

Boys Volleyball

South meets section final goal, faces Eden for title

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

Williamsville South will have a home-court advantage heading into this Wednesday night's Section VI Class B boys volleyball title game.

South (20-5), seeded No. 2, will host top-ranked Eden (30-0) at 8 p.m. It's the first time South has appeared in a section final in at least 15 years.

"My guys are very psyched," said South coach Thom Knab. "It was one of our goals we set from day one. We're also doubly excited because we can do it at home."

Knab said his team will have to play its best to knock off Eden, who have won every Class B title since 2000.

"We have to play excellent defense," said Knab. "We need to have our offense run quickly and try to attack as quickly as possible. Basically, we need to minimize any errors in our game."

South advanced to the finals after beating seventh-seed East Aurora, 25-10, 25-23, 25-12, last Thursday in the quarterfinals and third-seed Depew, 25-15, 25-23, 30-28 in the semifinals on Saturday at Clarence.

Frank Pieri and Spencer McIntyre had 12 and 10 kills, respectively, against Depew. Scott Steimer (11 kills), Pieri (9 kills), Nick Needham (7 kills) led South versus East Aurora. Pieri and McIntyre had three aces each against East Aurora.

Since winning the Grand Island Tournament, South hasn't lost a game (19-0).

Amherst Central

The Tigers' bid for a berth in the Class A semifinals came up a point short as Amherst, seeded fifth, fell to fourth-seeded Maryvale 25-23, 23-25, 24-26, 25-16, 26-28, in the quarterfinals last Thursday.

"We dominated the fourth game and I thought we could have taken the fifth game," said Amherst coach Michael Belle-Isle. "We had match point, 25-24, but Maryvale made a nice play. Between both teams, there were three missed serves in a row and their main player, Jeff Gutman, closed out the match with a kill."

"It was a fun match," he continued. "The kids played incredible. Their defense was phenomenal, their teamwork was great and they had wonderful energy. They

worked extremely well as a team. It was one of those building experiences for a young team."

Middle blocker Ryan Menasco is the only senior on Amherst's roster and Belle-Isle felt he came into his own versus Maryvale.

Charlie Gomez led the Tigers with 32 kills.

"He was really a force on the court and stepped up," said Belle-Isle. "He's a junior so it was a great learning experience... Maryvale's a young team too. I could foresee that as a possibly sectional final next year, except we'll win."

Amherst advanced after dominating twelfth-seed Cleveland Hill, 25-9, 25-2, 25-11 on Oct. 31.

"It was really a team effort," said Belle-Isle. "I was able to get everyone to play which was nice."

Amherst finished 4-6 in ECIC II, 8-9 overall.

"All of our losses with the exception of Maryvale, were against top-ten teams," said Belle-Isle. "That won't be the case next year. Our goals next year are to win ECIC II and the Class B section title."

Gomez led the team in kills, blocks and aces. Andrew Hays led in assists. Alex Dusenberry led in digs.

Sweet Home

The Panthers played well in every facet of their game except one against Niagara-Wheatfield in the Class A prequarterfinals and it cost them the match, 25-23, 22-25, 23-25, 25-17, 25-19.

"A couple of games we lost were by two or three points but we gave up between six and eight overpasses which they ran down our throat," said Sweet Home coach Rich Cicero. "It's unfortunate because I thought we played well except that part of the game."

Left side hitters Ryan Maxwell and Ryan Barton and middle hitter Dan Miranda led Sweet Home, seeded twelfth.

Tom Sheehan had 18 kills and 12 aces for fifth-seed Niagara-Wheatfield.

Sweet Home finished 3-6 in league play, 5-8 overall. They were third at Sweet Home Tournament, won the bronze division of the Eden Tournament and were in the top eight at the Clarence Tournament.

Maxwell and Dan Miranda led the team in major categories.

"Not too many people stopped them," said Cicero. "They were fantastic at the net."

