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*Slinger*

**HOOPS**

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## **OWLS SHOW POTENTIAL IN EARLY SEASON PLAY**

The 2005 – 2006 Slinger Owls Boys Basketball Team has showed signs of inexperience while also displaying some dazzling play in the early season. While overall work ethic and determination has been very good, the Owls have struggled to score consistently. The inability to finish shots in the lane and poor free throw shooting are holding back the Owls. Slinger enters 2005 with a 4 – 2 overall record including a 2 – 1 conference mark. The conference appears to be very balanced this year with no clear favorite as Dominican and Brown Deer both graduated several players last year.

After a couple weeks of very inconsistent practice play, Slinger opened the season on Saturday night, November 26<sup>th</sup>, hosting the Grafton Blackhawks. Without knowing what to expect from the young Owls, the team dominated the first half. Using a full court trapping man-to-man defense, Slinger jumped on Grafton from the opening tip and opened up a 43 – 14 halftime lead. The Owls cruised to a 68 – 43 victory. Sophomore guard Austin Kearns led the Owls with 14 points and 11 assists, while sophomore forward Gus Gehring contributed 11 points off of the bench, and Senior guard Brandon Rothenhoefer chipped in 10 points.

The following Tuesday, the Owls traveled to Kewaskum to play their local rival in a nonconference game. The performance was typical of a young team playing its first road game. Poor shooting and some poor decision making hurt the Owls early as they fell behind 24 – 19 at halftime. Slinger righted the ship during the first part of the third quarter to open up a 29 – 26 lead, but then went into a long scoring drought that carried over into the fourth quarter. The Owls took the lead back midway through the fourth quarter, then the lead changed hands several times down the stretch. After a three-point basket gave the Indians a 39 – 38 lead, Senior forward Jeremy Off scored with about one minute left to give the Owls the lead. After a Kewaskum miss, Sophomore forward Devin Mayer hit one of two free throws with 9 seconds left. The Indians missed a three-point shot at the buzzer as

the Owls survived with a 41 – 39 win. Jeremy Off led Slinger in scoring with 11 points.

Slinger opened up Parkland conference play on Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, at Pewaukee. The experienced Pirates blitzed the Owls in the first half. After making just two three-point shots in their first two nonconference games combined, the Pirates hit 7 of 8 three-point shots in the first half, including a half-court shot at the halftime buzzer, to open up a 34 – 14 lead on the Owls. Slinger never seriously challenged in the 59 – 36 loss. Pewaukee is currently tied for first place in the conference with St. Francis heading into Christmas.

On Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Owls picked up their first conference win over an inexperienced Shorewood team that is picked to finish last in the conference. Slinger jumped out to a big lead early in the game and never looked back in 65 – 27 win. Senior forward Jeremy Off led the Owls in scoring with 12 points, while Sophomore guard Austin Kearns chipped in 10.

The next Friday, Slinger traveled to Watertown to play the Luther Prep Phoenix. Again the Owls struggled to make shots around the basket, but tenacious defense allowed Slinger to open up a 25 – 19 halftime lead. The Owls pulled away in the fourth quarter leading by as many as 17 points en route to a 49 – 39 victory. Jeremy Off dominated the boards with a 17 point, 21 rebound performance (just three short of the Slinger single game rebound record), while Kearns added 11 points, and Senior guard Brandon Rothenhoefer added 10 points.

On Thursday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, Slinger traveled to Campbellsport to play the talented Cougars in a nonconference game. The Owls jumped out to 13 – 6 first quarter lead, but the Cougars rallied to tie the game at halftime. Again, several missed shots in the lane hurt the Owls. In a close game all night, Campbellsport pulled away in the final two minutes for a 46 – 42 victory. Senior guard Jack Stern led the Owls with 14 points.

