

Press Clippings 03/08/2019

---Courier News---03/08/2019

Pilot program to let students choose their own activity

District U-46 wants online physical education course to be offered to juniors and seniors

By: Rafael Guerrero



Monitors keeping track of activity and heart rates would be used in a U46 pilot physical education program in which high school students would exercise on their own time in any way they want. (School District U46)

High school gym classes of the future could be anything from dancing to techno music to training for a marathon as long as the student does it for 150 minutes a week and electronically monitors their activity and heart rate.

School District U46 wants to pilot an online physical education course that will be offered to juniors and seniors at Elgin and Bartlett high schools and the Dream Academy, the district's alternative school in Elgin, in which the students will choose an athletic activity and do it independently.

"They're 17 years old, 18 years old. What do they want to do for physical activity? What do they enjoy?" said Tracey Jakaitis, U46's student wellness coordinator.

The U46 School Board is expected to vote on the proposal later this month.

If approved, the pilot program will allow 125 students to sign up for the independent physical education class in the 2019-20 school year at a cost of \$18,848 to the district. If it's expanded to the other high schools the following year, the district would pay an additional \$127,356, Jakaitis said.

The cost includes the purchase of heart rate monitors, licenses to access online material and resources, and professional development and training, she said.

Under the course proposal, students would be required to record 150 minutes of physical activity per week, with target heart rate data uploaded online, Jakaitis said. Teachers would meet with the students about a dozen times to provide training for the monitors and software and conduct fitness testing.

"Throughout the rest of the semester, the teacher's role will be to continuously monitor, check in, check work and check fitness data the students will be reporting," Jakaitis said.

The course fulfills several needs, she said. Independent physical education allows teenagers to be active based on their social, emotional and physical needs and preferences. It teaches them how to be physically active outside of school, she said.

“These are decisions that students will need to be making as they graduate and go on with the rest of their lives,” U46 School Board member Melissa Owens said Monday, when the program was explained to the board.

Beyond that, it will give students more flexibility in their class schedule, Jakaitis said, and may reduce the number of waivers requested for students to be exempted from gym classes for academic or medical reasons. Many times a waiver is requested so a student can take another class.

According to district data, more than 2,600 students received a PE waiver between 2013 and 2016.

“I do love the flexibility this allows students,” board member Jeanette Ward said at Monday’s meeting. “I think this is a fantastic idea.”

Jakaitis said they have reached out to local park districts and fitness centers to determine how U46 can work with them to help students find potential physical fitness programs and classes.

PE classrooms in U46 have transitioned away from team sports to individualized fitness in recent years. Board members have approved changes to high school and middle school PE curriculum in 2017 and 2018.

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SPORTS

---Courier News---03/08/2019

Boys Basketball: Mighty Miskiewicz

South Elgin rolls past Harlem to advance to the sectional final for the second time

By: Paul Johnson



South Elgin's Vincent Miskiewicz scores while being fouled by a Harlem player during the fourth quarter of the Wednesday's Class 4A Rock Valley College Sectional semifinal. (Brian O'Mahoney/Courier-News photos)



South Elgin's Drake Montgomery puts up a shot during the third quarter.

ROCKFORD — South Elgin played stifling defense Wednesday, and Vincent Miskiewicz quite literally was in the middle of it.

The 6-foot-7 senior forward hounded Harlem all night, helping the Storm lead from wire to wire for a 57-35 victory in the Class 4A Rock Valley College Sectional semifinals.

Miskiewicz had 17 points, 15 rebounds, four blocked shots, four assists and three steals for South Elgin (25-8). He also altered several other passes and shots as Harlem (19-12) shot 14-of-51 from the field.

"I played my game," Miskiewicz said. "I knew what I wanted to do. I sat there in the paint, I blocked the shot, and I got the rebound and went."

With Miskiewicz patrolling the lane, the Storm can play a zone defense knowing he's there to clean up the back end.

"He's done a great job of understanding his role and the type of defense we're playing," South Elgin coach Brett Johnson said. "You just have to be a paint protector and be smart in your decision making. Make the shots tough. Vince keeps us going."

The Storm led 15-12 after one quarter, but an 11-2 spurt in the second quarter broke the game open.

It was fueled by two baskets each from Miskiewicz and Drake Montgomery and a 3-pointer from Lane McVicar. Montgomery finished with 14 points.

With a 28-18 halftime lead, it was easier for the Storm to clamp down defensively and pick their spots on the offensive end.

“We focused on defense all week,” Miskiewicz said. “We held them to 35 points, which is great for us. We were able to stop them on one end and then take the ball down and score.”

In the fourth quarter, Miskiewicz started to flex his muscle on the offensive end.

In addition to an alley-oop dunk from Montgomery, Miskiewicz started driving the lane and taking over the game. He scored 10 points in the fourth as the Storm iced the win.

“I’m really proud he realized he had the opportunity to get to the basket,” Johnson said. “That shows his development as player this entire season. I have this guy, I can take him to the basket, and he finished.”

South Elgin reached the sectional final for only the second time in program history and will play for the title at 7 p.m. Friday against Rockford East, a 51-46 winner over St. Charles North in the other semifinal.

“We have to play the same way we did (Wednesday),” Miskiewicz said. “We’ll have the same outcome.”

A season’s worth of work and aspirations come down to Friday.

“All those morning practices, all the time we spent yelling at each other, getting through the losses, this is what our goal was,” Johnson said. “We wanted to make sure we could get here and put ourselves in a position to be special.”

