

Girls basketball

Sweet Home takes over first in ECIC II

Defense has been the big key for the success of the Sweet Home girls basketball team, and its defense has placed them at the top of ECIC Division II.

The Lady Panthers (8-3, 6-0) knocked off Hamburg (6-5, 5-1), 47-41, last Thursday at Sweet Home.

"The difference was our defense," said Sweet Home coach Matt LaRoach. "We really did a nice job of defending. At times Hamburg made plays, but we were able to overcome them and keep the game going our way."

"This was another positive step forward," he continued. "I cannot say enough about our defensive efforts. It will be the difference down the stretch as we get into the

second half of league play."

Sweet Home led, 28-21, at halftime and 34-25 after the third quarter.

With one minute to play, Hamburg cut Sweet Home's lead to three points. LaRoach said he called a timeout and regrouped his team, and they responded with four free throws with under a minute to play to seal the win.

Gleniesha Ferby was the difference for Sweet Home on the defensive side of the ball.

"She caused them fits all night long and hustled all over the floor," said LaRoach.

Ellie Allen led Sweet Home with 20 points, eight

rebounds and three blocks.

"She was great on both ends of the floor," said LaRoach. "She made plays when we needed her to."

Bianca Smiley added 11 points.

"She was a force inside for us," said LaRoach. "Every game she just seems to be getting stronger."

Nadia Durno added seven points and 10 rebounds.

Hamburg was led by Katie Medina's 11 points.

Sweet Home played at Lancaster on Tuesday for a nonleague game, but the result was unavailable before The Bee went to press. The Lady Panthers play at 7:30 p.m. on Friday at Williamsville South.

Amherst Central extends win streak to five

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Since a loss to Pioneer on Dec. 20, Amherst Central has been one of the hottest girls basketball teams in the area.

The Lady Tigers (8-4, 4-3) have rolled off five consecutive victories, including road wins over Williamsville South, 50-35, last Tuesday and Tonawanda, 54-44, last Thursday.

South led, 10-9, after the first quarter but Amherst forced a few turnovers in the second quarter to go ahead, 27-18, at halftime.

The Lady Tigers went up, 42-31, after the third quarter and held South to four points in the fourth quarter.

"One of our goals was to continue to play as a team," said Amherst coach JoAnna Fildes. "This group of ten players is really unselfish and works hard in practice and games. We played very well on the defen-

sive side, holding them to 35 points."

Sophomore guard Jequana Roberts was the key to the Lady Tigers' success. South coach Erik Solomon said when Roberts was put in at the end of the first quarter, she made a huge impact. She scored seven points in the second quarter and poured in another six in the third quarter.

"She was literally a one-person press," said Solomon. "She created several turnovers. Even if we would get the ball ahead, she would come from behind or wait for a reversal and pick it off. She knew what spot on the court to go to. Our guards had a lot of trouble handling her pressure."

Roberts finished with 13 points, 10 steals and nine assists.

Amherst sophomore Casey McGuire added 10 points. Senior Elana Korn dumped in eight points and grabbed seven rebounds.

South also shot poorly from the field, hitting only 10 of 40 from two-point range

and 1 for 8 from threes.

Freshman Joanna Ostroot led South with 12 points and nine rebounds. Sophomore Sarah Marcus had 11. Junior Allison Couche scored four points and chipped in eight rebounds. Junior Cassiana Hyppolite, sophomore Heather Caputi, and seniors Molly Hoffer and Alyssa Ashcroft each scored two points.

Amherst led Tonawanda, 27-17, at halftime.

"We held our composure throughout a scrappy game from Tonawanda," said Fildes. "We are really working on minimizing turnovers and forcing the opposition to turn the ball over and then capitalizing on it. We had great work on the inside on the boards. Our outside shooting continues to improve."

Roberts had another monster game, scoring 23 points and dishing out six assists. Korn added 11 points.

Amherst plays road games at Springville at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday and Cheek-

towaga at 6:30 p.m. on Friday.

South closed out its week with a 35-29 win last Thursday at Lake Shore.

The Lady Billies led, 11-7, after the first quarter, 18-14, at halftime and, 28-18, after the third quarter.

Hyppolite led all scorers with 19. Marcus added six, Caputi tossed in four and Ostroot, Hoffer and Couche each had a bucket. Ashcroft did not score but provided good defense and hustle, said Solomon.

Solomon said Ostroot had a great day rebounding before leaving with a sprained ankle in the fourth quarter. Marcus also sprained her ankle in the fourth. Both are expected to not miss any time.

Emily Ludwig led Lake Shore with eight points.

South (5-7, 3-3) hosts ECIC II's best, Hamburg on Wednesday and Sweet Home on Friday. Both games have 7:30 p.m. tip-offs.

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North almost upsets top-ranked Jamestown

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

The first time Williamsville North played Jamestown in a girls basketball game last year, the Lady Spartans lost 81-28. The first contest between both teams this season was a much different story.

