

## Boys basketball

## Tigers split league games in weird ways

by PATRICK J. NAGY  
Reporter

It's been a crazy week for the Amherst Central boys basketball team.

The Tigers opened it with a thrilling 67-64 home victory on Monday over Cheektowaga, which included three shots that fell from half court or longer, and ended with a free throw filled 55-42 home loss last Thursday versus Depew.

Depew (15-1, 11-1) and Cheektowaga (10-6, 8-3) are the top two teams in ECIC Division III.

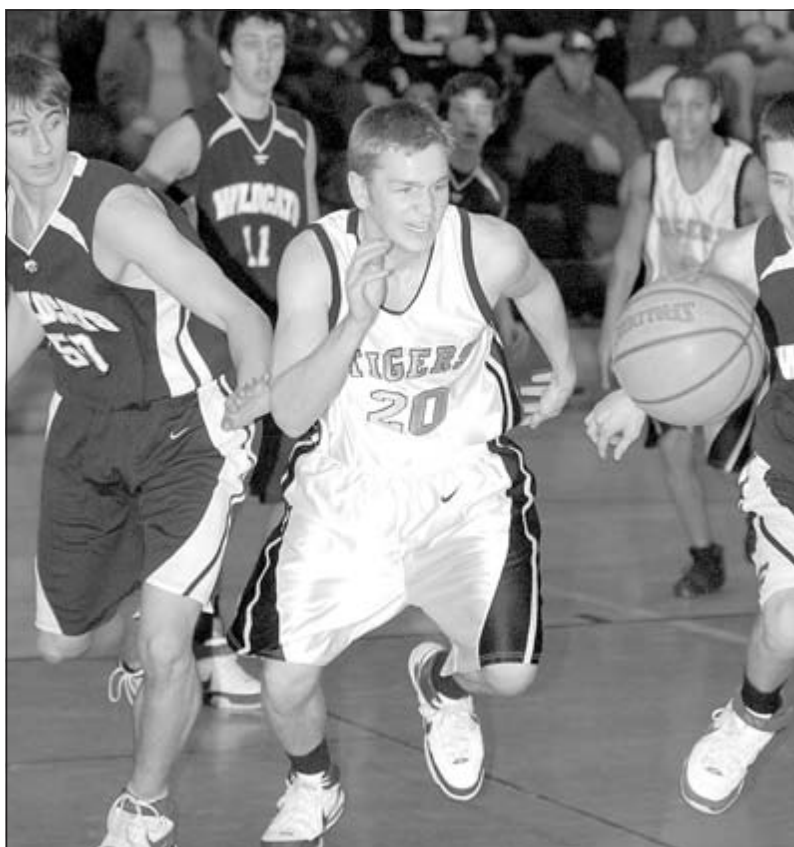
Amherst led Cheektowaga, 20-16, after sophomore Nico McLean made a three from three quarters of the court away on the last shot of the quarter. McLean shot it from Amherst's foul line.

The ridiculous long range shooting also appeared at the end of the game.

Amherst was leading 64-61 with 9.9 seconds remaining when Cheektowaga's Donte Parks (23 points) stepped across mid court and hit a three.

Amherst got the ball to mid court and with 3.3 seconds left, Amherst's Kevin Ford (10 points) dribbled to his left and fired a three from half court to win the game for the Tigers. Ford was mobbed by fans after the game.

"I've never seen anything like



Amherst Central's Geoff Gallson chases a loose ball during the Tigers' 55-42 home loss to Depew last Thursday.

Photo by Patrick McPartland  
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that, two half court shots in nine seconds and a three quarters shot, in the same game," said Amherst coach Mike Chatelle.

The three ball was working throughout the game for both

teams. Amherst and Cheektowaga combined for 11 threes. Kurt Ebsary (13 points) hit three threes and McLean (23 points) had two threes for the Tigers.

The teams traded leads

throughout the game with Amherst ahead, 31-26, at halftime and Cheektowaga up, 46-44, after three quarters.

Viron Hale added 10 points and 16 rebounds for the Tigers.

Free throws, especially in the fourth quarter, doomed an Amherst upset against Depew, who only has one loss in league play.

In the final quarter, Depew made 13 of 18 free throws. Four of the free throws came after the Wildcats' Tyler Stevens was fouled and Amherst coach Mike Chatelle was called for a technical foul, building Depew's lead to 44-33. Several fans were also ejected in the fourth.

Stevens hit 9 of 10 from the foul line in the fourth. He also hit back-to-back threes to help Depew outscore Amherst, 23-9, in the fourth quarter.

"At halftime, I don't think we matched their intensity level but in the second half Greg (Osika) and Tyler really got us going," said Depew coach Larry Jones. "Tyler also hit some big threes that helped us get a momentum swing."

Osika finished with nine points.

Prior to the fourth, Amherst played Depew even, trailing, 12-11, after the first quarter, leading 22-20 at halftime and going

down 32-31 after the third quarter.

"Amherst is playing so much better," said Jones. "They're very athletic. We're quick but not as quick as them."

"They played hard," added Chatelle of his team. "They never gave up. It was a hard fought game."

While Amherst did send Depew to the free throw line a lot in the second half, they missed many shots.

"From midway through the third quarter to the end of the game, I think we missed six layups in the paint," said Chatelle. "We're getting good shots. We just have to make them. In general, we've been playing well but our troubles on offense have held us back from some wins."

Nobody on Amherst scored in double figures. Ford and Mike Yanity each had eight points. McLean and Stephone Brown each had six points. Hale had three points and 17 rebounds.

