

Press Clippings 12/03/2018

---The Courier-News---12/03/2018

Rain forces Elgin Winter Wonderland to head inside

By: Gloria Casas



- The Caroling Connection's Elizabeth Murphy, from left, Jason Sirvatka, Amanda Sirvatka and Kyle Efken perform indoors for the Winter Wonderland in Elgin after events were moved out of the rain Saturday.

Weather caused a few changes in Elgin's Winter Wonderland lineup but didn't diminish the holiday spirit Saturday at the annual festival.

"There's still a ton of excitement," said Jennifer Arndt, the Downtown Neighborhood Association's marketing coordinator. "There's a lot of activities, and all the entertainment moved indoors. We made accommodations to still celebrate the season."

Performances were moved to the entertainment stage at Dream, 51 S. Grove Ave. The lineup included Nothing but Treble, Kimball Middle School Jazz Band, Elgin Master Chorale Children's Chorus and Highland Elementary School Folkloric Dancers.

The Caroling Connection's Elizabeth Murphy, Jason Sirvatka, Amanda Sirvatka and Kyle Efken strolled around the Artspace Lofts, 51 S. Spring St., singing Christmas carols at the Winter Market.

Carriage rides, story time with goats and the food trucks were canceled, but other activities and events like the live Nativity were moved indoors. The city of Elgin's tree lighting was also held indoors at Hemmens Cultural Center, 45 Symphony Way.

Congregation Kneseth Israel Elgin's Tina Wolf and Heather Weiser were relocated to Artspace Lofts, where the two shared information about Hanukkah and displayed items representing the holiday.

"We are telling them how we observe the holiday of Hanukkah. It starts on Sunday. We want to teach everyone a little about Hanukkah," Wolf said.

Organizers wanted to include different kinds of celebrations representing Elgin's diversity. It was the first year Congregation Kneseth Israel participated.

"Elgin is a very inclusive community, so that's why it's important for us to be here," Weiser said.

Elgin Academy also attended the Winter Market with staff showing children how to make candy cane reindeer. Lyrik Washington, 2, and her sister Kamaere, 5, looked happy with their final creation. Their mom, Sharoenika, enjoyed the variety of things to do, she said.

Arndt said people were lining up for the Winter Market even before it opened. She added that the Winter Market was packed shortly after it opened, and she absolutely felt a holiday spirit everywhere.

---The Daily Herald---12/03/2018

Will suburban schools opt for e-learning on snow days?

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



- Will suburban schools opt for e-learning on snow days? That's among the ideas Illinois school districts can explore with new state law providing educators more flexibility to determine what constitutes a school day based on what improves student learning.



- Elgin Area School District U-46 CEO Tony Sanders



- Huntley Community School District 158 Superintendent Scott Rowe



- Kids enjoy a day off of school to go sledding at Sunset Meadows in Arlington Heights on Monday.

What if instead of snowball fights and tobogganing down sledding hills on a snow day, students could use those hours more productively learning in an online classroom?

That's more than a rhetorical question under the state's new school-funding law, and a series of programs are planned to discuss such ideas.

The new law lets Illinois school districts explore blended learning opportunities and other creative ideas to determine what constitutes a school day based on what improves student learning.

"Each district now can (decide) locally how they want to define an instructional day and what does it look like," said Tony Sanders, chief executive officer of Elgin Area School District U-46. "The exciting part is there is no structure the state is saying you must abide by. In the midst of a blizzard, there are high school districts that are able to do online learning as part of the (school) day. Maybe we could have (U-46) high school students make up their time online."

Administrators at the state's second-largest school district are starting to have conversations about possible variations to the school calendar. Among the challenges is working with the district's six different employee unions to revise contracts stipulating a minimum number of working days.

"We also want to be mindful that any change we make will affect families in our district," Sanders said.

The Illinois State Board of Education recently issued [guidance](#) encouraging school district leaders and teachers to come together and create new ways of teaching and learning.

The [Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act](#), which became law Aug. 31, 2017, changed the basis of state funding for schools to student enrollment rather than attendance. Previously, Illinois School Code defined a day of attendance as a minimum of five instructional hours.

