

Boys volleyball

Amherst, Eden to clash for Class B crown

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Amherst has a huge mountain to climb if they are going to win the Section VI Class B title.

The top-seeded Tigers (17-2) face Class B powerhouse Eden (19-8) for the title at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Orchard Park. Eden, seeded second, has won the last seven Class B section titles and is the three-time defending Class B state champion. Amherst appeared in the section finals in 2000 and 2004. They lost both times to Eden.

"They don't do anything wrong," said Amherst coach Jeremy Schwob. "They have a strong team, defensively and offensively. It's going to be a real challenge for us."

Amherst lost two games to Eden in pool play at the Clarence Invitational on Sept. 8, but Schwob feels his team is much different now.

"I like our chances," said Schwob. "I think we match up well with them. We're not a big team. They're not a big team. I think our guys are going to play inspired."

Schwob once played for Eden coach Robert Pierce's 18 and under national team through Eden Volleyball Club.

Amherst advanced to the Class B finals after coming back to beat a pesky East Aurora team in four games in the quarterfinals on



Amherst Central's David Greetham fires a shot at East Aurora's CJ Coastsworth during the Tigers' five game Section VI Class B quarterfinal win last Thursday at Amherst. The Tigers went on to beat Cheektowaga in

the semifinals on Saturday and will face Eden for the Class B title at 6 p.m. on Wednesday at Orchard Park High School.

Photo by Joe Eberle
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Thursday at Amherst and dominating a good Cheektowaga squad in three games in the semifinals on Saturday at Eden.

The Tigers trailed the Blue Devils 2-1, but Amherst won the fourth game 25-16. Tied at 24-24 in

the fifth game, Schwob said senior back row hitter and defender Adrian Bylewski dug two balls from impossible angles for senior Andrew Hays, who set it to another senior, outside hitter Charlie Gomez, for the last two points.

Gomez finished with 32 kills. Hays had 90 assists.

Amherst won the first game 25-12; East Aurora won the second and third games 26-24 and 25-21, respectively.

"East Aurora played the game

of their life," said Schwob. "They played better defense than what we've seen from them all year. We took it to them in the first game, but they came on the next two games and were on fire."

Schwob said his team had to play out of character against Cheektowaga.

"They're a bigger team than us," said Schwob. "I told them the better defensive team will win the match."

"Before the match, I thought it was the most focused we've looked all year," he continued. "We came ready to play and took it to them. It's a testament to how hard we've worked in every game."

Amherst won 25-20, 25-17, 25-10. Schwob said his team got better as the match progressed.

Senior right side hitter Zach Willett had 11 consecutive service points in the third game.

"He played out of his mind," said Schwob. "He had a big impact on the game with his blocking, serving and hitting."

Gomez had 17 kills. "They couldn't stop him," said Schwob. "He was hitting the ball all over the field."

Junior middle blocker Dave Greetham had eight blocks versus a player from Cheektowaga who was seven inches taller than he is, Schwob said.

Hays had around 40 assists.

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North plays its best in prequarterfinal loss

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

There's no shame in losing when you played your best.

That's the feeling the Williamsville North boys volleyball team has after dropping three games to Frontier, 23-25, 20-25, 14-25, in a Section VI Class A prequarterfinal game last Tuesday. North was seeded 10th; Frontier was seventh.

"We played the best that we could," said North coach Paul O'Connor. "Frontier was unbelievable. We served them every which way, and they still passed the ball every time to their setter."

O'Connor said his team led 7-2 in the first game, but Frontier tied it at 7-7. Both teams kept siding out the rest of the game until it was 23-23. Frontier won the last two points.

Frontier jumped out to a 15-5 lead in the second game, but North made a nice run to cut the deficit to 21-18.

"If we didn't start so slowly, we would have taken the second game," said O'Connor.

Spartan senior outside hitter Matt Antaluk had a season-high 14 kills.

O'Connor said Frontier's 6-foot-7 outside hitter, Phil Peterson, got most of their kills. North sophomore libero JV call-up Aaron Ridell dug a couple of Peterson's hits, O'Connor said.

After the match, O'Connor said both teams got a standing ovation.

Frontier went on to beat North Tonawanda and Hamburg convincingly in the quarterfinals and semifinals. They play Orchard Park for the Class A title on Wednesday.

"Those are good teams, so I think a lot of credit can go to our team for how we played," said O'Connor.

