

South girls gymnastics in unfamiliar role

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

For years, Williamsville South has been the premier high school girls gymnastics program in Western New York. But with Division I powerhouses Lancaster and Frontier loaded this year and the Lady Billies missing some key gymnasts from last year's team, coach Kurt Stumpf finds himself in some unfamiliar territory.

"Usually we're loaded every year," said Stumpf, who with coach Kathy Nardini have posted a 129-21 record since starting the program in 1982. "We'll still have a chance at high school sectionals because the rules are different. They only count three scores and we have three really strong gymnasts so we'll be there at sectionals. During the dual meet season, where you count five scores, it might be a little different."

Only one of South's three gymnasts who qualified for last year's New York State Championships is back — junior Kristina Arcury. Freshman Danielle Dee went to Williamsville East, where she joined the cheerleading team, and senior Jenna Hasan did not come out for the team.

Stumpf is looking for his daughter, Marisa, a junior, and Kristina's younger sister, seventh grader Kailyn, to fill in for Dee and Hasan. Marisa has been on the team since seventh grade and is co-captain with Kristina Arcury.



Williamsville South junior Kristina Arcury finished third in all-around at last year's Section VI Championships. She is the 2004 section champion. *File photo*

Stumpf and Kailyn Arcury are Level 9 gymnasts. Kailyn was fourth in all-around for the Western Region's women's scholastic Empire State Games team this past summer.

"It's tough because Jenna and Danielle were two really strong gymnasts," said Stumpf. "You have to five strong kids, especially against Lancaster and Hamburg. Now we lost two of those five. Kailyn will definitely fill in, and hopefully the new kids will pick up the slack."

Kristina Arcury, the 2004 Section VI all-around champion, placed third at sectionals last year after a slip-up on the balance beam. To get back to the top, Arcury, a Level 10 gymnast who earned bronze in all-around for the Western Open ESG women's team, said she has to focus.

"I just have to concentrate more and work harder and make sure my mind is set on what I'm doing," the 5-foot-3 gymnast said.

"She's one of the top six kids in the state," said Stumpf. "She's usually very consistent... In gymnastics it comes down to who hits and who doesn't. At last year's high school sectionals, she fell on beam on the first event and could never recover. If she had hit the beam, she would have won. (The competition) is that close."

Stumpf said Hamburg's Danielle Hover, Lewiston-Porter's Deanna Favero, and Lancaster's Christine Del Prince

are Arcury's toughest competitors at sectionals.

Arcury, who has competed for South since eighth grade, wants to place in the top three at sectionals to qualify for the state meet. The state meet is March 4-5 at Rush-Henrietta High School in Rochester.

The only other returning gymnasts besides Kristina Arcury and Marisa Stumpf are sophomore Jessica Gerrity (floor, vault) and eighth grader Katherine Scimia (all-around). Senior Amy Stanley (all-around), who competed for South from seventh to ninth before moving to Ohio, is also back. Freshmen Christina Haffa (floor, vault) and Christina Smith (all-around) and seventh graders Haley Harris (floor) and Cassidy Strong (vault, floor) will make their varsity debuts.

Last year, South finished 4-2 in league meets with losses to Hamburg and Lancaster. They were second in team competition at sectionals.

South 2006 Schedule

10-3 Sweet Home, Lancaster 5 p.m.
10-10 Orchard Park..... 5 p.m.
10-13 Clarence, Maryvale 5 p.m. (non-league)
10-18 North..... 5 p.m.
10-19 Frontier, Hamburg. 5 p.m.
10-28 Halloween Invitational (Lancaster) TBA
11-4 Section VI Championships (Williamsville East)..... TBA

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North captains step up, Hirschs' to coach team

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Sharon Hirsch wasn't sure she was going to be coach of the Williamsville North varsity girls gymnastics team until the middle of July but that didn't stop the Lady Spartan captains — seniors Karen Hartman and Christine Wagner, and junior Sarah Mikulski — from performing their duties.

