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CHRIS FOX PHOTO Villa Park Review

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## Senior Night at Willowbrook

Willowbrook High School recognized several members of its Class of 2022 at Friday's Senior Night football game. In addition to honoring the seniors on the football team, the school noted the contributions of other seniors, including those on the cheerleading team, marching band and dance team. The six seniors on Willowbrook's dance team are pictured at the end of that team's halftime performance. Pictured (left to right) are: (bottom row) Coco Bernardi, Ava Cappitelli and Olivia Ehrhardt; (middle row) Sabrina Corso and Katie Corsini; (top row) Nelly Irion. The Warriors defeated Proviso East 40-14 in Friday's football contest to earn their first win of the season.

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CHRIS FOX PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Singing to the music

The Willowbrook High School marching band concluded its halftime performance at Friday night's home football game by marching from the field toward the school's student section. The band then played "Hey! Baby" to the delight of the enthusiastic students in the bleachers. Playing its first home game of the season on Friday, Willowbrook's football team crushed Proviso East 40-14. The Warriors, who led the Pirates 40-0 at halftime, improved their overall season record to 1-2.

## Obituary — Villa Park VFW Post 2801 Auxiliary to accept essays for youth scholarship competitions

*Deadline to submit entries is Oct. 31; Patriot's Pen essay is open to students in grades 6-8; Voice of Democracy is for high school students*

### Lt. Col. Frank Gentile Sr.

Lt. Col. Frank Gentile Sr., passed away on Aug. 31, 2021, and is now at rest with the Lord, his family and many friends gathered on the Italian side of heaven. Frank is survived by his wife of 70 years Marilyn Gentile (Greco); sons, Frank Gentile, Jr. and John Gentile, and daughter, Angela (Ryan) Trexler, and Victoria Urso Pass; grandchildren, John Jr., Brandon, Nicholas, Todd, Angelique, and Jenna; great-grandchildren Noah, Summer and Grace; and dear friends Emad and Minnie. "Our deepest gratitude to all of you who so patiently cared for and comforted our father," the family said. "Thank you. Although he is no longer here, his light shines on in all he loved."

Private interment at Queen of Heaven Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials are appreciated to the Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans, 433 S. Carlton Ave., Wheaton, IL 60187 or visit [helpaveteran.org/](http://helpaveteran.org/) donate. Arrangements by Brust Funeral Home, Lombard. For more information, call 630-834-6656 or visit [brustfuneralhome.com](http://brustfuneralhome.com).



The Villa Park Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2801 Auxiliary will participate in the upcoming 2021-22 Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy youth scholarship competitions.

The Patriot's Pen contest is for students in grades 6-8. Entrants must complete an essay by writing an answer (300 to 400 words) to this year's theme question: "How can I be a good American?"

The Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition is open to all high school students. Contestants will write an essay respond-

ing to the 2021-22 theme question: "America: Where do we go from here?"

In addition to writing their response to that question, students will make an audio recording (3 to 5 minutes) of their essay.

Students who participate in the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy essays can advance to four different levels of competition—VFW Post, VFW District, VFW State and VFW National. Students can earn scholarship funds by advancing to each level. The first-place national award for the Patriot's Pen contest

is \$5,000. The grand prize in the Voice of Democracy competition is a \$30,000 scholarship.

The deadline to submit entries to VFW Post 2801 in both competitions is Sunday, Oct. 31.

For more information, or to obtain an entry form, send an email to the post at [vwpost2801auxiliary@gmail.com](mailto:vwpost2801auxiliary@gmail.com).

Entry forms are also available online at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org). Go to the Community tab, and then click on the Youth & Education tab. From there, click on the Youth Scholarships link.

## VFW Post 2801 Auxiliary hosts concert on Sept. 25

*Concert is free; event will also feature food, drinks and bucket raffles; donations are encouraged*

The Villa Park Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2801 Auxiliary invites the public to a free concert on Saturday, Sept. 25.

