

Press Clippings 12/10/2018

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Community leaders get to be U-46 principals for day

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



- South Elgin Fire Chief Steve Wascher talks with first-grader Jordan Davis-Rhodes on Friday while playing the part of principal for the day at Clinton Elementary in South Elgin. More than 50 area leaders visited U-46 schools for the 11th annual event.



- South Elgin Fire Chief Steve Wascher helps out in a computer lab at Clinton Elementary in South Elgin. He was among more than 50 area leaders who visited U-46 schools Friday for the 11th annual "Principal for a Day" event.



- South Elgin Fire Chief Steve Wascher waves to kids Friday while performing the duties of principal for the day at Clinton Elementary in South Elgin. Wascher's children are former Clinton students.

More than 50 local leaders experienced what it's like to be the head of a school during Elgin Area School District U-46's 11th annual "Principal for a Day" event Friday.

Guest principals included police officers, firefighters, community leaders in the areas of medicine, finance, business and education, and more than a dozen elected officials.

They got a behind-the-scenes look at the responsibilities of a school leader in a diverse district of nearly 39,000 students across 11 communities. Twenty-two of the 57 guest principals were first-timers.

Participants are encouraged to develop long-term partnerships with the schools they visit by committing to activities, such as mentoring and tutoring, hosting field trips, sponsoring a school activity, or being a guest for career day, officials said.

The event concluded with a luncheon sponsored by Marco, a technology services provider, at Villa Olivia in Bartlett.

Guest speaker State Sen. Andy Manar, the chief advocate of evidence-based school funding reform in Illinois, addressed statewide education initiatives. The evidence-based funding law led to additional revenues for U-46 -- \$24 million in the 2017-18 school year and \$18 million this school year.

Carpentersville woman was selfless -- in life, and in death

By: Lauren Rohr

The kindness, selflessness and unshakable faith that loved ones say Melissa Thielen embodied throughout her life are perhaps most exemplified in her death.

The 37-year-old wife and mother from Carpentersville died Nov. 26 after an undetected brain aneurysm ruptured. Per Thielen's wishes, seven of her organs were donated to five recipients, and her tissue will help enhance dozens of other lives, according to the Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network.

That's one piece of comfort family members are clinging to as they mourn Thielen's unexpected death.

"She was just the best wife anybody could ask for," said her husband and high school sweetheart, Joe Thielen. "She would give anybody the shirt off her back. She was everyone's crutch, everyone's therapist. She lifted everyone up and made them feel so much better about themselves.

"It's just really hard to process that she's gone."

Joe and Melissa met 20 years ago in a home economics class at Streamwood High School. Their relationship was "pretty much a storybook," he said, recalling their countless family vacations, outdoor adventures and all the time they spent with their 10-year-old daughter, Avery.

"That's why it's so hard right now. We were inseparable," Joe Thielen said. "She was the love of my life."

Thinking about his wife's organs going to other people seemed somewhat inconceivable to Joe, who said he and his daughter have had difficulty grasping the reality of losing her. But being an organ donor was something for which Melissa had always advocated, he said. It was a way she could continue giving after she was gone.

"Melissa's gift and her amazing family have created a legacy that will honor her memory forever," said Kevin Cmunt, Gift of Hope president and CEO. "Our hearts ache for their loss, but donation has rewritten the end of this tragic story."

As time goes on, the Thielen family will receive updates about the organ recipients whose lives Melissa saved or made better, said her sister-in-law, Sarah De Loncker.

In addition to spending time with family, Melissa ran 5Ks, loved to read and was an active member of Willow Creek Community Church, loved ones said. Her willingness to help others prompted her husband to start searching for places to volunteer, Joe Thielen said, "because I feel like that's what she would have wanted."

She also was a perfectionist and was the "hardest worker in the room," he said. She held a job at Person, an education company where she partnered with Maryville University in St. Louis to help with its online initiative, said Katherine Louthan, the institution's executive director of the School of Adult and Online Education.

"Even in the short time we worked together, Melissa really embraced the institutional values of putting students first and helping them be successful," Louthan said. "She was

an advocate for that and had a positive impact on everyone who worked with her. She's one of those people you can't help but love."

The outpouring of support the Thielen family has received since Melissa's death has been humbling, Joe Thielen said, pointing to the large crowd of friends, relatives and co-workers who attended her funeral.

