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## **OWLS COME UP SHORT IN CONFERENCE TITLE RACE**

After battling into a three-tie tie for first place in early February, the 2005 – 2006 Slinger Owls suffered a three game losing streak (including two conference games) in mid-February to fall from title contention.

Coming off a tough 35 – 33 loss at Kettle Moraine Lutheran in which the Owls missed all three front ends of bonus free throws down the stretch and lost at the buzzer, Slinger traveled to Whitefish Bay Dominican on Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup>.

The Owls jumped out to an early lead, but Dominican battled back to take the lead in the third quarter. The fourth quarter saw several lead changes including four changes in the final minute. Dominican hit a driving layup with 16 seconds to go to take a 48 – 47 lead. After getting nothing off of the initial push, Slinger called timeout with 10 seconds left. With the clock running down, sophomore guard Austin Kearns got off a contested 17-foot jumper that fell short, but Coach Schieve had called timeout with 2.6 seconds left. On the ensuing inbound play, Kearns dribbled left to attempt a 24-foot three-point shot; however, he was fouled on the shot at the buzzer. After missing the first free throw, Kearns hit nothing but net on the next two free throws as the Owls pulled out an exciting 49 – 48 win. It was only the second win for Slinger at Dominican during the nine years that they have been in the Parkland Conference together. Kearns led the Owls with 18 points.

The ensuing Friday, the Owls struggled against the zone defense of the Brown Deer Falcons. The Owls led most of the night, and had a four point lead with 3 minutes left. The Owls only scored one free throw the rest of the way as they lost 48 – 43. The loss dropped Slinger to 4 – 3 in conference at the halfway point of the conference season.

The next Friday, Slinger hosted Pewaukee for the final conference meeting between the two teams. The Owls and the Pirates have been in the same conference for 69 of the last 70 years. The Owls lit

up the scoreboard early jumping out to 34 – 18 halftime lead. The Pirates rallied in the second half hitting 7 three-point shots to pull within 3 points with about 4 minutes left in the game. The Owls continued to score, and the Pirates finally missed a few shots, as Slinger closed out a 68 – 58 win. Owl Senior forward Jeremy Off dominated in the paint scoring 29 points and grabbing 19 rebounds.

The Owls then proceeded to pick up three more conference wins in succession beating Shorewood 54 – 36, Watertown Luther Prep 52 – 39 on Slinger **HOOPS** Night, and picking up a hard fought 59 – 53 win at St. Francis. On the night of the St. Francis win, Pewaukee beat Kettle Moraine Lutheran to pull into a three-way tie for first place in the conference at 8 – 3 with Slinger and KML.

That set up a February 10<sup>th</sup> showdown with KML traveling to Slinger. The Chargers jumped on the Owls early racing out to a 13 – 0 led to start the game. The Owls cut the lead to seven points by halftime. The Owls fell behind by twelve points at the end of the third quarter, and could get no closer than eight points in the final period as they fell to KML by the score of 54 – 46.

The next Friday, the Owls hosted the Whitefish Bay Dominican Knights, and the game went down to the fourth quarter buzzer again. The Owls had a nine-point lead with less than five minutes to go. A couple turnovers and missed free throws allowed Dominican to tie the game with under a minute to go. Jeremy Off answered with two free throws with 15 seconds left, but Dominican scored with 4 seconds left to send the game into overtime. The Knights pulled away in the final minute of OT to defeat the Owls by the score of 71 – 67. Jeremy Off led the Owls in scoring with 24 points. The loss put the Owls two games behind in the conference race.

Slinger closed out the regular season with a nonconference loss at home against Germantown, before ending their three game losing streak with a 72 – 68 victory at Brown Deer.

