

DeCiccio, Aronica excel at Buffalo Challenge

The Niagara Gymnastics team from Gleason's Gymnastics attended the Buffalo Challenge on Jan. 21.

The event was held at Greater Buffalo Gymnastics Center on North French Road in Amherst. Niagara's Level 4 team had a strong showing and was awarded third place in the team competition.

Amherst resident Abby DeCiccio, a second grader at St. Christopher School, competed in the 6-8 year-old division and had her best outing of the season.

DeCiccio was able to compile an impressive all-around score of 36.150 with season highs in all four events. Her strongest event was the floor exercise where she earned 9.175. She was also sharp on the bars and beam, earning 9.15 and 9.1, respectively. She rounded out her meet with 8.725 on the vault. DeCiccio received an eighth place medal in the all-around for her performance.

In the 11 and over division, Meghan Aronica, a fifth grader at Willow Ridge Elementary School, had a solid meet. Her all-around score

of 35.875 was good for 11th place.

She looked particularly strong on the bars, where she earned 9.25 and on the balance beam, earning 9.175. Aronica's beam score was a new season high.

Farrell earns eighth all-around

Niagara gymnasts from Gleason's Gymnastics competed in the 21st annual Leatherstocking Invitational meet held the weekend of Jan. 13-14 at the Utica Memorial Auditorium.

Sweet Home High School senior Jamie Farrell, a Level 8 gymnast, earned eighth place

all-around. She scored 8.925 on both balance beam and floor, earning fifth place in each event. Farrell also placed 10th on both vault and bars.

Teammate Lily Jagodzinski, a seventh-grade student at Casey Middle School, also competed and earned a high score on the floor event. Niagara Level 8 placed second in the team competition.

For the Level 7 team, Sweet Home Middle School sixth-grader Jill Daddario placed eighth all-around with 35.15. She placed eighth on floor (9.05) and ninth on vault and beam.

SS. Peter and Paul girls hoops bounce back with win

After a disappointing loss to St. Mary's of Lancaster, the SS. Peter and Paul girls' varsity basketball team raised its record to 4-2 with an 18-8 win over St. Gregory the Great last Friday.

The Knights jumped out to a 6-0 lead in the first quarter and never looked back.

Forward Julia Collins led all scorers with six points. Center Alyssa Bellus dominated the boards, continuously pulling down defensive rebounds. She also scored one point. Paige Han-

ley, Michelle Haumesser, and Maury Fields kept the St. Greg's forwards from penetrating the baseline and denying them any easy shooting opportunities.

Alexis Parry and Claire Haumesser came in to relieve at center and continued to dominate the defensive boards. Parry added four points to the score in the fourth quarter after grabbing several offensive rebounds. Olivia Jakson, Marla Calabro, and Samantha Basile put pressure on the Cougars at mid-court, causing

the St. Greg guards to turn over the ball several times. Calabro added four points while Basile added three points.

Victoria Mendiola, Jessica Lynett, Kathleen Ruggiero, and Hope Genco came off the bench to shut down a second half surge by St. Greg's with multiple steals and strong pressure at the guard position.

Once again, a total team effort by the Knights stymied a strong disciplined opponent for another win.

WNY Elite softball fares well in College Showcase tourney

The WNY Elite Girls Fast-Pitch Softball team, a first-year squad coached by Niagara University's Al Dirschberger, went 6-1 during the recently held Rising Stars College Showcase Tournament in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

The Elite, composed of players only from Western New York, played teams from Florida, Illinois, Georgia and New York in the tournament.

Cheektowaga's Kelli Gleiser, the team's only freshman, batted .300 in the seven-game tournament. Other area players on the squad include Sarah Anthon of Lancaster, Lindsey Macaluso and Breanna Brink of Sacred Heart, Trish Kennerly of Williamsville North, Claire Gerlach of Williamsville South, Michele Krier of Kenmore West and Caity Behm of West Seneca West.

The WNY Elite is currently scheduled to play in five tournaments over the summer, including one local tournament. The other events have the Elite traveling to Binghamton, New Jersey and Delaware.

JV Cougars hockey defeats Shamrocks

The St. Greg's JV Cougars hockey team played a good game against the Buffalo Shamrocks at Nichols on Saturday that ended with a 5-4 win.

Jake Spring opened the Cougar scoring with a pretty goal assisted by Steven Skinner. Spring kept things going when he buried another in the back of the net from a great feed from Billy Christ.

Skinner came in hard to stun the Shamrock goalie when

he put the puck through the five-hole. Tommy Adolf and Marc Giangreco were strong on the blue line as they held the Shamrocks back.

Matt Prugel tied it up for the Cougars when he broke away from the pack and had a nice wrap around goal.

Late in the third period, Dennis Gilbert, after going end to end, ripped one off the cross bar for the game winner.

East swimmers beats West Seneca East by fingernail

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

The Williamsville East-West Seneca East boys swimming meet last Friday came down to one event and Matt Geiger made sure the Flames left Transit Middle Pool as victors.

Geiger swam a personal-best leg of 49.7 of the 400-yard freestyle relay to lift East to a 93-92 win.

