yards on the drive before taking it to the end zone himself on a pass from Syrek.

For the game, McCullough completed 4 passes for 40 yards, caught 3 for 18 yards, ran 5 times for 31 yards, and returned 6 kickoffs for 123 yards.

Elgin forced a punt on Glenbard East's first possession, then drove into Rams territory only to have the drive end on an interception by Alonso Perkins. The Maroons couldn't sustain the early success.

"It's almost like we were shocked," said Elgin coach Anthony Mason. "We were shocked in the first quarter that we were playing so well, playing decently. With the inexperience, it makes us not be used to what we have tried to make this program used to: doing things well, doing things at an elite level and giving ourselves a chance to win."