

[Print Page](#)

Fans follow Geneva until the end

By KEVIN DRULEY - kdruley@kcchronicle.com

Here they came, the East St. Louis marching band, parading past a mob of Geneva football fans in the newly incorporated Tent City. "We are the Flyers, the mighty, mighty Flyers!" they shouted. Not if Jason Birschbach had his way.

Standing beside classmate Aaron Frasz in a matching frizzy blue wig, the Geneva sophomore jokingly suggested he stick his foot out. Vikings fans were just as pumped as the players were Saturday, but Geneva ultimately fell short.

The Vikings' undefeated season ended in the IHSA Class 7A state title game at the University of Illinois' Memorial Stadium, with East St. Louis pulling out a 33-14 win.

A throng of fans from both schools shivered from the stands, joining supporters from the 14 other schools who competed during a full weekend of football.

Tent City served as home base for all of them, a lively bank of parking lots west of Assembly Hall that offered food, shelter and fun.

Only the entertainment tent, a haven for hot chocolate, television and face-painting, was heated.

Geneva's tent was decorated with lots of blue as well as a few signs, not unlike some of the Chicagoland suburb's homes during the playoffs.

"Everyone has the blue ribbons and stuff, and they're all supporting the team," Geneva senior Jason Lucchetti said. "It's great to see. It's just a sense of strong community."

Lucchetti and classmate TJ Schroyer have seen enough of the Flyers lately.

Traveling to East St. Louis last fall, they watched Geneva fight back from a big early deficit before losing 34-26 in the quarterfinals.

The Vikings, who have lost just four times in the past three seasons, were making their first state title appearance since 1975.

"It's huge. It's a long time coming," Geneva resident John Crawford said. "They've been so close the last three or four years. Just getting down here is amazing."

Crawford's daughter, Morgan, would agree. A student at Bradley University in Peoria, the 2006 Geneva graduate and former marching band member said she was glad the game coincided with her Thanksgiving break.

Moments later, she watched her old bandmates perform.

East St. Louis' had marched out of Viking country.

Copyright © 2008 Kane County Chronicle. All rights reserved.