

Hank Karius
President 644-7701

Gerry Lofy
Vice President 644-8952

Tim Wiedmeyer
Secretary 689-2779

Tim Wiedmeyer
Treasurer 689-2779

Slinger HOOPS

Ltd.

Established 1996

www.slingerhoops.com



Volume 20, Issue 2

Spring – 2016

OWLS FALL JUST SHORT IN REGIONAL FINAL

HEARTBREAKING END FOR NINE SENIORS

The 2015 – 2016 Slinger Owls basketball team had an exciting run in the WIAA Division 2 State Tournament. After rallying in the final two minutes of regulation on Friday night March 4th to send the Regional game against West Bend West into overtime, the host Owls pulled out a heart stopping 54 – 51 victory. Jesse Bellefeuil scored 12 points, Derek Sabin added 11 points and 8 rebounds, and Max Merkes contributed 9 points (including a go ahead 3 point shot in overtime), to lead the Owls to a tough victory.

The next afternoon, the Owls (who were seeded fourth in their half of the Menasha sectional) traveled to play #1 seeded Cedarburg in a Regional Championship game. Cedarburg entered the game ranked 6th in the last WIAA Division 2 Coaches Poll. The back and forth game saw several lead changes. The Owls rallied from a 7-point deficit late in the game to tie it with less than 30 seconds left. After Cedarburg hit two free throws, the Owls had one last possession. An open 3 point shot from the right wing missed the mark; Cedarburg rebounded the miss, and broke out for an uncontested layup at the buzzer to eliminate the Owls 55 – 51. Derek Sabin led the Owls with 22 points and 9 rebounds, Max Merkes had 9 points and 7 rebounds, and Chris Evans contributed 5 points and 10 rebounds. The Owls out rebounded the Bulldogs by a 30 – 15 margin, but could not pull out the victory. The loss ended the careers of nine seniors who were members of this year's team.

Cedarburg beat Grafton in the Sectional semifinal game the following Thursday, but lost in the Sectional Championship game to Kaukauna by the score of 71 – 49. Kaukauna advanced to the State Tournament in Madison where it won both games in blowout fashion to capture the Division 2 State title with an overall record of 24 – 2.

The Regional Championship game appearance was the 5th for the Owls in the last six seasons. The Owls are now 2 – 3 in those games.

The Owls finished another successful regular season in the Wisconsin Little Ten Conference finishing in outright third place. Oconomowoc ended the ten-year reign of Wisconsin Lutheran by winning the conference championship with a 13 – 1 conference record. Beaver Dam finished in second place, while Wisconsin Lutheran finished in fourth place – one game behind the Owls. Slinger beat Wisconsin Lutheran 62 – 54 in the regular seasonal finale to take third place. It was the first victory for the Owls over WISCO since 2007 – 2008 (the Owls first season in the WLT), a streak that lasted 18 games.

An amazing highlight of the season was a 52 – 51 win at Watertown on February 19. The Owls trailed 50 – 46 while inbounding with 7 seconds left. Senior Jacob Rothenhoefer hit a 30 foot shot off the inbound pass to cut the deficit to one point. The Owls fouled Watertown with 1.9 seconds left. After Watertown made the first free throw but missed the second, Derek Sabin rebounded the ball, took two dribbles, and banked in a 65-foot shot at the buzzer! Highlights of the last 30 seconds of the game, along with Watertown radio commentary, is on the internet at youtube.com for all to see! Search for “Slinger vs Watertown” and the clip should be the first film in your search.

Slinger finished the season with an overall record of 14 – 10, including an 8 – 6 record in Wisconsin Little Ten Conference play. Next season will be the final year of the Wisconsin Little Ten Conference as it currently exists. The WIAA approved a significant conference realignment plan in April that will place Slinger in a new conference with Cedarburg, Grafton, Nicolet, Whitefish Bay, Homestead, Port Washington, and also current WLT foes Hartford, West Bend East, and West Bend West.

