



## 2025 IHSA JOURNALISM STATE FINALS: SPORTS WRITING

### DIRECTIONS & RULES

You are a staff member of Abraham High School's The Standard (Middleland, Ill.). Your editor has assigned you to cover the 2023 IHSA Football State Championship games at Hancock Stadium on the Illinois State University campus in Normal, Illinois, on Saturday, November 26, 2024.

You are to write a story based on the results of the IHSA Class 6A Football State Championship game between Cary-Grove High School (Cary, Ill.) and East St. Louis High School (East St. Louis, Ill.) You will start by viewing film from the game. The film will begin early in the fourth quarter. East St. Louis scored a touchdown and kicked a successful extra point on the final play of the third quarter to go ahead 20-15. East St. Louis kicked off and Cary-Grove returned the kickoff to its own 21-yard line. Cary-Grove will have the ball, 1<sup>st</sup> and 10, at its 21-yard line when the video begins. The video has been edited to cut times between plays.

The ensuing prompt pages contains quotes from players and coaches from both teams that can be included in your game story. The quotes provided by coaches/players are not concurrent sentences, so quotes by an individual can be mixed/matched. Final game stats, play-by-play, and team information are provided on the subsequent pages or linked.

In addition to a well-written and organized article, judges will be looking for the use of an interesting lead that pulls the reader into the story, accurate details about the information given, and proper style and mechanics. At the top of your document, type "School Code: ####" with your individualized code numbers. Type the final word count at the bottom of the story before turning it in. The word limit will be 400 words. You are permitted to use an AP Stylebook and dictionaries. Type the final word count at the bottom of the story before turning it in.

Start Time: 11:30 AM

Work must be submitted to Google Drive by: 1:00 PM

### SUBMITTING YOUR WORK

1. Upon completing your work, be sure your four-digit school code is at the top of the document and your word count at the bottom of the story. Be sure your name or school name do not appear in the document or file name.

2. Turn your work into a PDF (File > Save as > Save as Type) and name the file as follows:

**Four Digit School Code – Event Name**

So it should look like this...

**1234 – Sports Writing.pdf**

3. Go to [www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series](http://www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series)

4. Find your event and click the "Submit Work" link that applies to it.

5. Select the PDF of your work to upload. In the First Name box, type your four-digit school code. In the Last Name box, re-type your four-digit school to confirm.

6. Once you are prompted that your document as uploaded successfully, please log out if you are using a Heartland Computer.



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### GAME VIDEO

The video will be played twice for the group. If you need to review further, it can be accessed at: [www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series](http://www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series)

The video can also be directly accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogeP7BMQ8i8>

### BOX SCORE

Accessible here: <https://www.ihsa.org/archive/fb/2023-24/6Box31.pdf>

### TOURNEY HISTORY, ROSTER & STATS

Cary-Grove Team Information: <https://www.ihsa.org/Portals/0/Cary-Grove%2023FB.pdf>

East St. Louis Team Information: [https://www.ihsa.org/Portals/0/East%20St\\_%20Louis%2023FB.pdf](https://www.ihsa.org/Portals/0/East%20St_%20Louis%2023FB.pdf)

### QUOTES

**Cary-Grove head coach Brad Seaburg:** "I couldn't be prouder of this group. Most of the state and the country think this was an upset, but every player and coach in our locker room believed we could come out and win this game. Logan (Abrams) is a warrior. He put the team on his back on that last drive, that is the stuff of legend. Every carry and every yard mattered. They had to account for Logan up the middle, which helped open some lanes for Andrew (Prio) and Peyton (Seaburg). Our gameplan was the same as it is for every game, we want to control the clock on offense and keep our defense off the field. That was never more important than in this game, because East St. Louis is so talented and well-coached. Holding them to 20 points is an incredible accomplishment. The biggest thing was that we limited their big plays on offense. We aren't built to comeback, so taking that early lead and having the lead at halftime were both huge for not only our confidence, but even more so for the game script. It's special to get to coach your kid. Winning a state championship with Peyton (Seaburg) under center is something neither of us will ever forget. We played a really clean game, I am proud of how we limited penalties. East St. Louis is a program that is ranked nationally just about every season, and deservedly so. Several of our seniors beat them in two state championship games. What a legacy they leave. That says something about our program and the type of football we play."

