

SPORTS

APRIL 1, 2021 • 19

Warriors overpower Blazers in District 88 Bowl

Brown and White both run for three touchdowns

STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook football team improved to 2-0 with Friday's 48-13 victory at Addison Trail. The Warriors built a 41-6 halftime lead over the Blazers, who dropped to 0-2.

Beating Addison Trail enabled the Warriors to keep possession of the District 88 Bowl trophy—known as "The Lady." Willowbrook has won its last five games against Addison Trail.

Junior Josh Brown, who rushed for five touchdowns in the Warriors' 40-0 season-opening win against Leyden on March 19, provided three more touchdown runs against the Blazers. Junior Jaylon White also ran for three touchdowns against Addison Trail. Brown and White scored all of their touchdowns against the Blazers during the first half. Junior Haven Pryor scored Willowbrook's seventh touchdown of the game during the second half.

Brown ran 51 yards for a touchdown on the game's second play from scrimmage. Junior Izabelle Manning added the first of her six extra-point kicks to give the Warriors a 7-0 lead with 11:35 left in the first quarter.

Willowbrook's next two offensive drives ended with an interception and an incomplete pass on a fourth-down play. Shortly after the Warriors turned the ball over on downs, Addison Trail senior Eric Reed delivered a 56-yard touchdown run. The Blazers missed the extra-point kick, leaving the Warriors with a 7-6 lead with 5:48 remaining in the opening quarter.

White broke a 48-yard touchdown run less than one minute later to help Willowbrook push its lead to 14-6. Moments later, senior Tyler Raya recovered an Addison Trail fumble at the Blazers' 16-yard line. Brown provided a 16-yard TD run on the next play to extend the Warriors' lead to 20-6 with about four minutes left in the opening quarter.

White scored the Warriors' next two touchdowns with second-quarter runs—a 1-yard dive and a 15-yard burst. Brown added an 18-yard touchdown run with 3:10 to play in the first half. Manning's kick raised the Warriors' lead to 41-6.

The Warriors will try to move to 3-0 in their shortened six-game spring season when they face Hinsdale South in tonight's game in Villa Park.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Josh Brown (No. 31 - above) and Jaylon White (No. 4 - right) both ran for three touchdowns during the Willowbrook football team's 48-13 victory at Addison Trail on Friday. The two juniors scored all of their touchdowns during the first half to help the Warriors to a 41-6 halftime lead. Willowbrook improved to 2-0, while Addison Trail dropped to 0-2. The Warriors have won five straight meetings in the football rivalry between the two District 88 schools.



Warriors wrap up their season at Hinsdale South Sectional

STAFF REPORT

Willowbrook's badminton team finished its 2021 season by tying for fourth place in the team standings of last week's IHSA Hinsdale South Sectional. The Warriors and Glenbard South both scored 5.5 points in the six-team sectional, which took place on March 25.

Hinsdale South won the sectional title with its score of 18 points. Downers Grove North (9.5 points) claimed second, while Oak Park-River Forest (7.5 points) placed third.

Each team's sectional lineup included two singles players and two doubles teams. Junior Amelia Gesicki and freshman Lily Caron both played singles for the Warriors at the sectional. Senior Katy Abbott joined junior Emma Rattana to form one of Willowbrook's sectional doubles

teams. The duo of senior Lana Gallagher and junior Allison Harr also represented the Warriors in the sectional's doubles competition.

The tandem of Abbott and Rattana won three matches at the sectional and finished one win short of qualifying for the IHSA state meet. The top four singles players and the top four doubles teams from each of the state's 16 sectionals advanced to this week's state meet, which will take place at Hinsdale South.

Gallagher and Harr won two matches at the sectional, while Gesicki earned a pair of singles victories.

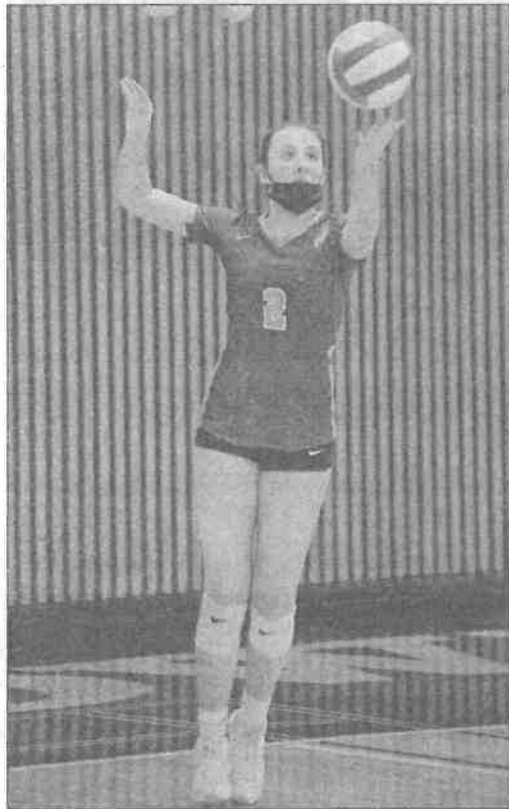
Willowbrook junior Becca Lopez Egan was injured during the West Suburban Gold Conference Meet on March 19, and was unable to compete in the sectional.