"Time in a classroom is not as important to us," said Scott Rowe, superintendent of Huntley Community School District 158, which has blended online learning at the high school level. "We are trying to shift our thinking to be more outcomes-based. We only have 174 days to impact our students, and this is our opportunity now to really break down the walls. ... School can happen (anywhere) and learning can happen at any time."

A logical first step is taking advantage of snow days by providing e-learning opportunities to keep students engaged, he said.

"We should be pushing and challenging ourselves to evaluate schools in a different way ... for us, our community values the innovation," Rowe said.

Some lawmakers who supported the school funding law and teachers unions have voiced concerns about changing traditional school days.

State officials are hosting a series of Q&A sessions in December for educators, parents and district leaders to learn more about this new provision. The only suburban forum is from 4 to 6 p.m. Dec. 6 at the DuPage County Regional Office of Education, 421 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton.

Holiday market, music and more at Elgin Winter Wonderland Dec. 1

By: City of Elgin



- The Elgin Master Chorale Children's Chorus returns to Elgin's Winter Wonderland Saturday, Dec. 1, to perform Christmas carols.

Celebrate the holidays at the annual Elgin Winter Wonderland from 2 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1, on DuPage Court and the Elgin ArtSpace Lofts downtown. The festival features a holiday market, live music, outdoor activities, food trucks, and more.

In DuPage Court, live entertainment will include: Hutson & Friends at 2 p.m., Nothing but Treble at 2:30 p.m., The Caroling Connection at 3 p.m., Kimball Middle School Jazz Band at 3:30 p.m., Elgin Master Chorale Children's Chorus at 4 p.m., Highland Elementary School Folkloric Dancers at 4:30 p.m., Children's Theatre of Elgin & Fox Valley Theatre Company at 5 p.m., and fire juggler Kyle Wiese at 5:30 p.m.

Take a selfie with your favorite Disney character, or listen to roaming musicians along Spring and Chicago streets!

There also will be a variety of outdoor activities. Join miniature goats from Reverse the Kerrs Farm for a holiday story with storytellers from Gail Borden Library every half-hour at Fulton and Grove (limit of 25 people per story). Makes some s'mores on DuPage Court or enjoy some roasted chestnuts over an open fire at Chicago and Spring streets. Get free photos in a vintage sleigh at Spring and Grove.

First United Methodist Church of Elgin will present the story of Christmas with a live nativity, Christmas carols, a petting zoo, hot cocoa and cookies at 2:30, 3:30, 4:30 and 5:30 p.m.

Free carriage rides will be offered along the Fox River, with the first ride at 3 p.m. at Fulton and Spring streets. Space is limited for this activity, offered by Long Eared Livery.

Celebrate Hanukkah with paper dreidel making and Hanukkah songs at DuPage Court.

The food trucks on Spring Street will be offered treats from 2 to 6 p.m., including Cook's Ice Cream with hot beverages, ice cream, and edible cookie dough; Mario's Cart with tacos, flautas, quesadillas and burritos; Perk N Pickle with gourmet sandwiches, burgers and American fare; and Boy Scouts Troop 10 with hot chocolate!

The Holiday Market inside Elgin ArtSpace Lofts from 2 to 6 p.m. will feature: Bridge N Sweets Gourmet Bakery, Broadview Farm And Garden, Cozy By Candles, Ecuadorians Crafts, First Star Art, Hospitalitea, Ivory Petal Co., Leaf and Loom, Little Bird Confections, Mode De Vie Studio, Red Flower Organics, Rocket Relic Candles, Socks & Souls, Three Bees Honey, Treasure Breads, Wildtree and Yolo Glow.

Downtown businesses also will offer activities indoors including:

- Pine cone and cupcake decorating, mini acupuncture sessions at Ben Shen Acupuncture, 162 E. Chicago St.
- Antler hat making for kids at Cuming Building, 80 S. Grove Ave.
- Holiday cookie decorating at Delish Cakes, 213 E Chicago St.
- Pictures with Santa from 4 to 6 p.m., cookie decorating and chili bar at Dream Hall, 51 S. Grove Ave.

