



THIS ARCOLA FOURSOME won the U2 soccer tourney at Tuscola's Sparks in the Park: Jaxson Mccullough, Alex Cortez, Mark Lira, and Levi Fifield. Photo by Dominik Stallings.

Hopkins and Garza NACC scholar-athletes

By Mike Monahan

EUREKA - The Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference recognized 16 Eureka College football players as scholar-athletes for the 2022-23 academic year. Two of the 16 are Arcola grads Hugo Garza and Austin Hopkins. Garza, a junior Kinesiology major, was a starting offensive lineman for the Red Devils last season. Hopkins, a key junior linebacker last season, is a business administration and environmental science major.

It is the third time Hopkins has earned the honor, while the second for Garza.

Eureka was 2-8 last year, including 2-6 in the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SLIAC).

Hopkins is 5-8, 182, while Garza is 6-2, 285. Hopkins played in nine games and had 28 solo tackles and 19 assists for an average of 5.2 tackles per game. He also had 2.5 tackles for loss, one interception and one fumble recovery.



Garza



Hopkins

Garza played in all 10 games and had one solo tackle, his first of his career.

As a senior Hopkins had 199 carries for 1,530 yards and 18 touchdowns in the 2019 season for the 9-3 Purple Riders, who reached the Class 1A quarterfinals. He was an honorable mention Illinois Football Coaches Association All-State player. Hopkins was a first team all-Lincoln Prairie Conference running back and linebacker for the Purple Riders,

then coached by Eureka grad Nick Lindsey. Arcola went 6-1 in the LPC.

Garza helped the Purple Riders finish 9-3 overall and reach the quarterfinals, was also a unanimous all-Lincoln Prairie Conference offensive lineman and a first-team defensive lineman. Arcola was 6-1 in the inaugural year of the LPC. Garza is a two-time Illinois High School Football Coaches Association Class 1A All-State Football player.

Arcola football schedule released Closed conference season first in a long time

By Mike Monahan

ARCOLA - The 2023 Arcola football schedule has been released and for the first time in a long time every conference team plays each other. In the past there were some teams that did play all conference teams, but not every team in that year.

The Purple Riders open the season August 25 at home at Thomas-Bradford Field against Nokomis, a team they have never played before and a new team, (football only) to the Lincoln Prairie Conference. The first road game is the Friday of Labor Day weekend at Sullivan against Sullivan-Okaw Valley and the Redskins are a new team to the LPC.

"We get to start the year with a home game and to be home gives us a little advantage for week one," said first-year Arcola coach Steve

Snider. "Obviously having a closed conference is good. Yes, we don't get to play Tuscola, but the nice fact is in a closed conference most of the time a team can get in the playoffs with five wins and that usually is enough points to get in the playoff. That is the nice thing about that, that you are not playing a team out of conference."

Arcola travels to Argenta-Oreana on Broom Corn Festival Friday followed by four home games in the span of five weeks. The Purple Riders play host to Tri-County on Sept. 15 and Villa Grove on Sept. 22. After traveling to Cumberland on Sept. 29 Arcola plays host to Sangamon Valley/Tri-City on October 6, which is the Homecoming game. The next week, Oct. 13 is Senior Night as the Purple Riders host Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Ham-

mond. The regular season ends with a game at Cerro Gordo against Cerro Gordo/Bement.

"Finishing the year with a bunch of home games, especially week 7 and 8 at home is really nice to have a little bit of a home stretch at the back end of the season," said Snider, who was in a closed conference division play in the Three Rivers (one division is rock and one is Mississippi) at Morrison.

Snider is glad the first two games are against the new teams in the LPC.

"Before you could play a team that ended up not getting many wins and that could leave you without enough playoff point on the other side of that is you could play two tough teams to start off like Arcola (Tuscola

and Braidwood Reed-Custer last year) and although you played good teams you were 0-2. Also now you know what everybody (except the first game) is trying to do across the board."

2023 Arcola varsity schedule

(last year's scores in parentheses; all games are Lincoln Prairie Conference contests; all games at 7 p.m.)
 Aug. 25 NOKOMIS
 Sept. 1 at Sullivan vs. Sullivan/Okaw Valley
 Sept. 8 at Argenta-Oreana (W, 47-23)
 Sept. 15 TRI-COUNTY (W, 46-14)
 Sept. 22 VILLA GROVE (L, 20-6)
 Sept. 29 at Cumberland (L, 28-38)
 Oct. 6 SANGAMON VALLEY/TRI-CITY* (W, 28-12)
 Oct. 13 ARTHUR-LOVINGTON-ATWOOD-HAMMOND! (L, 49-21)
 Oct. 20 at Cerro Gordo vs. Cerro Gordo/Bement (W, 45-6)
 Oct. 21 playoff pairings announced
 Oct. 27 first round of playoffs
 *Homecoming; !Senior Night

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Arcola volleyball does well at Parkland's team camp

By Mike Monahan

ARCOLA - Like most sports in the summer high school teams are busy and volleyball is no exception.

The Lady Riders played at a team camp at Millikin at the end of June and have been having open gyms as well as weightlifting with all of the other females and they just finished a team camp.

"In the summer I want to get them used to playing with each other for the first time as a group," said Arcola coach Katy Whisman. "We are really working on communication and really trying to work on ironing out the basic skills and so that way when we don't have to take as much time doing over the individ-

ual skills when the season starts (practice starts Aug. 7). We can just jump right into drills."

The big encouraging thing was how the team played at a team camp at Parkland July 15-16. The Lady Riders went 4-2 beating Champaign Centennial, Paxton-Buckley-Loda, Armstrong-Potomac and Decatur MacArthur. Arcola won the silver bracket.

All that is left before the IHSA required dead period (no team can practice or do anything starting July 31) is an open gym Thursday.

Whisman said open gyms brought in 10-15 players of the projected roster of 20,

See VOLLEYBALL on page 5



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A list of those participating along with a map will appear in the August 2, 2023 issue of the Arcola Record-Herald.

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