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Rock Valley Publish

Warriors vs. Eagles

Senior Kevin Kapica (No. 2) of the Willowbrook boys soccer team is pictured during last week's match against Leyden. The visiting Eagles defeated the Warriors 5-0 in Villa Park on March 25. Leyden scored one goal in the first half and added four more goals during the second half. The loss sent Willowbrook's season record to 0-5. The Warriors opened their season with losses to York Glenbard West, Addlson Trail and Proviso East. Willowbrook's season continues with this week's matches at Hinsdale South and Morton.



CHRIS FOX FILE PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Junior Katie Linnig (No. 2) helped Willowbrook's girls volleyball team to a pair of road victories last week. The Warriors defeated Morton and Downers Grove South to even their season record at 2-2. Willowbrook, which suffered three-game losses to Lyons Township and Glenbard West in its first two matches, outlasted Downers Grove South in last week's three-game battle. Willowbrook beat the Mustangs 25-17, 23-25, 26-24. Linnig contributed 15 assists and five digs in the victory. Two days before facing Downers Grove South, the Warriors earned a 25-10, 25-18 win at Morton.

Warriors rebound from two losses to post two straight victories

Team moves to 2-2 with a three-game victory at Downers Grove South

STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook girls volleyball team evened its record at 2-2 with last week's road victories at Morton and Downers Grove South.

The Warriors, who opened their season with three-game losses to Lyons Township and Glenbard West, picked up their first win of the season when they beat Morton 25-10, 25-18 on March 23. Freshman Calli Kenny provided five kills, seven digs, two blocks, two assists and an ace in the

victory at Morton.

Junior Elizabeth Bruschuk had nine digs, five aces and two assists. Senior Grace Reckamp delivered five assists, four kills and four aces. Sophomore Natalie Cipriano contributed four kills, while junior Katie Linnig had two digs, two assists and two aces. Senior Stephanie Dasbach hit two kills and made two blocks. Sophomore Hope Reckamp added two kills and two digs.

Willowbrook pulled out a 25-17,

23-25, 26-24 win at Downers Grove South on March 25. Kenny piled 11 kills and eight digs for the warriors. Junior Kyla Ostrowski had 12 assists, 10 digs and five kills. Bruschuk made 22 digs and served aces. Linnig handed out 15 aces and made five digs.

The Warriors' 12-match season continues with this week's home contests against Oak Park-River Forest and York.

Fenton pitching standout signs to play baseball at Benedictine

Fenton starting pitcher Aidan Kress recently decided to continue his baseball career at Benedictine University, a Division III NCAA school located in Lisle. Kress said he plans to be a business major with a minor in sports management.

Aidan said he chose Benedictine University because it's close to home and offered him the best overall opportunity at both baseball and study. At some point, Aidan also plans to coach youth baseball and inspire

young children and teens to be their best self.

"As a BenU Eagle I feel that I will continue to develop my own simple leadership qualities, ones that I learned on the mound as a top-ranked pitcher, as a dedicated student and as a proud son. More than that, I will be well-prepared to help our local youth discover their worth and build their self confidence as well as help to teach them the skills they need to succeed in anything they choose to

do in life."

Aidan has a goal of becoming a professional baseball player said his path thus far has included several obstacles that many thought he couldn't overcome, but he is committed and has thrived.

"My parents sacrificed so much because they believed in me," Kress said, noting their willingness to invest in private biomechanics specialty c

See STANDOUT, Page 2



Fenton starting pitcher Aidan Kress bats during a 2019 home game he started. Aidan just signed to play for Benedictine.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Fenton starting pitcher Aidan Kress signs his commitment letter during a recent visit to Benedictine University. He will pitch for the BenU Eagles beginning in 2022.

• **Standout** (Continued from page 20)

to supplement his team play over the years. "It is their support that now allows for me to be the first in our family to attend college, despite all the odds."

Bison Head Coach Dave Schwabe said Aidan is "without question" Fenton's #1 pitcher this year, and opening day starter. Aidan was Fenton's opening day starter two years ago as a sophomore. However, the 2020 baseball season was canceled due to COVID-19.

"His work ethic is excellent, by far one of the best to work on the craft of pitching that I've seen," Schwabe said. "What also makes him stand out is he's a really good person. He's a good teammate and he always keeps his word. He's very mature for his age."

Matthew Sedey, a Fenton math teacher and assistant baseball coach, saw Aidan is one of the most respectful students and players he has had the pleasure of serv-

ing. "He holds himself to the highest of standards both academically and in extracurriculars," Sedey said. "Without a doubt, Aidan's leadership inside and outside of the classroom inspires his peers."

Aidan thanked Fenton's coaching staff for trusting him with important high-pressure games.

