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## **OWLS PREPARE FOR DIVISION 1 REGIONAL**

The 2008 – 2009 season for the Slinger Owls has been up and down. The team has struggled at times on the offensive end of the floor, but has shown flashes of brilliant basketball during parts of almost every game. Unfortunately, the Owls have rarely been able to sustain that level of play for an entire game. The team has often had to battle back from slow starts.

As the season has moved along, the Owls have become a more balanced offensive team, with six different players having scored in double figures in at least two games each, and a seventh player having scored in double figures in one game.

The season has seen one blowout win at Grafton, and two blowout losses (at Pewaukee and home against Wisconsin Lutheran). There has been one last second win at home against West Bend West, and four heartbreaking losses, including three games in which Slinger had five point leads with less than four minutes left in the game. The Owls have swept a pair of games from a formidable West Bend West team that recently upset Wisconsin Lutheran and currently posts a 12 – 7 overall record.

In the first West Bend West game, which was rescheduled to Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> because of a December snow cancellation, the Owls handed the Spartans their first loss of the season. Slinger avoided their typical slow start and led 12 – 11 at the end of the first quarter, and 23 – 19 at halftime. The game was close throughout with no team leading by more than five points all night. The Owls lost the lead when they did not score a point in the third quarter, but they continued to battle from a slight deficit in the fourth quarter, and took the lead with 8 seconds left when Senior guard Kegan Schieve hit a driving layup. West Bend West did not take a timeout and pushed the ball up the floor, but they fumbled it away, and did not get off a shot as the buzzer sounded giving the Owls a 38 – 37 victory. Senior forward Dustin Hau led the Owls in scoring with 11 points, while Schieve added 8

points. That win improved the Owls overall record to 5 – 4, which was its best mark of the season.

As the second half of the season schedule was loaded with road games, the Owls struggled. Despite being in several of those away games, Slinger has managed just two road wins this year, at West Bend West and at Grafton.

In road games against the top two teams in the conference – Wisconsin Lutheran and Oconomowoc – the Owls have battled from double-digit deficits to give themselves chances to win. At Oconomowoc, Slinger battled back from a 27 – 11 first half deficit to cut the Cooney lead to 36 – 34 midway through the fourth quarter. The Owls had three different possessions to tie or take the lead, but failed to score on any of them, as Oconomowoc hit free throws down the stretch to close out their 48 – 42 win. At Wisconsin Lutheran, on February 10<sup>th</sup>, Slinger cut a 15 point third quarter lead to five points with 1:31 to play, but could not score on its next two possessions as Wisco pulled away in the final minute to win by 12.

As the Owls prepare for the WIAA tournament, they currently hold a 7 – 13 overall record including a 4 – 10 mark (seventh place) in Wisconsin Little Ten play. Once again, Wisconsin Lutheran has captured the Wisconsin Little Ten Conference Championship, their fourth in a row.

In WIAA tournament play this year, Slinger will play as a Division 1 team for the second time in three years. The Owls will be part of the Oshkosh Sectional, which includes some of the largest schools in the state such as Stevens Point, Neenah, and the Oshkosh schools. At the recent seeding meeting, the Owls were awarded the 10th seed in the 14 team Sectional, and will open up Regional play on Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm at #7 seeded Fond du Lac (10 – 10). Oshkosh North holds the #1 seed. A complete tournament bracket can be found on the WIAA website at [www.wiaawi.org](http://www.wiaawi.org)

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## Slinger Owls 2008 - 2009 Schedule and Results