North finished 10-11. O'Connor loses eight seniors, including six starters. They are starters Antalik, setter Drew Moscato, outside hitter Joe Greenwald, middle hitters Justin Miller, Jack Jagodzinski and Nick Hereth, as well as reserve back row player Alex Stoler and libero Ben Zwierzchowski.

Sweet Home

The Panthers only won two games but one of them came in the playoffs.

Sweet Home, seeded 17th in the Section VI Class A tournament, won at 16th-seed Niagara Falls,

25-18, 25-8, 25-15, in a first-round game held on Monday, Oct. 29 but fell last Tuesday at top-seeded Orchard Park, 11-25, 15-25, 25-23, 11-25, in the quarterfinals.

Sweet Home coach Rich Cicero felt his team hit well and played good defense against Niagara Falls.

"Almost everyone got significant playing time," said Cicero.

Cicero lauded the play of senior and sophomore middle hitters, Dan Miranda and Steven Maxwell, respectively, and junior setters Bryan Price and Jared McHenry.

While a four-game loss to OP doesn't look great on paper, Sweet Home did win its first game against them in the match.

"We passed a lot better, put up a solid block and didn't let a lot of balls hit the floor that game," said Cicero. "We were actually down 21-15 and came back to win. I give the kids credit for hanging with the number one team."

Cicero felt Miranda played his best match of the year, especially in the third game. Libero Steve Daniels-Robinson was committed to make sure balls didn't hit the ground, he added.

Sweet Home finished 2-18. Miranda and Brian Vitello are seniors on the team, but he returns four starting sophomores in Maxwell, Cody Stonish (left side hitter), Trevor Barrett (right side hitter) and Corey Desiderio (setter).

Williamsville East

The Flames' Section VI Class B playoff run was derailed by the second-best team in Western New York.

East, seeded seventh in the Class B tournament, fell to sec-

ond-seed Eden, 11-25, 12-25, 19-25, in the quarterfinals last Thursday. Eden has won the last seven Class B section crowns and is the three-time defending Class B state champions.

"Junior middle hitter Mark Rutecki, senior setter Chris Schiumo and junior outside hitter Peter Heim played well during that match and held their own against a strong Eden team," said East coach Randy Ball.

"Eden just did a better job of passing and controlling the ball. I am very proud of the team's effort and character against a very strong team in a hostile environment."

East knocked off 10th-seed Lewiston-Porter, 25-16, 25-22, 25-11, last Tuesday at East, in the prequarterfinals.

"We dominated Lew-Port from the start, and every member of the team played in one or all of the three games," said Ball.

Rutecki (26 kills, eight blocks, five aces), Heim (18 kills, three blocks) and Schiumo (63 assists) led the Flames.

Williamsville South

South coach Thom Knab can't put his finger on why his team didn't play well against East Aurora in the Section VI Class B prequarterfinals.

The Billies, last year's Class B

runner-up, fell to the Blue Devils, 18-25, 13-25, 25-22, 23-25, at South last Tuesday.

"We started flat and didn't have a lot of energy on the court for whatever reason," said Knab. "It wasn't until the third game that we got going ... We struggled setting that day, too."

Knab said South led 9-3 in the first game, then "hit a wall."

Outside hitter Joe Paul, the only returning player from last year, led South with 12 kills and five digs. Nick Schuh added five kills and eight digs.

"Joe was a true leader," said Knab. "He was doing the best he could with the passing that we had."

South finished 5-15. Paul, outside hitter Nate Lennert and middle hitters Brian D'Angelo, Mike Quinlan and Alex Walkowski are seniors. Paul led the team in kills (133), digs (111) and blocks (51). Pat Drexinger (316 assists), Lennert (132 serves) and Schuh (eight aces) also led the team.

"The team definitely got better," said Knab. "We competed pretty well in most matches. We lost many close matches but played a lot better than I expected with losing so many guys from last year."

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Sports brief

Cleveland Hill will be hosting the 2007 Frederick J. Puff Memorial Boys Swim Meet on Saturday, Dec. 29, and is seeking other varsity teams to participate.

The cost of participation is \$20 per team. Warm-ups for the meet will begin at 9 a.m., with the actual competition slated to kick off at 10.

For more information, send email to Doug Newman, Cleveland Hill's varsity coach, at dnewman08@yahoo.com.