Adam Smith, head baseball coach at Benedictine University, said his staff couldn't be more excited to welcome Aidan Kress to their Benedictine Baseball Family.

"Aidan is a fantastic talent on the mound with huge potential but we are more excited about the person he is," Smith said. "He is hard-working, intelligent, and very driven to be the best he can be on and off the field. We are thrilled to have Aidan be a huge part of our program for years to come!"

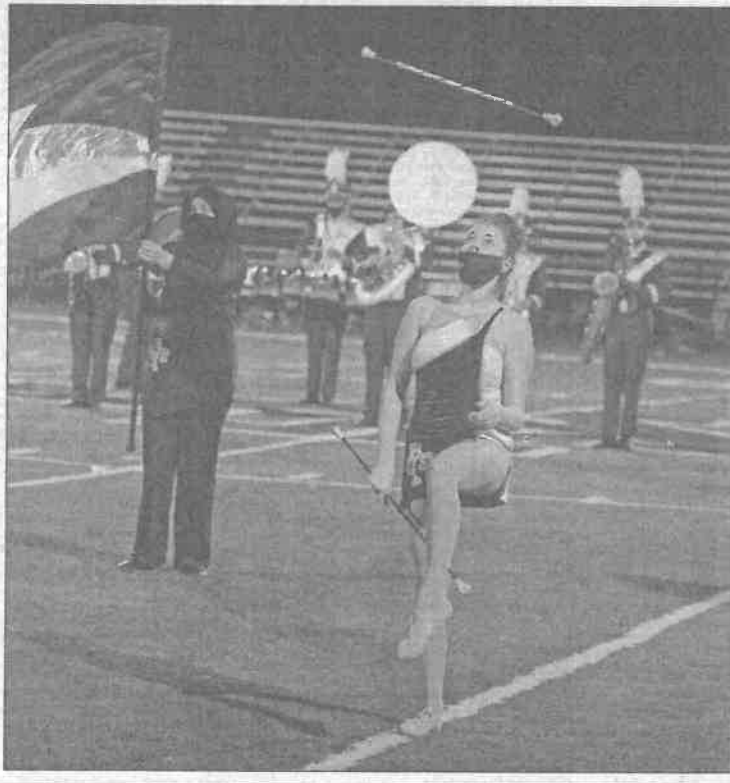
Congratulations, Aidan. Fenton is proud of you.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Halftime performances

The halftime entertainment at Friday night's Addison Trail football game against Willowbrook included performances from three baton-twirling Blazers. The trio of baton twirlers, who performed with Addison Trail's marching band, included senior Samantha Zaremba (above left), sophomore Tiffany Zaremba (above right) and senior Jenna D'Antonio (below).



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Pictured are (from left): Natalia Dabrowska, Nalya Garcia, Amalia Panos, Yana Patel, Lindsay Stevenson.

Five students qualify to compete in BPA National Conference

Five Addison Trail students have qualified to compete in the Business Professionals of America (BPA) National Leadership Conference.

They are:

- Junior Natalia Dabrowska: Legal Office Procedures (1st place at the State Leadership Conference)
- Senior Nalya Garcia: Legal Of-

ice Procedures (2nd place at the State Leadership Conference) and Business Law & Ethics (4th place at the State Leadership Conference)

- Junior Amalia Panos: ICD-10-CM Medical Diagnostic Coding (5th place at the State Leadership Conference)
- Junior Yana Patel: Health Insurance & Medical Billing (4th place at

the State Leadership Conference)

- Junior Lindsay Stevenson: Health Insurance & Medical Billing (3rd place at the State Leadership Conference), Parliamentary Procedure Concepts (2nd place at the State Leadership Conference); Information Technology Concepts (5th place at the State Leadership Conference) and

Management, Marketing and Human Resources Concepts (5th place at the State Leadership Conference)

This year's event will take place from May 4 to 9, and the theme is "Envision, Empower, Ignite." Competitions will be hosted virtually because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Millie's...the next 60 years

'Millie's Market' coming soon with pre-order, carry-out service

By Sally Litvan

FOR THE ADDISON INDEPENDENT

Millie's Pancake Shoppe, the beloved staple of the Addison Community since 1959, is about to broaden its horizons. Starting early April, the new Millie's Market will officially open in the location of the former Gift Shoppe, attached to the restaurant.

James Duda, Jr., the third-generation family owner of Millie's since 2016, made the decision to change the vision of that space during the recent lockdown. He began offering his handcrafted specialty chicken salads and egg salads on a pre-order, carryout basis. The salads took off and with the help of some local chef friends, a new "comfort food" menu was curated.

"The pandemic forced us to re-

evaluate the overall dining experience, and what the future might hold for our restaurant, and the industry in general" James said of the initial inception of the new Market. "Millie's Market came from the idea that we wanted to have a menu that was chef-created, but focused around comfort foods, because the whole idea of Millie's was centered around Grandma's kitchen and being with friends and family, enjoying a meal. I've teamed up with some local chefs whose jobs were also affected by the pandemic and we all brought in new ideas. Part of the excitement of the Market Menu is Chef Matt's ability to be creative with barbecue, seafood, charcuterie, and do things outside the Millie's norm.

