

Press Clippings 10/19/2017

---Courier News--- 10/19/17

Planning platform price tag \$566,000

U46 officials aim to improve college, career preparations

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

In hopes of simplifying college and career planning for its middle school and high school students, School District U46 is eyeing a new platform.

District officials Monday presented to the U46 school board Hobsons' Naviance, which would replace the district's Career Cruising platform. Not only would it expand beyond career planning and into higher education planning, but the platform would expedite the process when it comes to reaching out to higher education institutions, applying for scholarships and other items of interest.

"This will streamline our data collection," said Terri Lozier, U46's assistant superintendent for secondary schools instruction and equity, during Monday night's school board meeting.

The five-year contract with Hobsons, an education software company, would cost the district about \$566,000, although CEO Tony Sanders said they would get a \$10,000-per-year discount if the proposal is approved by the school board before Nov. 1. The money would come from the district's educational fund and would be paid over five years.

In a summary of the proposal, district officials said Career Cruising has been "sporadically" used for college and career planning because the program is limited in what it can provide. The district has had to supplement certain services for those using Career Cruising, such as career interest, personality, and learning style inventories, additional college sites, financial literacy and scholarship information.

Naviance would allow students and parents to access and send their transcripts, develop and view a students' four-year high school plan, welcome parents more into the college and career pathway process, among other features, said Chris Boden, the district's lead counselor.

"At the district level, we'll also be able to look at and also be able to see the scholarships students have applied for, the colleges and universities, the military and other options," Lozier said. "We will know where our students are going."

The district gets graduates' broad data and does not necessarily say where a student went, Lozier said.

The data Naviance may collect will help U46 and the schools better figure out what scholarships students pursue, what scholarships to promote, she said.

The goal is to begin using Naviance next school year, with other in-school tools already used by U46 students and families, such as Infinite Campus, to be integrated into it.

---Daily Herald--- 10/19/17

U-46 considers purchasing online career planning tool for students

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

Elgin-area schools' officials this week discussed purchasing a new online platform to help students with college and career planning and to better track where students go after graduation.

The cost for the Hobsons Naviance program would be \$566,297 over five years, or \$50,000 less if the district signs a contract with the vendor before the end of November, officials said.

The web and app-based program offers comprehensive career and college planning tools, replacing another system the district sporadically uses known as Career Cruising, which has limited capabilities. Students were having to use other web-based programs and inventories to supplement what the Career Cruising system didn't offer.

Career Cruising did not allow the district to track college applications and scholarships completed, nor keep track of colleges or postsecondary experiences students have been offered.

With the Hobsons program, students would have the capability of sending electronic transcripts, teachers would be able to maintain four-year high school plans with students, and parents would be able to monitor their children's college and career plans. It also would help students identify scholarships and schools matched based on their interests.

"Students will have access to this all the time," said Terri Lozier, assistant superintendent for secondary schools instruction and equity for Elgin Area School District U-46. "Our intent is to begin this in middle school when they start with career explorations. That will actually help them build their high school plan, as well as their post secondary plan. This will streamline our data collection."

Principals and administrators will have access to which classes students are accessing, which colleges and scholarships they have applied for, and how many have been accepted. The district will be able to track how many students pursue further education and how many choose the military and other options.

If approved by the school board next month, officials expect to roll out the program in the 2018-19 school year with training provided to career counselors and teachers next summer.

SPORTS SECTION

---Daily Herald--- 10/19/17

Boys soccer: Lake Park prevails vs. Bartlett

BY CHRIS WALKER



Lake Park's Gabriel Mendrano (2) battles for the ball with Bartlett's Sergio Navarrete (22) during the West Chicago boys soccer regional match

In the first two minutes of Wednesday's Class 3A West Chicago regional semifinal against Bartlett, Lake Park had a pair of shots strike each of the posts.

Then, midway through the first half, the Lancers had a shot carom off the crossbar.

The back of the net seemingly was mocking them until Franco Presta scored with 10:05 remaining in the first half, and it proved to be all the Lancers needed in a hard-fought, 1-0 nail-biter.

"It doesn't matter what seed you are in these games," Presta said. "You've got to be aggressive and move the ball around and I think that's what we did. We only had one goal but we created a lot of chances. Next time we have to finish more."

Lake Park (11-6-4) proved unlucky with its set pieces early on, literally missing a few goals by inches, but they didn't miss when Presta redirected a pass from Gabe Mendrano.

"It all started once we got the free kick after a nice through ball and a foul," Presta said. "I got that cross coming in and all I had to do was be in the right place and redirect it and it went in."

The Lancers have several players that can deliver on offense. In addition to the Mendrano and Presto combo, Victor Pawlik, Andrew Eliopoulos, Matteo Costa, Sebastian Glodz and Chris Nasiadka all had near misses.

