

Press Clippings 10/05/2017

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Officials hope Bartlett's athletic complex is up and running in a year Project's next phase includes work on seats, lights, press box

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



Twenty years since the school opened, Bartlett High School is close to having its own stadium. School District U46 board members soon will vote on a bid for the first phase of the project. (Rafael Guerrero/Courier-News)

Work on bleachers, lights and a press box for Bartlett High School's athletic complex could begin this fall.

On Monday, School District U46, school and Bartlett High School Boosters officials presented to the school board bid proposals, including the nearly \$1.6 million bid they hope the board will approve at a later date.

The \$1.6 million proposal would allow for Aurora-based L.J. Morse Construction Co. to start work on bleachers, lights and a press box this fall, with the plan to have the project completed before next fall.

Bartlett President Kevin Wallace and village of Bartlett trustees are among those in support of the stadium, said George Kantzavelos, the booster club's activity complex director and former booster president. Some U46 board members also expressed their support Monday night.

Money for the project would come from private, state and local funding. On the private front, the Bartlett Boosters have raised \$925,000 from fundraising and donors. Among the notable donations was \$250,000 each from Bartlett-based Greco Foods and Cheese Merchants of America, Brooke Graphics in Elk Grove donated \$175,000, Plote Construction in Hoffman Estates donated \$50,000 and the Bartlett Rotary Club donated \$25,000, according to a list of donors with the presentation.

“Within the next week or two, we will turn over a check in the amount of \$925,000 to go toward the completion of Bartlett High School’s very own athletic complex,” said Kantzavelos, a longtime Bartlett resident who said the project has gone through ups and downs. He said the project gained much-needed momentum after Principal Mike Demovsky took over at Bartlett last school year.

As of early October, the district would receive \$466,000 in Qualified Zone Academy Bonds from the state, although U46 Chief Operating Officer Jeff King said it could change if other districts that applied for it decide not to take their share. The amount of bonds available for U46 and the Bartlett project has already changed; the district was originally going to receive just less than \$372,000.

“If the board decides they’re not going to do this and wanted to do something else, they can’t use these funds,” King said. “These particular funds are earmarked for the stadium, that’s all.”

The remaining balance for the project would come from U46’s operations and maintenance fund, King said. Already, the district has paid for the design phase of the project, he said.

However, the work on the field slated for this fall into next spring is only the first phase. Kantzavelos previously said the complex project will require three phases, with phases two and three including installation of visitor bleachers, concession stands, locker rooms and the entrance.

Already, the field has been re-sodded and graded, Kantzavelos said. Work on the project began last school year, with the installation of a scoreboard and sound system, valued at \$50,000.

Since Bartlett High School opened in 1997, Streamwood High School — about 8 miles north along Illinois Route 59 — has been host for practically all of Bartlett’s home football games, along with other events such as track and field.

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---Daily Herald--- 10/05/17

Which will win out -- South Elgin's offense or Batavia's defense?

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK



South Elgin quarterback Nate Gomez celebrates his first quarter touchdown run against West Aurora earlier this season. Gomez and the Storm travel to Batavia Friday night in a battle of 6-0 Upstate Eight Conference teams.

The marquee matchup within this week's marquee matchup is Batavia's aggressive defense against a South Elgin offense led by dynamic quarterback Nate Gomez.

Both teams enter Friday's Upstate Eight Conference crossover at Bulldog Stadium at 7:30 p.m. atop their respective divisions.

Batavia (6-0), ranked No. 5 in this week's Associated Press Class 7A poll, remains unbeaten in the UEC River along with St. Charles North.

Gomez has been nearly unstoppable in leading South Elgin (6-0) to the top of the UEC Valley. The 6-foot, 180-pound option quarterback has rushed for 979 yards and 15 touchdowns in 119 attempts and has thrown for 655 yards and 10 touchdowns with 3 interceptions. A 61-percent passer who can huck the pigskin 65 yards downfield, the senior has completed 45 of 74 attempts. The three-year starter is the driving force behind a South Elgin offense averaging 40.3 points and 328.5 yards per game.

"Gomez is the straw that stirs the drink over there," Batavia coach Dennis Piron said. "They're going to be tough to defend. They will provide us with some challenges, but we're very proud of our defense."

Batavia's defense has allowed 182 rushing yards all season.

Gomez averages 109 rushing yards per game.

Something has to give.

"It's probably the most aggressive team we've seen in a while in terms of flying to the football," South Elgin coach Pat Pistorio said of Batavia. "Their pursuit is something we'll try to manipulate. We'll try to find a way to use that against them. They're very strong and very fast. Up front they have an advantage in terms of overall size, but we've seen that almost every week when we're the smaller of the two opponents. Hopefully, we can get the ball in Nate's hands and he can show how versatile he is and continue on with the trend."

