

Press Clippings 09/13/19

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South Elgin High School stadium to host first-ever Friday night football

By: Rafael Guerrero



School District U46 spent \$1.5 million this summer to add lights and a new press box, track and fencing.

Fourteen years after it opened, South Elgin High School will host its first-ever Friday night football game this weekend.

School District U46 spent \$1.5 million this summer not just installing new LED stadium lights but adding a new press box, running track and fencing.

“The kids, the teachers, the community, they’ve been calling, they’ve been talking,” Athletic Director Mike Jezioro said. “They can’t wait until (Friday) night.”

The game starts at 7:30 p.m. when South Elgin takes on Elgin High School

Because a record crowd is expected, the school has rented additional temporary seating to complement its bleachers, which can seat more than 1,600, Jezioro said.

The new lighting has been a long time coming, he said. Stadium construction was completed in 2011.

“You just turn them on and they turn on instantly, no need to warm them up,” he said. “I can turn them on from my phone easily.”

The new press box replaces a small one that was meant to be temporary and used for just a couple of years, Jezioro said. It includes sections for coaches, media and announcers, and Beacon Academy students who will live stream games.

And the new track and fencing surrounding the field means there is a level running surface that can be illuminated and will allow South Elgin to host evening track-and-field meets.

Although Friday is the first official night football game under the new lights, the renovations have already made their debut, Jezioro said. Last month, the stadium played host to “Taste Under the Lights,” a family event that included football scrimmages, soccer scrimmages, cheer and dance performances, and food trucks. And earlier this month South Elgin hosted two night soccer matches.

It is Friday’s football game, though, that is drawing the most attention, Jezioro said.

“High school football is synonymous with playing on Friday night,” he said. “It can get more students involved than on Saturdays. It allows us to give our kids a better experience, both on the field and off it.”

Still to be added to the stadium are permanent visitor bleachers, concession stands and restrooms, Jezioro said. Discussions continue on plans to build those amenities sometime in the future, he said.

SPORTS

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Football

TOUCHDOWN TYLER

Two-way threat Rivelli maximizes opportunities on offense for Bartlett

By: Paul Johnson

Tyler Rivelli has only carried the ball 16 times over Bartlett’s first two games, but boy has he made the most of them.

In the 43-8 season-opening win over East Aurora, the senior running back gained 161 yards on eight carries and scored touchdowns of 40 and 70 yards.

In last week’s 24-21 loss to Glenbard East, Rivelli delivered TD runs of 85 and 54 yards.

“It’s really just an honor, if I’m being completely honest,” Rivelli said. “I loved watching Nick (Deckard, last season’s leading rusher) run, but it’s always tough being the second man in.

“It’s just really nice being the one they look to for yards.”

Deckard carried the load last season for the Hawks, rushing for 1,306 yards and 16 TDs. Rivelli backed him up, gaining 254 yards with four TDs.

Deckard did it with a bruising, powerful style. Rivelli, however, combines brute force with more explosiveness.

“He’s got what Nick had with the power, where he’d run you over,” Bartlett coach Matt Erlenbaugh said. “But he’s a little more shifty than ‘Deck’ was.

“He’s tough to tackle, as you saw last week, spin move, gone 85 yards. He reminds me a lot of ‘Deck,’ but he just has more agility and speed.”

Rivelli is using that combination to keep teams guessing.

“I have a little more bounce,” Rivelli said. “It keeps teams honest because they can’t just focus on me being upright or being shifty.”

The only thing keeping the ball out of Rivelli’s hands more often are his defensive duties. Rivelli also starts at outside linebacker.

“I work hard during the week,” Rivelli said. “I’m up in the morning before school, doing everything I can, running. After school I come home from football and run more. I’m always on the field.”

Rivelli envisions a day, though, where he's getting more than eight carries a game.

Erlenbaugh even admitted that, down the road in a big game, Rivelli could be unleashed more on offense.

"I've been dying to get more carries," Rivelli said. "I wish there was a game where we could just keep (my backup) in on defense and I could just run the ball over and over."

For now, averaging nearly 20 yards per carry while also solidifying the defense will have to do.

Bartlett (1-1, 1-1) is looking to bounce back after last week's tough loss to defending Upstate Eight champion Glenbard East. Rivelli confirmed a sluggish week of practice got to the Hawks on game day.

"Everyone was high off the first win and it cost us," Rivelli said. "A loss is way better earlier in the year as opposed to later. It's a confidence booster in that it puts us in our place, humbles us a little bit."

Last season, Erlenbaugh's first at Bartlett, the Hawks returned to the playoffs for the first time since 2015. That shift in culture is what has Rivelli confident the Hawks will rebound Friday against Glenbard South (2-0).

"The family he's built around the program, the camaraderie, the alumni that come back just because of him, it's a drastic difference," Rivelli said Erlenbaugh. "It's amazing what he's done for the team."