

Hank Karius
President 644-7701

Gerry Lofy
Vice President 644-8952

Tim Wiedmeyer
Secretary 644-7618

Tim Wiedmeyer
Treasurer 644-7618

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OWLS LOOK FOR WAY TO CLOSE OUT GAMES TEAM HAS BEEN TIED OR LED IN FOURTH QUARTER OF EVERY GAME

The 2011 – 2012 Slinger Owls have shown flashes of brilliance, but have combined that with periods of sloppy play that has led to several tough losses in the first half of the season. Heading into the New Years break, the Owls find themselves with an overall record of 5 – 4 and a conference record of 2 – 2. The team has either led or been tied with four minutes left in every game so far this year. Some costly turnovers, subpar shot selection, and poor free throw shooting in the fourth quarter has led to some gut wrenching losses. The team has employed a full court press for the majority of games throughout the season, but while the press has led to several opponent turnovers in some games, it has appeared to cause some erratic play by the Owls as well. The team looks to adjust to the faster pace of play as the season moves on.

The Owls opened the season strong with four straight victories including two in the “Old Scenic Moraine” Thanksgiving Tournament to capture the championship of the invitational that was held in Grafton this year. Slinger opened the season with a 74 – 62 win over Kewaskum. Junior guard Tanner Schieve led four Owls in double figures with 17 points. Junior forward Derek Merkes added 14 points, while Senior guard Kirk Emmer and Junior guard Nate Roethle contributed 13 and 12 points respectively, in the win. The Owls followed that up with a hard fought 57 – 54 win over host Grafton in the title game. Emmer paced the Owls with 21 points in that contest while Schieve added 18.

In the home opener, the Owls played one of the more wild games it has had in years while hosting the Pewaukee Pirates. Slinger was sharp early and forced the Pirates into many turnovers throughout the first three quarters. The Owls led by 15 points with just under six minutes left in the game, but then Pewaukee caught fire. The Pirates made a run hitting several long three point shots. Slinger hit only one of two free throws on at least three occasions. Pewaukee hit a three point shot with one

second left to tie the game at 67 at the end of regulation. The game continued on with Pewaukee continuing its torrid shooting. The Pirates took a four point lead in the first overtime, but the Owls went on a 7 – 0 run to take the lead back. Pewaukee again answered with another three point shot in the final 30 seconds to send the game into a second overtime. With several players for Pewaukee fouling out, the Owls managed to keep their key players on the court and managed to prevail 93 – 89 in double overtime. Kirk Emmer led five Owls in double figures with 25 points, while Senior forward Jared Sandretti had a career high 20 points in the wild win.

After beating Hartford to open up 4 – 0 on the season, the Owls dropped four of five games including a 53 – 48 loss at Watertown on December 8th. The Owls rallied from a 13 point deficit with five minutes left to tie the game, but could not pull out the victory in the final minute.

After the Watertown game, Slinger amazingly played its second double overtime game in four games when they hosted a strong Waukesha North team in a nonconference game on December 13th. The Northstars hit a three point shot at the buzzer of regulation to force the first overtime. The Owls led the entire fourth quarter in the tightly played game, but never led by more than six points. Slinger again struggled from the free throw line late in the game often making only one of two attempts several times down the stretch and in the overtimes. Waukesha North pulled ahead to stay in the second overtime and beat the Owls 56 – 53.

The Wisconsin Little Ten Conference appears to be a dogfight amongst the top five teams in the conference with any road wins being incredibly valuable. Beaver Dam is the only undefeated team at 5 – 0, while Wisconsin Lutheran is alone in second place at 4-1, and Slinger, Oconomowoc, and Watertown are at 3 – 2.

Slinger HOOPS Ltd., P.O. Box 251, Slinger, WI 53086

SlingerHoops@charter.net

Slinger Owls 2011 – 2012 Basketball Schedule

Nov 25	Kewaskum at Grafton (nc)	W 74-62	Jan 20	Oconomowoc
Nov 26	at Grafton (nc)	W 57-54	Jan 24	at New Berlin West (nc)
Nov 29	Pewaukee (nc)	W 93-89 2OT	Jan 27	at Hartford
Dec 2	Hartford	W 65-45	Jan 31	Watertown
Dec 8	at Watertown	L 48-53	Feb 3	West Bend West (HOOPS)
Dec 13	Waukesha North (nc)	L 53-56 2OT	Feb 10	at Beaver Dam
Dec 15	at West Bend West	W 60-58	Feb 11	Monona Grove (nc)
Dec 22	at WISCO	L 48-51	Feb 14	at Oconomowoc
Dec 27	Hortonville at UWGB (nc)	L 50-53	Feb 17	WISCO
Jan 3	West Bend East	W 61-52	Feb 23	at West Bend East
Jan 6	at Greendale (nc)	W 47-41	Mar 2&3	WIAA Regionals
Jan 13	Beaver Dam (Parents)		Mar 8&10	WIAA Sectional

SLINGER HOOPS NIGHT GAME AND PARTY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd

The annual Slinger **HOOPS** Night game and post-game party will be held on Friday, February 3rd, when the Owls host the West Bend West Spartans. The Junior Varsity and Freshmen games will tip off at 5:45 pm, with the Varsity scheduled to begin at 7:30 pm. The post-game party will be held in the private upstairs bar area of Strange Brew this year. Ample parking is available in the Community Park parking lot if the street spots are filled. Last year, we had over 70 people attend the party. Hot appetizers and beverages are free to any individuals who have made a donation to Slinger **HOOPS** during this season. All fans are welcome to join us at the party, and can make a donation that night. Please try to join us. It is always an enjoyable night to catch up with other Slinger alumni and supporters.

Coach's Corner

By Head Coach Alan Schieve

Back on December 2nd, we played Hartford to open our conference season. That game, on that particular night, reminded me of why I love coaching and why I love high school athletics. What a night to play a basketball game. The crowd was electric. It was nearly standing room only. It was a great atmosphere to watch a game and a great atmosphere to play in. I really believe it is why we played so well and handled Hartford for our first conference win of the season.

Our student body was outstanding. They were into the game and they were loud. Hartford had a good number of students at the game so both cheering sections were really going at each other. I know our guys loved it and they were energized by it. That atmosphere was a big reason why we played so well. It was like the good old days - playing a big rivalry, two communities trying to cheer their schools on to victory.

I do have to give our school's Business Ed department a lot of the credit for the excitement in the gym that night. They had a big promotion/charity fund raiser going on. They used a take-off from the "Teach Me How To Bucky" idea the Wisconsin Badgers use. The promotion was "Teach Me How To Hootie". They sold t-shirts and created a little dance and our student body

really responded to the concept. Looking into the stands and seeing the "sea of red" in our student section was inspiring. Our guys really played well and with enthusiasm.

It is my hope that the fan support we got that evening will continue the rest of the season. We played 6 of our first 9 games on the road so we have a lot of home games coming up. When we get the crowds into our gym we have a great "home court" advantage and we are tough to beat. Opposing teams do not want to come to Slinger to play. We have tremendous support for our basketball program and we are hoping our fans come out to see us play at home over the next 2 months as we continue to drive for a conference championship and a deep run in tourney play.

Thanks for the continued support from the **HOOPS** boosters and hoping you all are able to get to the gym to give us that fan support we need to finish the season strong.

Happy New Year
from Slinger **HOOPS** Ltd!

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