

Sacred Heart-Nardin meet on Friday

The next chapter between Sacred Heart and Nardin girls basketball takes place at 6:30 p.m. on Friday at the Villa Maria College Athletic Center. The teams have split meetings this season with the most recent game won by Nardin, 44-38, on Jan. 31. Sacred Heart is ranked second among Western New York large schools; Nardin is fifth.

Hockey

Teamwork leads North back to Fed finals

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Williamsville North is back in the Section VI Western New York Varsity Hockey Federation finals, and it's because the players only care about what each can do to help the team.

North coach Bob Rosen found this out prior to the Spartans' 6-3 win over Bishop-Timon St. Jude in the Section VI Western New York Varsity Hockey Federation

quarterfinals on Friday.

"The kids were taking the name off the back of their jerseys," said Rosen. "Ryan Geary stood up and said 'the name on the front means more than the name on the back'. That's when I knew Timon was in trouble."

Rosen said his players also did not wear their jersey names in the team's 6-5 semifinal win against Kenmore West on Sunday at Buffalo State College.

"When you have kids willing to

make sacrifices then in the games make the little plays, and do whatever it takes to win, it's great to be a part of," said Rosen. "Too many times you hear about kids who act as individuals. It's nice to see kids that still care about playing as a team."

Rosen also credits assistant coaches Tim DiGiulio, Dan Mancuso, John Burns, Tim Smallwood and Brian Willison for getting the team ready to play day in and day out.

North (22-2-3) will try to use the momentum from those games to beat rival St. Joe's in the Federation finals at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday at Buffalo State College.

North is 4-1 in Federation final games with its most recent victory coming in 2005 over Frontier. The Spartans beat St. Joe's in the finals in 2000 and 2001.

"We're going to have to play our best game to beat them," said Rosen. "We're looking forward to the challenge."

Win or lose, North will host Section VII's Seton Catholic in a Division I New York State regional game at 8:30 p.m., Saturday, March 3, on the Amherst Pepsi Center's Feature Rink.

North led Kenmore West, 3-0, four minutes into the first period after goals by Justin Kochan (Ryan Geary) on the power play, Jamie VonHendy (Kyle Agius,



Williamsville North's Ryan Geary, right, shoots past Kenmore West's Andy Page during Federation semifinal action on Sunday at Buffalo State College. North won 6-5 and will face St. Joe's on Thursday in the finals.

Photo by John Rusac

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Williamsville North's Mike Cusenz, left, tries to block the shot of Amherst Central's Thom Bergman during first round action in the Section VI Western New York Varsity Hockey Federation playoff on Feb. 13 on the Amherst Pepsi Center's Feature Rink. North won 8-1.

Photo by Joe Eberle

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John Walter), and Geary, short-handed. Kochan added his second of the period from Tom Goehrig with 44 seconds left. Nick Panepinto scored for Kenmore West from Michael Vasquez and Scott Moser.

Josh Little (Pat Mulvihill, Nick Fronczak) made it 5-1 at the 12:44 mark of the second before Kenmore West responded with goals from Jared Passman (Giovanni Venezia) and Nick Panepinto

(Scott Moser).

Vasquez cut the Blue Devils' deficit to 5-4 at 10:41 of the third from goalie Patrick Browne but Geary scored from Kochan and Nick Angelo at the 6:35 mark to give the Spartans back a two-goal cushion. Kenmore West's Anthony Farah scored from Andy Page and Passman with four seconds remaining.

"They're a good hockey team," (Please turn to page 16)

Amherst boys hoops clinch ECIC Division II

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Amherst Central's formula to winning games this season was evident in last week's group of victories.

The Tigers (15-5, 11-1) shot well from the field, got contributions from several players, and tightened up their defensive intensity in wins over Medina, 82-69, Williamsville East, 70-55, and Lake Shore, 66-43.

