

Three straight losses send Warriors' season record to 5-8

Willowbrook drops a 62-60 decision to Buffalo Grove at the MSL/WSC Challenge

The Willowbrook boys basketball team suffered three straight losses last week. The Warriors' overall season record dropped to 5-8 with those three losses.

On Monday, Dec. 30, Willowbrook played its fourth and final game at the

IC Catholic Prep/Westmont Christmas Classic, losing a 78-65 decision to Unity Christian Academy of South Holland. The Warriors won their first two games at the holiday tournament, but lost their next two games and placed fourth in the 12-team event.

Junior Otis Powell scored a team-leading 30 points for the Warriors in their loss to Unity Christian Academy at IC Catholic Prep in Elmhurst. Powell scored 11 of his team's 14 first-quarter points. He scored all 11 of the team's second-quarter points and added eight more points in the third quarter.

Junior Jaylen Griffin scored 19 points for Willowbrook in its Dec. 30 loss. Griffin scored all 19 of his points in the second half.

Senior Mark Murrell added seven points for the Warriors in their loss to Unity Christian Academy. Senior Jesus Gomez added five points, while junior Matthew Ciesinski provided four points.

Unity Christian Academy led the Warriors 19-14 after one quarter, 44-25 at halftime and 63-43 after three quarters.

The Warriors' season continued with a 79-41 loss at Hoffman Estates on Friday, Jan. 3. Hoffman Estates held a 21-19 lead at the end of the first

quarter. The Hawks extended their lead to 40-27 at halftime and 65-37 after three quarters.

Powell scored 14 points for Willowbrook in Friday's loss. Griffin provided 12 points, while Murrell supplied eight points. Senior KJ Rhodes and sophomore Michael Garner added four and three points, respectively.

The Warriors faced Buffalo Grove in Saturday's game at the Mid-Suburban League (MSL)/West Suburban Conference (WSC) Challenge. Playing on their home court, the Bison of Buffalo Grove edged Willowbrook 62-60.

Buffalo Grove led the Warriors 20-14 after one quarter and 33-26 at halftime. Willowbrook cut the Bison's lead to 44-43 by the end of the third quarter.

Powell scored a team-leading 20 points in Saturday's loss to Buffalo Grove. Murrell provided 17 points, while Griffin scored 15 points. Ciesinski and junior Antwain Walker provided four points each.

Ciesinski's rebound and basket cut the Bison's lead to 60-56 with about 25 seconds to play. Walker made two free throws with 22 seconds on the clock to trim Buffalo Grove's lead to 60-58. Buffalo Grove missed several free throws in the closing seconds, but the Bison grabbed rebounds after two of those missed free throws. Buffalo Grove made one free throw with 11.6 seconds left to take a 61-58 lead.

Ciesinski made two free throws with 10.9 seconds on the clock to drop the Bison's lead to 61-60. Buffalo Grove then made one of two free throws with 8.3 seconds to play to take its 62-60 lead. The Warriors proceeded to bring the ball down the court with a chance to tie the game or take a lead, but they turned the ball over with about four seconds left in the game.

Willowbrook's season continues with this week's games against York and Proviso East. The Warriors will face Proviso East in this Friday's West Suburban Gold Conference battle in Villa Park.

Rams fall to 9-9 after losing to Palatine

Nee scores a team-high 13 points in Glenbard East's loss at the Grow the Game Showcase

The Glenbard East girls basketball team faced Palatine in Saturday's contest that was part of the Grow the Game Showcase at Elk Grove High School. Palatine defeated the Rams 53-29 in the first of the day's four games in Elk Grove Village.

Glenbard East's overall season record dropped to 9-9 after Saturday's loss.

The Grow the Game Showcase, which features teams with female head coaches, included games at multiple sites on Friday and Saturday.

Palatine led the Rams 10-7 after one quarter of Saturday's game. Glenbard East held a 23-21 halftime lead over the Pirates. Palatine outscored the Rams 19-4 in the third

quarter to build a 40-27 lead with eight minutes to play.

Freshman Olivia Nee scored a team-leading 13 points for Glenbard East in Saturday's loss to Palatine. Nee scored nine points in the second quarter by sinking four field goals, including one shot from 3-point range.

Sophomore Lilly Carver added eight points for the Rams. Four Glenbard East players—senior Veronica Witt, senior Erin Brown, senior Taylour Hodges and sophomore Teagan Murphy—scored two points each. Hodges provided the team's only two points of the fourth quarter.

The Rams' season continues with this week's road games at Elmwood Park, South Elgin and Riverside Brookfield.