- Dreamy snowflake photo op and professional face painter at Dream2Be Image, 23 S. Spring St.
- Book signing at Explore Elgin, 60 S. Grove
- Free goodies and 20-percent off sale at Elgin Antiques, 207 E Chicago
- Face painting, make a gift tag and "S-Elf-ies" at Elgin Area Chamber, 31 S. Grove
- Kid-friendly activities, SWAT team, and more from 2 to 4 p.m. at Elgin Police Station, 151 Douglas
- Photos with Santa from 2 to 4 p.m. at Elgin Public House, 219 E Chicago
- Letters to Santa & snowman cup at Farmers Insurance, 79 S. Grove
- Holiday trivia for kids & temporary tattoos at Funky Rooster, 73 S. Grove
- "Jimmy-themed" bell cups at Jimmy John's, 50 S. Grove, Unit B
- Free small bag of popcorn with purchase of large at Mama Lee's, 20 S. Spring
- Healthy snacks & hot chocolate at Simple Balance, 211 E. Chicago
- Birdhouse ornament crafting at Soulful Sparrow Cork, 10 Douglas
- Make and take holiday arts and crafts at Side Street Studio Arts at 15 Ziegler Court.
- Create your own wooden ornament stamp at Whatnots & Whimsies, 211 E. Chicago
- Fifteen-minute kids holiday yoga sessions every half-hour at Vida Yoga, 50 S. Grove, Unit D

SPORTS SECTION

---The Curier-News---12/03/2018

Chairman of the boards

Miskiewicz leads South Elgin to win with 16 rebounds

By: Paul Johnson



- Above: South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz delivers a slam dunk against Larkin during a Thursday's game.



- Left: South Elgin's Drake Montgomery (3) drives between Larkin defenders Damari Wheeler-Thomas, left, and Pierre Black on Thursday.

South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz had a primary objective heading into Thursday's Upstate Eight opener at Larkin.

He wanted to dominate on the boards.

“That was my main goal — out-rebound the other team just by myself,” Miskiewicz said. “I felt like if I owned the glass and owned the paint, we’d have a good chance to win.”

The senior forward accomplished that mission by hauling down 16 rebounds, helping the Storm to a 69-58 win.

Miskiewicz also scored a game-high 19 points on 9-for-13 shooting, including three dunks. He added three assists, two steals and a blocked shot.

“He did a good job of understanding, ‘Just get inside,’” South Elgin coach Brett Johnson said of Miskiewicz. “That’s what we were looking for out of him — finish around the basket, get those dunks, get those exciting plays because it gets the crowd going.

“I loved his intensity to get the rebounds. He said I’m going to get every single rebound. That’s the way he’s always played.”

Larkin (1-4, 0-1), which unveiled its state finals banner, rode the energy to an 18-11 lead early in the second quarter.

“We did, which is different than our first four games,” Royals coach Deryn Carter said. “We came out ready to play.”

South Elgin (4-1, 1-0) ended the first half on a 22-4 spurt to take a 33-22 lead. Jace Warrick scored 13 of his 17 points in that stretch.

“He shot the ball extremely well,” Johnson said of Warrick. “We have confidence in him to keep shooting, and that’s what he did.”

The Storm kept the lead in double digits the rest of the game. Senior point guard Drake Montgomery scored 15 and freshman guard Drew Cwik added 13 for South Elgin.

“They have a veteran point guard who is high level,” Carter said of Montgomery. “He’s the one who really made them go.”

A big key for the Storm was their perimeter play. South Elgin shot 11 of 22 on 3-pointers, many coming on kick-outs off Miskiewicz’s offensive rebounds.

“When I was getting those rebounds, I wasn’t trying to force it up there,” Miskiewicz said. “I was looking for my guys. I knew they were going to double-team off my rebounds. I found guys wide open and they hit it.”

Marcus Green paced Larkin with 15 points. Jashon Johnson-Neals added 14.

“We’re growing,” Carter said of his young team. “We’re learning. Overall, I’m not unhappy with what I saw from my guys and the stuff that we’ve been talking about holding them accountable for.”

Coming off a solid showing at last week’s St. Charles East Tournament, the Storm made a statement in the conference opener.