Through her work in higher education, a full scholarship was set up for Melissa's daughter at Maryville. Additionally, De Loncker set up a [GoFundMe page](#) that raised more than \$19,000 in eight days.

"No amount of money is going to bring Melissa back. No amount of money is going to take away the pain," De Loncker said. "But it definitely provides a level of comfort (for the Thielens)."

In addition to her husband and daughter, Melissa is survived by her three sisters, Stacy, Ayala and Elizabeth; her brother, Shai; her father, Emery; her stepmother, Peggy; and several nieces, nephews and in-laws.



- Melissa Thielen, 37, died unexpectedly Nov. 26, leaving behind her husband, Joe, and daughter, Avery.



- Melissa Thielen, 37, of Carpentersville, died Nov. 26 after an undetected brain aneurysm ruptured.



- The Thielen family often took trips and went on outdoor adventures together, Joe Thielen said. His 37-year-old wife, Melissa, died unexpectedly Nov. 26 from a ruptured brain aneurysm.

SPORTS

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Harrington's hot hand leads Glenbard South over Elgin

By: Scott Walsh

Going into the season, Glenbard South coach Wade Hardtke wasn't quite sure what to expect from senior center Ryan Harrington.

"Ryan's been....," Hardtke paused for a moment and a smile spread across his face. "Big." Another pause. "And that's been it."

Friday night in Elgin, the 6-4 Harrington showed his coach a little more: he was big and effective -- and if he wasn't quite dominant, he could see it from his real estate in the low post.

Harrington made 7 of the 11 shots he took, added three free throws in four tries and pretty much had his way in the paint as the Raiders romped over the Maroons, 63-31.

Harrington's 17 points led all scorers, and Cole Hardtke added a dozen. Elgin (2-4, 0-2) got a half-dozen apiece from starters Trey Yarber, Darien Jackson and Kejuan Harvey.

"We played really tough defense tonight," said Harrington, like his coach a smile plastered all over his face. "I felt really good out there. I was able to get into position and the guys just got me the ball."

The Maroons continued their trend of futility in the face of pressure defenses and poor ballhandling. They turned the ball over 14 times in the first half (they had 24 for the game), and Glenbard South seemed to capitalize on every one.

"Yep, we're really struggling against pressure," assessed Maroons coach David Hess. "Tonight was a lot like last week (a 65-52 loss against East Aurora). We're not handling the ball well and we're making poor decisions. But I give them a lot of credit -- they've got five senior starters and they're well coached. But when you turn the ball over that much, it's really hard to get your defense."

The Raiders' defense was clicking from the get-go. Elgin scored the first basket of the game, and that was their largest -- and last -- lead. Glenbard South ripped off 10 unanswered points to take a 10-2 lead just over three minutes into the game.

Jeffrey Lomax (5 points) stopped the bleeding for Elgin, but Harrington closed the quarter with a three-point play when he scored on a layup and drew a foul against Jackson, the second time in the quarter Harrington converted under the basket and was fouled for three the old-fashioned way.

As the Maroons continued to cough the ball up, the Glenbard South lead, 19-9 after one, grew steadily, to 37-19 at halftime.

In the third, it was apparent that the Raiders were determined to get the ball inside to Harrington, who scored 7 of their first 10 points in the period. The Raiders, who shot 53 percent (25 of 47) from the floor on the night, closed the period with a 9-1 run to lead 53-26 after three, and it was all but over.

"We really wanted to establish the inside game early," said coach Hardtke, "but we did a good job of taking what they gave us in the first half. I really thought that our defensive intensity sparked our offense, and that was a nice surprise. We preach defense all the time, and they showed it tonight. We're really balanced right now. It's nice."

Warrick sparks South Elgin to comeback win over Streamwood

By: Craig Brueske

Playing without injured senior starting guard Drake Montgomery and trailing Streamwood by double digits late in the first half, South Elgin's basketball team needed some sort of spark.

Enter Jace Warrick.

The 6-foot-3 senior guard/forward knocked down four second-half 3-point baskets en route to a career-high 27 points while helping the Storm (5-1, 2-0) rally past host Streamwood, 71-63, in Upstate Eight Conference action Saturday night.

Warrick, who scored 17 second-half points, actually provided a huge offensive boost in the first half when he connected on a 3-pointer just inside half-court at the buzzer to keep the Storm within striking distance -- down 34-26.