Cicero loses six starters — Maxwell, Barton, Kaminski, Nic Galli, T.J. Eskew, and Zack Crittenden.

Williamsville North

Lancaster outside hitter Dale Freier was one of the main reasons why the Redskins, seeded No. 1 in Class A, eliminated ninth-seed Williamsville North in the quarterfinals last Thursday.

Freier, who was scouted at the game by Ohio State University, had 18 kills as Lancaster won 25-21, 25-22, 25-18.

"That kid was unstoppable," said North coach Paul O'Connor. "Their middles were (also) tough."

"They were good," he added. "There's a reason why they're No. 1 and didn't lose a divisional game all year."

Spartan left outside hitter Matt Parisi had eight kills and dug six or seven balls that were headed straight to the ground, O'Connor said.

Six-foot-eight middle hitter Justin Miller had five kills.

North played Lancaster after defeating eighth-seed Grand Island, 25-21, 23-25, 25-18, 25-18 on Oct. 31.

O'Connor said Miller (season-high 12 kills) was the difference.

"They had a shorter player and we kept using him in the middle," said O'Connor. "That was his breakout game. He was really pounding the ball. We just kept going to him over and over again. We went to the outside with Matt Parisi and he kept getting blocked. It was the first time all year Matt was consistently getting blocked so we kept going to the middle and Justin kept going."

O'Connor said the blocking of Miller and outside hitter Ryan Young in the third and fourth games put his team over.

North finished 14-10 and 5-5 in ECIC Division I. North beat Sweet Home and Clarence after the snowstorm and did not count. Six of the team's seven starters — Parisi, Young, Josh Siva, Elliot Hoy, Kevin Hughes and Ryan Riegel — are seniors.

"It was a good season," said O'Connor. "Everyone looked at us and said 'you lost Max (Lipsitz) who was your whole team last year'. I think we really surprised a lot of people. We won the South tournament and came in third at the Sweet Home tournament."

"I have a deep team of some



Williamsville South's Dan Lynch spikes over East Aurora's Scott Converse in the Billies' three-game home win last Thursday in the Section VI Class B quarterfinals. South beat Depew in three games on Saturday to advance to the finals against Eden at 8 p.m. Wednesday.

Photo by Joe Eberle

juniors who did play," O'Connor added. "Justin should carry the load next year but I do have some juniors who will be seniors who will have to fill roles. We'll go out

and try to be competitive again and try to start over and see what happens next year."

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Amherst Mite Minor 'AAA' ties Oakville, 3-3

The Amherst Mite Minor "AAA" travel hockey team hosted Canada's Oakville Rangers on Saturday morning at the Amherst Pepsi Center. The Rangers are part of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association. The teams skated to a 3-3 tie.

In the first period, Amherst netminder Caleb Hannon stopped an Oakville attack with a remarkable glove save. With 4:26 remaining in the period, Jack Kelly assisted as Colton McKenna lifted the puck past the right side of Oakville's goalie to give Amherst a 1-0 lead.

Only 25 seconds into the second period, Oakville's Joshua Rettinger tied it up at 1-1. Halfway through the period, Nate Berke skated effortlessly through the Oakville defenders and capitalized on a breakaway shot to give Amherst a 2-1 lead. However, the period ended tied 2-2 after Oakville was able to score after a scrum in front of the Amherst net with 1:55 remaining.

Berke gave Amherst a 3-2 lead after he kept the pressure on Oakville and scored an impressive short-handed goal. Amherst's Matt Slick and Jordan Martin both played strong defensively as they were called upon to negate Oakville's power play advantages in the third period. Eventually Oakville benefited from its power play as Rettinger tied the game 3-3.

Amherst welcomed back forward Joey Marchese after an extensive layoff due to injury. Amherst had two players debut in new positions — Kelly at center and Ryan Sidorski on defense. Amherst backchecked well throughout the game.

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