

Panthers need wins to share division crown

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

The roller coaster that is the Sweet Home boys basketball team continued with a split of ECIC Division II league games.

After a week which saw the Panthers lose to Hamburg and Williamsville South and its top spot in the division, Sweet Home appeared to turn the corner with a 72-62 win last Monday over another team which has been spiraling, Williamsville East. However, Sweet Home closed out the week with a 58-56 loss at Iroquois last Thursday, leaving them having to win its last three league games over Lake Shore, West Seneca East and Hamburg, to clinch a tie for the division title.

The East win was a great confidence boost for Sweet Home. The Panthers only dressed eight of its 11 players and Brandon Hudson was a game-time scratch because of bruised ribs. Marcus Johnson sat out with a thigh contusion.

"I was happy to have gotten out of there with a win," said Sweet Home coach Paul Schintzius. "The kids that did play played with a lot of emotion."

Knotted at 16-16 after the first quarter, the Panthers used balanced scoring in the second quarter to take a 35-23 lead into halftime. Brian Pappagallo (six), Casey Kacz (five), Jamel Werts (four), Ali Ramadan (two) and Keon Williams (two) scored in the second for the Panthers.

Sweet Home outscored East, 16-11, in the third quarter to open a 51-34 advantage into the fourth quarter.

In the fourth, East coach Dennis Belote

put his fastest guys on the floor, Kevin Castine, Peter Heim, Mike Silvestri, Kelse Lee on the floor along with six-foot-six center Brian Wallden and it got the Flames back into the game. Belote said East cut a 22-point deficit in the fourth to four.

Wallden scored 16 of his 31 points in the fourth to lead the Flames. Many of his points came in transition. He also grabbed 29 rebounds, blocked two shots and dished out five assists.

Wallden was held to three field goals and three free throws in the first half. Schintzius lauded the defensive work of Nick Christman on Wallden and East's other big man, 6-foot-11 Mark Rutecki (two points, seven rebounds).

Lee and Castine each scored five points in the fourth. Silvestri scored all five of his points in the first quarter.

Werts led Sweet Home with 30 points. Ramadan (14 points) and Pappagallo (12 points) also scored in double figures for the Panthers. Kacz and Richard Rush each scored seven. Williams added two.

Heim scored 12 points for East.

Turnovers were a huge reason for the Flames' loss. East committed 26 turnovers. Belote thinks Sweet Home scored at least 14 points off East mistakes.

Schintzius thought his team put forth a great effort against East and wanted to build on the win against Iroquois but instead "they came out as flat as a pancake."

Schintzius described the play of his team in the opening quarter against Iroquois as "the worst quarter in my eight years (coaching) with Sweet Home."

The Chiefs led, 18-8, at the end of the first quarter.

"We had no energy and a lack of focus," said Schintzius. "It was unbelievable. I called three timeouts in the first quarter begging and pleading them to get into the game."

Sweet Home clawed back into the game into the second quarter to trail, 29-24, at halftime, and outscored Iroquois, 21-8, in the third quarter, to go up, 45-37, after three quarters.

In the fourth, Sweet Home's inability to go to the free throw line more and its inability to stop sending Iroquois to the line did in the Panthers. Iroquois made 12 of 14 free throws while Sweet Home made 4 of 6 attempts in the final period.

"It was our own undoing," said Schintzius. "We didn't get to the line enough."

Paul Evans led Iroquois in the fourth with nine of his 16 points. He hit 7 of 8 free throws in the quarter, including four straight, to put the Chiefs ahead, 57-56. Wyatt Mariacher added a free throw for Iroquois' final point. Schintzius said Werts missed a wide open three at the buzzer.

Ramadan scored 15 of his 24 points in the second half despite three fouls at halftime and four in the game. Ramadan and Werts each tallied nine in the third. Werts added 15 but went scoreless in the fourth.

Johnson played but only scored three points. Pappagallo played the entire game and went scoreless.

Iroquois, known for its physical play, outscored Sweet Home, 21-0, from three-point range.

"Iroquois was playing a 2-3 zone the

entire game and we did not make a three," said Schintzius. "I think I could have kicked one in."

Sweet Home (6-3, 9-7) tries to ride the ship at 7:30 p.m. on Friday at West Seneca East. They hosted Lake Shore on Tuesday but the result was unavailable before The Bee went to press.

Belote switched up his starters in the Flames' road game at Lake Shore last Friday and it paid off with a 76-49 victory. Belote started Heim, Rutecki, Castine, Silvestri and Wallden and the quintet helped East take a 16-12 lead after the first quarter, 37-21 advantage by halftime, and 60-32 after three quarters.

"We played excellent basketball," said Belote. "They were finding the open man and kids were scoring points. On defense, we made sure every shot was contested."

East only made 12 turnovers. They had been averaging 22 turnovers per game.

Wallden led East with 20 points, 16 rebounds, six steals and two blocks. Heim had 19 points, Silvestri tossed in a career-high 17 points, including three threes and Rutecki picked up 10 points, 11 rebounds and four blocks.

"Wallden took less shots, passed the ball more, grabbed rebounds and got the proper outlets to the right guys," said Belote. "After the game, he told me that was the best basketball we had played all year and I agreed."

