

Boys basketball

South picks up crucial road league wins

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

The Williamsville South boys basketball team needed a win badly, and the team responded with two victories last week on the road.

The Billies won last Tuesday at Iroquois, 64-57, and at West Seneca East last Friday, 68-43. The wins improved South's ECIC Division II league record to 2-2, 3-3 overall.

"It was very important to win these games," said South coach Al Monaco. "I was proud of the way they played on the road. They should enjoy the wins but not be satisfied."

South came out strong against Iroquois. Senior Brian Webb hit three-pointers on South's first two possessions, and freshman Joe Licata hit two more threes to build the Billies' lead at the end of the first quarter to 17-9.

South proceeded to shoot ice-cold from three-point range and by early in the second quarter, Iroquois was ahead, 18-17. The score bounced back and forth for the rest of the quarter with South gaining a 32-28 halftime advantage.

South's three-point shooting came alive again in the

second half, beginning with a three by freshman Phil Stasiak on the Billies' first possession of the third quarter that extended the lead to 35-28. Stasiak and Licata each hit two threes in the third that helped South take a 51-41 advantage after three quarters. All eight of Stasiak's points came in the third quarter.

Iroquois kept trying to press but could only close its deficit to four because speedy sophomore point guard Mark Coppola kept outrunning the Chiefs with the ball. Coppola hit four of four free throws down the stretch and finished with 15 points and a season-high nine assists.

Licata hit five threes and led with 20 points. Junior Zach Murray added 11 points and six rebounds. Webb tossed in seven points and five rebounds.

Junior guard Tom LiSacchi, who had been out all season with a strained left rotator cuff injury, held Iroquois' best player, Calvin Sluberski, to two points in the fourth quarter. Sluberski finished the game with 17 points.

"That was huge," said Monaco. "To be able to trust him to play defense allowed us to get Coppola on somebody else because he was working so hard to break their press."

South shot well, making 50 percent (12 of 26) of its two-point baskets and a third of its threes (11 of 30).

The West Seneca East game started almost identical to Iroquois.

South led, 17-9, after the first quarter but trailed 18-17 with three minutes to play in the first half. Licata hit back-to-back threes to give the Billies back the advantage. South added four points in the last 10 seconds of the first half, a Stasiak basket followed by a Coppola steal and basket, to head into halftime ahead, 28-18.

South used the momentum from late in the first half to outscore the Trojans, 26-12, in the third quarter to take a 54-30 lead into the fourth quarter.

Stasiak and Coppola each scored 17, but Coppola also had seven steals, seven assists and six rebounds. Licata hit four threes for 12 points.

South shot 28 for 76, including 22 of 45 two-pointers. Monaco said his team was able to score so many points because they picked up the tempo, pressured and caused a lot of turnovers. He also had more depth on his roster than he ever had all season with the return of LiSacchi and guard Armaan Wood, which made the roster 10 players deep. Wood has been out with a knee injury he suffered in the fall while playing football for the school.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com

North's depth on display in road league victories

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Heading into the season, Williamsville North boys basketball coach Chuck Swierski wasn't sure how his bench players would match up with other teams. So far, they've passed with flying colors.

Ten of the 13 Spartans who dressed last Tuesday at West Seneca West and last Thursday at Lancaster scored, as North beat West Seneca West, 75-51, and Lancaster, 67-38.

"No matter who I put in, they

played well," said Swierski.

"Our bench is deeper than other teams," he continued. "We might lose a little bit, but it's not a significant drop than some other teams. It's one of our strengths. A lot of unproven kids have stepped up."

Some of those unproven players are guard Mark Balsom and center Mike Herberger, who each made significant contributions against West Seneca West. Balsom, a guard, came off the bench and scored 11 points. Herberger, a backup center, recorded six points and six rebounds in limited time. Both played JV last year.

North had five players in double figures against West Seneca West. In addition to Balsom, senior forward Josh Barrett and junior forward Alex Barth each scored 11. Senior center Alex Ullrich led all scorers with 13 points and hauled in 12 rebounds. Senior point guard John Piaggione had 10 points and with Barrett, put a ton of pressure on West Seneca West guards, Swierski said.

Six of Barrett's 11 points came in the first quarter, as North built a 20-10 lead on West Seneca West. They led, 35-26, at halftime and outscored the Indians, 40-25, in

the second half. The Spartans forced 19 turnovers, including 10 steals.