"We started off the season slow at 2-3 but finished 12-2," said Amherst coach Mike Chatelle. "I was pleasantly surprised with how the regular season has turned out.

Maybe it took us a while to gel but the kids have really developed."

Amherst shot 52 percent from the floor against Medina and extended a 37-25 halftime lead to 58-49 after the third quarter.

Cordell Freeman led all scorers with 31 points, 21 coming in the first half. Chris France added 17 points and six steals. Will Gowen almost recorded a double-double (15 points, nine rebounds). Viron Hale contributed eight points, eight rebounds and four blocks.

The Tigers also shot 52 percent against East, opening a 22-11 first quarter advantage and building a 39-29 halftime lead.

Amherst was ahead, 59-42, after the third quarter.

"We got off to a fast start but was patient with our shots," said Chatelle. "We played an aggressive zone which took them out of their offensive sets."

East coach Dennis Belote said his team shot horrible, including 0 of 15 from three-point range. The Flames also only made half of their free throws (5 of 10).

"They made everything and we couldn't make anything," Belote said.

France led all scorers with 26 points and 13 rebounds. Freeman had 18 points. Hale (seven points, seven rebounds, four steals), Gowen (eight points) and Andre

Hakeem (seven points) also scored for the Tigers.

Brian Walden led East with 20 points, 18 rebounds and five blocks. Andy Heim (13 points), Justin Andreozzi (10 points), Rick Silvestri (eight points), Mike Ferguson and Mike Rath (two points each) also scored for the Flames.

Later in the week, Amherst and East each beat Lake Shore.

Amherst used a 21-4 second quarter to rout the Eagles by 23 points while East overcame another poor shooting night to win, 62-43.

France (18 points) and Freeman (13 (Please turn to page 18)

Wrestler Stella advances to first state meet

Sweet Home junior wins 135-pound division at Section VI qualifier

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Ever since losing, 5-2, to Lucas Mariacher last year in the 135-pound finals of the Section VI New York State qualifier, Nic Stella has been waiting for another chance to advance to the state meet for the first time. On Saturday, Stella got his opportunity, defeating Cheektowaga's Clay Reeb, 5-3, in the 140-pound finals of the state qualifying tournament held at Fredonia State College.

It was the third time Stella had beaten Reeb this season. He won 12-1 in the semifinals of the ECIC Tournament and 3-1 in the finals of the Joe Shifflet Sweet Home Invitational Tournament.

Leading 3-2 in the third period, Stella took down Reeb and gave up a meaningless point with a couple seconds

remaining in the match.

Stella said he was a little nervous at the beginning of the match but once he started wrestling, he felt confident in his abilities.

"It means a lot (to advance to states)," said Stella. "I would like to place but my ultimate goal is to win it."

The New York State Championships are March 2-3 at the Times Union Center in Albany.

Stella beat Maryvale's Jim Litz, 10-2, and Lake Shore's Sean Will, 11-5, in earlier state qualifying matches.

"I was pleased," said Sweet Home coach Chris Nadeau. "When you're the top dog, guys are out to get you. Nic never was in trouble. He was in a zone."

Stella is a student of the game. Nic said he reviewed all of his opponents the night before the tournament began with his older brother, Andrew, Sweet Home's all-time career wins leader and a redshirt freshman at the

University at Buffalo.

"Everything my brother told me worked perfectly," said Nic Stella.

Heading into states, Nic Stella is 39-0 and has 102 takedowns, 14 technical falls, and 11 pins. He will face a yet to be determined Section X wrestler and if he wins, faces Section II's Austin Meys, the defending state champion, in the quarterfinals.

"He is four more matches to go," said Nadeau. "That's what it amounts to."

Nic Stella scored all 19 of Sweet Home's points at the state qualifier to finish the team in 16th place.

Freshman Gage Bateman lost 6-0 to West Seneca East's Nick Vitale and 2-1 to Jamestown's Max Murray. Bateman finished 22-11.

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