"We just have to put teams away, never give up and always push the pedal," Presta said. "You can't have any mercy on these teams. You just have to shut them out like we did in the first and second half and give them no hope, but you want to score more than one."

Bartlett (5-14-4) may have been hoping for the upset, but the Hawks couldn't muster much offensively as the Lancers controlled possession and only allowed the ball to get near its back line and goalkeeper on a handful of occasions.

"It was high press and we've played that way for a while now," Lancers coach Sean Crosby said. "Our midfield unit and back line worked together in good unison. So it's great to see a shutout. We hadn't had one in a couple of games with a stiff end of the season so it's good to get back to it and commit to the high press."

The Lancers certainly didn't take the Hawks for granted. While Bartlett has struggled, they hadn't been shut out in their past nine games coming in.

"We knew this was going to be a hard team to beat," Costa said. "We had to be physical and to play our hardest because if we didn't, we'd be going home."

Tyler Serpico and Anthony Garcia took shots late in the second half for the Hawks as they switched to a 3-3-4 to try to net the equalizer and extend the game.

"Lake Park had opportunities so we were fortunate it was still 1-0 and very reachable," Hawks coach Victor Marquez said. "I think that's what it's about at the end of the day. Those differences with records and rankings were narrowed based on our performance so in that regard I really can't ask for anything more from our guys."

---Daily Herald--- 10/19/17

Boys soccer: Zdravkovic scores twice, Larkin blanks Huntley

BY STEVE NICHOLS



Larkin's Sergio Cruz battles for the ball with Huntley's Drew Landoch during Larkin at Huntley regional soccer.

The advice given to Larkin's Aleksandar Zdravkovic by his coaching staff at halftime of a scoreless regional game at Huntley Tuesday was rather simple. And somewhat prophetic.

"Take some one-timers, some volleys and go straight up at the keeper," Larkin coach Ken Hall said after the Royals downed No. 12 Huntley 2-0 in a rather chippy Class 3A Huntley regional semifinal.

And that's exactly what the forward did in the second half. Good advice coupled with even better execution made things happen for Zdravkovic on a rebound in the 60th minute. The tall forward sent home a one-timer just from the left of the 18 on ricochet to finally break through for the Royals.

But not even a minute later, Zdravkovic struck again similarly for his 26th goal of the year as No. 5 Larkin (12-7-2), who beat Huntley for a second time this year by a 2-0 tally, capitalized on its best sequence of the night. The Royals can win their ninth regional plaque at Red Raider Stadium Saturday against No. 4 Jacobs at 2 p.m.

"He's got a tremendous sense of the game," Hall said about Zdravkovic's ability. "He's big, fast, has great skill, a great shot but I think it's his sense of where to be and what to do with it at times and certain situations."

It was a dire one for Larkin, who came in on a 2-game skid and fired a 14-7 shot advantage. The Royals watched 12 previous shots go to no avail as Huntley keeper Andrew Fulcer made 7 key saves as Larkin let opportunity after opportunity slide.

"If anything we were playing a little sloppy but it we just needed to play a little harder," Zdravkovic said. "We just needed to play with the ball and we got confused in the first half. We were trying to fight for the ball and at the same time we needed to play with the ball."

It took three-fourths of the game to finally do so, and the sophomore finally broke through when he received a ball to the left of the box off a header and launched a shot that rocketed across the goal and ended up inside the right post.

"It takes practice, that's all it takes," the forward said of his laser. "Without practice it wouldn't have happened."

Goal number two saw another shot come from the right to the left again that Zdravkovic finessed it home.

"It's creating the chances you need to score," he added. "Without getting the chances it's not going to happen. And when you play as a team you're going to play way better."

That's where the defense comes in, and Larkin couldn't have asked for a better performance, as a switch to a 3-5-2 paid off and a mark on Raul Valladares didn't give Huntley much chances.

"We've learned a lot from coach Hall and assistant coach Mike Huizar, they helped us out all season," sweeper John Bahena said. "They let us know how to play and we follow what they say. They say we clear the ball, we clear the ball."

On the flip side, Huntley, who scored just 2 goals in its last 3 games, ended its campaign 7-15 and basically saw a microcosm of what cost them all season.

"I thought we played a good 60 minutes and then we had, unfortunately, our typical breakdown," Red Raiders coach Kris Grabner said. "When you have a talent like (Zdravkovic), you can't have a breakdown. He buried that ball (on the first goal)."

And while Huntley attributed its inability to take away time in the back let alone forcing turnovers, the chippiness on both sides did take its toll toward the end in a game that oddly only featured 2 yellow cards.

"It's a beautiful game when it's played beautifully," Grabner added. "But when it's gimmicked up it's not. And that's where I struggle with all this. (Larkin) deserved to win, they didn't have the breakdowns we had and it's as simple as that."

