

Broncos conclude season with a loss in sectional final

Playing on its home court, Christ the King beats Montini 44-28 in sectional final in Chicago; after game, DeMong informs Broncos he is leaving the program

The Montini Catholic boys basketball team's season ended with Friday's 44-28 loss to Chicago's Christ the King School in the championship game of the IHSA Class 2A Christ the King Sectional.

The Broncos finished their 2024-25 season with a record of 21-12.

Montini advanced to Friday night's sectional final with its 52-46 victory over Chicago's Clark High School in a March 5 sectional semifinal at Christ the King.

After winning a sectional title on its home court on Friday, Christ the King advanced to this week's IHSA super-sectional against Rock Falls in Sterling. The winner of that March 10 contest earned a berth in the Class 2A state semifinals, which

take place today—Thursday, March 13—in Champaign.

Montini led the Eagles of Clark High School 13-8 after one quarter of last week's sectional semifinal. The Broncos held a 29-21 halftime lead. Montini's lead stood at 39-30 at the end of the third quarter, but a surge of 8-2 by Clark reduced the Broncos' lead to 41-38 in the fourth quarter.

Senior Dillon Bagley delivered a basket to extend Montini's lead to 43-38. After Clark made a free throw, senior Jack Barrett of the Broncos scored to raise the lead to 45-39.

An inside basket from junior Angelo DeSensi—which was assisted by Bagley—gave Montini a 47-39 lead with about 3:25 left in the game. Senior Drew Church provided

a basket to give the Broncos a 49-42 advantage with about 2:35 remaining.

The Eagles made two free throws with 28.7 seconds to play to trim Montini's lead to 49-46. Barrett then made one free throw with 24.7 seconds to play. Senior Max Bell of the Broncos scored the final points of the game when he made two free throws with 11.2 seconds remaining.

Bell, who made a pair of 3-point shots in the second quarter, scored a team-high 14 points for the Broncos in their March 5 victory in the sectional semifinal. Bagley scored 12 points, while Barrett supplied seven points. Church contributed six points, while junior Robert Sansone provided five points. DeSensi added four points. Senior Jake

Maquet scored two points with a second-quarter basket. Juniors Colt Ashton and Henry Herold scored one point each.

Christ the King led Montini 7-4 after one quarter of Friday's sectional final. The Gladiators led the Broncos 14-9 at halftime.

Church drained a 3-point shot to trim Christ the King's lead to 14-12 early in the third quarter. Church drained another 3-point attempt later in the quarter to cut the Gladiators' lead to 18-15.

Church's two long-range shots provided Montini's only six points of the third quarter. Christ the King led the Broncos 22-15 with eight minutes to play.

After making two 3-point shots in the third quarter,

Church connected on two more 3-point attempts in the fourth quarter. He made a long-range shot to cut the Gladiators' lead to 26-23 with about 4:45 left in the game. Christ the King then scored six straight points to take a 32-23 lead. Church netted a 3-point shot to reduce the lead to 32-26 with about 2:20 remaining.

Sansone made two free throws to drop the Gladiators' lead to 34-28 with 2:11 to play. Christ the King finished the game with a 10-0 run. That closing run included three dunks that delighted the Gladiators' boisterous supporters.

Church scored a team-high 12 points in Friday's loss with his four 3-point field goals in the second half. Sansone,

who made one 3-point shot, provided nine points. Bell, who made a 3-point shot to cut Christ the King's lead to 26-20 with about 6:05 to play, added five points. DeSensi scored two points.

After Friday's season-ending loss, Montini head coach Adam DeMong informed the team that he would be leaving the program to pursue greater opportunities in his professional career. DeMong guided the Broncos to four straight regional titles in his five seasons as the program's head coach.