Slinger Owls 2015 – 2016 Basketball Schedule

Nov 28	at Nicolet (nc)	W 86-80	Jan 14	Watertown	W 50-37
Dec 1	Kewaskum (nc)	W 73-41	Jan 22	at Wisconsin Lutheran	L 47-69
Dec 8	at West Bend West	W 55-53	Jan 23	at Burlington (nc)	W 55-35
Dec 11	Oconomowoc	L 31-61	Jan 28	West Bend West	W 62-43
Dec 18	Hartford	W 55-43	Feb 2	at Oconomowoc	L 38-47
Dec 19	Plymouth (nc)	L 51-65	Feb 5	at Hartford	L 59-64
Dec 22	at West Bend East	W 74-51	Feb 11	West Bend East	W 43-40
Dec 28	Freedom at Green Bay (nc)	W 52-49	Feb 16	at Beaver Dam	L 35-53
Dec 29	Neenah at green bay (nc)	L 52-61	Feb 19	at Watertown	W 52-51
Jan 5	Sussex Hamilton (nc)	L 55-63	Feb 25	Wisconsin Lutheran	W 62-54
Jan 8	Beaver Dam	L 53-59	Mar 4	West Bend West (WIAA)	W 54-51
Jan 12	New Berlin West (nc)	W 83-71	Mar 5	at Cedarburg (WIAA)	L 51-55

INDIVIDUAL HONORS, AWARDS AND RECORDS

Two Slinger Owls players were recognized with honors by the Wisconsin Little Ten Conference for their play during the season. Senior point guard Tyler Reinhardt was named 2nd team All-Conference, and Sophomore forward Derek Sabin was named Honorable Mention All-Conference. Reinhardt was voted the Most Valuable Player for the season by his teammates and coaches while Senior guard/forward Max Merkes was voted as the Most Improved Player. Tyler Reinhardt and Chris Evans were voted as Captains by the team.

Tyler Reinhardt finishes his career as the all-time assist leader in Slinger history (since the stat was formally saved in school records starting in 1979) with 295, easily eclipsing the prior mark of 238 that was held by Ryan Voels during the 1996 and 1997 seasons. Jesse Bellefeuille became just the tenth player in school history to shoot higher than 80% from the free throw line for a single season. His 83.3% average this season is the second best in school history, just missing the mark of 85.4% set by Ryan Voels during the 1997 season. Bellefeuille again tied the single game record for 3-point shots made with 6 – he became the second person to hit that mark twice as he did it in the sectional game against West De Pere last year.

Following the season, Tyler Reinhardt was awarded the Brendan Dobson Owl Pride Award, and Max Merkes won the Brad M. Wiedmeyer Memorial **HOOPS** Award. Please visit the **HOOPS** website for information on these awards and other stats/records.

Coach's Corner

By Head Coach Alan Schieve

As we roll into the summer it is time again to start our basketball activity. As the saying goes, "basketball teams are made from November to March but basketball players are made from March to November". Between summer leagues, camp, and individual workouts we try to give our players ample opportunity to develop their basketball skills. And in the long run we will only be as good as the amount of time the players and coaches put into making us better.

As we shift into next season mode we would be remiss if we did not look back at last season, and the legacy left by those graduating seniors. I think it would be appropriate to say that we were a little underachieving this year. That is an interesting statement considering we finished 3rd in the Little Ten Conference after being picked 5th. We made it to the regional final where we lost a heart breaker to a very good Cedarburg team that won the North Shore Conference championship. And beat perennial conference champs WISCO for the first time in 18 games. But the thing is, we have built a program that has high expectations every year, and I am sure this year's players will tell you we lost some games that we should not have lost.

Still, it was a good group to work with. We always say as long as the players let us coach it is always a good year, and this year's group is no exception to that. It was an unusual year in that we had so many seniors on the team and most of them were in our playing rotation. So, we must say good bye to senior starters Tyler Reinhardt, our team MVP and 2nd team All-Conference point guard, starting guard Jesse Bellefeuille, Chris Evans, as fine a big man we have had controlling the lane defensively, and do a little of everything, Max Merkes. Off the bench, seniors Tyler Ritger, Kurtis Fritz, Jacob "Sauce" Rothenhoefer, and Collin Schmelebeck all made major contributions at some point during the season. And last, but not least, is senior Mitch Behm, who is one of the best practice players we have had the opportunity to work with. These guys will be missed not only as players but as people - just a great group of kids to be around and work with.

But now on to the next group of Fighting Owls. It will be an inexperienced group with only 2 guys who played much this past year. Sophomores Derek Sabin, who was Honorable Mention All-Conference and Tyler Evans, both played a lot of minutes for us, and both made major contributions to the team. They will be expected to do even more next year. While we have a lot of guys who don't have much experience, our expectations remain high. We are very confident that the returning varsity guys along with guys off our JV team will put in the time and work needed for us to again contend in the last year of the Wisconsin Little Ten Conference.

As always the coaches would like to thank all our **HOOPS** contributors as well as the community of Slinger for their support throughout the year. That was never more apparent than when we played at Cedarburg and out numbered their fans 3 to 1. Have a great summer and we will see you next year in November. Go Owls!!