

Press Clippings 12/17/2021

---Daily Herald--- 12/17/2021

Suburban school districts respond to unspecified social media threat

By Barbara Vitello

Area school districts are responding to a nationwide social media post about an unspecified threat, a TikTok post referencing "school shootings and bomb threats for every school in the USA" on Friday.

Elgin police said in a community bulletin issued Thursday that there is no credible threat to Elgin schools, but they will increase patrols. In an update, authorities said they received information about the post referencing the "Larsen Lancers" of Larsen Middle School and are investigating.

"The origins of this post are unknown and there is no indication this post is within U-46," wrote U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders in an email to families, adding that administrators will continue to monitor social media.

Sanders recommends students report any concerning messages to school administrators or police and urges students to refrain from promoting social media rumors.

Downers Grove Elementary District 58 Superintendent Kevin Russell urged parents to encourage children to follow the "if you see something, say something" adage.

"It is extremely important that school personnel are promptly notified of anything that may not seem right so we can investigate all situations in coordination with law enforcement," he wrote.

Naperville Unit District 203 officials are aware of the posting but are not aware of any threat related to district schools, said Alex Mayster, executive director of communications.

"We continue to keep the safety of students and staff members as our highest priority," he said.

---Elgin Courier-News--- 12/17/2021
Girls' basketball notes: Caroline Croft is more than just a classic point guard for South Elgin. 'Her hustle, her heart? It's really epic.' By Rick Armstrong for The Beacon-News



South Elgin's Caroline Croft (11) shadows East Aurora's Mia Moore (25) during a game on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

They're back, but just how good are they?

Senior point guard Caroline Croft feels the answer to that question for undefeated **South Elgin** will be coming soon.

Very soon.

The Storm (9-0), who are 5-0 in the Upstate Eight Conference, will have a better idea of where they stand after the Komaromy Holiday Classic, which will be held from Dec. 27-30 at Dundee-Crown.

A four-year varsity starter, the 5-foot-5 Croft is one of five returning starters for the Storm, who went 12-6 in a 2020-21 season delayed at the start and then limited by the coronavirus pandemic.

“I definitely love it a lot more this season with everything more normal,” Croft said. “Last year there was so much, ‘You can’t do this, you can’t do that.’

“Even when we rode our bus, we had to sit a row apart from each other.”

South Elgin and its Upstate Eight rivals were limited last season to conference games.

Last week, the Storm rolled 60-21 over Glenbard South and 67-27 at East Aurora, which stayed close at 19-14 for one quarter. Four South Elgin players scored in double figures in each game.

“I feel this year the Upstate Eight may be struggling a little more,” Croft said. “We haven’t had much trouble, but Christmas will be a ‘prove it’ time for us.”

The little but mighty Storm hope to measure up.

Ella Winterhalder, a 5-6 guard who’s also in her fourth varsity season, provides veteran leadership with Croft. They are joined by three junior guards — 5-9 Zoie Lewis, 5-5 Raina Yang and 5-7 Caitlyn Tolentino — in the starting lineup.

“We don’t run the offense through any one player — they all have the green light,” South Elgin coach Daniel Mandernack said. “We’re basically five point guards.

“Zoie is our ‘tall,’ but she is a legitimate point guard because she’s so athletic.”

Lewis, who transferred in from Burlington Central for her sophomore season, produced seven steals against East Aurora.

Winterhalder is closing in on 1,000 career points, while Croft also could hit the milestone later in the season.

“I’m hoping both of us can do it — that would be pretty cool,” said Croft, who hopes to play at the next level and has been drawing some NCAA Division III interest. “Ella and I came into this program not knowing anybody except each other.

“We have a pretty good connection. We’ve played in the same travel program and on the same team a couple times.”

Croft, who’s averaging 11 points, can shoot the 3-pointer or score on the fast break but defense is her strong suit, leading the Storm’s press and often earning the opponents’ top scorer.

“We’re a defense-first team and we fly around,” Mandernack said. “The kids have bought into it. Our defense has to set up our offense, and we want to get a shot off in seven seconds or less.

“Caroline is all basketball all the time. It will be tough when she graduates. Her hustle, her heart? It’s really epic. I’m extremely demanding of her, but she gets better and better each year.”



South Elgin's Caroline Croft enjoys a break in the action during a game at East Aurora on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Sipla steps up: Sophomore guard/forward Reagan Sipla got acclimated to the varsity last season as St. Charles North’s sixth man and has taken off, scoring a career-high 29 points in a recent loss to Geneva.

“She had significant minutes last season,” North Stars coach Mike Tomczak said. “Then from the end of the season in March until the beginning of our summer work, Reagan had taken massive strides.”

The 6-1 Sipla can post up but is comfortable playing outside.

“She can finish at the rim and is also a very good 3-point shooter,” Tomczak said. “The days of the clear-out five player aren’t gone, but there’s not many left. The bigs want to play outside and sometimes can.”

Sipla is averaging 14.2 points, 5.1 rebounds, 2 assists and 2.1 steals.

“I would say I’m versatile,” said Sipla, whose dad, Greg, played at Wisconsin. “He taught me the Mikan drill where you keep shooting continuous layups going up from either side of the basket without dribbling and try to make anywhere from 50 to 100 in a row.”

Reagan Sipla, who has drawn Division I recruiting interest, has a visit scheduled next week with Marquette. She’s hoping to plan a possible visit to Wisconsin.

First, Sipla and her teammates visit rival St. Charles East in a DuKane Conference showdown Friday.



St. Charles North's Reagan Sipla drives to the basket on a fast break against Geneva during a game on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. (Photo provided by Grant Oler)

Hard knocks: Last week, Batavia was without Wisconsin recruit Tessa Towers and Dubuque commit Claire Nazos after the two seniors collided in practice. Both went into concussion protocol.

Batavia coach Kevin Jensen hopes Towers and Nazos will be available for Friday’s DuKane showdown at rival Geneva.