The Lady Spartans fell, 54-48, to the Lady Red Raiders at home last Thursday. North made it a three-point game with under 40 seconds to play but Jamestown's defense forced freshman point guard Corrin Genovese to take a couple of extra steps on a shot attempt and it didn't go into the net. Jamestown hit some free throws in the last 12 seconds to secure the victory.

"We scared them big time," said North coach Mike Del Valle.

Jamestown is ranked first among Western New York large schools.

Del Valle said his team missed a ton of open shots.

"Our wounds were self-inflicted," said Del Valle. "We missed 10 to 15 layups. Some of them were uncontested."

North hung with Jamestown throughout the game, largely because they didn't turn over the ball (Jamestown

had only eight steals) and because Genovese was able to break the Lady Red Raider press.

"I think they may have underestimated our ball handling and passing strength," he added. "I think they thought they could just pressure us and create turnovers but what it did was create opportunities for us once we broke it."

Jamestown led, 14-9, after the first quarter, 33-28, at halftime and, 44-36, after the third quarter.

Senior Leslie Ahern led North with 10 points and had a strong game on the boards, Del Valle said. Genovese had nine points. Senior Katie Kubala and Nikki Attea added eight and seven points inside, respectively.

Nikki Frederickson scored 21 to lead Jamestown. Del Valle said she had been averaging around 30.

North (5-8, 2-5) lost 53-36 to Orchard Park on Monday. Highlights will appear in next week's Bee. North plays Frontier at 7:30 p.m. on Friday.

Williamsville East

A good first quarter paced the Lady Flames to a 46-22 road win last Thursday at Iroquois.

East took a 16-9 lead after the first quarter, extended it to 27-13 at halftime and held Iroquois to one basket in the second half, a three-point play by Niagara University

bound Grace Cunningham on Iroquois' second possession of the third quarter. Iroquois also had six free throws in the second half. East led, 37-17, after the third quarter.

"To hold a team to one basket in a half is pretty impressive," said East coach Chris Durr.

Cunningham was held to 14 points. Neha Bakhai, Becca Rumschik and Bridget Steele each took their turn guarding her.

East senior Aleece Burgio had her best game of the year, scoring a career-high 14 points and grabbing 11 rebounds. Durr said at one point of the game, she was 4 for 5 from the floor. She finished 5 for 10.

Senior Taylor Klun added 11 points and 10 rebounds. Rumschik and Jessica Kowalski each scored five points. Bakhai had a point and seven rebounds.

East shot 17 for 51, made 11 of 16 free throws, dished out 12 assists and turned the ball over only 12 times.

East (8-4, 4-2) played at West Seneca East on Tuesday but the result was unavailable before The Bee went to press. East is ranked ninth among Western New York large schools.

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Nichols beat Sacred Heart in battle of MMA unbeatens

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Nothing went the Sacred Heart girls basketball team's way against Nichols at home last Wednesday.

The Sharks lost to Nichols, 43-34, last Wednesday at the Villa Maria Athletic Center.

"We didn't play well," said Sacred Heart coach Sister Maria Pares. "If we shot 20 percent in the first half, that was a lot. We were not in the bonus at all in the second half. Every time they drove to the hoop, they got a foul."

Meanwhile, Nichols thrived at

the free throw line, making 10 of 12 attempts in the fourth quarter. Nichols outscored Sacred Heart, 18-6, in the fourth quarter.

The Sharks led, 21-18, at halftime.

Natalie Coppola led Sacred Heart with 10 points and five rebounds. Krystal Watson scored eight points and grabbed 10 rebounds. Devon Hornung added seven points and six rebounds. Hayley Pickett tossed in seven points and three rebounds. Pickett shot 5 of 6 from the foul line.

Kaitlin Donahoe and Brianna Smith each scored 12 for Nichols.

Both teams were undefeated in Monsignor Martin Association league play. Nichols improved to 6-0 with the win. The Sharks dropped to 5-1.

The Sharks, led by a healthy Watson, bounced back with a 56-40 over Mt. Mercy at home on Friday. Mt. Mercy upset Sacred Heart in last year's MMA final.

"We played like we should have against Nichols," said Pares. "We played with good intensity."

Watson had 14 points, seven rebounds and two assists. Watson has been fighting exercise-induced asthma that led to nausea, said Pares.

"It was like she was a different

person," said Pares. "She had all kinds of energy. She was the old Krystal."

Pickett (12 points, three rebounds, assist) and Alycia Pontello (12 points, two rebounds) also scored in double figures for the Sharks. Sam Arena added eight points and two rebounds.

Mary Kate Kubera scored 12 to

lead Mt. Mercy.

Sacred Heart (11-4, 6-1), ranked fifth in Western New York large schools, plays Clarence at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

They host Mount St. Mary's at 6:30 p.m. on Friday at Villa Maria.

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Sports brief

Williamsville South graduate Drew Rogers was a double winner for the Geneseo State College men's swimming team in the team's 153-103 home win last Thursday over New Paltz. Rogers won the 200 free in 1:47.85 and 500 free in 4:59.09. Rogers won the 400 IM in 4:32.09 in the team's 122-86 win on Saturday at Monroe Community College.