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OWLS SHOW STEADY IMPROVEMENT LOOKING FORWARD TO TOURNAMENT

After losing Senior Matt Vraney for the season when he reinjured his knee during the first week of practice, it took the 2009 – 2010 Slinger Owls basketball team a while to hit its stride. Vraney was the only returning starter from the prior year, and would likely have led the team in scoring and rebounding this year. In his absence, the Owls struggled at times early in the season to score. However, as of late, the team has been hitting its stride with improved scoring punch led by improved three-point shooting.

Slinger opened the season at home by winning the championship of the “Old Scenic Moraine” Thanksgiving Tournament on Friday, November 27th, and Saturday, November 28th. The Owls beat Grafton 46 – 34 in a first round game, and then defeated Mayville 52 – 37 in the championship game on Saturday night. Sophomore guard Kirk Emmer led the team in scoring both nights with 17 points against Grafton, and 15 points against Mayville. In the Grafton game, Senior guard Jordan Teschendorf and Sophomore forward Dan Sabin each chipped in nine points. In the Mayville game, Senior guard Brennan Quinn added 11 points.

The Owls picked up a hard fought 47 – 40 nonconference win over Lomira before opening conference play at Watertown. The Owls’ scoring woes put them in a hole early as they trailed 25 – 8 at halftime, and never recovered in the 48 – 27 loss.

The team started out 5 – 2 before hitting the skids with a five game losing streak. Inexperience was evident during the first half of the season as the Owls struggled to play “complete” games. The third quarter of a lot of the games was the turning point for the Owls, as they often would enter halftime with a lead or small deficit, only to dig themselves a hole in the third quarter that they could not recover from. As the season has moved along, and the key players have gained more experience and confidence, this has not been a problem.

The Owls snapped their five game losing streak in exciting fashion with a buzzer beating victory at home over Oconomowoc. Cooney was picked to finish as high as second in the Wisconsin Little Ten Conference this season, but has suffered some close losses. The game was close throughout with neither team leading by more than six points. Senior guard Jordan Teschendorf kept the Owls close in the second half by hitting three three-point baskets. Senior guard Kevin Burns hit a runner with 25 seconds to go to give the Owls a 51 – 50 lead. However, Oconomowoc scored on a put back basket and foul with 7 seconds left to take the lead back. After a missed Cooney free throw, Slinger pushed the ball up court, but was fouled twice – as they were not yet in the bonus. The Owls had a side out of bounds with 2.1 seconds left. With Teschendorf coming off of a double screen, three Cooney defenders jumped out to defend him. This allowed Brennan Quinn to “slip” down the lane to receive the inbound pass and make a wide open layup just before the buzzer to give Slinger a thrilling 53 – 52 victory.

After a 64 – 61 road win at Hartford, the Owls almost pulled out another exciting home win against the second place 13 – 2 Watertown squad. Slinger rallied from a five point deficit with 15 second left in regulation to send the game into overtime on a three-point basket by Brennan Quinn and, then after two missed Gosling free throws, Kirk Emmer hit a 14-foot jumper at the buzzer. However, in overtime, a 12-foot shot by Emmer with two seconds left bounced off the rim as they suffered a tough 53 – 52 loss.

The team has had balanced scoring from its starting guards. After a slow start to the season, Teschendorf has hit 21 three-point baskets in the last eight games. Emmer has scored in double figures in 14 of 20 games, while Teschendorf has hit the double figure mark in 11 games and Quinn in 10 of the 20 games so far this season.

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Slinger Owls 2009 – 2010 Basketball Schedule