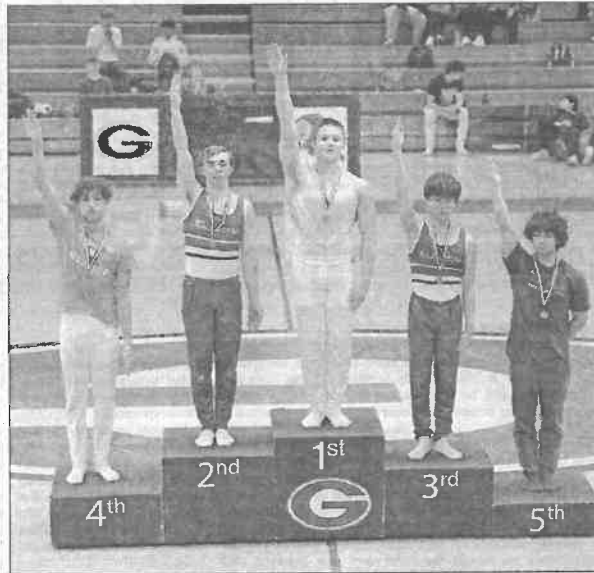
Montini ended a 39-year drought when it won the first of those four straight regional championships in 2022. Before 2022, the Broncos' boys basketball program won its last regional title in 1983.



JIM IZZO PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Second-place finishers

The IHSA girls wrestling individual state tournament took place Feb. 28-March 1 at Grossinger Motors Arena in Bloomington. Glenbard East junior Nadia Shymkiv (above) earned a second-place finish in the tournament's 105-pound level. Shymkiv won three matches in Bloomington to advance to that level's championship match. Shymkiv lost a 10-5 decision in the title contest. She finished her season with a record of 35-2. Montini Catholic senior Kat Bell (right) advanced to the first-place match in the individual state tournament's 100-pound level. Like Shymkiv, Bell won three straight matches in Bloomington to advance to a championship match. Bell lost the title contest and finished her season with a 39-6 record. Glenbard East sophomore Maria Green also competed in the state tournament. Wrestling in the 135-pound division, Green lost her first match in Bloomington. She then earned a victory in the consolation round before finishing the event with a loss. Green completed her season with a 36-8 record.



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Warriors/Blazers open season

The Willowbrook/Addison Trail co-op boys gymnastics team opened its 2025 season by competing in the 2025 Vic Lesch Invitational at Glenbard East High School on March 6. Glenbard West won the team title in the five-team invitational with its score of 102.3. Willowbrook/Addison Trail (95.05) placed second, while Glenbard North (81.8) finished third. Glenbard South delivered a fourth-place total of 74.75, while Glenbard East (27.75) finished fifth. Only two gymnasts from each team competed in each event at the invitational. Willowbrook senior Daniel Javier posted first-place scores in two individual events and placed third in the all-around standings. Javier delivered his first-place performances in the vault (9.45) and in floor exercises (9.1). He earned second-place honors on the parallel bars (8.35) and placed fourth on the still rings (7.95), fifth on the horizontal bar (7.2) and sixth on the pommel horse (7.0). His all-around total of 49.05 placed third, behind a pair of Glenbard West gymnasts. Willowbrook junior Jae Newman finished in a tie for first on the horizontal bar (8.2). Newman placed third on the still rings (8.15), tied for third on the vault (8.8), finished fourth in floor exercises (8.45), and earned seventh on the parallel bars (5.0). Willowbrook senior Jacob Seremak finished in a tie for fourth on the pommel horse (7.4). Javier (center) and Newman (far left) are pictured during the awards presentation for the invite's top five finishers in floor exercises. This is the first year in which the Willowbrook and Addison Trail teams have combined to form one co-op team.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Former Chicago Bulls center and head coach Bill Cartwright makes a point to students during the District 88 Student Leadership Summit held at Willowbrook High School on Feb. 20. Willowbrook senior Eddie Devens (right) moderated a question-and-answer session with Cartwright. Around 80 Willowbrook and Addison Trail students attended the summit.

District 88 students participate in meet and greet with former NBA player and coach Bill Cartwright during Student Leadership Summit

On Feb. 20, about 80 Willowbrook and Addison Trail pupils came together for a Student Leadership Summit.

This was the second Student Leadership Summit of the school year and took place at Willowbrook.

It was coordinated by District 88 Student Success Coordinator Dr. Valarie Humphrey, Willowbrook Athletic Director Ed Sullivan, Willowbrook staff member Rachel Karos and Addison Trail staff member Rob Schader.

