

Hottest ticket in town

Of all the Batavia-Geneva showdowns over the decades, Saturday night's matchup will prove to be the biggest in either school's history.

Vying for a berth in the IHSA Class 6A football state championship game in Champaign on Nov. 25, this time, the game is for much more than pride or even a conference championship.

The question is – perhaps even trickier than which 11-1 team has the edge – will there be enough tickets and seating to accommodate the thousands of fans who turn out to Burgess Field on Saturday in hopes of watching history in the making?

Based on the two rivals' matchup in the regular-season finale, which drew a reported crowd of more than 7,000 fans and forced Geneva personnel to turn people away at the gate, it is unlikely.

"This is as big of a matchup as you can have," Batavia coach and athletic director Mike Gaspari said. "It's very exciting for both teams and both communities, and of course, it's meant to be great fun for everyone involved."

Before this year's regular-season finale against Batavia, Geneva never had turned away fans at a football game because of a lack of space. Temporary bleachers at the north end of the field were brought in to accommodate the swelling crowds for the season's final weeks, and are estimated to seat about 6,000 people, Geneva athletic director Jim Kafer said. About 1,000 more can watch the game while standing.

According to Kafer, host Geneva will sell student tickets during lunch hours Wednesday and to the general public between 1 and 6 p.m. Wednesday at the school. All tickets are \$6, with a limited number of tickets being sold at the gate starting at 4:30 p.m. Saturday.

Batavia will have an equal amount of tickets available to presell to its student body, faculty and the general public.

Kickoff is set for 6 p.m. per Geneva's request, and Comcast will tape the game to be televised next week, Kafer said.

Because of the overwhelming fan interest in the game, a rumor spread that the game would be played at Northern Illinois University. Kafer said if the rivalry game continues to be as heated as this season's, the two programs would consider moving it to a larger venue.

This year, however, that was not an option.

"There's a possibility that we'll outgrow both of our stadiums, and we'll need to go somewhere a little bigger," Kafer said. "I'd certainly love to be able to let in everyone that wants to come. We'll see down the road."

By MAUREEN LYNCH

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