"These three have been absolutely incredible," said Hirsch, who is joined by Torey Hirsch. "We didn't have anyone to take over the head coaching position and these kids just kept going with fund-raisers and contacting the girls on team when the first practice or physical verifications were. I don't really know what we would have done without them."

Hartman competes in vault, balance beam and floor exercise, Wagner is on vault, bars and floor and Mikulski competes all-around. Hartman and Mikulski enter their third years on varsity; it's Wagner's second. Mikulski qualified for last year's Section VI Championships.

Other key gymnasts for North are all-around third-year competitors sophomore Sarah Carbrey and Torri Maccagnano and sophomore Megan Dressel, a four-year North gymnast who specializes in vault, bars, and floor.

The Hirschs, who work at Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center, have a lot of history with North gymnastics dating back to when they introduced the sport to the school in the early 1970s. Sharon was head girls' coach for 10 years and had a five-year stint with Williamsville East before re-

turning to North five years ago as an assistant. Torey was boys gymnastics coach of Williamsville North, East, and South from the mid-1980's until the late 1990's.

They have a different approach than other girl gymnastics teams, focusing on giving gymnasts a chance to compete and building self-confidence and rapport with teammates.

"We give everybody a chance to compete," said Sharon Hirsch. "Our win-loss record is important but not our focus. We tend to compete kids even if we sometimes lose a meet because of it. For some of these kids, they won't have another sport that they can participate in at high school. We don't do any cuts. We take as many

kids as are willing to come out and learn. We want the girls to have an opportunity to try something that they may have not been able to try when they were younger."

A team goal is to score 150 points at a meet, which Sharon Hirsch said would be difficult this year because gymnastics scoring has changed. She said new scoring requirements are geared towards club gymnasts and many of her gymnasts only compete for the high school season.

Other team goals are to win as many meets as they can using all gymnasts on the team and qualify eight for sectionals.

"Torey and I are both glad to be back," she added. "We have a great bunch of girls. They're ea-

ger to work. They stay later than required practice time. I think we're really lucky to have the group of girls that we do."

North 2006 Schedule

10-12 at Frontier w/Lancaster. 5 p.m.
10-18 at South..... 5 p.m.
10-20 Orchard Park..... 5 p.m.
10-21 Jamestown, Amherst 2 p.m. (non-league)
10-24 Hamburg/Sweet Home ... 5 p.m. (non-league)
10-26 at Lancaster w/Hamburg 5 p.m.
10-28 Halloween Invitational (Lancaster) TBA
11-4 Section VI Championships (Williamsville East)..... TBA

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East girls volleyball finishes strong

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Williamsville East's varsity girls volleyball team sure likes to make winning matches the hard way.

East went 2-1 last week and lost the first game of both victories.

The Lady Flames defeated Iroquois, 23-25, 25-21, 25-20, 25-23, on Sept. 11 then beat West Seneca East, 24-26, 25-17, 25-10, 25-17, last Wednesday.

On Friday, East lost the first game against Lake Shore and took the Section VI Class A runner-up to five games before falling 8-25, 25-23, 18-25, 25-18, 23-25.

"Lake Shore has one really special girl in Maureen Tilert," said East head coach Scott Wright. "We were up 8-7 in the first game and she served 17 straight points."

East rebounded with a fourth place finish at last Saturday's Frontier Invitational. It's East's highest finish at the tournament.

East won its pool and beat Frontier, 30-28, in the quarterfinals 30-28, and lost to Eden, 14-25, 17-25, in the semifinals. Eden went on to lose in the finals

to Lancaster, 22-25, 24-26.

East's Mary McDaniel was named to the all-tournament team.

East played most of the week without senior Michelle Brent, who sprained a thumb in the first game against West Seneca East.

"Some teams take an injury to one of their better players and turn into a negative, especially after we lost game one but they came back really strong and played some of the best team volleyball that we've played in a while," said Wright.

Wright noted strong performances for the entire week by Kaitlin Roseti, Courtney Rung, Jessica Hernandez, Meghan Scheidemann and Karen Kingsley.

East (2-2, 2-1) plays at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Williamsville South.

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