The concert, which will take place at the post (located at 39 E. St. Charles Road) from 5:30 to 8:30

p.m., will feature Full Volume—a local classic rock band.

Full Volume will perform some of the greatest hits of several bands, including Lynyrd Skynyrd, ZZ Top, The Doors, CCR, The Rolling Stones, Bad Company, Aerosmith, Cheap

Trick, The Allman Brothers and Tom Petty.

In addition to music, the event will feature food and drinks, as well as bucket raffles. Donations to the post are greatly encouraged and appreciated.

# Warriors move to 13-0 after winning the title at another invite

## Willowbrook wins five matches in Saturday's event at Leyden

The Willowbrook girls volleyball team improved its overall season record to 13-0 by winning five straight matches and claiming the championship at Saturday's six-team Eagle Invite at Leyden High School.

The Warriors didn't lose a single game during their five victories at Leyden's invite. Willowbrook opened Saturday's round-robin event with a 25-20, 25-20 victory over Lake Forest.

The Warriors then beat Lane Tech 25-6, 25-6. In its third match of the invite, Willowbrook defeated DePaul College Prep 25-9, 25-14. The Warriors then beat Leyden 25-11, 25-6. Willowbrook completed its first-place performance at the event with a 25-16, 25-17 victory over Conant.

Sophomore Calli Kenny contributed 11 kills, eight digs and two aces for the Warriors in Saturday's match against Conant. Freshman Hannah Kenny provided 15 assists, six digs, five kills and one ace. Senior Katie Linnig had nine assists, seven digs and an ace. Junior Hope Reckamp hit six kills, while senior Kyla Ostrowski and junior Natalie Cipriano bashed four and three kills, respectively. Senior Elizabeth Bruschk contributed

five assists, three digs and three aces. Calli Kenny provided a total of 39 kills and 23 digs during the five matches at Saturday's invite. Her sister Hannah supplied 24 kills and 43 assists, while Linnig amassed 45 assists and 20 digs.

The Warriors' win at the Eagle Invite came seven days after their championship effort at their own eight-team invitational in Villa Park. Willowbrook won five straight matches at its two-day event, which ended on Sept. 4. The Warriors earned a three-game victory over Metea Valley in the invite's championship match.

The Warriors started their West Suburban Gold Conference season by defeating Addison Trail 25-8, 25-12 in Addison on Sept. 7. Hannah Kenny piled up 10 kills, nine digs, five assists and two aces in the victory over the Blazers. Calli Kenny delivered seven kills, seven digs and three aces. Linnig handed out 14 assists and made five digs. Bruschk made eight digs, while Cipriano connected for three kills.

The Warriors' season continues with this week's matches against Morton, Proviso West and Riverside Brookfield.



CHRIS FOX FILE PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Willowbrook's girls volleyball team won five straight matches to win the championship of Saturday's six-team Eagle Invite at Leyden High School. The Warriors moved their overall season record to 13-0 with Saturday's five victories. Willowbrook has won a pair of invitational titles this season. The Warriors won five matches and claimed the championship at its own eight-team invite, which took place Sept. 3-4. Willowbrook freshman Hannah Kenny (above - No. 10), who is pictured during the recent invite in Villa Park, provided 24 kills and 43 assists during the team's five victories at the round-robin Eagle Invite. Senior Katie Linnig (right - No. 4), who is also pictured during Willowbrook's Invite, contributed 45 assists and 20 digs during Saturday's five wins at Leyden. The Warriors opened their West Suburban Gold Conference season with a 25-8, 25-12 win at Addison Trail on Sept. 7.



## Warriors win home opener, pound Proviso East 40-14

### Six first-half touchdowns help Willowbrook to a 40-0 halftime lead

The Willowbrook football team earned its first win of the season on Friday, when it routed Proviso East 40-14 in a West Suburban Gold Conference game in Villa Park. The Warriors, who opened their season with a pair of non-conference road losses, improved to 1-2.