"Nothing about the pandemic has been normal, so why not do some-

thing different that makes everyone feel good?"

Millie's Market will be offering gourmet mac-and-cheese, specialty-baked potatoes, a fresh take on a traditional lobster roll, bacon, bris- ket, as well as the popular chicken and egg salads. Millie's homemade soups will also be available for carry-out, as well as hand-held sandwiches, artisan charcuterie boards, and loaded tater tots, like you have never seen before.

"Although Millie's Market was born to be a carryout and third-party delivery concept, as the world resumes more normal dine in practices, we do plan on opening the door between our new storefront and the Millie's dining room, allowing people to take their meals and enjoy them with friends and family at one-

of our tables or booths" James explained. "We are planning to create some craft cocktails and offer beer and wine as well. Desserts like ice-cream and cookie platters will add to those experiences to give people a more comfortable approach to hanging out with their friends and families, like being in Grandma's kitchen."

The hours of the new Millie's Market will be Thursday through Sunday 4 - 9 p.m., and they hope to expand the days and hours, as people start to enjoy the new menu. It will be a new image of your favorite Millie's with an evening flair.

Millie's Market is located at 609 W. Lake St, Addison, directly next to Millie's Pancake Shoppe. They can be reached at (630) 628-9891, or www.milliespancakes.com.

Addison Park District offers Remote Learning Day Camp

Before and After School edition begins April 5

The Addison Park District program corresponds to School District 4 (ASD4) calendar designed for those enrolled in kindergarten through 5th grade. The program provides your child with a safe, structured environment. The experienced staff focuses on providing a variety of quality activities that enrich the lives of children and support their social and emotional well-being. Participants will have designated homework time, play sports, go outside, use of gym and craft projects. Activities will follow IDPH recommended social distancing guidelines, but if not possible, masks will be required.

Parent Information:

Addison Park District offers weekly registration for 1-day to 5-day options only. New full day

in-person school begins on Monday, April 5. You are required to register for the following week by the Friday prior of the program week. Pro-rating of fees, sibling discounts, punch pass for 2021 before- and after-school care programs will not be available.

Cleaning and Safety Protocols:

Your children are in good hands with our expanded safety measures. The health and safety of our families will be the top priority. We are adhering to the IDPH and CDC recommendations for preparedness and taking additional steps as needed such as small group ratio and sizes and limiting activities that do require close physical contact. Program staff and facility maintenance staff will comply with all IDPH and CDC disinfecting/cleaning protocols.

Program Information:

Full Remote Learning Day Camp

Time: 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Before Care Time: 7 - 8:50 a.m.

After Care Time: 3:15 - 6 p.m.

Location: Community Rec Center, 120 E. Oak Street

Transportation: Addison Park District staff will bus children to and from school.

Grades: Kindergarten - 5th grade

- Pre-packaged morning snack provided, parent drop-off time, prepare for school day; 7 - 8:30 a.m.

- Bus transportation drop-off from program location to student's respective elementary schools will begin promptly at 8:30 a.m.

- Pre-packaged afternoon snack provided, parent pick-up time, homework help - 3:15- 6 p.m. Bus transportation pick-up to program location will begin promptly at 3:15 p.m. from student's respective elementary school.

Important Updates:

ASD4 will be switching to full day in-person school starting the week of April 5. ASD4 schools will

begin full day in-person learning on the following days during the school week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesday will continue to operate as a full day remote learning day.

See information below to register for before care, after care, both before/after care or Wednesday only.

Ways to Register:

For question or additional information, please call (630) 233-7275 extension 2 or 3. To register call, go online, or in-person at Centennial Rec Center or call and schedule a registration visit at Community Rec Center.

Registration at Community Center by appointment only. Visit addisonparks.org for proper emergency paperwork to complete and returned prior to first day of program.

For fees and registration code, please visit addisonparks.org or contact David MacDonald at 630-656-6209.

University creates new COVID-19 Relief Grant

Designed to help students affected by pandemic

Elmhurst University recognizes that in the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a financial, emotional and academic toll on many students and their families. For example, a parent may have lost a job or experienced a cut in hours; or a student's grades may have suffered during remote learning, or due to pandemic-related stress.

To support students who have struggled as a result of the pandemic, Elmhurst University has created the COVID Relief Grant. The COVID Relief Grant is a renewable scholarship of up to \$1,000 that can be awarded to incoming students

who indicate that they have been negatively affected by COVID-19. The grant is stackable, meaning that it will be given in addition to any financial aid a student already may have been awarded.

"We understand that the pandemic has caused some real challenges for many of our incoming students and their families," said Vice President for Admission Timothy Ricordati. "We hope this grant will give those students some added reassurance, and free them up to focus optimistically on their future."