“It was a great win for us,” Miskiewicz said. “We knew they were going to come out with some energy, and they did, but we held it together. It feels great to start off the conference season 1-0.”

SPORTS SECTION

---Daily Herald---12/03/2018

South Elgin handles Larkin behind McClure's 33

By: Allen Oshinski

After a strong start by South Elgin, a second-quarter lull allowed Larkin to stay in the game. But the second half was all South Elgin.

Led by Megan McClure, the Storm came out of the locker room hitting on all cylinders. The big second half carried the Storm to a 68-24 victory in the Upstate Eight matchup in Elgin.

McClure scored 16 of her game-high 33 points in the third period as the Storm outscored Larkin 29-9.

Freshman Ella Winterhalder added 9 points for South Elgin (3-3, 2-0).

Sparked by their pressing, trapping defense, the Storm blew out to a 16-2 lead. But they hit an offensive drought in the second quarter, missing 8 straight shots at one point.

Meanwhile, Larkin, sparked by Janelle Clements off the bench, scored 9 straight points to get within 23-15.

The Royals' Brianna Young scored the first basket of the second half to make it 25-17, but that was as close as they got. South Elgin scored the next 11, with McClure hitting two 3-pointers in the run.

The Storm then closed the game on a 23-0 run.

"I told the girls, we're going to open some eyes," said Storm coach Dan Mandernack. "Our confidence is really high. They're really clicking on all cylinders. It was an exciting game. I told them that Larkin is just coming over to this side of the conference, and we want to show them and everyone else that we're going to be right there in the mix."

The Storm used the second-quarter lapse as motivation during halftime.

"When we went into the locker room for halftime, we all got pumped up and we all hugged each other," said McClure. "When we came out, we played harder because we wanted to prove to ourselves that we could extend the lead."

Clements scored all 10 of her points in the first half for Larkin (1-6, 0-2). Young added 8, but the Storm's pressure was just too much for the Royals. The pressure forced 33 Larkin turnovers.

"Once we get pressed, our girls right now are struggling to break it," said Larkin coach Steve Knapp. "We're turning the ball over on their side, giving them easy points. We just need to get better fundamentally."

Aryanna Williams added 6 points for South Elgin despite foul trouble, and Casey Brennan had 7 rebounds to go with 5 points.

Grayslake North third at Bison Invite

By: Mike Garofola

The wrestling teams from Grayslake North, South Elgin and Fenton were stronger than nine others but not strong enough to stop the individual star power of Thornton Fractional North, which lifted the championship trophy Saturday afternoon at the 39th annual Steve Bison Invite in Bensenville.

The top-rated Class 2A duo of brothers Sincere (138 pounds) and Bilal Bailey (152) inspired TFN with masterful performances at host Fenton High School, each pinning their ways to their weight class titles, along with two other teammates, to help their team score 182.5 overall points.

Grayslake North, led by 126-pound champ Jake Joswiak finished second with 155.5 points, followed by South Elgin (145), Fenton (117) and Proviso East which would round out the top five with 103 points.

Jamier Castleberry (Proviso East), Jeremiah Duty (North Chicago) and the Bailey brothers collected their second consecutive Weiss championships with Castleberry's title coming at the expense of area wrestlers.

Jeremy Piskorz, one of two from Fenton in the finals, was beaten by Sincere Bailey, while Grayslake North senior and 2018 state qualifier Adam Blonski dropped his 152-pound final against Bilal Bailey.

"Both of the Baileys are great wrestlers, so there's no shame in losing to either one of them," said Grayslake North head coach Collin McKillip, who watched the Blonski final after guiding Jake Joswiak on to victory at 126.

"Jake is always in a match because he's able to win the big points," said McKillip of Joswiak, who was 26-13 a year ago at 120 pounds.

Joswiak was one of three from the area who would hoist traditional championship brackets, the other two coming from Elijah Lopez from South Elgin and Palatine junior Gio Jackson, who was not even in the Pirates' regional starting lineup last season.

"This feels great right now," admitted a thrilled Jackson, who navigated his way through his 220-pound bracket before recording a 10-1 major decision over Basilio Betancourt of Bremen Township.