Willowbrook's athletic department transitions to cashless payment system for home sporting events

School encourages families to buy the \$50 Activity Pass, which covers a family's entry into most athletic events, as well as plays and other select events

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2025, the Willowbrook High School Athletic Department transitioned to a new payment method, which will provide a more streamlined and efficient system and experience for spectators of the school's athletic events.

As of Jan. 1, the school will no longer accept cash payments for admission into home sporting events. Willowbrook has partnered with GoFan digital ticketing to allow spectators (home and away) to pre-purchase their tickets or buy them at the ticket booth.

Through GoFan, the following payment methods are available:

- Credit card
- Debit card
- Apple Pay
- Google Pay

The admission rates will be \$5 for adults (including a \$1 credit card processing fee); \$3 for students without a District 88 school ID (including the \$1 fee) and \$3 for senior citizens without a District 88 Senior Gold Card (including the \$1 fee).

Admission is free for District 88 students with a school ID and District 88 Senior Gold Card members.

Tickets for Willowbrook home athletic events can be bought online at www.dupage88.net/WBAthletic-Tickets.

Willowbrook strongly encourages families to buy the \$50 Activity Pass at <https://dupage88.revtrak.net/wbhs-activity-pass>. This pass covers a family's entry into most athletic events, plays and other selected events at the school that require an entrance fee.

For athletics, the only time an Activity Pass is invalid is for Illinois High School Association (IHSAA) State Series events.

Senior citizens (age 65 and older) who live within District 88's boundaries can enjoy the benefits of District 88's free Senior Gold Card. With the card, they can experience athletic events, musical performances and more at Willowbrook for free. To sign up for the Senior Gold Card, or for more details, visit www.dupage88.net/SeniorGoldCard.



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Special award at Montini Catholic

Montini Catholic High School commemorated the life of a special member of its family during the fall of 2024. On Oct. 18, Montini's football team played its annual charity game benefiting the Johnathan Weiger Memorial Scholarship Fund in honor of Montini's Class of 2015 member and football player Johnny Weiger. Johnny Weiger joined Montini as a freshman in the 2011-12 school year. He was diagnosed with leukemia during his freshman year, and he passed away at the age of 15 on Nov. 4, 2012, during his sophomore year. Weiger's jersey number—76—was retired in 2023. As a tribute to Weiger, Montini's football players have worn special uniforms each year at what has been called the Broncos' annual "Spirit of 76" game. The school's "Spirit of 76" Award pays tribute to Weiger and the positive impact he had on his teammates and peers. Before the kickoff of Montini's home game on Oct. 18, 2024, the Weiger family presented senior Jimmy Fitzpatrick of Lombard with the "Spirit of 76" Award. The Weiger family presents the special award each year to a unique member of the Broncos' football team. With help from staff members and coaches, the family chooses the player who receives the award. "Jimmy is a great example of a Montini student who embodies all of the attributes that Johnny Weiger exhibited in his short time at Montini," said Mike Bukovsky—the school's head football coach—while speaking about Fitzpatrick. "He is a multiple sport athlete, with an outstanding GPA, and is a tremendous role model to everyone in our Bronco community. Jimmy demonstrates a strong commitment to his faith and an outstanding character in everything he does." Fitzpatrick (No. 80) is pictured with the Weiger family before the Oct. 18 contest. Johnny's parents—Karl and Fran Weiger—are in the center of the photo. Montini defeated St. Ignatius 28-7 in the Oct. 18 game in Lombard. The Broncos went on to win the 2024 IHSAA Class 3A state championship. Montini defeated Monticello 49-8 in the title contest on Nov. 29. The Broncos completed their 2024 season with a 12-2 record.

Court grants state's motion to detain pre-trial Wheaton man accused of stealing lottery tickets in Elmhurst

Subject is suspected of stealing lottery tickets in several municipalities; taken into custody in Villa Park

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin and Elmhurst Chief of Police Michael McLean announced on Saturday, Jan. 4, that Judge Michael Fleming had granted the state's motion to deny pre-trial release for a Wheaton man accused of stealing lottery tickets from an Elmhurst 7-Eleven store.



Yonas Beyene

Yonas Beyene, 37, appeared in court on Saturday morning and was charged with one count of continuing financial crimes enterprise (a Class 1 felony), one count of burglary (a Class 2 felony) and one count of retail theft (a Class 3 felony).

On Dec. 22, 2024, the Elmhurst Police Department responded to a call of a lottery ticket theft at the

7-Eleven location at 155 E. First Street. Following an investigation into the matter, it is alleged that on Dec. 21, at approximately 11:17 p.m., Beyene entered the store and after speaking with the clerk, was allowed to remain in the store so he could warm up and charge his phone while he waited for a ride.