All incoming first-year and transfer students for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 terms are eligible for

the grant. Students can indicate on their admission application that they have been negatively affected by COVID-19, and then identify whether the impact has been academic, financial, health-related or other. Applications will be reviewed weekly. First-year and transfer students who already have been admitted for Fall 2021 also will be notified about this opportunity.



SUBMITTED PHOTO, Rock Valley Publishing

Junior elected Key Club district governor

Addison Trail junior Yana Patel was recently elected as the 2021-22 governor for the Illinois-Eastern Iowa District of Key Club International. As governor, she will direct the service and leadership efforts of Key Clubs in assigned high school areas within Illinois and the 14 eastern counties of Iowa. She also will continue to be active with local service activities in the Addison Trail Key Club. Key Clubs are sponsored by local Kiwanis Clubs.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS, Rock Valley Publishing

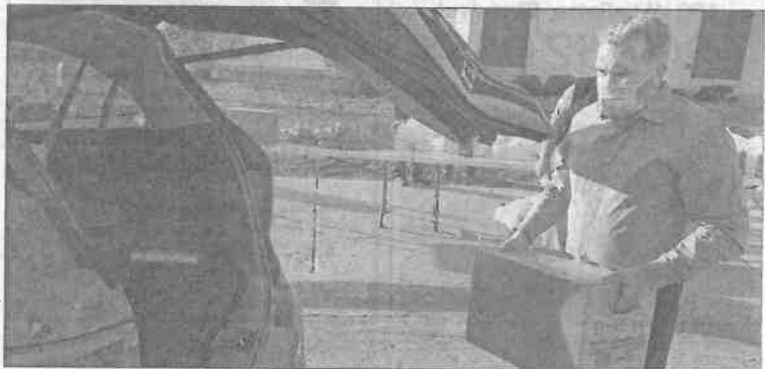
Helping the cause

Fenton School Board President Paul Wedemann works the check-in counter at the March 6 vaccination event for senior citizens.



Meeting and greeting

Rick Kambic, Fenton's Director of Community Relations, chats with a visitor while she waits for her vaccine shot. Kambic was one of many volunteers who helped seniors navigate the March 6 vaccination event.



Heave ho

Sam Bentsen, assistant superintendent for human resources and operations, carries a box of produce to a car. The next event will be Tuesday, April 20 at Tioga School.

'Time For New Ideas'

University to host post-pandemic panel discussion

Innovation has been the watchword of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the start, innovation was a necessity as the world sought new ways of working, learning, and simply living daily life. It then led to the record-setting development of COVID-19 vaccines, as well as the means to mass produce and administer them.

Now, as the pandemic shows signs of subsiding and we all prepare for a new normal, innovation offers the key to emerging from the pandemic in a position of strength, and ready to advance in new directions.

In recent years, Elmhurst University has launched a number of new academic programs, projects and partnerships to support innovation and entrepreneurship. According to U.S. News & World Report, Elmhurst University ranks third among the Most Innovative Schools in the Midwest.

On Wednesday, April 7, the Office of Admission will host "Time for New Ideas," an online panel discussion about the urgent need for innovation and entrepreneurship in the post-pandemic era. The panelists will discuss:

- The entrepreneurial mindset
- The role of creativity in innovation
- Trends in entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship (innovation within an existing organization)
- Startup funding and resources
- Elmhurst University's new Graduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The panelists include:

- Bruce Fischer, professor in the Department of Business & Economics, and director of the Master of Project Management Program and the new Graduate Certificate Program in Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Elmhurst U.
- Travis Linderman, managing director of Innovation DuPage, partner at Exascale Ventures, and previous director of three venture incubators
- Soni Simpson, associate professor of business administration at Elmhurst U., and a consultant and high-performance trainer in brand strategy, innovation and change leadership
- Patrick Yanahan '94, MBA '10, entrepreneur in residence for the Weigand Center for Professional Excellence at Elmhurst U., and president of USA Strategies, a business marketing firm serving clients from startups to Fortune 500 companies

"Time for New Ideas" begins at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Apr. 7, in a virtual format. The event is free but registration is required, at elmhurst.life/innovation2021. For questions, contact the Office of Admission at (630) 617-3400 or email admit@elmhurst.edu.

This event is sponsored by the new Graduate Certificate program in Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Elmhurst University. The program can help students jump-start a startup, bring new ventures to existing organizations, and better leverage ideas in today's dynamic economy. The part-time program is accepting students for the fall of 2021 and can be completed on campus or online in one year.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing



Halftime entertainment

Willowbrook High School's cheerleading and dance teams performed during halftime of Friday night's home football game in Villa Park. The school's football team normally plays a nine-game regular season each fall. The Warriors did not play any games during the fall of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The abbreviated spring season will feature six games and no post-season. Willowbrook's cheerleaders and dance team usually join the school's marching band to perform during halftime of the Warriors' home football games. The marching band did not attend Friday's season-opening contest against Leyden, which was played in front of a limited audience. Willowbrook defeated Leyden 40-0.

