

Sweet Home girls win own tip-off hoops tourney

For the first time in four years, a girls basketball team other than Sacred Heart has won the Sweet Home Tip-off Tournament.

Host team Sweet Home defeated Sacred Heart, 41-36, in last Friday's tourney final.

Team defense earned Sweet Home the title. The Lady Panthers held the Sharks without a three-pointer.

"The girls worked really hard all night long trying to battle Sacred Heart's inside-out game," said Sweet Home coach Matt LaRoach. "We knew that they had good post players and that they are able to catch around the arch and shoot it and our goal was to shut it down with good, aggressive defense."

"This win was a great step forward as we continue to work on our team defense," he continued. "The girls are seeing how important the defensive side of the ball is and how with great defense, we will put ourselves in a position to win games. I cannot say enough about the preparation by the girls and their drive to get better. They are working very hard day in and day out and that is the message we need to continue to live by."

Sacred Heart coach Sister Maria Pares lauded Sweet Home's defensive effort but said her team missed a ton of shots.

"For every shot they made, we missed three," said Pares.

LaRoach said Laura Nerber was a huge piece to the team's success inside.

"She was great against their forwards," said LaRoach. "She battled from horn to horn."

He also liked the defensive work inside of Nadia Durno, who



Sacred Heart's Krystal Watson, right, reaches past Iroquois' Jaelyn Lawrence for a rebound during the Sharks' first round 54-35 win in the Sweet Home Tip-off Tournament last Wednesday. Sacred Heart lost to Sweet Home, 41-36, in the finals on Friday.

Photo by Joe Eberle

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battled Sacred Heart forwards, and Ellie Allen (tournament MVP), Gleniesha Ferby, Coretta Davis (all-tournament team) and

Amanda Cannizzo for not giving much up around the arc.

Offensively, Davis gave Sweet Home a lift with 13 points. Ferby

and Allen each added eight points. Durno chipped in six points.

Sacred Heart was led by 14 points from Alycia Pontello and Krystal Watson. Watson also grabbed eight rebounds.

Tied at 17-17 at halftime, Sweet Home led, 29-23, after the third quarter.

Sweet Home advanced to the final by routing Grand Island, 53-33.

"This was a good first win for us," said LaRoach. "We have been working very hard on our defense and we were able to do good things with it. Our efforts to get better in practice and our focus in practice is helping us be prepared come game night. So far, the girls are working very hard to get better this year."

The Lady Panthers jumped on Grand Island early, leading 18-9, after the first quarter and 31-21 at halftime.

Sweet Home outscored the Lady Vikings, 10-3, in the third quarter and 12-9 in the fourth quarter. Again, defense was the Lady Panthers' key to victory. LaRoach said his team played an aggressive half court defense that led to victory.

"The defense was great," said LaRoach. "It was active and aggressive and put us in a position to make plays."

Ferby led Sweet Home's defensive charge.

"She was active and forced Grand Island into tough situations," said LaRoach.

Allen's effort's offensively (18 points) helped set the tone. She also grabbed 11 rebounds and dished two assists.

Along with Allen, Sweet Home had nice balance from Bianca Smiley (15 points, 11 rebounds) Ferby (eight points) and Davis (six points, seven rebounds).

Grand Island was led by Mallo-ry Griffiths (eight points) and Kallie Banker (six points).

Sweet Home (2-0) hosted Kenmore East in a non-league contest on Tuesday but the result was unavailable before The Bee went to press. The Lady Panthers host Williamsville South at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday.

In the other consolation game, Sacred Heart beat Iroquois, 54-35. The Sharks led 26-6 at halftime.

Nine Sacred Heart players scored led by Haley Pickett (14 points) and Coppola (11 points, six assists). Coppola, who hit three threes in the game, made the all-tournament team as did Iroquois' Ashley Platek and Grand Island's Catie Hillard.

Watson had six points and nine rebounds. Platek scored 10 points. Grace Cunningham led Iroquois with 11 points.

"We limited them to one shot," said Pares. "Our defense was great. Everybody played and contributed."

Sacred Heart defeated Bennett, 80-30, in the first round of the Al Pastor Tournament on Monday at Daemen College.

The Sharks play either East High School or Immaculata in the finals at 5:15 p.m. on Friday at Daemen College.

Sacred Heart opens Monsignor Martin Association league play at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday at Niagara Catholic.

(Patrick J. Nagy contributed to this article)

East takes runner-up at Bloomfield Tournament

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

For the second year in a row, Williamsville East's girls basketball team was a bridesmaid at the Bloomfield Tournament.

The Lady Flames defeated Bloomfield, a Class C New York State finalist last year, 49-44, in the first round last Friday, but fell to Nazareth, 62-45, in Saturday's final. Both games were held at Bloomfield High School in Rochester.

East defeated Nazareth, 37-36, in the first round last year and lost to Bloomfield, 35-22, in the final.

The Lady Flames trailed Nazareth, 15-14, after the first quarter, but committed 10 of its 26 turnovers in the second quarter and was outscored 21-6. Eleven of the 21 points were scored by junior forward Megan Morell, who finished with 20. She

hit three straight three-pointers in the second quarter and finished with four threes.