Batavia's defense is led by junior linebackers Luke Weerts (team-high 51 tackles) and Michael Jansey (12 tackles for loss, 4 sacks), senior end Mike Bautch (5 sacks), senior safety Michael Niemiec (41 tackles) and senior cornerback Tom Stuttle (4 interceptions).

Two is better than one: Elgin (2-4, 1-2 UEC River) has recorded 2 victories in a season for the first time since 2010, the last year the Maroons made the playoffs.

They had hoped to be at least 3-3 through 6 games.

"We're still kind of upset about West Chicago," third-year Elgin coach Anthony Mason said of a 28-26 overtime loss in Week 2.

On the heels of back-to-back 1-8 campaigns, the Maroons need to win 3 straight against Geneva (3-3, 2-2), St. Charles North (5-1, 3-0) and Larkin (3-3, 1-2) to become playoff eligible.

"We've definitely made progress," Mason said. "We've still got a chance. We just have to play well. I still don't think we've put together a full game all year. (Geneva) is in the same position we are, coming off a loss and needing to get to 5 wins to become playoff eligible, so I'm expecting their best game."

Elgin has the potential to score on any team, as shown in Week 4 when the Maroons marched 73 yards in 13 plays against Batavia (6-0, 4-0) for a second-quarter touchdown. It was impressive considering Batavia's defense has allowed only 2 touchdowns all season.

"That was the only legit touchdown drive of the year against our No. 1 defense," Batavia coach Dennis Piron said this week. "Elgin's coaches are working their cans off up there They're improved in their scheme, their personnel, their (roster) numbers are up. They're doing a nice job."

Charging back: Aurora Central Catholic has won 2 straight to put itself in position to become playoff eligible.

The Chargers (3-3, 2-0 Metro Suburban Red) need 2 wins in their final 3 regular-season games against Ridgewood (3-3), Chicago Christian (3-3) and Elmwood Park (4-2) to have a shot at a second straight playoff berth.

"These are all big the rest of the way," first-year ACC coach Luke Brauweiler said. "We'd really like to get to that 6-3 mark and know we're in because playing that waiting game at 5-4 is nobody's favorite pastime."

Ridgewood (3-3, 1-1) likes to throw the ball. The Rebels have gained 1,403 of their 2,014 total yards via the pass. Senior quarterback James Chalabi has completed 88 of 145 attempts for 1,103 yards and 15 touchdowns.

"They are going to throw and we have to stop it, which has not been our greatest strength this season," Brauweiler said.

ACC counters with senior running back Ryan Cerza, who has surpassed 800 yards rushing in what will likely be a second-straight 1,000-yard rushing season.

Ridgewood is the defending MSC Red champion. The Rebels defeated ACC 38-37 last season to deny the second-place Chargers the title.

The glare of the postseason: Sophomore quarterback Jake Lenschow and junior running back/defensive back Nick Termini were thinking about their seniors after Burlington Central improved to 3-3 with a 55-16 victory at Woodstock last Friday.

"It's important to make sure we're there for them because we know they are there for us," Lenschow said after firing 6 touchdown passes in just a couple of seconds less than 28 minutes.

"It's do or die now for kids like Ryan (senior linebacker Doubek)," Termini said. "My class wants to do it for their class."

Doubek wants badly enough to get the Rockets back in the playoffs for the first time since 2014 that he returned from a broken left hand that required surgery after the season

opener. Doubek's heavily wrapped hand didn't stop him from making an impact from the game's opening play.

"Now we have Ryan back on the field," said Burlington coach Brian Melvin. "He's the leader of our defense and the kids follow him."

In fact, Melvin named Doubek a team co-captain at Tuesday's practice.

The Rockets host 3-3 Woodstock North for Homecoming on Friday. The Thunder is coming off a 41-7 loss to unbeaten Johnsburg but one of its other losses was 15-14 to unbeaten Antioch in Week 2.

Calling all Burlington Central football alumni: Second-year coach Brian Melvin is launching a new club for Central football alumni designed to create networking opportunities between former players.

Dubbed the Central Rockets Gridiron Club, the organization eventually will hold an annual banquet and award scholarships.

"One of my goals when I started here was to bring back the great tradition of Central High School," Melvin said. "Through this club, this fraternity, of sorts, is how we're going to bring them back. We're going to take our past and ask them to help our future."

Melvin invites all former players in attendance at Friday's homecoming game to stop by an informational tent to register their contact information. T-shirts will be available for \$9, but the club is strictly nonprofit.

Melvin is modeling the club after similar organizations like the one at East Aurora, where he coached previously.

"When these kids graduate from college they may need a job," Melvin said. "Now, they might have a connection with someone looking to hire because they both played football for the Central Rockets. Maybe a kid who doesn't want to go to college would rather go into a trade. Maybe this way he can find a job. We're in the first phase, the informational phase, where we're gathering contact information so we can get it going."

Interested former players can learn more on the club's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/CentralRocketsGridironClub/

-- Marty Maciaszek contributed