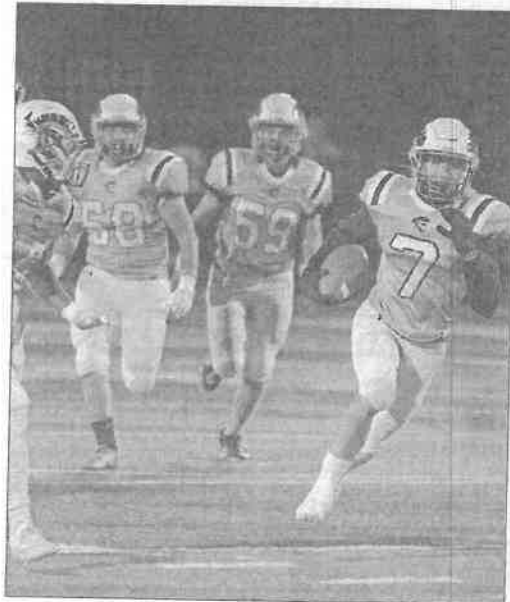
Willowbrook scored four first-quarter touchdowns to take a quick 27-0 lead over Proviso East, which dropped to 0-3 overall and

0-1 in the conference. The Warriors added two more touchdowns in the second quarter to build a 40-0 lead by halftime. The lead of at least 40 points triggered a running clock throughout the second half.

Senior Josh Brown scored Willowbrook's first two touchdowns of the night. His 24-yard scoring run gave the Warriors a 6-0 lead less than two minutes into the game. Moments later, the Pirates turned the ball over

on a fumble. Brown recovered the loose ball to set up Willowbrook's next scoring drive. Shortly after the Warriors' offensive unit returned to the field, Brown pushed the lead to 12-0 when he ran 28 yards for a touchdown with 9:03 left in the first quarter. Junior Jacob Kotcherian made the extra-point kick to boost Willowbrook's lead to 13-0.

See WARRIORS, Page 12



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Playing its first home game of the season, the Willowbrook football team rolled to a 40-14 victory over Proviso East on Friday in Villa Park. The Warriors, who began the season with non-conference losses at Providence Catholic and Downers Grove North, moved to 1-2 with Friday's West Suburban Gold Conference win. Willowbrook scored 27 first-quarter points to build a 27-0 lead over Proviso East, which dropped to 0-3. Senior Nick Mabutas (above-No. 7) scored the Warriors' third touchdown of the quarter when he intercepted a pass and raced 41 yards for a touchdown. Mabutas, who is pictured during his interception return, scored Willowbrook's fourth touchdown of the first quarter when he made a leaping 25-yard reception of a pass from sophomore quarterback A.J. Palicki. Another photo (right) from Friday's game shows a group of Warriors, including juniors Patrick Michael (No. 20) and Joey Tumilty (No. 10) converging on a Proviso East ball carrier. Willowbrook will play a conference home game against Downers Grove South this Friday.





I am calling about Jackson Middle School pick-up and drop-off procedures, which are crazy. I've lived a block away from Jackson for 37 years. It gets worse every year. The village recently installed sensors on our street to see how fast people are going. All they had to do was ask us; lots and lots of cars cut down our street to avoid the Jackson jam-up. It's a quagmire. It's crazy over there. Somebody's going to get hit; somebody's going to get killed. Please, Villa Park village board and police, do some patrolling and come and talk to the people who live on our street. You don't have to spend all this money on these sensors. We've been complaining about this for years. It's time to do something to make the drop-off procedure at Jackson a little more fluent. It's crazy. Thanks a lot.

Apparently, "my body, my choice" only applies to abortion. It certainly doesn't apply if you dare choose not to get vaccinated or not to wear a mask.

To the person who called about grocery stores putting newspapers where they can be seen instead of being located after you check out: One, perhaps contact the store in question, instead of Speak Out, to make your request? Two, if you know that is where the newspapers are, swing by there first, or before you finish your shopping, to get the paper you want. Problem solved.

