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Slinger

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OWLS WILL AGAIN NEED TO OVERCOME INEXPERIENCE

OPEN SEASON AT HOME IN "OLD SCENIC MORAINÉ" THANKSGIVING TOURNEY

After struggling during the second half of the 2008 – 2009 season, the Slinger Owls look to bounce back and improve on their 7 – 14 record from last season. Last season was the first time since the 1992 – 1993 season that Slinger did not record at least ten wins during the season.

The Owls will have to replace several key players from last season, as Senior Matt Vraney will be the only returning starter. However, the Owls will return a lot of athletic players which will hopefully translate into a deep team that will be much improved on the defensive end of the floor. Rebounding and interior defense will again be concerns as the Owls will not have a player taller than 6'2" on the varsity roster.

The WIAA has increased the number of regular season games that can be played by varsity and JV teams to 22 games from the 20 game limit that had been in place since the late 1980s.

Slinger opens the season at home by hosting a four team "Old Scenic Moraine" Thanksgiving Classic Tournament on Friday, November 27th, and Saturday, November 28th. The other teams in the tournament are Grafton, Kewaskum, and Mayville. All of these teams were rivals in the now defunct Scenic Moraine Conference from the late 1960s throughout the 1970s. They are now each in different athletic conferences. The tournament will open with both JV games starting at 4:15 pm on Friday. Kewaskum (from the Eastern Wisconsin Conference) will battle Mayville (East Central Flyway Conference) in the opening varsity game at approximately 6:00 pm, while the Owls will open with Grafton (North Shore Conference) at approximately 8:00 pm on Friday night. On Saturday, November 28th, the JV games will again be played at 4:15 pm, the losers of the first round games will play for third place at 6:00 pm, while the winners of each varsity game will play for the tournament championship at 8:00 pm.

After hosting the season-opening Thanksgiving tournament, Slinger will then play six straight road games. This is primarily the result of an unusual conference schedule in which the Owls will play their first three Wisconsin Little Ten Conference games on the road. After a nonconference game at Lomira on Tuesday, December 1st, Slinger will open up conference play at Watertown on Friday, December 4th. The Owls split their two games with Watertown last season with each team winning on their respective home courts.

On Tuesday, December 8th, Slinger will travel to Milwaukee to play at Wisconsin Lutheran, the defending 2008 – 2009 WIAA Division 2 State Champion. Wisco will again be a heavy favorite to win the Wisconsin Little Ten Conference title as they return several key players from their championship squad of last year.

The following Saturday, the Owls will travel to Campbellsport for a nonconference game, before traveling to West Bend West for a conference matchup on Tuesday, December 15th. The Spartans were the only WLT team that the Owls swept last season. Slinger completes its "road trip" with a nonconference game at Sheboygan Falls on Saturday, December 19th.

The Owls will then have their next five games at home including nonconference matchups against long-time rivals Pewaukee and New Berlin West.

In WIAA tournament play this year, Slinger will play as a Division 1 team for the third time in four years. The Owls will be part of the Oshkosh Sectional including fellow Wisconsin Little Ten Conference teams Beaver Dam, West Bend East, and West Bend West. The sectional includes several schools from the Fox Valley Association conference such as Fond du Lac and the Oshkosh teams. A complete tournament bracket can be found on the WIAA website as www.wiaawi.org.

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Slinger Owls 2009 – 2010 Basketball Schedule

Nov 27	Grafton (nc)	Jan 22	Oconomowoc
Nov 28	Kewaskum or Mayville (nc)	Jan 26	at Hartford
Dec 1	at Lomira (nc)	Jan 29	Watertown
Dec 4	at Watertown	Feb 2	at Greendale (nc)
Dec 8	at Wisconsin Lutheran	Feb 4	West Bend West
Dec 11	at Campbellsport (nc)	Feb 9	at Beaver Dam
Dec 15	at West Bend West	Feb 12	at Oconomowoc
Dec 19	at Sheboygan Falls (nc)	Feb 18	Wisconsin Lutheran
Dec 30	Pewaukee (nc)	Feb 23	at West Bend East
Jan 5	West Bend East	Feb 26	Hartford
Jan 15	Beaver Dam	Mar 2 - 6	WIAA Regionals
Jan 19	New Berlin West (nc)	Mar 12-13	WIAA Sectionals

2nd Annual Slinger Owl Alumni Basketball Tournament

The second annual Slinger Owl Alumni Basketball Tournament will be held this year on Saturday, December 26th, at Slinger High School. The tournament will again be coordinated by Mark Weske. Last year, the tournament drew over 50 players that made up eight teams. The winning team was made up of primarily of players from the 199 and 2000 graduating classes. We hope to see even more alumni participate this year. If you are interested in playing, contact Mark Weske at mweske@shorewest.com.

Coach's Corner

By Head Coach Alan Schieve

It has been an interesting off season as we get ready to start yet another basketball season. The off season started with a very successful summer that saw our team really grow. We had many successes that included a solid trip to the Tri-State team camp and winning the annual Slinger Summer Basketball Mini-Tournament. Probably the best part of the summer was winning the West Bend Summer League. After finishing tied for third during the regular league play, we won three straight games in the playoffs including the championship game vs. West Bend East to claim the overall league championship. Needless to say the play of our players this summer has us very excited about the upcoming season. We are sure to be picked in the bottom half of the conference but we feel we are going to surprise a lot of people.

Even though it was a very good summer for our players we did have an unfortunate thing happen. Matt Vraney, our most experienced returning player, as well as our leading returning scorer suffered a knee injury in a high school soccer game. The original diagnosis was torn cartilage and torn ligaments including the ACL. It looked like we had lost him for the season. After exploratory surgery, the news is much more encouraging. The ACL suffered only a partial tear and everything else is healing well. It looks like we are going to get Matt back close to full strength by the time the season starts. Great news for us - but even better news for Matt.

At this point the question is always what can we expect this season? I am not sure how to answer that question. Obviously, we are excited about what happened over the summer. We had some players like Jordan

Teschendorf, Matt Vraney, Kevin Burns, Brennan Quinn, Dan Dubnicka, as well as others, who put time into their skill development. We did some great things developing the team concept which has been a big part of

our program throughout the years.

On the other hand, we graduated 5 of our top 6 players and about 80% of our scoring. That group also showed great leadership throughout the season. We have got some young players who are going to have to take that step up to be productive players at the next level. While we have several returning seniors, we will need some of those guys to provide us valuable leadership. On top of all of these question marks, the conference should be very tough. There are many returning players that played key roles for their teams last year.

So, what does this all mean? I am not really sure. The only thing I am certain of is that our players will practice hard, play hard, and they will be ready to play. We will back down from no one and battle every possession of each game. Whatever happens after that is anyone's guess. Hopefully, you will be able to get to the gym to watch the 2009-10 Slinger Owls. Like always they will be a group you can be proud of.