Depew clinched a share of the division title with the victory.

Amherst (6-8, 5-5) plays its next four on the road. It began on Tuesday at Pioneer but the result was unavailable before The Bee went to press. They play at 7:30 p.m. on Friday at Springville.

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## North wakes up, defeats Lancaster, 65-43

by PATRICK J. NAGY  
Reporter

It took until midway through the second quarter for Williamsville North to get going against Lancaster last Friday at home but once they did, it was all Spartans.

Tied at 16-16, North outscored Lancaster, 16-5, over the last four minutes of the first half to lead 32-21. They won 65-43.

The win improved the Spartans' record to 8-2 in ECIC I and 15-2 overall.

North opened a 4-0 lead but Lancaster tied the game. Carlos Serrano scored an inside layup late to give the Redskins a 13-11 advantage at the end of the first quarter.

In the second quarter, North's Alex Barth exploded for 10 of his team-high 15 points in the Spartans' run, which included a three and a two-point basket, to push North's lead to 23-19. They led, 32-21, at halftime.

North coach Chuck Swierski said a switch on defense from man-to-man to a 1-3-1 trap in the

second quarter led to the Spartans' second quarter success.

"We used it for five or six possessions and it got us more active," said Swierski. "It gave them a different look and gave us a different feel. It did its job and we went to man the rest of the way."

"We locked up on them, put pressure on the ball and they couldn't get to the basket," added Alex Barth, who also had seven rebounds, six assists and three steals. "Alex Ullrich was especially great inside."

Ullrich finished with six points, 10 rebounds and two assists.

Back-to-back threes early in the third quarter by Josh Barrett (11 points, four steals, two rebounds) extended the Spartans' lead to 41-23. Alex Barth stole a pass and passed it to Mark Balsom for a layup at the third quarter buzzer for a 47-33 North lead.

The Spartans, like they have all year, outscored its opponent in the fourth quarter, this time 18-11 in the fourth.

"We seem to be in better conditioning than other teams," said

Alex Barth. "It's where we usually beat a lot of teams."

Steve Barth added nine points. Jim Gaines had seven points and eight rebounds. John Piaggione chipped in seven points.

North didn't shoot great, making 43 percent of its two-pointers, 31 percent of its three-point shots and 62 percent of its free throws. But they caused 13 steals, grabbed 42 rebounds and dished out 10 assists.

"We're not always the prettiest team but we play hard and when we play hard, good things are going to happen," said Swierski. Matt Brehm led Lancaster with 10 points.

North opened the week by routing West Seneca West, 71-23, last Tuesday.

It was senior night and Swierski said Piaggione volunteered to sit out the start of the game for other classmates to get time on the floor. Senior reserves Joe Greenwald, Jack Jagodzinski and Matt

Antalik played with regular starters Ullrich and Barrett. Greenwald scored the first points of the game and finished with six, Jagodzinski poured in for the game a career-high 13 points and 10 rebounds and Antalik added over the game 10 points and seven rebounds.

"They work just as hard as the regular starters; they just don't get the minutes, press, or accolades," said Swierski. "On this night, they were kings."

Piaggione entered the game around the midway point of the first quarter. Piaggione finished with two points but had a smile on his face for the entire game, said Swierski.

"He was playing with his buddies," said Swierski. "He could have scored more but was looking to set up his teammates. It was a great moment."

Swierski said every player on the roster scored at least two points. Steve Barth had 10.

"It was a complete team effort," said Swierski. "It was almost like a perfect storm where everything we did seemed right and everything West Seneca West did didn't seem to work."

North used a solid man-to-man defense to lead, 17-4, after the first quarter, 42-8, at halftime, and 56-17, after the third quarter.

"We didn't give them a second opportunity," said Swierski. "When they got a shot off, everybody boxed out and rebounded well."

North, ranked 10th among Western New York large schools, played at Clarence on Tuesday but the result was unavailable before The Bee went to press. They don't return to action until Tuesday, Feb. 12 when then play at 7:30 p.m. at Williamsville East. The Spartans close out the regular season with a game at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday at Jamestown.

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## South boys hoops' win streak continues

by PATRICK J. NAGY  
Reporter

Williamsville South's boys basketball team made it four wins in a row and 10 of its last 12 after winning two more ECIC Division II home games last week.

The Billies defeated Iroquois, 79-69, last Tuesday and West Seneca East, 95-62, last Thursday, to move within a half game of the division lead. South is 7-3 in league play and 11-5 overall.

The South-Iroquois game featured the Billies' run-and-gun, three-pointing shooting style against the Chiefs' physical play inside.

"I was worried about this one because Iroquois is big and physical and coming off our win against Sweet Home (66-62 on Jan. 25), I didn't know if there would be a let down," said South coach Al Monaco. "It was a quality win."

South had to use its great shooting from the

outside (nine threes) to stay ahead of Iroquois, 44-40, going into halftime. Freshman Joe Licata hit 6 of 7 treys and 20 points in the first half. Classmate Phil Stasiak added two threes of his own in the first quarter and had 10 points in the first half. South finished 11 for 21 from behind the arc for the game.

Iroquois mostly used a zone defense in the second half and the Billies countered with 13 points inside from junior center Zach Murray.

"It's almost pick your poison with us," said Monaco.

The Billies scored the first nine points of the third quarter and extended its lead at the end of the third quarter to 53-40. Iroquois fouled late in the game but South went almost perfect from the free throw line, making 10 of 11 attempts, including 4 of 4 from Stasiak and Murray.

Licata (23 points, 7 of 12 from threes), Stasiak (20

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