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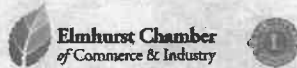
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Warriors open season with a pair of narrow losses

Glenbard West saves four match points in a three-game victory in Villa Park

STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook girls volleyball team began its shortened season with a pair of three-game losses last week.

The Warriors opened their season with a loss at Lyons Township on March 16. The Lions defeated Willowbrook 25-20, 21-25, 25-15.

Willowbrook played a home match against Glenbard West on March 18. The Warriors prevailed in the first game, but the Hilltoppers rebounded to win the second game. Willowbrook built a 24-20 lead and had four match points in the decisive third game, but Glenbard West reeled off six straight points to earn a 21-25, 25-19, 26-24 victory.

"We've got to figure out how to finish to get it done," said Willowbrook coach Irene Mason after the loss to the Hilltoppers. "There's no way we should have let that one slip away. That's disappointing. The good news is we have a lot of young players in crucial roles."

Freshman Calli Kenny contributed 13 kills, 21 digs and a pair of aces for the Warriors during the match against Glenbard West. Junior Elizabeth Bruschuk made 32 digs and supplied three assists and two aces.

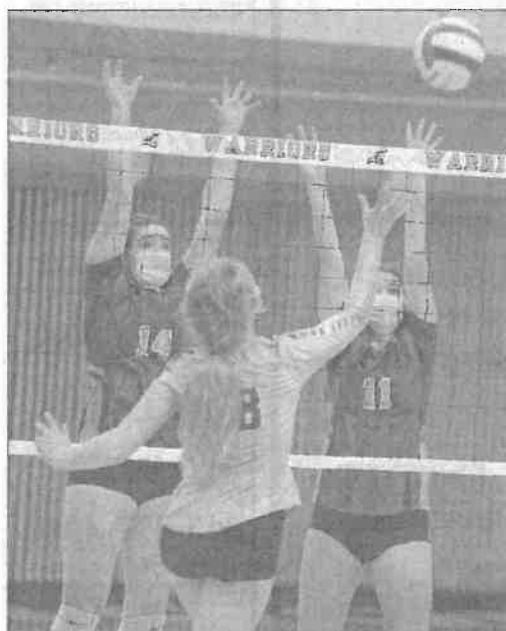
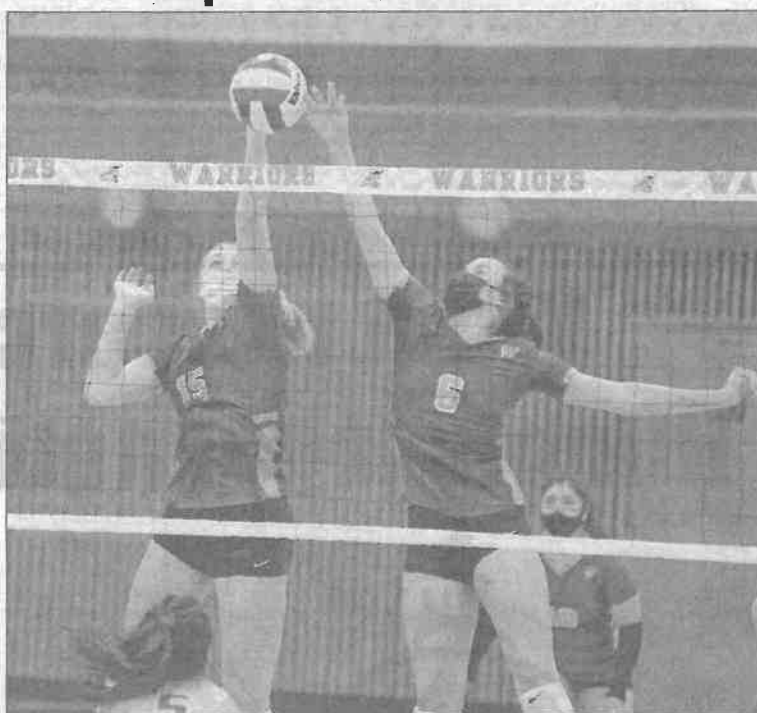
Junior Katie Linnig provided 16 digs and 13 assists, while senior Grace Reckamp delivered 14 digs, 11 assists and seven kills.

Willowbrook sophomore Natalie Cipriano added five kills and two digs against the Hilltoppers. Senior Stephanie Dasbach had three kills and two blocks.

Bruschuk amassed 22 digs, two kills, two aces and two assists in the season opener at Lyons Township. Cipriano and Kenny both provided eight kills, while Reckamp piled up seven kills, 13 assists, two blocks and an ace. Linnig supplied 15 assists and six digs.

The Warriors are scheduled to play just 12 matches during their abbreviated spring season, which runs through April 24. Willowbrook played a total of 36 matches (posting an overall record of 20-16) during its 2019 fall season. The team's 2020 fall campaign was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Willowbrook will play all of its spring-season matches against opponents in the West Suburban Conference.