Participants—who are leaders in athletics, clubs and activities at the schools—had the opportunity to attend a

presentation with Addison Trail SEL Interventionist Jennifer Dowling, who shared information about mental health and the importance of having a plan of what to do and who to reach out to for help if someone is struggling.

The keynote speaker for the event was former professional basketball player and coach Bill Cartwright. Students had an exclusive meet and greet with Cartwright to celebrate the launch of his biography, "Living Life at The Center." According to <https://bill-cartwright.com>, the book offers "profound insights into leadership, teamwork and person-

al growth ... (and) Cartwright offers a rare glimpse into the experiences that have defined his path."

The book is published by Sophisticated Press (www.sophisticatedpress.com/#).

Cartwright discussed his NBA and coaching career and encouraged students to take a limitless approach to their success. He told students they "deserve more" and can achieve anything they believe is possible. Willowbrook senior Eddie Devens moderated a question-and-answer session with Cartwright, which included questions from the audience.

Elmhurst Police arrest two men for stealing a senior citizen's two wallets and attempting to purchase Apple products with her credit card

The Elmhurst Police Department reported last week the arrest of two men who allegedly distracted a senior citizen in a grocery store parking lot, stole her two wallets from her car, then attempted to use one of her credit cards to purchase more than \$6,000 worth of Apple products.

On Monday, March 3, at approximately 1:30 p.m., Elmhurst Police officers responded to the parking lot of Whole Foods, 215 S. Route 83, for a 911 call reporting a burglary to a motor vehicle that just occurred. Officers arrived at the scene and spoke to a 76-year-old Elmhurst woman, who explained her two wallets were stolen from her purse in her car.

The victim said a male suspect approached her and asked her to check the back of her car, as it was damaged. The victim exited her car and spoke to the man near her rear bumper. Two witnesses reported seeing a second male suspect open the front passenger door of the victim's car and take something from the vehicle while the victim was being distracted. The witnesses reported seeing the two men leave onto Route 83 in a gray Honda Odyssey displaying a temporary New Jersey registration plate. The victim reported two wallets were stolen from her purse in the car. Those wallets contained cash and the victim's credit cards.

Elmhurst police detectives then received automated license-plate reader camera alerts that the suspects' vehicle was detected traveling south on Route 83, eventually pulling into the Oakbrook Center mall. Detectives from Elmhurst, Oak Brook, and Villa Park located the Honda, which was occupied by only the driver, in the mall parking lot.

During surveillance, the driver was observed discarding the victim's wallets in a mall dumpster. The driver then picked up the passenger, who had exited the mall on foot. At 2:22 p.m. the Honda pulled into

another mall parking space, and detectives approached the suspects as they walked away from the car. One of the suspects complied and was arrested, but the second suspect ran and was apprehended by an Elmhurst detective after a short foot chase. The Honda minivan was found to be displaying a fictitious New Jersey temporary registration plate. Both suspects were taken to the Elmhurst Police Department.

Further investigation determined the passenger used one of the victim's stolen credit cards at the Apple Store in Oakbrook Center and attempted to purchase two iPhone 16 Pro Max phones and a MacBook M4 Pro computer, having a total value in excess of \$6,000. The transaction was declined at the register, as the credit card had been canceled by the victim.

In consultation with the DuPage County State's Attorney's Office, Petrica Valerian Balan, 24, of Bowie, Maryland, was charged with burglary to a motor vehicle, aggravated identity theft of a senior citizen, obstructing a peace officer, and improper use of registration.

Marcus Bebino, 22, of Downers Grove, was charged with burglary to a motor vehicle, aggravated identity theft of a senior citizen, and obstructing identification. Both men were transported to the DuPage County Jail for first appearance court.

"The allegations that these two men conspired to distract a senior citizen and steal her wallet from inside her car are appalling," said Elmhurst Chief of Police Michael McLean. "Seniors should feel safe when out shopping and I wish to thank the two witnesses that saw this suspicious activity and recorded the suspect's description and license plate. I am also thankful for the excellent teamwork demonstrated by detectives from the Elmhurst, Oak Brook and the Villa Park police departments that led to the swift arrest of the suspects in this case."