---Courier News--- 10/19/17

FOOTBALL: On the Ball

Senior QB grows into new role for improving Larkin

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



Larkin quarterback DJ Ball keeps the football during a game against St. Charles East earlier this season. (Jeff Krage/Courier-News)

BY PAUL JOHNSON

THE COURIER-NEWS

Larkin senior DJ Ball has done just about everything on the football field.

Up until the second half of the season opener against Mundelein, however, he had never played quarterback.

Coach Dragan Teonic experimented with it then, continued to work with Ball all season at his new craft. And now he's playing his best football as Larkin (3-5, 1-4 Upstate Eight River) heads into Friday's season finale against host Elgin (2-6, 1-4) in the Town Jug game.

"I'll play any position to help this team win games," Ball said. "It's Teonic — all the time he works on my passing, staying in the pocket. At first, I was all over the place. Now I'm more comfortable in the pocket. Now I'm a quarterback."

Teonic knows Ball is versatile. After all, Ball is the Royals' punter and holder, is on the kickoff and return teams and starts in the defensive backfield. Teonic was preparing Ball to play multiple offensive positions over the summer as well, knowing that he would be the speed complement to senior running back Kindrel Morris.

What better way to get the ball in his hands than to have him handle it 60 times a game under center?

“We like our quarterback to be a senior who can handle the ball and be a decision maker,” Teonic said. “It’s leadership with a guy who’s comfortable under the lights. You can’t just have a guy back there. It’s got to be ‘the guy.’ He stepped up to the challenge. He’s done a really good job of picking up on it.”

The other thing that made him think Ball was up for the challenge was his growth off the field since Teonic took over the program four years ago.

“DJ, maturity-wise, has grown exponentially,” Teonic said. “He was not this kid his freshman year. He has really come along and matured. He’s always asking questions, watching film. He’s diligent about it. That wasn’t there before. This year this light went on like, ‘Oh my God, it’s my senior year.’ It’s been really fun to watch.”

While Ball started learning his new position, Morris felt like he had to carry the team. As Ball eased into his new position, things opened up for Morris, as well. His 298-yard effort against West Chicago in Week 4 has him on the verge of his second straight 1,000-yard rushing season. He sits 46 yards shy going into Friday.

“I know if I give him the ball he can get us out of anything,” Ball said. “If I give him the ball, I know he’ll make the play. We’re a speed-option team, so having Kindrel behind me and our slots in motion every play, it’s pretty good.”

The elephant in the room is last year’s Elgin game. The Royals were one win away from becoming playoff eligible for the first time in a decade. Elgin thwarted that with a 26-20 win, taking the Town Jug and bragging rights while ending Larkin’s season.

“It was awful,” Teonic said. “I couldn’t sleep for four days. It took me until May to finish the film. I could only watch a couple clips at a time.”

That’s the backdrop for the season finale, as Larkin looks to finish 4-5 for the second straight year.

“I hope, I pray, that we come through with the victory,” Ball said. “We have to play the way we’ve been taught to play and see what happens. Last year is last year. This is a new team.”

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

Mike Clark’s Chicago-area rankings

With records and previous rankings

1. Lincoln-Way East 8-0 (1)

Up next: at No. 18 Bolingbrook Friday

2. Maine South 7-1 (2)

Up next: at Niles West Friday

3. Prairie Ridge 8-0 (3)

Up next: vs. Dundee-Crown Friday

4. Loyola 7-1 (5)

Up next: vs. Brother Rice Saturday

5. Phillips 8-0 (4)

Up next: vs. Clark at Mandrake Friday

6. Glenbard West 7-1 (6)

Up next: vs. Proviso West Saturday

7. Marist 8-0 (7)

Up next: vs. Joliet Catholic Friday

8. Homewood-

Flossmoor 7-1 (8)

Up next: at Sandburg Friday

9. Lake Zurich 8-0 (9)

Up next: at Mundelein Friday

10. Barrington 8-0 (10)

Up next: vs. Conant Friday

11. Huntley 7-1 (11)

Up next: at McHenry Friday

12. Naperville Central 6-2 (14)

Up next: at Lake Park Friday

13. Batavia 8-0 (15)

Up next: at No. 15 St. Charles North Friday

14. Hinsdale Central 6-2 (16)

Up next: at Hinsdale South Friday

15. St. Charles North 7-1 (20)

Up next: vs. No. 13 Batavia Friday

16. Wheaton North 6-2 (12)

Up next: vs. Waubonsie Valley Friday

17. Nazareth 7-1 (17)

Up next: at Marian Catholic Friday

18. Bolingbrook 7-1 (18)

Up next: vs. No. 1 Lincoln-Way East Friday

19. Crete-Monee 7-1 (NR)

Up next: vs. Cahokia Friday

20. South Elgin 7-1 (NR)

Up next: vs. East Aurora Friday