Just like with politics, masks and COVID-19, the abortion debate is not likely to change minds. I am pro-life but do not judge others' right to choose. However, the recent ruling in Texas is extreme in not allowing the termination of a pregnancy that was the result of rape or incest. I don't subscribe to the view that abortion is simply part of "reproductive health," except when a woman's life is in jeopardy. Example:

## • Warriors (Continued from page 5)

Senior Nick Mabutas then provided a defensive touchdown for the Warriors when he intercepted a Proviso East pass and raced 41 yards into the end zone. Kotchian added another extra-point kick to extend the Warriors' lead to 20-0.

Mabutas added an offensive touchdown later in the opening quarter when he made a diving catch in the end zone to haul in a 25-yard pass from sophomore quarterback A.J. Palicki. The extra-point kick raised Willowbrook's lead to 27-0 with 4:40 remaining in the first quarter.

Brown broke a 31-yard touchdown run early in the second quarter to help the Warriors push their lead to 34-0. Senior Izerick Yates ram-

Medicaid (our tax dollars) should cover a deviated septum but not an elective nose job. Part of being pro-choice should include the choice not to risk getting pregnant in the first place; there are plenty of preventive measures out there, including the morning-after pill. So, the Texas governor said he wants to eliminate rapists as one solution to preventing unwanted pregnancy? Let's see how that works out for Texas!

Masks—who likes them? But it's the law to protect those who refuse to get the vaccination. Thanks to one local grocery store for removing a customer who said she doesn't have to wear one! But, what is going on at another local grocery store? Employees, delivery people and customers are not wearing them. Come on, help keep your customers safe—enforce the law!

It was good to see capacity crowds at several college football games around the country. People were able to live their lives and enjoy themselves. Of course, there are some of the COVID-19 scolds who want to maintain lockdowns forever. But lockdowns don't work.

Since the left is up in arms on the ruling in Texas, I would imagine the mask mandates will be lifted. My body. My choice.

America is not made up of the Washington elitists that lie, cheat, deceive and manipulate. We must realize that most of the politicians and bureaucrats, both Republicans and Democrats, are not working for us. Over the years they have shown themselves to be inept, callous and out of touch with the American people. The politicians and bureaucrats tell us how to act and live, while their world, both public and private, is chaos. This will continue

and possibly get worse as long as we allow the politicians and the bureaucrats to divide us. We must fight back and throw them out of office.

Producer inflation has gone up 8.3 percent in the largest annual increase on record, but it's all good. At least that meanie Donald Trump isn't posting mean tweets on Twitter anymore.

I'm starting to see more and more signs along streets and in front yards that say: Follow the science, unmask the kids. Couldn't agree more! I hope to see more of these signs around town, but I have a feeling Pope Pritzker will issue an executive order to have these signs removed.

Elder abuse, plain and simple, is against the law. The Democrats took poor Mr. Biden, who already seemed to have cognitive problems, hid him in the basement during the presidential campaign and made him president so they could have a puppet. I feel sorry for Mr. Biden and all the stress put upon this man by the Democrats so they can carry on their socialist agenda. And shame on the people who voted a party instead of America. Goodbye.

I'm 90 years old, and most of those

years I have lived in DuPage County. I've watched in amazement at what the Democrats have done to Chicago, Cook County and the state. What is even more amazing is the way people in Cook County have constantly complained about the way things are but then continually vote Democratic and expect things to change. I guess it was pretty smug thinking this could never happen to DuPage County in Illinois. The people in DuPage are too smart. Well, the people of DuPage must be tired of a good thing and now they are starting to vote Democratic. Want to know how that is going to turn out? Just look at Chicago and Cook County.

Here's the deal, Joe: 13 service members are dead because of you and you alone. You own it.