"We play an up-tempo pace that as the game goes on, teams eventually wear down and we don't seem to tire," said Swierski.

North also seemed to wear down Lancaster. The first quarter was tight (North 18-15), but the Spartans outscored the Redskins, 33-13, in the second and third quarters, to take a 51-28 advantage.

Alex and Steve Barth tied for game-high with 14 points each. Piaggione chipped in nine points. Ullrich tossed in eight points but

was the leading rebounder with 11 and blocked five shots.

North forced Lancaster into 22 turnovers, including 11 steals.

The Spartans (7-1, 3-1) face Newfane at 6 p.m. on Thursday at Williamsville South in the opening round of the Williamsville Rotary Tournament. The winner plays Williamsville South or Fredonia at 7:30 p.m. on Friday. The consolation game is at 6 p.m. North has beaten South for the tournament crown since it started three years ago.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com

North-South final a possibility at Rotary Tournament

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

The Williamsville North and Williamsville South varsity boys basketball teams have met the last three years in the final of the Williamsville Rotary Tournament, and if history is a good indicator, it could happen again.

The fourth annual version of the tournament, featuring South, North, Newfane and Fredonia, is slated to begin on Thursday at Williamsville South. North (6-1, 3-1) has beaten South (3-3, 2-2) in the final every year.

"North is big and physical inside," said South coach Al Monaco. "That's the one thing we aren't. We've gotten good play for our guards. If we play them, it could be a repeat of those two styles."

The varsity tournament begins at 6 p.m. with North against Newfane, followed at 7:30 p.m. by South against Fredonia. The finals and consolation are slated to begin at 6 and 7:30 p.m. on Friday. The JV tournament, with the same match-ups, is scheduled for 2:30 and 4 p.m. on both days.

In between the 6 and 7:30 p.m. varsity games on Thursday, Jim Mohan will receive the inaugural "Make a Difference Award," given to the person who has made a difference in the lives of the South boys varsity basketball team.

Mohan, a graduate of the University at Buffalo, worked as a physical education teacher at Casey Middle School from 1972 to 1982 and at Mill Middle School from 1982 until his retirement in 2004. Monaco said the seniors on his team, Brian Webb and Tim Krempa, as eighth-graders, were the last class to have Mohan as a teacher at Mill. Freshmen Erik Hansen, Aaron Adams, Phil Stasiak and Joe Licata were fifth-graders at the time.

"He is so deserving as the first winner of the award," said Monaco. "He's done so much for all of the kids. It was neat to listen to the kids and hear how much they have appreciated him."

Mohan is also the first golf coach at Williamsville East, holding the position from 1975 until 2004. In college, Mohan golfed at UB. In retirement, Mohan is an adjunct professor of physical education at Canisius College.

After the South varsity game on Dec. 27, the South Booster Club is holding a reception at Sorrentino's. All current and former players are invited. Mohan will also be honored.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com

Amherst Soccer Association Deadline for second-session registration ends Jan. 13

The deadline for the second session of the Amherst Soccer Association's indoor season is Jan. 13.

Indoor soccer is available for any child in age groups U8-14. The games are played on Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Each game is one hour and played 5-on-5, including goalkeepers.

The game encourages ball control and substitutions are made on the fly (one player steps off, another steps on during play). There are no prac-

tices, only games.

The session is eight weeks and costs \$35. If you do not have the new uniform that was distributed with the Fall 2007 House league, you will need to purchase the uniform set for \$35. Uniforms will be distributed at the first game.

Volunteers are needed to supervise a group and run the substitutions.

For more information, e-mail info@amherstsoccer.com.

WISH YOU
WERE HERE...

Why not give tennis a try?

THERE'S A GUEST PASS WAITING FOR YOU

Village Glen and South Towns Tennis Clubs

Choose a club and present this ad to receive Full Member Privileges for the entire month of January, 2008!

~ Guest Pass includes member prices for court times, lessons & clinics ~

VILLAGE
GLEN
TENNIS CLUB
162 Mill Street
Williamsville, NY 14221
tel 716 633.1635

PLUS, get 50% OFF
2008 Membership
if you decide to join.
(Discount membership applies to
January 2 - May 31, 2008 only)
Tennis... Your Game for Life™
www.wnytennis.com

SOUTH TOWNS
TENNIS
CLUB
75 Mid County Drive
Orchard Park, NY 14127
tel 716 662.9396