"We have a great new head coach (Chris Winters) who has really brought out team together, so I feel he's been a big reason for my early-season success, as well as all of the lifting I've done during the offseason to prepare for the football and wrestling seasons," said Jackson, who finished a high single midway through the second period to open a 6-1 advantage.

South Elgin welcomed a new head coach this season as well, and if you ask Lopez for the reason for his 160-pound title it would be that of head coach Adam Lehnus.

"Lehnus is a great guy. He's brought a lot into our room this year and for me, he's more than a coach, he's like a good friend," said Lopez, who was one win away from advancing into sectionals a year ago.

"Elijah executed his game plan really well today, and in his final he stuck to it, and that's why he won," said Lehnus, an assistant for three years before taking over.

Vince Clinite finished second at 195 for the Storm as did Hayden Groesser, who lost his 285-pound final (6-1) to Ahmed Suleiman.

"Hayden came in at 210 pounds. His opponent was massive. He must have had 60-70 pounds on him," said Lehnus. "But Hayden is the ultimate team guy. He knew we might be without a heavyweight this season, and he came to me and said he didn't want us to have a hole in our lineup but he goes out there nonetheless and gives us everything he has."

St. Viator had three of its wrestlers finish third -- Gaetano Console (132), Nick Demmuno (182) and heavyweight Brandon Flores, for his second time in two seasons.

"Those three, plus Michael Purk (170) are the leaders of this team, and although they have to fill the big shoes of Jake Wolf (2018 state qualifier) they will do just fine because they saw how Jake led this team, both in and out of the room," said Lions coach Jason Churak.

The Lions were missing their 195-pound star, Ryan McGuire (flu), who won 30 matches last season as a sophomore.

South Elgin stays hot, stymies St. Edward

By: Scott Miller

After a shaky 0-3 start to the season the South Elgin girls basketball team has gone on a roll with 4 straight wins and junior Megan McClure has played an instrumental role.

The Storm's latest win was a 58-37 blowout at St. Edward in nonconference action on Saturday night. While McClure didn't quite match the 33 points she put up against Larkin on Friday the versatile 5-foot-9 guard filled up the stat sheet nonetheless with 18 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists, 3 steals and 2 blocks.

"She's a coach's dream," South Elgin coach Dan Mandernack said. "She can play all five positions and her basketball IQ is off the charts. She's a great leader on the court and she's unselfish and humble. This year she has really improved her ballhandling and is pushing the ball up the court more. She's the heart and soul of our team."

McClure set the tone early with 8 points in the first quarter as the Storm jumped out on top 14-2 lead. McClure scored in a variety ways with a drive to the basket, a transition layup off a steal, a medium range jumper, and a short turnaround jumper in the post. She would later add a 3-pointer and then a 3-point play on an isolation drive to the bucket.

"My strength in the past has been driving to the basket," McClure said. "But I have worked a lot on my jumper to add to my game and plus I got stronger so I could work more down low, too. But honestly I can't do anything without my teammates. I trust them. I know if I dish off to them they are going to make a play and they do a great job of getting me the ball too."

The Storm's lead was trimmed to 25-19 by halftime, but they broke open the game in the third quarter, outscoring St. Edward 17-4 to go up 42-23. Caroline Croft and Madison Waichunas both knocked down 3-pointers in the third quarter run.

"We said at halftime we need to come out and win the first 3 minutes," Mandernack said. "And we did. We made some adjustments and got some good looks off some set plays. But at the end of the day the defense is really what did it. We take a lot of pride in playing strong aggressive defense. We play a lot of road games this year and defense

always travels well. You are not always going to have your shot in someone else's gym, but you can always bring strong defense."

Waichunas finished with 11 points for the Storm. Ella Winterhalder added 8 points.

The Green Wave continue to struggle through some growing pains as they fell to 1-5. Brooke Biggins and Sam Ottinger each had 7 points. Coach Michelle Dawson also pointed out the play of Mia Castro at point guard as a big positive.

"It's certainly not for a lack of effort because the girls are really playing hard," Dawson said. "We just don't have the experience and chemistry we need yet. It will come with time. We are going to continue to work on cutting down our turnovers and communicating on the court. Tonight South Elgin has multiple players who can hurt you and we just struggled to match up with them."