Police Reports

The Villa Park Police Department recently reported the following arrests and citations. Readers are reminded that an arrest does not constitute a conviction, and that suspects are considered innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Persons charged with domestic battery are not named in order to protect the privacy of victims. Juveniles age 17 or younger are not named.

March 4

A complainant in the 600 block of W. Ridge reported at 8:36 p.m. that a suspect battered them.

A complainant in the 700 block of S. Monterey reported at 9:08 p.m. that an unknown suspect left a note on their front door.

March 3

A 30-year-old Woodridge woman and a 29-year-old Wheaton woman were charged with two counts of domestic battery at a hotel in the 1-100 block of W. Roosevelt at 9:15 p.m. A 58-year-old Lisle man

was charged with two counts of domestic battery on the above date for an incident that allegedly occurred in the 500 block of S. Harvard on Jan. 11.

A complainant at a business in the 200 block of W. North reported their vehicle was damaged.

March 2

Kathryn Jackson-Geddes, 37, of Chicago, was charged with DUI, use of unsafe tires and driving the wrong way on a divided highway near W. Roosevelt and S. Ardmore at 3:12 a.m.

A complainant in the 1-100 block of W. Ridge reported at 12:53 p.m. that a suspect is harassing them via telephone.

A complainant at a store in the 1-100 block of E. North reported at 5:33 p.m. that a suspect removed merchandise from display shelves and left without paying.

March 1

A complainant at a business in the 200 block of S. Villa reported at 1:58 a.m. that a suspect battered them.

A complainant at a restaurant in the 300 block of E. St. Charles reported at 3:10 a.m. that a suspect battered them.

A complainant at a restaurant in the 300 block of E. St. Charles reported at 3:29 a.m. that a suspect entered their unsecured vehicle and rummaged through it.

A complainant in the 300 block of N. Yale reported at 10:52 a.m. that a suspect battered them.

A complainant at a fitness center in the 300 block of W. North reported damage to the windshield of their vehicle.

A complainant at a store in the 900 block of S. Route 83 reported at 3:22 p.m. that a subject was causing a disturbance.

A complainant in the 400 block of S. Harvard reported at 3:38 p.m. that a suspect battered them, but did not wish to sign complaints.

Feb. 28

A complainant in the 600 block of N. Ardmore reported that a suspect battered them. Both parties agreed to separate.

A complainant at a store in

the 1-100 block of E. North reported at both 5:27 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. in separate incidents that a suspect removed merchandise from display shelves and left without paying.

A complainant in the 100 block of Ovaltine Court reported at 5:30 p.m. that a suspect is harassing them via telephone.

Feb. 27

A complainant at a store in the 1-100 block of E. North reported at 12:49 a.m. that suspects removed merchandise from display shelves and left without paying.

Feb. 26

A complainant in the 500 block of N. Iowa reported they received a suspicious text message from an unknown subject.

Identity theft, fraud

According to information provided by the Villa Park Police Department, police reported four incidents of identity theft or fraud in the village between Feb. 26 and March 4.



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Celebrating Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent

Montini Catholic students, faculty and staff gathered March 5 to celebrate Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten season. Lent is a solemn 40-day period of fasting and penitence, ending at sundown on Holy Thursday and observed by Catholics as they prepare for the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday, April 20. Fr. Larry Dreffeln, OFM, celebrated Mass with the students. After Mass, senior Isabel Evenson of Villa Park gave a reflection on the three pillars of Lent—prayer, fasting and almsgiving—which are expressions of the fundamental purpose of Lent: turning to God in a conversion of heart. Above: Senior Joseph Urizar of Villa Park receives ashes from Fr. Dreffeln.



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Villa Park salutes new graduates

The Village of Villa Park announced last week that Steve Schimanski and Will Schermer graduated from the Romaoville Fire Academy on Friday, March 7. "We are excited for you to continue your journey with us and to serve the community at the Villa Park Fire Department," noted the village in a statement last week. Schimanski and Schermer began serving as candidates of the Villa Park Fire Department in late 2024. Pictured left to right at last week's graduation are Villa Park Fire Department Lieutenant Ron Brzezowski, Schimanski, Schermer and Villa Park Deputy Fire Chief Frank Reposh.