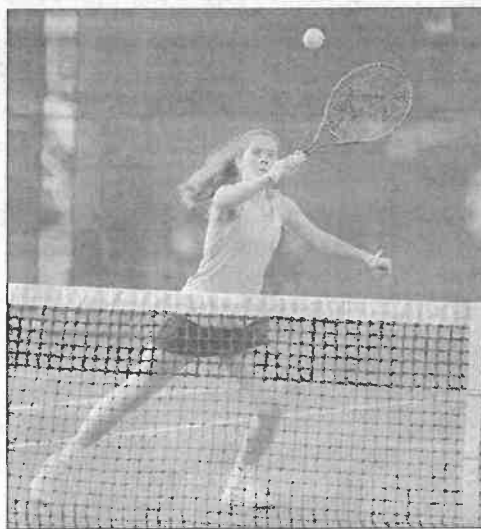
Good morning. This is for the person who keeps referring to our governor as Pope Pritzker; please stop. This is so disrespectful and disheartening to those of us who are Catholic, many of whom could be your own good neighbors and friends. Thank you very much. Bye now.

I would like to speak out to the liberals who voted for Biden. With all that has happened in and to our

country since Jan. 20, 2021, I w appreciate knowing what benefit have received from your choice of new administration. First, why did choose Biden? Was it your hat President Trump or because of his outstanding qualities to be better a quiet voice? Whatever the case, share the responsibility for the action of America today. Liberals become rather quiet; speak out your truths! I'm waiting. While you thinking, consider reading or writing, "Hunger Games," if you have already. It takes place in the future new country in North America. C it be us?

Thanks to the Speak Out calling guarding garbage cans in front of garages or houses. I called about this in my subdivision some time and was told to call code enforcement. A lot of good that did; they're still in front of the garages and houses.

Remember how the regressive breathlessly kept track of how n lies Donald Trump told when he president? I think someone should start keeping track of how many Biden has told since becoming president because that list is growing the day.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

## Winning Warriors

The Willowbrook girls tennis team earned a 6-1 win over West Chicago in last week's non-conference dual meet in Villa Park. One photo from the Sept. 8 competition shows sophomore Lauren Carson (right), who posted a 6-0, 6-1 win for the Warriors in the No. 3 singles match. Senior Mackenzie Parente teamed with senior Brooke Vandergrift to claim a 6-3, 6-2 victory in the No. 1 doubles match. Parente is pictured above while hitting a volley near the net. One more photo shows senior Rebecca Lopez Egan (above right), who joined senior Amelia Abbott to give the Warriors a 7-5, 6-3 win in the No. 2 doubles match. Willowbrook's No. 3 doubles team of seniors Gillian Enriquez and Caitlyn Kulczynski posted a 6-1, 6-1 win. The tandem of junior Maggie Anderson and sophomore Jasmine Langston secured a 6-1, 6-1 win in the No. 4 doubles contest. Junior Molly Brennan prevailed 6-1, 6-2 in the No. 2 singles match. Senior Penelope DeVille of the Warriors lost a 6-3, 6-4 decision to a tough West Chicago opponent—senior Katrina Dy—in the No. 1 singles match. Willowbrook's schedule this week includes West Suburban Gold Conference dual meets against Proviso East, Hinsdale South and Morton.





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202101

# Student engagement ultimate mission for two Montini educators

Two Montini Catholic faculty/staff members are going above and beyond when it comes to student involvement at the Lasallian college preparatory high school. Student Government Director and Montini Maniacs Moderator Alexxis Johnson and Student Activities Director Andrew Weisenburger are doing everything they can to see that students get engaged during their high school years as Broncos.

#### About Alexxis Johnson

Teacher Alexxis Johnson is enjoying her first year leading a team of energetic Bronco Student Government members who are determined to make this year a memorable one, especially in light of last year's series of cancellations and postponed events (due to COVID-19 regulations).

"My goal is to offer events that students are excited to participate in," she said. "I want to get our school community back together to celebrate all of the great activities that Montini has to offer."