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## SLINGER OWLS 2005 - 2006 SCHEDULE

Nov 26	Grafton	W 68 - 43	Jan 27	Pewaukee	W 69-59
Nov 29	at Kewaskum	W 41 - 39	Jan 31	at Shorewood	W 54-36
Dec 2	at Pewaukee	L 36 - 59	Feb 3	Luther Prep	W 52-39
Dec 9	Shorewood	W 65 - 27	Feb 7	at St. Francis	W 59-53
Dec 16	at Luther Prep	W 49 - 39	Feb 10	KM Lutheran	L 46-54
Dec 22	at Campbellsport	L 42 - 46	Feb 17	WB Dominican	L 67-71 OT
Dec 30	Mayville	W 54 - 44	Feb 18	Germantown	L 48-56
Jan 3	at New Berlin West	W 48-46	Feb 24	at Brown Deer	W 72-68
Jan 6	St. Francis	W 61 - 50	Feb 28	WIAA Subregional	
Jan 13	at KM Lutheran	L 33 - 35	Mar 2 - 4	WIAA Regionals	
Jan 20	at WB Dominican	W 49 - 48	Mar 9 - 11	WIAA Sectionals	
Jan 24	Brown Deer	L 43 - 48	Mar 16 - 18	WIAA State Finals	

### SLINGER HOOPS NIGHT PARTY - FRIDAY FEBRUARY 3RD

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Slinger **HOOPS** Fan Appreciation Night and post-game party was held on Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, after the Owls hosted Watertown Luther Prep. A large crowd of approximately 80 people joined us for the post-game party at the Kettle Moraine Bowl after a convincing 52 - 39 victory over the Phoenix. Earlier in the evening,

both the Junior Varsity and Freshmen teams completed season sweeps of the Phoenix as well with both posting double digit margins of victory. Thank you to all who attended the game and party. We hope you had a good time visiting with some of your fellow alumni and Slinger basketball supporters. We hope to see you again next year!

### OWLS AGAIN SEEDED FOURTH IN WIAA REGIONAL PLAY

The WIAA boy's basketball tournament starts the week of February 27<sup>th</sup>. Slinger will again participate in the Division 2 tournament. All WIAA schools participate in the tournament and are separated into four divisions based on high school enrollment from the prior school year. This is the fifth season that the WIAA has seeded regional play. The coaches of the respective teams in the regional meet to vote on the seeding of the teams.

For the second year in a row, the Slinger Owls received the fourth seed in the Cedar Grove Regional. The Owls currently with a record of 13 - 7 will open tournament play at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, at home against the fifth seeded Mayville Cardinals (12-8). Tip off is at 7:00 pm start instead of the regular season 7:30 start time. The winner of that game will play the winner of first seeded Delafield St. Johns Military Academy (19 - 1), who feature Wisconsin Badger recruit Trevon Hughes, and eighth seeded Kewaskum (4-16). The other teams in the regional are second seeded Campbellsport (15 - 5), third seeded Pewaukee (15 - 5), sixth seeded Watertown Luther Prep (8 - 12) and seventh seeded Grafton (3 - 17). The Owls have played every team in the regional this year other than Delafield St. Johns. Slinger beat Mayville, Kewaskum, and Grafton, swept a pair of games from Luther Prep, split a pair of games with Pewaukee, and lost its game at Campbellsport.

Second round action takes place at 7:00 pm Thursday night with the better-seeded team hosting the game. The regional final is scheduled for Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 pm at Cedar Grove-Belgium High School. If you have any questions regarding the tournament, feel free to call Doug Riesop during school hours at 644-9615.

### *Coach's Corner*

*By Assistant Coach Hank Karius*

Despite a couple tough losses the last couple weeks that knocked us out of Parkland Conference title contention, we are optimistic entering the 2006 WIAA tournament.

At times, our play is spectacular allowing us to compete with and beat some of the best teams in the area. We need to be stronger with the ball down the stretch of games, keep our focus, and knock down free throws late in games to win games come tournament time.

We have gained valuable experience playing in several close games this year. We entered the season with a very inexperienced team. Unfortunately, some of that inexperience has "bitten us" a little down the stretch of the

conference season. Hopefully we have learned something from our successes and failures in those close games.

Despite the last couple weeks of disappointment, I am excited about our chances entering the tournament and about the future of Slinger basketball. With five sophomores on the varsity team, we have had very successful years at the JV (15-5) and Freshmen (15 - 2) levels. It is important that we bounce back and close out the 2005 - 2006 season with some strong play in the tournament to continue the momentum. With the regional and sectional fairly balanced in competition levels, with twelve teams in our sectional with at 12 regular season wins, a team that gets "hot" over the next couple weeks could advance all the way to Madison.

Tournament time is the most exciting time of the season. We hope to see you at the games. Thank you for your continued support of Slinger **HOOPS**.

**Don't forget to check up to date game and player stats on our website!**

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