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# Slinger **HOOPS**

*Ltd.*

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## **OWLS ENTER SEASON WITH MANY QUESTIONS NEED TO REPLACE NINE SENIORS HEADING INTO FINAL WLT SEASON**

The Slinger Owls boys basketball team heads into the 2016-2017 season with more uncertainty than they have had in a long time as they look to replace nine seniors from a team that finished 14 - 10 overall while finishing in third place in the Wisconsin Little Ten (WLT) Conference last season. This will be the final season of the Wisconsin Little Ten as it currently exists, with Slinger, Hartford, and the two West Bend schools joining six schools from the current North Shore Conference to form a new conference for sports beginning with the 2017-18 season.

The Owls do return two critical pieces from last year's team with Junior Derek Sabin and Junior Tyler Evans. The 6'8" Sabin and 6'5" Evans both played significant minutes last year as sophomores, with Sabin earning Honorable Mention All-Conference recognition. However, the other spots are wide open with several guards and some additional big men vying for playing time. This will include seniors who served as reserves last season, as well as players from the JV and even some underclassmen. It will remain to be seen how the puzzle pieces fit together with a mix of big and small players competing for starting spots and key minutes.

The Owls open the season with four nonconference games against opponents that they also played last year. The season opener will be against Nicolet at home on Saturday, November 26th with the opening tip of the Varsity game at 4:00 pm that day. Slinger will then play road games at Kewaskum, Plymouth, and Sussex Hamilton, before opening conference play at home on Friday, December 9th, against West Bend West. The West game will be an important early season matchup as the Spartans return several starters from last year and look to compete with the Owls to finish in the top half of the conference. That conference opening night will also be the night of the Slinger **HOOPS** Fan Appreciation Party. After the

game, all Slinger fans are invited to join us at the Night Owls Bar & Grill in downtown Slinger. The party takes place after the Varsity game in the upstairs bar area with free beverages and heavy hors d'oeuvres. We hope you can join us!

Beaver Dam is the favorite to win the conference this year with several starters returning including WLT Conference Player of the Year in point guard Garrett Nelson. Wisconsin Lutheran will look to rebound from their fourth place finish last year which snapped their conference title streak at ten straight years. Defending champion Oconomowoc will also be expected to finish in the top half of the conference. The rest of the conference should be very competitive with several teams looking to knock off those top three picks.

Also in nonconference play, the Owls will host two teams before Christmas that they have never played in the history of the school. On Saturday afternoon, December 17th, the Owls will host Kewaunee (a Division 3 school), and on Friday night, December 23rd, the Owls will host West Allis Hale (a Division 1 school). The Owls will again travel to Green Bay this year to participate in the SunDrop Classic on the UWGB campus playing perennial Division 2 power Seymour on Wednesday night, December 28th. The eighth, and final, nonconference game will be at home against 2016 Division 1 state runner-up Muskego. Slinger actually participated in the same conference as Muskego (in a two division Parkland Conference) for six years in the 1980s.

The full schedule is included in this newsletter and is also available on our website at [SlingerHoops.com](http://SlingerHoops.com), which also includes a huge database of Slinger basketball statistics from the last 30+ seasons of play. Check out the website when you have a chance.

## Slinger Owls 2016 – 2017 Basketball Schedule

Nov 26	Nicolet (nc)	Jan 6	at Oconomowoc
Nov 29	at Kewaskum (nc)	Jan 10	Muskego (nc)
Dec 2	at Plymouth (nc)	Jan 13	Hartford
Dec 6	at Sussex Hamilton (nc)	Jan 20	at Wisconsin Lutheran
Dec 9	West Bend West ( <b>HOOPS</b> Night)	Jan 26	at West Bend West
Dec 15	at West Bend East	Jan 31	West Bend East
Dec 17	Kewaunee (nc)	Feb 3	at Beaver Dam
Dec 20	Beaver Dam	Feb 10	at Watertown
Dec 23	West Allis Hale (nc)	Feb 14	Oconomowoc
Dec 28	Seymour at UWGB (nc)	Feb 17	at Hartford
Jan 3	Watertown	Feb 23	Wisconsin Lutheran

### 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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.

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### *Coach's Corner*

*By Head Coach Alan Schieve*

Excited! That is how I feel every year at this time. As we prepare for the season, the list of questions grows and trying to figure out how we are going to answer those questions continues.

And actually the list of questions began the same night we took that tough defeat against Cedarburg in the regional final. With nine seniors leaving us after a successful season we realized we would have to find a lot of answers. Who would step up, both as starters and depth off the bench, and fill those spots left by the graduating seniors? Who is going to score? How will we defend? What adjustments will we have to make both defensively and offensively? Who are the leaders going to be? How will team chemistry develop? There is not enough room in this column to continue the questions we have about this year's team.

Well the coaches have met both formally and informally, The players have attended camps, played in summer league and did individual workouts to get better and try to answer the questions. And now it is time to find out what we have. The coaches are raring to get started and the players are eager to get on the court.

We have two players who played major roles on last year's team. We will look to them for production early on as our other guys gain experience. Seniors are always key guys at the varsity level so we will be looking for big contributions out of Josh Wetherall, Thomas Noltner, Jacob Olson, and Nick Rasimus. After that we will see how the guys off last year's JV team fit in.

And finally the big question, how will we do this season? That one we will have to wait until the end of the year to answer. We play one of the more challenging schedules we have ever played. There are some very good teams on the non-conference part of the schedule and the conference looks to be strong again with Beaver Dam and WISCO having really good returning players as we get ready to play in the last year of the Wisconsin Little Ten conference. While I won't predict the outcome of our year I will predict that this team will play hard, play smart, defend, share the ball, and play good team basketball while being outstanding representatives of Slinger High School and the Slinger community.

Hopefully, you are as excited about this team as we are. The season starts Saturday, November 26 at home vs, Nicolet. Come see us play, you won't be disappointed. The school and community support are the best in the area and for that we thank you. **GO OWLS!**