She stresses that her primary responsibility as director is to be an advocate for the student leaders - making sure that their voices and opinions are heard.

Johnson and her team of faculty class moderators are determined to challenge Bronco students to step up and be a part of creating a spirit filled community.

"We want to plan great events and activities to keep our students excited and engaged," Johnson added. "They should leave here with nothing but great memories of their Bronco experiences."

(Currently in the works is the planning of Montini's upcoming Homecoming Week which begins Saturday, Sept. 18. This year's theme is *Sweet Home Montini*.)

"It is extremely rewarding to work with our student body to collaborate on ideas for Montini," added Johnson, who works primarily with the officers elected to Student Government during the spring of last year. "They are all so eager to bring back some of the traditions that they were not able to participate in last year, and they have so many amazing ideas about how to raise school spirit! I am so lucky to learn from them what 'Bronco Pride' really is!"

Johnson and her team of teacher/

moderators conduct student government meetings twice a week (Executive Board on Tuesdays and individual class meetings on Wednesdays).

"All students are encouraged to attend their class meeting each Wednesday and to share their ideas for how to better the school community here at Montini," she shared. "We want everyone to feel like their ideas are valued. You never know who will have the next great idea!"

Student Government and Montini Maniacs go hand in hand in regards to student engagement. One group plans the events and the other goes all out in making sure all Broncos are inspired to take part. It made sense for Johnson to also take on the role of moderating the Maniacs spirit team. The group decorated the hallways for Montini's first football game of the season (Aug. 27) and themed their pre-game kick-off party - the Bronco Gold Rush! The spirited Bronco fans dressed the part for their first Friday Night Lights game and helped lead cheers throughout the evening.

#### About Andrew Weisenburger

Montini's Student Activities Director Andrew Weisenburger oversees all of the school's non-athletic clubs and organizations. He is also one of two Deans of students at Montini Catholic.

"This year, I hope that our students can enjoy a somewhat 'normal year,' in that they have the opportunity to take part in many events, unlike last year," he said. "One of the great things about Montini is that we are very receptive to new clubs and ideas and it is really a great empowering lesson for our students. They are encouraged to suggest new clubs and to find and recruit members with similar interests."

He is in awe of the resiliency he has witnessed in Bronco students over the last year and a half, with COVID-19 restrictions regulating, canceling and postponing many events.

"I'm excited for them to have a high school experience this year that is defined by what they can do rather than what they can't do," he said.

Weisenburger acknowledges that these days many students are pulled in several different directions, with memberships to several clubs, athletics and outside jobs.

"I think it really is a testament to



SUBMITTED PHOTO: Rock Valley Publishing

**Andrew Weisenburger and Alexxis Johnson are on a mission to do everything possible to see that students at Montini Catholic are fully engaged during their high school years as Broncos. Johnson is Student Government Director and Montini Maniacs Moderator while Weisenburger is Student Activities Director.**

our students - they are so involved and dedicated," he said. "They really are amazing young people and it is inspiring to see them excel in so many different aspects of life."

He feels blessed to be able to work with students in this capacity and greatly enjoys witnessing them as they develop their own leadership skills over the course of their four years of high school. Weisenburger hosted a special Club Day on Wednesday, Sept. 1, educating fresh-

man Broncos about the many opportunities available.

"Our students really take ownership and feel like they are a part of something much bigger than themselves," he said.

"These are the things that I think will benefit them long after they graduate and also will allow them to look back on their four years here and feel like they belonged and made the most of their high school experience."

## Park District to host annual Candy Carnival

It's time to get spooky!

On Friday, Oct. 29, kids ages 2-12 are invited to the Centennial Rec Center to join the Addison Park District for Candy Carnival, a family-friendly indoor Halloween party with inflatables, entertainment, creepy crafts, ghoulish games and more.

Parents must accompany children. There will be a costume contest held

every hour.

There are three time slots to choose from when you sign up:

602810-01 - 5:30-6:30 p.m.

602810-02 - 6:30-7:30 p.m.