"That got us going," said Storm coach Brett Johnson. "We were down 8 (points) instead of 11."

South Elgin continued its momentum into the third quarter, enjoying a 16-3 spurt during the first 5-plus minutes while opening a 42-37 lead.

The early second-half run included freshman Lane McVicar's 3-point play, back-to-back driving layups from fellow freshman Drew Cwik and a pair inside buckets from senior Vincent Miskiewicz.

"I feel like we fed off the energy we got at the end of the first half," said Warrick, who finished with five 3-pointers. "We found some open lanes and some open shots."

Warrick displayed some of his marksmanship when he buried an NBA-range 3-pointer from the wing to give the Storm a 38-37 lead with 5 minutes left in the third quarter -- a lead they would never relinquish.

"We work on a lot of drills at practice with me coming off of screens and hitting the deep 3," said Warrick.

"They left him open and he made his shots -- that's what he's supposed to do," Johnson said of Warrick. "He was also really good at taking care of the ball and driving the ball to the basket. I'm proud of the senior leadership from Jace."

With Montgomery sidelined by a stretched ligament in his thumb (suffered Nov. 29 vs. Larkin), Warrick helped take on some of the offensive load.

"Drake is a crucial player on our team," said Warrick. "I feel like someone had to step up -- me and Vince (Miskiewicz) really took the reins. I just had some open looks tonight and they fell."

Miskiewicz, who battled toe-to-toe with NIU-bound Sabres senior forward Keenon Cole, added 25 points, 13 rebounds and 3 blocked shots.

"From the opening tip, I felt like he had it and he wanted it," Johnson said of his team's 6-7 forward/center. "Keenon (Cole) is a great player and I was proud of how Vince said he wanted to guard him. He did a good enough job on him so he didn't take control. That's all you can ask of him.

"Both of those guys played above the rim."

Cole led all scorers with 30 points and 9 rebounds, while Nikola Sinik and Zach Marquez chipped in with 11 and 10 points, respectively, for the Sabres (2-5, 1-1).

"They just outplayed us in the third quarter," said Sabres coach Kent Payne. "They played with more intensity and made better decisions. We didn't defend in the second half and we didn't execute.

"They came here to win and we didn't answer the challenge. We've got to find guys who want to compete and defend."

Naperville Central powers to Marchese crown

By: Mike Garofola

Ben Cianchetti and six other Naperville Central wrestlers led a power-packed Redhawks lineup to an overwhelming victory Saturday afternoon at the 41st Mickey Marchese Memorial Tournament in Hoffman Estates.

Central's comprehensive effort saw coach Noah Fitzenreider's club score a whopping 293 points, 140.5 more than runner-up Notre Dame (152.5) which would better third-place Crystal Lake South by one-half point.

Cary-Grove was fourth with 112 points, while Maine West rounded out the top five with its 96 overall points.

"While we're very happy with the team result, and with the way the team performed today, there's still plenty of work everyone needs to do in order to be able to compete with so many great teams in our area and later on in the postseason," said Fitzenreider after the Redhawks lifted the Marchese trophy for a third consecutive season.

"We have a lot of talent and depth this season, and we're a real tight group, so I definitely feel if we stay healthy, and continue to work hard, this team can do some really great things this season," said Cianchetti (195 pounds, 9-1), who pinned his way to a second straight Marchese title.

Tommy Porter's hard-fought 5-4 win at 106 got Central off to a flying start, leading to individual titles from Colin Baumgartner (120, 9-1), Kyle Guttosch (138, 9-1), Ryan Silva (145, 8-2) and Ryan Palmer (170, 10-0).

For Baumgartner and Palmer, it would be their second championship ring at this tournament.

Top seed Jackson Punzel (9-1) appeared to be on his way to joining his teammates atop the podium, until the No. 6 rated 182-pounder was stunned by unseeded Isaac Rands (Cary-Grove) in the final.

Punzel looked every part his high profile status, running out to a 13-5 advantage after two periods, and 18-6 later when Rands caught Punzel.

"(Punzel) was taking me down, and letting me up all throughout the match, until I caught him with a lateral drop," said the junior Rands, who won only five matches two years ago as a freshman.

Rands' teammate, Charlie Gruen (10-3), thrilled the Cary-Grove faithful with his gritty 6-3 victory over Elrin Esporlas in the 132-pound final, using a crafty move one minute from time to defeat the Redhawks' junior.