**East St. Louis head coach Darren Sunkett:** "All the credit goes to Cary-Grove. They had a tremendous gameplan and they executed it when it mattered most. Their fourth quarter drive was something. You don't see that often in a high school football game. We made them work for every yard today, but their ability to control the clock, and drain almost all of it in the fourth quarter was the difference. I've coached for over 30 years and can't recall ever getting to only run two offensive plays in a quarter. Losing Robert (Battle) was obviously a real blow. He was really efficient running the offense up until that point, but he suffered a leg injury and couldn't go. He's the leader of our team and no one on our team is questioning his toughness or leadership. I am so proud of our kids. They are hurting



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right now, because state championships are the standard for our program, but once the sting goes away, they are going to be able to reflect on how much they accomplished and how much fun they had doing it.”

**Cary-Grove’s Logan Abrams:** “It is my job to set the tone, and we have to be a physical team to win, especially against a team and defense like East St. Louis. I just tried to finish every yard and get every extra yard I could. I was a little tired and a little beat up in the fourth quarter, but I still wanted the ball on every play. As soon as Peyton (Seaburg) gets under center, all that goes away, and I am running as hard as I can up the middle. Coach (Brad Seaburg) is a genius. He lulled them to sleep with my seven straight carries on that last drive, and then Prio burned them on the option. ”

**Cary-Grove’s Peyton Seaburg:** “Some people think the term ‘game manager’ as a bad thing, but that is how I think of myself. It’s my job to get the guys lined up and make the right read on the option. Logan (Abrams) makes my job pretty easy most weeks, because he’s such a special player. The way he grinds out yards is incredible. He was banged up on that last drive, but he found a way. I was able to make a couple of plays with my legs on that last drive, so it felt good to step up and be able to make some plays for my guys.

**Cary-Grove’s Ty Drayton:** “It was a battle in trenches all day long. We pride ourselves on our conditioning and winning the fourth quarter. That was on display during that last drive. It was definitely the longest drive of my high school career. I was afraid we might have scored too early, because East St. Louis is so talented, but the defense got a turnover when it mattered most.”

**Cary-Grove’s Patrick Weaver:** “It was man coverage with safety help over the top, so I was able to play a little tighter than normal without worrying about getting beat deep. I just stuck to my man and when the QB started to scramble, I knew the receiver would go back to the ball, so I just tried to beat him to the ball and make a play. It was an incredible feeling.”

**Cary-Grove’s Andrew Prio:** “They were the fastest defense we have seen by far this year. I am used to beating guys to edge and breaking off chunk runs, but they made it tough. The big run in the fourth quarter was all thanks to Logan (Abrams). He sucked in the defense and Peyton (Seaburg) made the right read and a great pitch. There was great downfield blocking as well. I just caught the ball and ran. It was nothing special.”

**East St. Louis’ Larevious Woods:** “We were effective running the ball, but we were obviously put in a bad spot there at the end of the game. We didn’t have enough time to keep running the ball, and losing our QB limited the passing game.”

**East St. Louis’ Leon Howard:** “Their offense is really hard to stop. They do a great job with misdirection and hiding the football. We played good assignment football, as they didn’t get many big plays, but they executed when it counted most. Both teams were exhausted at the end of the fourth quarter. ”

**East St. Louis’ Robert Battle:** “I feel like I let my brothers down. Every quarterback dreams of having the ball in their hands and leading a game-winning drive in the state championship game. Unfortunately, I tweaked my hamstring really bad. I just couldn’t run or get enough push off my back leg to throw, so I felt like it would have been selfish to myself out there. I would have done anything to play, but I thought Reece (Shanklin) gave us the better to chance win.”