602810-03 - 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Fee: \$7/residents, \$10/non-residents.

Registration is required. To sign up, call 630-233-7275 or visit [adsonparks.org](http://adsonparks.org).

## •Merger (Continued from front page)

than 4.2 million residents and bring together the collaborative expertise of more than 6,000 best-in-class physicians through an expansive geographic network of nine hospitals and more than 300 ambulatory facilities throughout the region.

Together, the two organizations are poised for growth in several highly ranked services such as orthopedics, cardiology, obstetrics and behavioral health, according to company officials. They intend to maintain existing physician and medical groups, ensuring physicians remain the key clinical decision-makers and are supported by leading edge equipment, research and innovation opportunities and Magnet-level nursing care. With a broader clinical

network, care will be available when and where patients need it, seamlessly connected throughout the system.

NorthShore and Edward-Elmhurst Health expect to close the transaction later this year, pending regulatory review and approval. The new organization, comprised of two regions - NorthShore and Edward-Elmhurst - will be led by J.P. Gallagher as president and CEO and governed by a single board of directors with representation from NorthShore, Edward-Elmhurst, Swedish Hospital and Northwest Community Hospital board members.

Mastro will join the executive team of the new organization, maintaining leadership as CEO of the Edward-Elmhurst region.

## Addison Trail set to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

Addison Trail is gearing up to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month starting on Sept. 13!

National Hispanic Heritage Month takes place from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 each year. It began in 1968 and was originally observed as "Hispanic Heritage Week" under President Lyndon Johnson, but was later extended to a month during President Ronald Reagan's term in 1988.

According to [www.hispanicheritagemonth.gov](http://www.hispanicheritagemonth.gov), "(This month) traditionally honors the cultures and contributions of both Hispanic and Latino Americans as we celebrate

heritage rooted in all Latin American countries. (The goal is to) share history, heritage and accomplishments of Hispanic and Latino Americans of past and present."

This is the fifth year Addison Trail will celebrate the occasion, and the school is continuing to plan events.

A Spirit Week is scheduled for Sept. 13 to 17, which will culminate with the boys soccer game on Sept. 17 (varsity will begin at 6:30 p.m. at home against Oak Park and River Forest). All community members are invited to attend the game to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

## FOOTBALL: DOWNERS GROVE NORTH 27, WILLOWBROOK 14

## Ethan Thulin sparks Downers Grove North's victory

By BOB NARANG  
editorial@mysuburbanlife.com

**DOWNERS GROVE** -- With a sudden change in direction, Downers Grove North's Ethan Thulin also altered the direction of the Sept. 3 game against Willowbrook.

For the first 15-plus minutes, the Trojans hurt themselves with a host of mistakes.

But when Thulin broke free on a punt return, turning his body away from the sideline with a twist toward the vast open space to his right, the complexion of the West Suburban Conference crossover game also shifted toward a different path.

Thulin sparked a 17-point second-quarter by racing 78 yards for a punt return touchdown to power Downers Grove North to a 27-14 victory over Willowbrook in Downers Grove.

"When I cut back, I knew I was either losing 10 yards or going to the house," Thulin said of his touchdown. "We had a couple of pancake blocks that helped me. I was too free on that. It was special. We needed the six [points]. We came out and started slow and picked it up at the end."

The Trojans (2-0) find themselves in new territory -- at least in recent years. The undefeated start builds momentum heading into this week's cross-town showdown at Downers Grove South.

At first, the Trojans looked headed toward their first loss of the season Sept. 3. Willowbrook senior wide receiver Vince Vassolo hauled in an 84-yard touchdown reception on the first play from scrimmage. Vassolo was wide open on the play-action pass, racing untouched to give the Warriors (0-2) a 7-0 lead just 19 seconds into the game. Vassolo caught five passes for 119 yards and two touchdowns.