The Warriors' season continues with this week's matches against Morton and Downers Grove South.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Willowbrook's girls volleyball team started its spring season with a pair of narrow losses last week. The Warriors dropped a three-game decision at Lyons Township on March 16. Two days later, Willowbrook lost a three-game battle to Glenbard West in Villa Park. The Warriors had match points against Glenbard West, but the Hilltoppers won the final six points to earn a 21-25, 25-19, 26-24 win. One photo (top right) from Willowbrook's exciting three-game match against Glenbard West shows (left to right) senior Stephanie Dasbach (No. 15) and freshman Calli Kenny (No. 6). Another photo (above) shows (left to right) senior Grace Reckamp (No. 14) and her sister, sophomore Hope Reckamp (No. 11). The Warriors are scheduled to play 12 matches during their abbreviated spring season.

Warriors take second at WSGC badminton meet

Willowbrook's badminton team placed second to Hinsdale South in the overall team standings of the West Suburban Gold Conference Meet, which took place at Hinsdale South. The Warriors earned second-place finishes in nine of the event's 10 singles flights.

Senior Katy Abbott of Willowbrook placed second in the No. 2 singles flight of the conference meet. Senior Lana Gallagher claimed second at No. 3 singles, while freshman Lily Caron earned second at No. 4 singles.

Junior Amelia Gesicki provided Willowbrook with a second-place finish at No. 5 singles.

Junior Allison Harr turned in a second-place finish for Willowbrook in the meet's No. 6 singles division. Junior Annabelle Romero wound up second at No. 7 singles, while junior Mary Whiting landed in second at No. 8 singles. Junior Kali Becker provided the Warriors with a second-place performance at No. 9 singles. Sophomore Emma Foley contributed a second-place effort at No. 10 singles.

The Willowbrook duo of Gallagher and Caron finished second in the No. 3 doubles level of the conference meet. Allison Harr and Romero teamed up to claim second at No. 4 doubles, while the tandem of Whiting and junior Claire Harr earned second at No. 5 doubles.

The Warriors' team of Gesicki and junior Emma Rattana delivered a third-place showing in the No. 2 doubles flight.

Willowbrook will compete in an IHSA sectional this week. The Warriors will send a lineup of two singles players and two doubles teams to the sectional.



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Junior Amelia Gesicki of the Willowbrook badminton team is pictured during last week's home dual meet against Hinsdale Central. The Red Devils defeated the Warriors in the March 17 meet in Villa Park. Willowbrook closed out last week by earning a second-place finish in the team standings of the West Suburban Gold Conference Meet. Hinsdale South won the team title in the event, which took place on its home courts. Willowbrook claimed second-place finishes in nine of the conference meet's 10 singles flights. The Warriors also placed second in three of the event's five doubles flights. Gesicki contributed a second-place showing at No. 5 singles. She teamed with junior Emma Rattana to earn a third-place finish in the meet's No. 2 doubles division. The Warriors will compete in an IHSA sectional this week.

Suburban Life All-Area Girls Basketball Team

- **SHANNON BLACHER, MONTINI, SOPHOMORE:** Second-year varsity player was lethal on the offensive end because of her ability to score around the basket and shoot 3-pointers. Blacher, an all-conference pick, averaged 13.4 points and 7.9 rebounds and shot 78% from the free-throw line. Long and active on the defensive end, the 5-foot-9 guard is a good rebounder.
- **LAUREN COHEN, GLENBARD SOUTH, SENIOR:** Illinois State recruit is one of the best defenders in the state and also the Raiders' main offensive player. A key part of Glenbard South state teams in 2018 and 2019, Cohen averaged 17 points, 8.1 rebounds, 6.1 steals, 3.75 assists and 1.1 blocks.
- **LINDSEY HARR, LYONS, SENIOR:** Winona State commit averaged 16.1 points and made 42 3-pointers in 15 games, shooting at a 37.2% clip for a Lions team that shared the West Suburban Silver Cup. All-conference and academic all-conference pick shot 80.4% at the free-throw line and averaged 2.3 assists and 3.7 steals.
- **LAUREN HUBER, GLENBARD EAST, SENIOR:** A stellar three-sport athlete, Huber became Glenbard East's all-time leading scorer with 1,294 career points in just two full seasons and 17 games this year. This season, she averaged 20.5 points, 10.5 rebounds and 3.7 steals while shooting 74.7% on free throws and 45.6% from the floor. Three-time all-conference pick was honorable mention All-State as a junior.
- **CLAIRE HYDE, WHEATON NORTH, JUNIOR:** DuKane Conference Player of the Year for 13-3 co-champions averaged 20.1 points and made 54 3-pointers (a 39.5% clip). Third-year varsity guard shot 80.9% on free throws and averaged 2.9 steals and 3.6 rebounds.
- **BRENNA LOFTUS, RIVERSIDE-BROOKFIELD, SENIOR:** Washington University (St. Louis) commit surpassed 2,500 career points this season. She averaged 27.5 points, 4.8 rebounds, 3.3 steals and 1.6 assists, playing 25 minutes a game. Loftus scored 42 points in a win over Aurora Christian. As a junior, she scored program record 48 points in a game.
- **SYDNEY MOLIS, YORK, SENIOR:** The 6-foot forward finished the season in impressive fashion, averaging over 12 points in the Dukies' last seven games. For the season, Molis averaged 9.5 points, 4.5 rebounds, 1.5 steals and 1.3 blocks.
- **KENDALL MORIARTY, BENET, SENIOR:** Nebraska commit averaged 13 points and shot 56% from the field. Elite defender led Redwings with 23 steals and 19 deflections. Scored career-high 25 points in season finale against Carmel. Benet went 96-16 in Moriarty's career with four East Suburban Catholic Conference titles.
- **HANNAH SCHURINGA, TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN, SENIOR:** The 6-foot senior forward averaged 21 points, 9 rebounds, 2.2 assists, 2 blocks and 1.4 steals, shot 73% on field goals inside the arc and 71% on free throws.
- **MEGHAN STAPLETON, DOWNERS GROVE SOUTH, SENIOR:** Four-year varsity player eclipsed 1,000 career points this season. Stapleton, who will play in college at Lesau, averaged 17 points a game.
- **SOPHIE SULLIVAN, WILLOWBROOK, JUNIOR:** Transfer from Montini averaged 25.4 points, 4.1 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 3.4 steals and shot 73% at the free-throw line for 14-2 Warriors team that won its last eight games and captured West Suburban Conference tournament title.
- **TARIS THORNTON, WILLOWBROOK, SENIOR:** Eastern Illinois recruit and Montini transfer was one of area's best rebounders. Thornton averaged 12.2 points, 7.2 rebounds and 3.1 assists in just 18.5 minutes a game for 14-2 West Suburban Conference tournament champions.