It is alleged that at approximately 1:47 a.m., the clerk went to the cooler, at which time Beyene reached around the lottery display, removed approximately \$730 worth of scratch-off tickets from two containers and then fled the store with the tickets as the clerk returned from the cooler.

Further investigation into the matter found that Beyene is a suspect in several theft/burglaries involving theft of lottery tickets out of Addison, Winfield, Carol Stream, Hanover Park, Oakbrook Terrace and

Lombard, and has three outstanding warrants for theft of lottery tickets.

On Friday, Jan. 3, the Elmhurst Police Department located Beyene at a motel in Villa Park. While surveilling the motel, Villa Park police officers observed Beyene leave the motel and enter a taxi, at which time the officers performed a traffic stop on the taxi and took Beyene into custody.

"It is alleged that for the past several months, Mr. Beyene entered multiple convenience stores throughout the Chicagoland area and then stole lottery tickets once given the opportunity," Berlin said. "In this case, it is alleged that Mr. Beyene first befriended an unsuspecting store clerk and then stole lottery tickets when the clerk briefly went to a back cooler. This type of chronic victimization of our retail establishments will not be tolerated in DuPage

County. I thank the Elmhurst Police Department for their efforts on this case as well as the multiple agencies in multiple jurisdictions and counties for their assistance. I commend the Villa Park Police Department and authorities with the Illinois Lottery for their efforts in the identification and apprehension of the defendant." Beyene's next court appearance is scheduled for Jan. 27 in of Judge Brian Telander.

Free Christmas tree pickup in Villa Park through Jan. 16

Christmas tree collection in Villa Park is available until Thursday, Jan. 16. Leave your tree in the area where you usually have trash and recycling collected on your regular collection day.

Be sure the tree is free of tinsel, lights, and ornaments. Please note that trees may not be picked up on your regular service day due to snow and ice. Stickers are not required.

For more information, call the Villa Park Public Works Department at 630-834-8505.



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Trooper Clay M. Carns

Illinois State Police honor Trooper Clay M. Carns

On Friday, Jan. 3, the Illinois State Police (ISP) joined Trooper Clay M. Carns' family and friends, along with officers from law enforcement agencies across the country, to honor and pay respects to Trooper Carns, who was killed in the line of duty on Dec. 23, 2024. Trooper Carns was laid to rest on Jan. 3.

"Today, and every day going forward, we honor Illinois State Police Trooper Clay Carns for his sacrifice, and the sacrifice made by his family," said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. "While ISP is hurting as we lay to rest the second trooper killed on Illinois highways in just three months, we will not falter.

"To honor Trooper Carns means to preserve and uphold that which

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Willowbrook teachers honored

Two Willowbrook High School teachers received the school's Outstanding Teacher award last month. Science teacher Sara Phillips received the Outstanding Teacher award for the second quarter of the current 2024-25 school year, while literacy teacher Colleen Smith was presented with the Outstanding Teacher award for the first quarter. Phillips and Smith received their awards at a Dec. 12 event at Willowbrook that also featured presentations of the school's Outstanding Student awards for the second quarter. Phillips is pictured with Willowbrook junior Salman Siddiqi, who presented the award to her. Willowbrook senior Hannah Daly, who presented the award to Smith, is pictured with Smith. To earn the Outstanding Teacher award, a staff member must treat teaching as a passion, create a positive learning environment, use a variety of strategies to engage students, be willing to offer extra support, provide prompt and effective feedback to students, and relate to and understand students' viewpoints and perspectives.

Two juveniles charged with early morning burglary at vape store

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin and Naperville Chief of Police Jason Arres announced last week that Judge Chantelle Porter had ordered that two Naperville juveniles be placed on home detention with electronic monitoring for allegedly breaking into a Naperville retail shop on Sunday, Dec. 29.

Both juveniles, one 14-year-old male and one 15-year-old male, appeared before Judge Porter and were charged with one count of burglary, a Class 2 felony, and one count of misdemeanor criminal damage to

property. On Dec. 29, at approximately 1:07 a.m., Naperville police officers responded to Drippy's Smoke Shop, located in the 1500 block of N. Aurora Road, for a burglary alarm. Upon their arrival, officers observed that the front glass window to the business was shattered. Following an investigation into the matter, it is alleged that the two juveniles went to the business together, threw a rock through the front glass window and entered the store.

It is further alleged that once in-

side the store, the juveniles stole a currently-unknown amount of vape products from the business before fleeing. Approximately 40 minutes after the initial alarm, officers located both juveniles walking near the store.

It is alleged that when the officers attempted to make contact with the juveniles, both fled on foot. Police apprehended the two juveniles following a brief foot pursuit.

The next court date for both juveniles is scheduled for Jan. 27 in front of Judge Porter.

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