"I just battled and never gave up, and when I had a chance to add to my lead, I did," said Gruen, who was a sectional qualifier a year ago with 22 wins as a sophomore.

"Both of those guys never gave in today, and you could see how important it is to wrestle with that mindset," offered Cary-Grove head coach Will Petersen.

The one-two punch of Christian Olsen (113, 9-0) and Peyton Timmons (8-0) continue to deliver knockout punches to their opponents with both Crystal Lake South stars claiming the top prize in their respective weight divisions.

Olsen, fourth a year ago at the Class 2A state tournament, cruised to his second straight Marchese title, while Timmons impressed all day long after bumping up to 126 pounds for this tournament.

"Knowing I would be moving (up) a weight class from a year ago, I spent a lot of time during the offseason to work on my conditioning in order to take on bigger and stronger guys," said Olsen, who was 45-3 in his rookie season a year ago.

Timmons, who was 39-5 as a first-time state qualifier, also became a two-time Marchese champ after his 5-1 decision over Leo Keating of Naperville Central.

"My focus over the summer was to build strength, and to get my body right to get ready for the season and state tournament," said Timmons.

After falling short a year ago, Maine West senior Sean Muellner (14-0) fired back to capture the 152-pound title to stay undefeated and give the Warriors their lone championship on the day.

"Oh yeah, I was really disappointed with my second place finish last season, so that was all the motivation I needed for this year," said Muellner, who led Ted Lawler (Hoffman Estates) 4-0 after two periods, before waiting for his chance to strike with a late pin (5:29) to finish things off.

South Elgin junior Elijah Lopez (160) made it two straight majors when he defeated Sean O'Farrell from Notre Dame.

Lopez (11-1) had just rolled over, and on top of O'Farrell at the edge, but in doing so, watched the Dons' senior injured on the move forcing him to take an injury default.

"That's not the way I want to ever win a match," admitted a gracious Lopez, who just 43 seconds in added another first-place trophy after doing so last weekend at Fenton.

"Elijah is such a great kid, and when he says how bad he felt about winning as he did, he really meant it," said South Elgin head coach Adam Lehnus. "His confidence this year is way up there, and it shows with the way he goes out each and every time he wrestles."

Storm senior Hayden Groesser would upend the No. 2 and 3 seeds to reach the final, before having his run ended by Gabe Fitzpatrick (10-1) of Notre Dame.

Willowbrook, which finished with 59 points, was led by Zach Seymore (18-2), who finished second at 120, while Elgin enjoyed a pair of fourth-place medals on the day from Brian Rea (126) and Felipe Franco at 220.



- Naperville Central's Leo Keating controls Elgin's Brian Rea in a 126-pound semifinal bout at the Mickey Marchese Memorial Wrestling Tournament at Hoffman Estates High School Saturday.



- Maine West's Hyusein Isuf escapes from Cary-Grove's Charlie Gruen in a 132-pound semifinal bout at the Mickey Marchese Memorial Wrestling Tournament at Hoffman Estates High School Saturday.



- Cary-Grove's Tyler Strege is wrapped up by Maine West's Sean Muellner in a 152-pound bout at the Mickey Marchese Memorial Wrestling Tournament at Hoffman Estates High School Saturday.



- Streamwood's Mike Brewer struggles with Hoffman Estates' Kameryn Goddard in a 152-pound bout at the Mickey Marchese Memorial Wrestling Tournament at Hoffman Estates High School Saturday.



- South Elgin's Michael Roath faces off with Cary-Grove's Joe Swanson in a 220-pound bout at the Mickey Marchese Memorial Wrestling Tournament at Hoffman Estates High School Saturday.



- Naperville Central's Leo Keating controls Elgin's Brian Rea in a 126-pound semifinal bout at the Mickey Marchese Memorial Wrestling Tournament at Hoffman Estates High School Saturday.



- Maine West's Hyusein Isuf is controlled by Cary-Grove's Charlie Gruen in a 132-pound semifinal bout at the Mickey Marchese Memorial Wrestling Tournament at Hoffman Estates High School Saturday.



- Cary-Grove's Joe Swanson battles South Elgin's Michael Roath in a 220-pound bout at the Mickey Marchese Memorial Wrestling Tournament at Hoffman Estates High School Saturday.