"Matt had to come way behind," said East coach Mike Doerfler. "After the first two legs, you really wouldn't have given us much of a chance. When Neil (Batta) took off, he was 15 feet behind and was able to come just within a body length, which gave Matt just enough. They came off the last turn tied and it was stroke for stroke. Matt touched him out by a fingernail."

Mike Anderson and Thomas Mitchell also helped East edge out West Seneca East's quartet in the event, 331.70-331.75.

Anderson (200 IM, 213.90; 500 free, 523.95) and Geiger (100 fly and 100 back) were double winners.

Batta won the 100 free (51.35). Kane Hsieh was

first in the 100 breast (106.10). Geiger, Hsieh, Kenny Munroe and Batta also won the 200 medley relay in 147.43.

Mitchell swam personal bests in the 200 free (202.50, second) and 500 free (534.20, third, knocked four seconds off).

Joe O'Gorman won diving with 180.80 points. His brother, Jeff, qualified for ECICs in the 100 and 200 free with personal best times.

"I'm very proud of the kids," said Doerfler. "They swam tough."

East opened the week with a 109-49 home win on Jan. 24 over Sweet Home. Geiger (200 IM, 208.45; 100 free, 51.49) and Munroe (100 fly, 105.25; 100 back, 105.43) were double winners. Batta won the 200 free (154.64). Mitchell was first in the 500 free (539.30). O'Gorman won diving with 197 points. Sweet Home's Connor Hoffman won the 50 free (25.51).

East (6-4), winners of its last four meets, closes out the regular season at 4:30 p.m. Friday at Lake Shore. They swam at Hamburg Tuesday but results were unavailable before The Bee went to press.

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BREATHE — Amherst Central's Paul Timmel comes up for air in the 100-yard butterfly during the Tigers' win over Lackawanna last Friday at Sweet Home.

Photo by Joe Eberle
Purchase photos at www.BeeNews.com

Sports briefs

The public is invited to participate in a 3D shoot Sunday, Feb. 18, at the **Double T Archery Club**, 1120 North French Road, Amherst.

The 15-target shoot will start at dawn and continue until 2 p.m. A map to the club can be found at doubletarchery.org.

Team New Era premier travel baseball program has opportunities for qualified players ages 9 through 18, parents and coaches who are committed to advancing their baseball knowledge and skills while participating in a first-class competitive baseball environment.

For more information or to register for a skills evaluation, contact New Era Park at 681-3001 or visit www.teamnewerabaseball.com.

Bryan Fadel of Amherst was part of Oneonta State College's winning 400-yard freestyle relay team in a tri-meet with Skidmore College and St. Rose on Jan. 15. The quartet swam a time of 3:55.62. He also won the 100 butterfly in 56.08 against Brockport last Friday.

Registration for Mel Ott Little League Baseball and Softball will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 1 at Dick's Sporting Goods, 281 Meyer Road, Amherst.

For more information, visit melottlittleleague.org.

John Bauman helped the University at Buffalo men's 4x800-meter relay team set a new school record. Bauman, a Williamsville North High School graduate, helped the team finish in 7:48.73 at the Penn State National Invitational on Saturday to qualify for March's IC4A Championships and break the UB mark of 7:59.18 set in 2004. He was also on the team's distance medley relay which also qualified for IC4A's with a time of 10:12.28.

Pop Warner football is forming a new league structure in the Buffalo-Niagara region for the 2007 season and are looking for organizations to join.

Pop Warner little Scholar Inc. is nationally recognized in over 42 states. There are currently over 1,350 associations, making up 145 leagues. Teams in various age/weights divisions are forming. There are also cheerleading and dance teams. Any town associations wanting to be involved are welcome. There is no experience needed.

ESPN and Disney are proud sponsors and the National championship game will air on ESPN at the Disney Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, Fla. For more information, call 473-6387.

Geneseo

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made 41 saves and for his efforts, received player of the game honors.

"This was Sean's best game of the season," said Crozier. "When his focus is on, he can really be a difference maker in hockey games. We've seen glimpses of his potential two or three times this season. It is scary to think what he will be able to do as a junior or senior."

"This was a big win for my hockey team," Crozier added. "Even though we were outplayed for the first two periods, we never gave up and Sean kept us in the game. In the locker room, we talked about someone stepping up and being the hero. It was great to see McQuiggan and McCann answer that challenge. We'll use this

win to help us in our final federation games and for a possible run in the playoffs. We're hoping that we are peaking at the right time."

In the second game of the tournament, Section V's Victor outmatched a depleted Tigers squad.

"While we offer no excuses for our performance, we are just battling through so many injuries right now," said Crozier. "McQuiggan, Dave Rubach, Zach Willet and obviously Mike Gruttaduarra all are irreplaceable players on our team. For us to have to battle through a game with those injuries was too big of a hurdle for us."

Halfway through the third period, Kelley scored the Tigers' lone goal.

Kelley let a slap shot go from the point that Victor's goalie could not handle. It was Kelley's second goal of the season.

The goal gave Kelley player of the game honors for Amherst.

"That game was not our night," said Crozier. "We are down a few players and have some costly injuries. It is disappointing that we have to deal with this at this point in the season but all teams go through it and I am confident that when we heal up, we will be successful again."

The Tigers faced Frontier on Monday afternoon. They face Williamsville North at 3 p.m. on Saturday on the Amherst Pepsi Center's Olympic Rink.