

Previews to continue next week

The Bee will continue to publish previews for winter sports teams in next week's edition of the paper, this time focusing on the wrestling and hockey teams. As is customary, a complete season schedule will be included with the preview. Previews of other winter sports teams will follow over the next few weeks.

Boys basketball

Size inside to help East's chances for success

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

When basketball teams play Williamsville East this season, they will have to at times deal with a couple of giants underneath the basket.

The Flames return 6-foot-6, 225-pound senior center Brian Wallden and debut 6-foot-11, 195-pound junior forward Mark Rutecki. Wallden is last year's only returning starter. Rutecki played JV as a sophomore.

Wallden, one of three East captains, led the Flames in points and rebounds the last two years (19 points, 19 rebounds in 2006, shot over 50 percent) and is the only returning starter. He's also the team's best three-point shooter.

"He's got such a nose for the ball and is tough to stop inside," East coach Dennis Belote. "He also runs the court well."

Rutecki hasn't been named a starter as of press time but will see playing time, said Belote.

When Wallden and Rutecki are both on the floor, Belote said he's going to run a lot of high-low sets.

Belote said Wallden is the key to East's success.

"If we're going to be successful, we have to get him the ball and let him score," said Belote.

Another key to East's success will be how the guards can get the ball to Wallden or Rutecki. Senior tri-captain Chris Schiumo will

start at point guard. Juniors Kevin Castine and Kelse Lee can also play at the point; Lee can also be a shooting guard.

Belote said Schiumo is a good shooter, which will be needed for his team to have success.

"We need him to shoot the ball," said Belote. "If he doesn't shoot the ball, it's going to tie up the inside like it did last year (East shot 22 percent as a team from three-point range)."

The starting position at shooting guard has yet to be filled, although Belote said it could be 6-foot-3 senior Mark Guenther or 6-foot-1 senior tri-captain Aaron Tichenor. Each should see playing time.

Six-foot junior Peter Heim is penciled in as the starting small forward. He can also be used as a point guard if needed.

Heim was brought up from JV last year and got some minutes. Belote said he has played well in the preseason.

"He runs the court well and has a good first step when going to the basket," said Belote. "He's tough to stop."

Other players who should contribute are 5-foot-11 junior guard/forward Mike Silvestri and 6-foot-3 senior transfer Roy Sanders. Silvestri should be one of the first players to come off the bench and is the team's best defensive player, said Belote.

Senior guards Andrew Steel



Brian Wallden, a 6-foot-6 senior center, has led Williamsville East in points and rebounds the last two years.

Photo by Joe Eberle
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and Adam Burtch and junior center Ryan Ganzenmuller and guards David Mernan and Ryan Duggan round out the roster.

East, which finished 12-10 last year and lost to McKinley in the Section VI Class A-1 quarterfinals, is a favorite with Hamburg to be one of the teams to beat in ECIC Division II.

"I think we'll be better than last year," said Belote. "Now we have to go out and prove it."

East boys 2007 Schedule

12-5 W.S. West.....	7:30 p.m.
12-7 W.S. East	7:30 p.m.
12-10 at St. Francis	7:30 p.m.
12-14 at Bishop Timon/St. Jude	7:30 p.m.
12-18 Sweet Home	7:30 p.m.
12-21 Lake Shore	7:30 p.m.
12-27 at Clarence Holiday Boosters tourn. Riverside	6 p.m.
12-28 at Clarence Holiday Boosters tourn. Clarence or Niagara-Wheatfield 6 p.m. (consolation) or 7:30 p.m. (final)	
1-4 at Hamburg	7:30 p.m.
1-8 at St. Joe's	7:30 p.m.
1-11 South	7:30 p.m.
1-15 Iroquois	7:30 p.m.
1-17 at W.S. East	7:30 p.m.
1-18 Lancaster	7:30 p.m.
1-28 at Sweet Home	7:30 p.m.
2-1 at Lake Shore	6:30 p.m.
2-5 Hamburg	7:30 p.m.
2-8 at South	7:30 p.m.
2-12 North	7:30 p.m.
2-14 at Iroquois	6:30 p.m.

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Sweet Home girls optimistic about upcoming season



Ellie Allen was the leading scorer for the Sweet Home girls basketball team last year. The junior guard is a returning ECIC Division I First Team all-star.

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

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Sweet Home girls basketball coach Matt LaRoach has many reasons to be looking forward to the 2007-08 season.

LaRoach returns seven players, including several who have three years of varsity experience. He also feels he can use up to ten players in a game, something he hasn't been able to do in his four years as head coach.

"There's more depth this year," said LaRoach. "Many girls have played in my system for multiple years."

No starters have been named as of press time but LaRoach returns three of five starters. They are junior Ellie Allen and seniors Amanda Cannizzo and Coretta Davis.

A returning ECIC Division I First Team all-star, Allen can run the point or play shooting guard or small forward. The 5-foot-9 Allen averaged almost 16 points per game and eight rebounds last year. It's her fourth year on the team.

"She does so much for us," said LaRoach. "She can put the ball on the floor or take girls off the dribble and pull up for a 19-footer."

"She's becoming more of a well-rounded player," he added. "She's gone to camps in the offseason and played in summer leagues and AAU. Her leadership on and off the court is starting to come through."

Allen is a tri-captain with senior forwards, Davis and Nadia Durno.

Cannizzo, who recently signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball at Canisius College, enters

her fourth year on the varsity basketball team. When Allen is on the floor, the 5-foot-4 Cannizzo will split playing time at guard with 5-foot-4 senior Gleniesha Ferby.

LaRoach said Cannizzo has good basketball IQ; Ferby has quick feet and is able to play good on-the-ball defense against other team's guards. It's Ferby's third year on varsity.

Davis, a 5-foot-8 guard/small forward, averaged eight points and nine rebounds last year. LaRoach said Davis and senior 5-foot-9 forward Laura Nerber can rebound as well as put the ball on the floor and spot up for medium range jump shots. Nerber primarily came off the bench last year but started some games in February.

Durno, 5-foot-7, will try to fill the void inside left by 6-foot-2 Kiaya Burks (ECIC I second team). Durno split time inside at forward and averaged seven rebounds last year.

"She's not as tall as Kiaya but is still strong on the block," said LaRoach. "She's physical enough where she is able to rebound and

post up around the rim."

The team's other senior is 5-foot-6 forward Lauren West. Junior 5-foot-4 guard Rachel Cimerman and sophomore 5-foot-10 forward Bianca Smiley make the jump from JV.

"I expect them to fill a role," said LaRoach. "They will contribute this year."

LaRoach thinks defense will be a cornerstone for his team this year.

"We're continuing to get better at it," he said. "We

(Please turn to page 19)

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— Matt LaRoach, Sweet Home coach