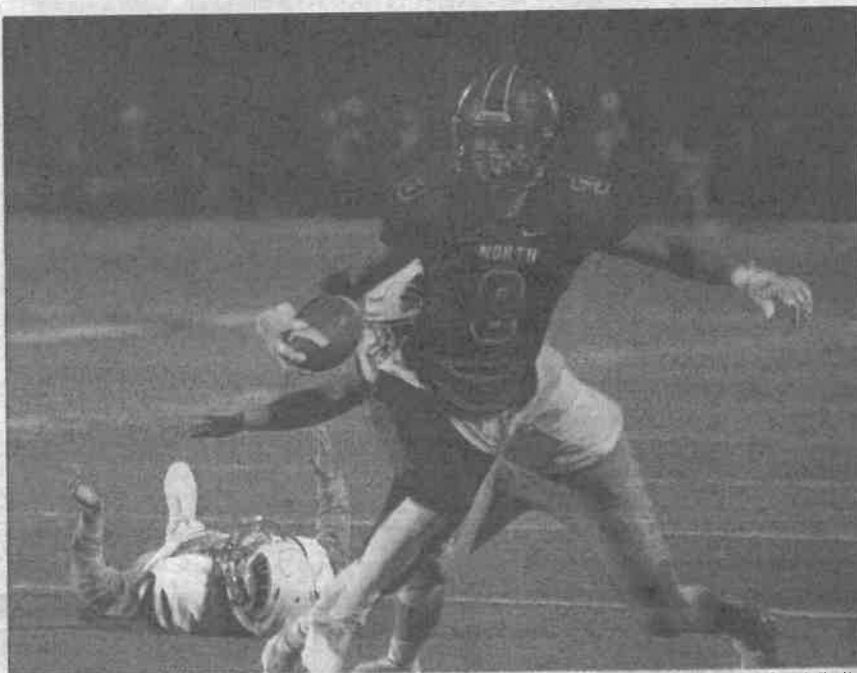
"I think most teams' focus against us is to take our running game away, so we came out throwing to go away from what we normally do to get things going," Willowbrook coach Nick Hildreth said. "That worked out, but not a ton after that."

The Trojans fell deeper into an early hole after quarterback Sam Reichert tossed an interception on his first pass of the game. The Warriors tacked on another score on Vassolo's 24-yard TD reception early in the second quarter for a 14-0 lead.

After the first of two Trojans field goals cut the deficit to 14-3, the Warriors couldn't sustain any drives or produce big plays.

Meanwhile, Reichert showed composure by settling into the offense.

Reichert was steady in the pocket, completing 9 of 15 passes for 87 yards.



Photos by Erica Benson for Shaw Media

Downers Grove North's Ethan Thulin makes his way toward the end zone against Willowbrook on Sept. 3.



Willowbrook's Josh Brown tries to get past the Downers Grove North defense.

He had a key 4-yard touchdown run in the second quarter, diving just inside the pylon to cut the gap to 14-10.

"We had a rough start, but the offense really had to bounce back and get everyone together and pick up the defense,"

Reichert said. "That pick was a mental error. I had to just reflect, get loose and calm, and a couple of my teammates picked me up. This feels great to be 2-0. The O-line played great."

Sophomore Noah Battle flashed his potential with several strong runs and some tough running, finishing with 19 carries for 73 yards. He rushed for 39 yards on Downers Grove North's first drive.

Junior Joe Chiarelli added an insurance touchdown with a 4-yard score midway through the third quarter.

"I knew I had to put my shoulder down and go right through," Chiarelli said. "I knew I had to get them one in. It feels awesome and means a lot to be 2-0. Downers Grove North hasn't had a team like this in a while. We want to keep on winning."

Aside from the first play, the Trojans' defense bottled up the Warriors' offense, limiting it to 105 yards rushing. Senior Josh Brown, who rushed for 1,750 yards and 23 touchdowns in six spring games, carried the ball 17 times for 71 yards.

"Big plays hurt us, from turnovers to the punt return [TD]," Hildreth said.

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