"You can't turn over the ball 26 times and give them 21 points in the second quarter," said East coach Chris Durr. "We want to hold teams to around 40 points because our offense is scoring by committee."

East held Nazareth's best player, 6-foot-2 center Nicole Jones, headed to Division I University of Massachusetts, to nine points. Guard Alyssa Santos added 11 points.

Nazareth led, 53-35, after the third quarter.

Senior forward Anna Stolzenburg scored a career-high 18 points on 9-of-11 shooting from the floor to lead East. She had 14 points by halftime. She also grabbed five rebounds.

"When she got it in the high post, she took a shot a couple of

times or dribbled once and took it to the lane and put it up," said Durr.

Becca Rumschik (seven points), Courtney Hawkins (six points), Aleece Burgio (four points), Taylor Klun (four points, nine rebounds), and Neha Bakhai, Jessica Kowalski and Bridget Steele (two points each) also scored for the Lady Flames.

East made 21-of-41 shots but were beaten inside, shooting 0 for 3 at the free throw line to Nazareth's 7 for 20.

East overcame a horrible shooting day early to defeat Bloomfield.

The Lady Flames started the game 0 for 11 and trailed 10-2 at the end of the first quarter. They finished the quarter shooting 1 for 14.

"We were getting open looks - 12-foot jump shots, 15-footers from the wing - and nothing fell,"

said Durr.

Trailing 22-13 at halftime, East opened the third quarter on a 6-0 run and outscored Bloomfield, 18-6, to go up 31-28, by the end of the quarter.

"We finally started knocking down some threes that weren't there in the first half," said Durr. "Steele and Rumschik each hit threes in the third and fourth quarters."

The closest Bloomfield cut into East's lead in the fourth was three points. Bloomfield only made two baskets in the fourth but hit 13 of 14 free throws. Bloomfield was 22 of 28 from the foul line in the game. East went 10 for 21.

Bloomfield was led by Brittany White (24 points) and Sarah Hunt (17 points).

East's Jessica Kowalski scored seven of her nine points in the fourth. Klun (eight points, career-high 13 rebounds), Steele (10 points), Rumschik (eight points), Burgio (eight points), Stolzenburg (four points) and Bakhai (two points, eight rebounds) also chipped in.

East opened its season with a 35-32 non-league home win last Wednesday against Lockport.

The Lady Flames led the entire game (11-4, first quarter; 17-12 halftime; 27-20 third quarter) but Lockport pressed and kept cutting into the deficit, eventually taking a 32-31 advantage with 50 seconds left on a five-foot jump shot by Kim Harrington.

Durr said his team got fouled and missed the front end of a one-and-one, Lockport came down missed a shot, his team

rebounded and Bakhai was fouled with 20 seconds left to play. Bakhai made both foul shots to put East ahead, 33-32.

After a Lockport timeout, its best player, Lindsey Burke, missed a 10-foot turnaround jumper. East rebounded, called a timeout and ran an inbounds play. Jessica Kowalski (seven points) was fouled with four seconds left and hit both free throws.

"I was proud of the way we handled having the lead, losing it and getting it back," said Durr. "You usually don't practice end of the game situations like that in the pre-season. They didn't get flustered, especially when Steele fouled out. This will be a game that will pay dividends down the road."

Bakhai and Burgio each scored eight points to lead East. Rumschik (six points) ran the point after Steele fouled out with 2.5 minutes left. Steele was held scoreless and dished five assists.

Stolzenburg (three points, nine rebounds) and Klun (three points, eight rebounds) also scored for the Lady Flames.

Lockport's methodical man-to-man defense held East to 12 of 42 shooting. Durr said his team normally shoots 50 or 60 shots in a game.

East made 11 of 16 free throws and 4 of 5 in the fourth.

East (2-1) started a three-game homestand on Tuesday against West Seneca East. The result was unavailable before The Bee went to press. They host Sweet Home at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 11.

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New

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South trailed Hutch-Tech, 9-4, in the first quarter but led by seven points from Stasiak and five from senior Brian Webb, South led 19-18 after the first quarter. Webb finished the game with nine points and eight rebounds.

It looked like the Billies were going down in the second quarter, trailing 30-21, but Licata hit three threes in the last minute to send the game into halftime tied at 31-31. Licata also grabbed six rebounds in the game.

The score went back and forth in

the third quarter with Hutch-Tech leading 47-46 by its end.

South finished shooting 52 percent (16 of 31) from two-point range and 40 percent (8 of 20) from three-pointers. They also committed only 13 turnovers.

Senior 6-foot-5 Tim Krempa, who never played basketball for the school before this year, had an all-around great game with four points, five rebounds, and three blocks.

"He altered a lot of their shots," said Monaco. "His improvement

in the last month has been remarkable. In some ways, we couldn't have won without some of the plays that he made."

South beat Hutch-Tech, 59-48, in last year's Section VI Class A-1 quarterfinals.

South (1-0) started a four-game road trip at Bishop Timon-St. Jude on Tuesday, but the result was unavailable before The Bee went to press. They play at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday at Sweet Home.

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