

# Press Clippings - 8/18/2023

## - The Beacon News - Countdown to Football: South Elgin is No. 4 in Beacon - News / Courier - News preseason Top 10 Rankings

*By: Paul Johnson*

*Aurora Beacon-News • Published: Aug 17, 2023*



Lucas Noworol, the latest senior to fill multiple roles on defense, offense and special teams as South Elgin looks to win its fifth straight conference title, poses before practice on Wednesday, Aug. 16, 2023. (Paul Johnson / The Beacon-News)

Lucas Noworol is the third in the family to go through **South Elgin's** football program.

Patrick, the oldest, Alex and now Lucas have all brought different strengths to the Storm.

"Patrick was the stronger one and Alex was the faster one," Lucas said. "I'm kind of in the middle of that."

A receiver/linebacker, Noworol may be a combination of his two older siblings, but he will be relied upon much like both of his brothers were during their senior seasons.

The plan is to have Noworol on the field for virtually every snap, including special teams, for the Storm, who are No. 4 in the Beacon-News/Courier-News preseason rankings.

"I've known him since seventh grade," South Elgin coach Dragan Teonic said. "He's just an unbelievable kid and a really good football player. He's a combination of his brothers."

“He’s about 5-foot-10, 185 pounds, all muscle, extremely bright football-wise. He does everything for us. He’s that kid.”

Senior offensive lineman Tommy Roath, the Storm’s lone returning first team all-conference selection, puts it succinctly.

“He just does everything right,” Roath said.

Since Teonic took over in 2018, it seems that a senior emerges as a jack-of-all-trades player for the Storm.

Mason Montgomery and Kyle Steinhofer come to mind of recent vintage. Noworol steps into that role this season.

“Senior year we have to push them,” Teonic said. “We try not to do it with a sophomore or a junior. He’s that guy this year like ‘Steiny’ last year.”

The workload doesn’t bother Noworol, either.

As one of only seven returning starters, he knows a robust class of 39 juniors looks up to players like him. Being on the field in all three phases is one way he can show his inexperienced teammates the way on the varsity level.

“I just know what I need to do,” Noworol said. “I know I need to show up early and that I need to be a leader because I have that advantage. I’ve been here so long.

“A lot of people have had to step up and be leaders, but it’s looking good.”

Teonic and his staff try to identify versatile players as their careers unfold. Using them in multiple positions at young ages helps develop strengths and smooth over weaknesses.

As those careers develop and senior year starts to loom, that’s when embracing the team concept often leads to breakout seasons for players like Noworol.

“It’s a challenge to get kids to want to do that — to think we over me, to be unselfish,” Teonic said. “You’ve got a position you could be too slow for. But if you move a couple yards over, now you’re considered fast for that position.

“You have to be willing to do that. Generally the older kids, who see the tail end of their careers, they’re the ones that buy into that more. He’s this year’s version of that.”

The Storm don’t boast a roster of established varsity stars this season. Starting quarterback Jake Sullivan transferred to Marmion, leaving a trio of juniors vying for that spot.

South Elgin, which has won 24 straight Upstate Eight games, is riding a four-year streak as conference champions. Noworol knows now is the time to show the Storm have the

type of program that reloads, not rebuilds.

“With Jake leaving, it’s a big year,” Noworol said. “We have a lot to prove. People are really showing their commitment. There are a lot of things we still have to fine-tune, but we’ll be good.

“We’ll figure out what we have to fix, but I think we’re ready with the amount of work we put in during the summer.”

### **Quick Facts**

**Team:** South Elgin.

**2022 record:** 11-0.

**Offensive leaders:** Kyle Corbin, senior, wide receiver; Ishmael George, junior, tight end; Ari Kravis, senior, running back; Tommy Roath, senior, offensive lineman.

**Defensive leaders:** Shawn Clausen, senior, free safety; Joey Cronin, senior, defensive lineman; Mo Hanif, junior, defensive lineman; Jayden Hartley, junior, defensive lineman.

**X-factor:** Lucas Noworol, senior, wide receiver/linebacker.

*Paul Johnson is a freelance reporter for The Beacon-News.*