East (9-7, 5-4) hosted Hamburg on Tuesday but the result was unavailable before The Bee went to press. The Flames play at 7:30 p.m. on Friday at Williamsville South.

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Sweet Home girls play complete game, beat East

by **PATRICK J. NAGY**
Reporter

The Williamsville East girls basketball team played a good first, second and fourth quarter in its home game against Sweet Home last Tuesday. It was the third

quarter where they faltered and the Lady Panthers seized the lead for good.

Ahead, 20-19, at halftime, East was outscored by Sweet Home, 17-6, in the third quarter. Sweet Home went on to win, 50-44.

"I thought we were playing well

and they went on an 11-0 run to open the second half," said East coach Chris Durr. "They had three straight layups to Bianca Smiley, Gleniesha Ferby got a layup and Ellen Allen hit a shot.... Our defense in the post in the third quarter was horrendous. We cut it to four with three and a half minutes left in the game but that third quarter was brutal."

"They deserved to beat us," he added. "They played a complete four quarters."

"I thought we did a better job playing with intensity and passion on the defensive end (in the second half), which, in turn, got our offense going," said Sweet Home coach Matt LaRoach. "Defensively, I thought we did a better job of limiting possessions in the third quarter."

Free throws down the stretch helped Sweet Home protect the lead. The Lady Panthers were in the bonus midway through the third quarter. They finished 12 of

24. East went 4 of 7 from the line but Durr said all of his team's free throws came late in the fourth quarter.

"When you don't go to the free throw line in the first three quarters, that doesn't bode well for you for the rest of the game," said Durr.

Smiley was huge for the Lady Panthers. She scored 18 points, grabbed 13 rebounds, and blocked four shots.

"She continues to show great progress day after day," said LaRoach.

Ellie Allen added 15 points and was clutch down the stretch from the free throw line, shooting 5 of 6 in the fourth quarter. She also grabbed eight rebounds and dished out four assists.

Smiley and Allen combined for 16 of Sweet Home's 19 points in the first half.

LaRoach also liked the guard play of Rachel Cimerman (four points) and Ferby (nine points).

"Both of them, along with Allen, did a nice job," said LaRoach.

East's Taylor Klun scored 13 of her team-high 15 points in the fourth quarter. Klun also grabbed nine rebounds.

Neha Bakhai (eight points), Anna Stolzenburg (six points), Bridget Steele (five points), Jordan Kowalski (four points) and Jessica Kowalski, Sarah Dipofi and Becca Rumschik (two points each) rounded out the Lady Flames' scoring.

East shot 19 of 62 from the field. Durr said his team missed a ton of layups, especially in the first half. There were also beaten on the boards, hauling in only seven on offense and 21 overall. They also only had one steal.

The win improved Sweet Home to 8-0 in ECIC II and 12-3 overall. East fell to 10-6, 6-3.

"We picked another important league win but the mood in the locker room is that we are not

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South

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points, five rebounds), and Murray (19 points, 12 rebounds) all scored in double figures. Junior Tom LiSacchi came off the bench and scored eight points and made two steals.

Sophomore Mark Coppola only scored four points and made three steals but tied a school record with 15 assists. Chris O'Connell, in the 2005-06 season against Starpoint, and Chris Rice in the 1984-85 season against Clarence, also accomplished the feat.

"When Iroquois zoned, Coppola didn't force any shots and got the ball for people in position to score," said Monaco.

South also made 15 of 37 two pointers and 16 of 21 free throws.

Paul Wirth led Iroquois with 20 points.

South overcame a slow start against West Seneca East to win big.

The Billies trailed, 16-14, late in the first quarter, when they scored the last nine points of the quarter and the first five points of the second quarter, to go up, 28-16. Coppola started the rally by forcing back-to-back steals and buckets to give South an 18-16 advantage. He scored 12 points in the first quarter.

The Billies led, 44-26, at halftime. Licata nailed three straight threes in the third to bump South's lead up to 55-28. They went ahead, 72-48, by the end of the third. The 95 points scored was the most this season by South.

For the first time in Monaco's coaching career, he had seven players in one game score in double figures. Tim Krempa, LiSacchi and Armaan Wood each had career-highs.

Krempa shot 5 of 5 from the field and made 5 of 7 free throws for 14 points. LiSacchi poured in 13 points, four steals and four assists. Armaan Wood had 12 points. Licata made 4 of 6 threes for 12 points.

Licata has 53 threes on the season, tying him with 2004 grad Mike Davis for fourth all-time for the single-season record at the school. The school record for a single season is 90.

Coppola led with 15 points, nine assists and five steals. He has 135 assists for the season (sixth all-time at South) and 278 for his career (fourth all-time). The school record for career assists is 521.

Murray and Stasiak added 11 and 10 points, respectively.

South made 26 of 45 two-point shots, 7 of 18 threes and 22 of 30 free throws.

The Billies play on Wednesday at Orchard Park and Friday at home against Williamsville East. Both games have 7:30 p.m. tip-offs.

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Lou Gehrig Youth Baseball/Softball

NEW and RETURNING players will be able to register on-line at

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New players who register on-line are not required to attend in-person registration. Supporting documents will be collected later.

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E-mail: regquestions@aol.com with your registration questions.