State Rep. Deuter seeks interns

State Rep. Marti Deuter, D-Elmhurst, is hosting a summer internship program. Students looking to learn more about state government, the legislative process and constituent engagement should apply by emailing a cover letter and resume to office@rep.marti.deuter.com. Internship responsibilities cover the areas of policy research, constituent engagement including canvassing, event planning, production and attendance. Pay is \$15/hour for an anticipated 20-25 hours per week. Must be at least 18 years of age. A detailed job description is available. Deuter's district office is located in Westmont.

District 88 parents and guardians encouraged to complete the Illinois 5Essentials Survey

Deadline to complete the survey is March 28

District 88 parents and guardians are invited to complete the Illinois 5Essentials Survey, which is now open. This research-based survey helps identify strengths and areas for improvement in a school's learning environment and provides stakeholders with a voice in enhancing their schools. The survey gives a comprehensive picture of a school's organizational culture in an individualized report measuring five "essentials" critical for school success. Those five "essentials" are:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environment
- Ambitious Instruction

District 88 truly values receiving feedback, and no individual survey response will be

shared. The goal is to gather a variety of input to ensure the district continues to accomplish its mission and vision. Parents and guardians are encouraged to complete the survey before the March 28 deadline. To take the survey in English or Spanish, visit <https://survey.5-essentials.org/illinois>.

District 88 staff members received an e-mail with details to take the survey, and students will have an opportunity to complete the survey at school.

The Illinois 5Essentials Survey is administered online by Chicago Impact at the University of Chicago on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education.

For more information, go to www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx.

Apply now for AAUW Scholarships

The deadline to apply is April 15

The Elmhurst Area Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is now accepting applications for three \$4,500 scholarships for women in need of financial assistance to continue their education at the undergraduate or graduate level. The deadline to apply is April 15. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity through research, education and advocacy.

To be eligible, women must be 23 or older and residents of Elmhurst, Addison, Bensenville, Berkeley, Northlake, Oak Brook, Oakbrook Terrace or Villa Park. Applicants must have already completed 12

credit hours at an accredited community or undergraduate college or university. Applicants may be full-time or part-time students.

For an application and/or more information, visit www.aauwelmhurst.org. Call 630-207-4851 after your application is submitted to confirm receipt.

The AAUW Elmhurst Area Branch is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. Funds from the Elmhurst Branch's annual used book sale are used to support the local scholarships, national AAUW research and programs for women and girls.



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Devens named 88's Best for February

Willowbrook High School senior Eddie Devens was recently honored as his school's recipient of the 88's Best award for the month of February. Devens was recognized during the District 88 Board of Education's Feb. 24 meeting. He is pictured (left) at that meeting with Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause (right). While speaking during the board meeting, Krause read comments from several Willowbrook teachers and staff members who praised Devens as talented, engaging and dependable. An academic standout in the school's Class of 2025, Devens is an Advanced Placement (AP) Scholar and an Illinois State Scholar. He's been named to Willowbrook's Distinction Honor Roll during each semester of his time in high school. Devens is a member of the National Honor Society, the National English Honor Society, the Science National Honor Society, the World Language Honor Society and Willowbrook's social studies honor society—Civitas. Devens has been a member of Willowbrook's football and boys' track and field teams. Additionally, he recently portrayed a lead role in Willowbrook's winter play—"Wait Until Dark." Devens has been a driving force in the school's creative media production team, which was created in January 2024. As a member of the creative media production team, Devens has taken photos and videos of numerous Willowbrook athletic events. He's also served as the lead broadcaster of livestreams of Warriors' athletic contests, and he's a co-host of the school's "Roll Brook" podcast. Devens plans to study medicine and continue his athletic career after he graduates from Willowbrook in May. He hasn't yet finalized what school he will attend in the fall. His future plans may include serving as a team doctor for a professional sports franchise.

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