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# SLINGER OWLS 2005 - 2006 SCHEDULE

Nov 26	Grafton (nc)	W 68 - 43	Jan 27	Pewaukee
Nov 29	at Kewaskum (nc)	W 41 - 39	Jan 31	at Shorewood
Dec 2	at Pewaukee	L 36 - 59	Feb 3	Luther Prep ( <b>HOOPS</b> )
Dec 9	Shorewood	W 65 - 27	Feb 7	at St. Francis
Dec 16	at Luther Prep	W 49 - 39	Feb 10	Kettle Moraine Lutheran
Dec 22	at Campbellsport (nc)	L 42 - 46	Feb 17	Whitefish Bay Dominican
Dec 30	Mayville (nc)	W 54 - 44	Feb 18	Germantown (nc) (Senior Night)
Jan 3	at New Berlin West (nc)	W 48 - 46	Feb 24	at Brown Deer
Jan 6	St. Francis	W 61 - 50	Feb 28	WIAA Subregional
Jan 13	at Kettle Moraine Lutheran		Mar 2 - 4	WIAA Regionals
Jan 20	at Whitefish Bay Dominican		Mar 10 - 11	WIAA Sectionals
Jan 24	Brown Deer		Mar 16 - 18	WIAA State Finals

## SLINGER HOOPS NIGHT PARTY - FRIDAY FEBRUARY 3RD

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Slinger **HOOPS** Fan Appreciation Night and post-game party will be held on Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, when the Owls host Watertown Luther Prep. Last year approximately 60 people joined us for the post-game party at the Kettle Moraine Bowl. The Junior Varsity and Freshmen games start at 5:45 pm, with the Varsity game following the JV game at approximately 7:30 pm. Slinger **HOOPS** members and one guest receive free admission to the games and party that night. A list of **HOOPS**

members will be at the front table when you arrive. Provide your name to the ticket desk attendant when you arrive to receive your free admission.

The post-game party will again be held in the hall at the Kettle Moraine Bowl. Sandwiches and beverages are complementary at the party. There is plenty of room for everyone and plenty of parking available. We hope to see a record crowd that night.

## SLINGER - PEWAUKEE RIVALRY HISTORY PROJECT

Nate Grimm, assistant basketball coach and Slinger High School history teacher, is looking for a few good quotes and/or memories from former players concerning the Slinger/Pewaukee rivalry for a student project. Please e-mail him at [grimmn@slinger.k12.wi.us](mailto:grimmn@slinger.k12.wi.us) if you'd be interested in sharing your memory with his students and a student will be in contact with you in late January or early February. If you cannot or are not interested in speaking to one of the students working on the project, but are still willing to share your quotes or memories, you may merely write down the memory and e-mail it to him or send it to Nate via regular mail at Slinger High School, 207 Polk Avenue, Slinger, WI 53086.

## Coach's Corner

*By Coach Alan Schieve*

We in the basketball program have always felt that the first priority of a coach is to be a good teacher. The beginning of the 2005-06 basketball season has been a good test of our ability to teach the game of basketball. With the number of inexperienced and young players we are using this year, our teaching skills have been put to good use. We have started two sophomores in every game and at times have played several minutes with four sophomores on the floor at the same time. The results have been encouraging.

We stand at 5-2 on the season and one of our losses has come to a once-beaten Campbellsport team by four points on the road. We have struggled a bit on offense, but are happy for the most part with our offensive execution. The major problem has been with our shooting. We are shooting less than 40% from the field and, most disturbing, less than 50%

from the free throw line. Defensively we have exceeded our expectations. We are holding teams to about 42 points a game and, for the most part, our defensive execution has been very good.

We are getting solid play from our seniors. Jeremy Off has given us good inside play and been outstanding on the boards. Kris Guerndt, Jack Stern, and Brandon Rothenhoefer have shown a solid all-around floor game. Sophomores Austin Kearns on the point, and Devin Mayer and Gus Gehring in the paint, have had flashes of very good play but need to be more consistent in their play.

It has been a good start to the season. The exciting part is that as a team we are only going to get better. As our youth continues to get more minutes and develop more confidence in their play we would expect them to have more success as the season moves on. We hope you get an opportunity to see this up and coming team. As always, thanks for your support and hopefully we will see you at a game this year.

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