| | | | | | |
|--------|-------------------------|---------|-----------|--------------------|--------------|
| Nov 27 | Grafton (nc) | W 46-34 | Jan 22 | Oconomowoc | W 53-52 |
| Nov 28 | Mayville (nc) | W 52-37 | Jan 26 | at Hartford | W 64-61 |
| Dec 1 | at Lomira (nc) | W 47-40 | Jan 29 | Watertown | L 52-53 |
| Dec 4 | at Watertown | L 27-48 | Feb 2 | at Greendale (nc) | W 52-38 |
| Dec 8 | at Wisco | L 37-61 | Feb 4 | West Bend West | W 55-52 |
| Dec 11 | at Campbellsport (nc) | W 44-37 | Feb 12 | at Oconomowoc | L 45-53 |
| Dec 15 | at West Bend West | W 52-42 | Feb 15 | at Beaver Dam | W 67-54 |
| Dec 19 | at Sheboygan Falls (nc) | L 45-47 | Feb 18 | Wisconsin Lutheran | L 45-55 |
| Dec 30 | Pewaukee (nc) | L 45-60 | Feb 23 | at West Bend East | W 71-64 (OT) |
| Jan 5 | West Bend East | L 56-58 | Feb 26 | Hartford | L 51-56 |
| Jan 15 | Beaver Dam | L 36-56 | Mar 2 - 6 | WIAA Regionals | |
| Jan 19 | New Berlin West (nc) | L 35-46 | Mar 12-13 | WIAA Sectionals | |

WIAA Basketball Tournament Details

Open at home against Stevens Point

In WIAA tournament play this year, Slinger will play as a Division 1 team for the third time in four years. Slinger is the smallest Division 1 high school this year based upon enrollment figures. The Owls will be part of the Oshkosh Sectional including fellow Wisconsin Little Ten Conference teams Beaver Dam, West Bend East, West Bend West, and Hartford. The Owls, with their then 10 – 10 overall record, were awarded the #8 seeding out of 14 teams in the Sectional, and will open up the tournament on Tuesday night, March 2nd, at 7:00

pm in Slinger hosting the #9 seeded Stevens Point Panthers (8-13). The other teams and their seeds are #1 Oshkosh North (who advanced to the Division 1 State Championship Semifinals last year), #2 Beaver Dam, #3 Neenah, #4 Sheboygan South, #5 Sheboygan North, #6 Wisconsin Rapids, #7 Fond du Lac, #10 Oshkosh West, #11 Hortonville, #12 Hartford, #13 West Bend West, and #14 West Bend East. A complete tournament bracket can be found on the WIAA website as www.wiaawi.org

Coach's Corner

By Head Coach Alan Schieve

Once again, as we are reaching the end of our season I would have to say it has been a relatively successful season. I believe the varsity squad has probably overachieved to this point and has 10 wins with a number of games where we have had halftime leads that we have let slip away. Our lower levels are also enjoying a great deal of success. Both the JV and freshmen find themselves in second place in the conference trailing only WISCO.

At the varsity level, considering we had to replace four starters at the beginning of the year, I am very pleased with the way our players have adjusted to varsity play. To make it a little more difficult, before we even played a game, we lost our only returning starter from last year, Matt Vraney, to a season ending knee injury. While we performed pretty well during the early non-conference portion of our schedule, we struggled at the beginning of the conference season with double digit losses. But with improved play from seniors Jordan Teschendorf, Kevin Burns, Brennan Quinn and sophomore Kirk Emmer we started to put some pretty good games together and began to win a few. We have gotten very steady play from our role players, seniors Dan Dubnicka and Steven Schwarz, juniors Kyle Behrens and Dan Wimmer, as well as sophomore Dan Sabin. We have become very competitive in games and given ourselves a chance to win every night out.

It seems like every year, when I write this column at this time of the year, I tend to say the same things.

We are a rebuilding team that shows great improvement and becomes very competitive as the year goes along. It must sound like all I do is just change the year on each column. So, why are we able to continue to re-tool our team and take players with little experience and watch them develop into teams that play good basketball? I think a great deal of the credit has to go to our coaches at the lower levels. It starts with the guys that work with our youth tournament teams. Guys who volunteer their time and effort so that Slinger basketball continues to have success. But I think the guys who have the greatest effect on our varsity players are the guys working with our freshmen and JV teams. At the JV level is Rick Held and Pete Fritz, and at the freshmen level is Tony Dobson and Josh Feller. All of these guys are outstanding teachers of the game, and do a great job of teaching our system to the younger players so they are ready to step in at the varsity level. And finally is the contribution of the varsity coaching staff. Nate Grimm, Steve Dummer, Doug Riesop, and Hank Karius are tireless workers who are very good at working with kids.

It has been a pleasantly surprising year and we are very excited to see how it will play out as the season winds down. I want to thank you all for your continued support and hope that you can still get out to see us play this year. It would be great to fill the gym for our last home game and first round state tournament game on Tuesday, March 2 against Stevens Point. Hope to see you there.

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