All-Area team compiled by Josh Welge.

GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Brenna Loftus leaves her mark at Riverside-Brookfield with wins and staggering offensive numbers

By JOSHUA WELGE
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Brenna Loftus is a girl who could have easily got caught up or infatuated with her individual statistics in high school.

It never happened. Humble to the core, thankful to those around her, the Riverside-Brookfield senior never dwelled on personal achievement. When Bulldogs coach Dallas Till's kids went to games, they'd ask Loftus afterward how many points she scored. She could never recite the answer.

"I have such strong relationships with my teammates, I know without having to say explicitly that they appreciate what I can contribute," said Loftus, a 5-foot-8 Washington University (St. Louis) commit. "Things like numbers and statistics are so much less important than the relationships I have built. In that respect, I've been surrounded by really great teammates."

Loftus won't crave attention, but the impact she left on Riverside-Brookfield's girls basketball program is immense.

She led the Bulldogs to an 84-24 record in four years and two conference championships, with a regional title in 2020 - the program's first since 2011. And Loftus did so with simply staggering offensive numbers.

As a junior, she averaged 30.7 points a game and scored 48 points in a game against Eisenhower. Her 1,044 points for one season are ninth all-time in IHSA history.

This year, despite only playing about 25 minutes a game and facing several box-and-one defenses designed to stop her, Loftus still averaged 27.5 points, 4.8 rebounds and 3.3 steals, surpassing 2,500 career points for the 10-4 Bulldogs - all while maintaining a perfect grade-point average.

The highlight perhaps came against 2020 state team Aurora Christian and Virginia recruit Anna Griffin, a game in which Loftus poured in 42 points in a Bulldogs win. With a normal-length season, Loftus certainly would have eclipsed 3,000 career points.

"Just unprecedented, really, and she did it from Day 1," said Till, noting that Loftus had about 600 points as a freshman. "I hate to say it, but you almost came to expect it. This kid did it over and over again. And she did it against good teams. Aurora Christian this year, Kankakee last year. The sectional game last year against Kenwood. [DePaul coach] Doug Bruno came over and talked to her afterward and was like, 'Who is this kid?'"

Loftus got her start in kindergarten. Her parents signed her up for multiple sports, but her dad, who played in college at Knox College in Galesburg, encouraged Loftus to stick with basketball. Things got serious when she joined the Chicago Hoops Express AAU team

Photo provided
Riverside-Brookfield senior Brenna Loftus is the Suburban Life Girls Basketball Player of the Year.

in eighth grade.

"I realized it was maybe something I could do at the next level just because so many girls in that program are doing such incredible things," Loftus said. "To be able to witness that is a gift and I'm grateful for it."

What makes Loftus' personal numbers all the more mind-blowing is that she did it old school. Till estimated she made fewer than 25 3-pointers over four years. Crafty going to the rim and speedy in transition (she also runs track), Loftus averaged more than a point a minute the hard way.

"She understands what she needs to do to be successful," Till said. "She was able to adapt to different personnel through the four years, and she was able to get it done. This year, for instance, we lost two key pieces off a 30-4 team, we did not have the supporting cast and she was getting harassed on the floor by everyone and still got it done. It spoke volumes. And she remained humble throughout it all. She's the epitome of what you want as a player."

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