Nov 29	Campbellsport (nc)	W 79 - 66	Jan 23	<b>West Bend East</b>	W 50 - 42
Dec 4	Lomira (nc)	W 51 - 43	Jan 27	<b>at Watertown</b>	L 61 - 64
Dec 8	at Pewaukee (nc)	L 30 - 63	Jan 30	<b>Hartford</b>	L 37 - 60
Dec 12	<b>at Hartford</b>	L 42 - 60	Feb 3	<b>Beaver Dam</b>	L 42 - 45
Dec 16	<b>Watertown</b>	W 52 - 47	Feb 5	<b>at West Bend West</b>	W 48 - 40
Dec 23	<b>Wisconsin Lutheran</b>	L 29 - 54	Feb 10	<b>at Wisconsin Lutheran</b>	L 51 - 63
Dec 30	Sheboygan Falls (nc)	L 57 - 67	Feb 13	<b>Oconomowoc</b>	L 43 - 54
Jan 3	at Grafton (nc)	W 47 - 24	Feb 20	<b>at Beaver Dam</b>	L 58 - 60
Jan 6	<b>West Bend West</b>	W 38 - 37	Feb 27	<b>at West Bend East</b>	L 51 - 53
Jan 8	<b>at Oconomowoc</b>	L 42 - 48	Mar 3 & 7	WIAA Regionals	
Jan 13	at Port Washington (nc)	L 32 - 51	Mar 13 & 14	WIAA Sectionals	

Conference Games in **Bold**

## Slinger **HOOPS** Alumni Basketball Tournament

On Saturday, December 27<sup>th</sup>, approximately 50 former Slinger Owl varsity basketball players gathered for the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Slinger **HOOPS**/Slinger Recreation Department Alumni Basketball Tournament. The tournament was the brainchild of 1999 graduate Mark Weske. The tournament ended up with eight teams with seven to nine players on each team including basketball alumni from graduating years in the 1960s (Ron Held) to a team made up entirely of players from the 2008 graduating class. Each game consisted of two halves with a 16-minute continuous clock that stopped in the last two minutes of each half. Each team played three games. In the championship game, a team made up of players from the 1998 through 2000 graduating classes beat a team made up entirely of players from the 2005 graduating class in a 35 - 33 nailbiter. Members of the

winning team were Mark Weske, Dave DeLong, and Nate Lanser from 1999, Brent Vandermause and Dan Dineen from 2000, and Scott Healy and Mike Zurn from 1998. Thank you to all who participated. The biggest "Thank You" goes out to Mark Weske for organizing the event.

The intent is to make this an annual event with the alumni tournament being normally scheduled for the Saturday after Christmas (likely date of December 26<sup>th</sup> for next season), and possibly moving to Thanksgiving weekend when Christmas falls on a weekend (such as in 2010 and 2011). There has been some discussion about starting a "senior" bracket if we can get four teams made up of older players. Watch your emails and stay in touch with some of your fellow alumni if you are interested in playing in future years.

## FORMER OWLS ON THE COLLEGE HARDWOOD

During the 2008 - 2009 basketball season, Slinger has many former players participating at the college level. Four players are participating at the "junior college" level playing for UW - Washington County in West Bend. They are **Eric Fassbender** and **Nolan Jensen** from the class of 2007, and **Joe Neary** and **Kyle Wagner** from the class of 2008. Three other former players are playing at the NCAA Division 3 level. All three players are seeing significant playing time.

**Eric Nehm** (2008) is playing at Maryville College located in St. Louis. Eric is pursuing a degree in English/Communications. Maryville participates in the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. They are currently in third place in their conference, and have qualified for their conference tournament where they will have a chance to advance to the NCAA Division 3 National Tournament. Information on the Maryville basketball team can be found online at [www.maryville.edu/athletics.htm](http://www.maryville.edu/athletics.htm)

**Jeremy Off** (2006) and **Austin Kearns** (2008) both play for the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) Raiders. Jeremy is pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering, while Austin is pursuing a degree in Business Management. MSOE participates in the 12-team Northern Athletics Conference. They currently have the third best record in their conference, and have already qualified for the conference tournament, where they will also have a chance to advance to the NCAA Division 3 National Tournament. Information on the MSOE basketball team can be found online at [www.msoe.edu/athletics](http://www.msoe.edu/athletics)

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### Coach's Corner

Coach's Corner will return next issue.

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