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

---Daily Herald---03/08/2019

Larkin grad McCullum wins Great Lakes player of the year

By: Mike Miazga



Lewis University guard Kendale McCullum, a Larkin graduate, recently was named the Great Lakes Valley Conference men's basketball player of the year and defensive player of the year. *Photo courtesy of Steve Woltmann*

A couple of former area stars took home some postseason hardware recently.

Larkin graduate Kendale McCullum, who now plays basketball at Lewis University in Romeoville, recently was named the Great Lakes Valley Conference men's basketball player of the year and defensive player of the year, while Cary native and Marian Central Catholic alum Adam Pischke was named to the all-GLVC second team.

McCullum is the first Flyer since the 2003-2004 season to be named the conference player of the year and fourth in school history. He also is the first player in conference history to garner two of the league's top honors in the same season.

It was McCullum's third all-GLVC honor and second first-team selection. He also was a unanimous selection to the all-defensive team after earning the same honor his sophomore and junior seasons.

"I'm so happy for Kendale," said Lewis coach Scott Trost in a school press release. "He is as good a point guard as there is in the country and I consider myself fortunate to coach him. That being said, he is a remarkable young man with a bright future."

Trost also was named GLVC coach of the year.

Through midweek McCullum was leading the conference in assists with 6.3 and steals with 2.8 per game and ranked eighth in scoring at 16.1 points per game. A three-time winner of the conference player of the week award this season, including the final two of the season, McCullum has reached double digits in scoring 23 times and has topped the 20-point mark nine times, including a career-best 28 points in a win at Quincy in late February. Twice this season, he's been a rebound short of posting a triple-double in a game. He matched his career high in assists (11) twice this season.

Pischke earned his first all-conference honor after averaging 12.2 points and 2.3 assists per game during the regular season. Through midweek he was leading the team and was third in the conference in 3-point field-goal percentage at 48.1 (50 of 104). He has reached double figures in scoring 16 times this season and has hit the 20-point barrier in a game five times, including a season-high 27 points against William Jewell on Jan. 24.

"I don't know if there is a young man that I have coached that has got more out of his ability than Pisch," Trost said. "He works extremely hard and plays with a little chip on his shoulder. He is not afraid of the moment and has made big play after big play for us this year. I am excited to have him back for another year."

Lewis won the GLVC regular-season title with a 15-3 mark and the team was ranked 15th in Division II through midweek.

Cunningham earns honor: Cary-Grove graduate Candace Cunningham recently was named to the all-Midwest Conference second team. Cunningham is a senior guard on the Beloit College women's basketball team.

Cunningham was the only player in the MWC to average a double-double this season at 14.2 points and 10.8 rebounds per game. Her 271 rebounds led the league by nearly 60 and set a new program record for rebounds in a season. That 10.8-per-game clip ranks among the top 50 in the statistic nationally among Division III cagers.

In 25 games this season, Cunningham registered 15 double-doubles, a top 25 mark in Division III. Her 81.3 free-throw percentage, 2.4 steals per game and 34.4 minutes played per game all ranked in the top five in the MWC this season.

She had a career-high 30 points against Grinnell, becoming the 16th player in Beloit women's history to register 30 or more in a game. Her career-high 17 rebounds against St. Norbert tied for the sixth-most in a game in program history, and her 9 steals against Illinois College earlier this year is second all-time in program history for a single game.

Beloit finished the season at 8-17 overall and 7-11 in conference.

Navigato at Toledo: Nate Navigato, a Geneva alum, played a key role in Toledo recently winning its second straight Mid-American Conference West Division men's basketball title.

Navigato had 17 points and was one of five players on the squad in double figures in the team's 76-57 win over Western Michigan. The win gave Toledo its 24th victory of the season and put it into a tie with Bowling Green for the second-best conference record at 12-5. Through midweek, Toledo had the No. 2 seed in the upcoming MAC tournament.

Navigato's key contributions mirrored that of his entire body of work this season.

Through 30 games, he was averaging 12.6 points per game (second on team), while shooting .475 from the field and a team-high .456 from the 3-point line thanks to 77 makes in 169 attempts. His .872 free-throw percentage also ranked first (only 5 missed throws in 39 attempts). Navigato added 3.5 rebounds, 18 steals and 80 assists against only 26 turnovers to that list.

In a recent 57-54 win over Northern Illinois, Navigato had 21 points on the strength of 4-for-6 shooting from the 3-point line and 7-for-9 shooting from the foul line.

Jeremiah at MSOE: Streamwood product Kiana Jeremiah wrapped up her college basketball career this season at Milwaukee School of Engineering. Jeremiah played in 19 games and started 14. She averaged 4.9 points per game, 2.2 rebounds and 2.1 assists. Over her four-year career in Milwaukee, Jeremiah averaged 4.5 points per game over 83 contests.

Gieseke at St. Francis: Dundee-Crown graduate Paige Gieseke is a sophomore forward on the St. Francis (Joliet) women's basketball team that qualified for the NAIA national tournament for the first time since the 2015-2016 season.

Through midweek Gieseke had played in 16 games and was averaging 3.1 points and 2.4 rebounds per game for 23-8 St. Francis, which also went 17-3 in conference play. St. Francis earned a No. 4 seed in its part of the NAIA bracket.

Off at College wants your help: Send statistics and/or information on Fox Valley-area athletes playing collegiately to Mike Miazga at mjm890@gmail.com.