

# SPORTS

## Watery Wolves send three qualifiers to state to end on high note

**W** Zoe Ljubic  
Editor in Chief

Three members of the boys swim and dive team will compete in the state meet Saturday, Feb. 27 at Evanston Township High School in the 200-yard individual medley (IM), 100-yard freestyle and diving. Performances by junior swimmer Konner Scott in both swimming events and junior diver Zach Rothstein and senior diver Ryan Zimmer landed them spots to compete at the state level.

Scott swam the 200-yard IM in 1:58.36 and the 100-yard freestyle in 47.61 seconds at the sectional meet last Saturday.

According to head diving coach Lou Torres, Rothstein and Zimmer were expected to do well at the sectional meet in order to qualify for the state competition. Rothstein scored 404, finishing in fifth place, and Zimmer scored 371, finishing in sixth place at the sectional meet. The Wolves finished the meet in fourth place with a total of 174 points.

Although the team as a whole had an off year, finishing the regular season with a 1-5 record of (0-4 in the Central Suburban League South), head varsity coach Dan Vander Jeugd expressed satisfaction with this season's progress and looks forward to next season.

"The season was really fun this year," he said, adding that he eagerly anticipates the "depth" that the team will have next year.

Junior butterflyer Elliot Kerbel agreed.

"This year we really increased the strength training and leg work. Three mornings a week we did this circuit that focused on

power," he said. "Looking back on the season as a whole, I think we have improved a lot."

At the conference meet on Jan. 23 at Glenbrook South High School, the top six finishers included Kerbel in the 100-yard butterfly, finishing in sixth place; Scott in the 200-yard IM and 100-yard freestyle, finishing in third and fourth place, respectively; the 200-yard medley relay (senior backstroke Tim Binkley, sophomore breaststroker Ryan Miller, Kerbel and Scott), finishing in fourth place; the 200-yard freestyle relay (Binkley, Kerbel, Miller and Scott), finishing in fifth place; and the 400 yard freestyle relay (Kerbel, Binkley, Miller and Scott), finishing in fourth place. Rothstein and Zimmer garnered the two spots to compete at sectionals based on their performance at the conference meet.

Kerbel attributes his success to preparation from practices.

"We were not terrible, but not exceptional at the conference meet," he said. "We were at what [Vander Jeugd] refers to as 'mid-taper slump,' which is our bodies not being used to the reduced work load and swimming poorly."

This reaction was expected, according to Kerbel.

"The good thing is though that this was expected so we would be on track to swim well at [the sectional meet]," he added.

As for the divers, Torres expressed satisfaction with the team's performance.

"The season was a lot fun," Torres said. "We have a humorous group of guys which is what you need sometimes."

Zimmer's goal of breaking 200 points at the six dive meet and qualify for the state meet was accomplished.

Zimmer said that he relishes the opportunity to compete at

the state meet.

"My goal for state is to be one of the top 16 divers," he added. "In order to do that, I cannot afford any mess ups."

As for next year, Torres expects "[sophomore diver Zachary] Flatley and freshman Narcis Ardelean to step up."

Torres added some words of wisdom for his charges.

"I want my guys to remember that nothing in life is promised," he said. "Your accolades last week might not be there next year so you need to keep changing and getting better. You [got to] look in the future and keep plugging away."



Kerbel prepares to swim against competition at home. Photo by Irfan Qurashi

## Boys basketball team begins preparation for difficult playoff slate

**W** Zoe Ljubic  
Editor in Chief

After Tuesday's 75-54 victory against Maine West, the boys varsity basketball regular season has come to a close. Lead scorers included senior guard and co-captain Lo Fiol, junior forward Lauris Herth and junior (G) Ramsan Younatham, garnering 17, 12 and 11 points, respectively.

The team posted a 12-13 record (2-8 Central Suburban League South); a seven game improvement over the previous season.

"Our dedication and commitment has improved since last year, and it is all because of [head coach Robert] Williams," senior forward Rodney Metellus said.

Williams believes the team has "definitely made a step forward."

"The seniors have made an investment in the behavior and attitude of the whole basketball program and hopefully throughout the school," he added. "There is a certain mentality that if you do the right thing on a consistent basis, good things will happen to you."

According to Fiol, this season "we never stopped getting better and we always worked very hard whereas last season we kind of

stopped trying hard and coasted."

"Our unity brought us together outside the court and that really helped us this year," he added.

The Wolves have been working on staying focused and determined to play their best in each game, according to Metellus.

On Jan. 31, West beat Gordon Tech 65-46. Senior (G) Chris



Varsity boys basketball team unites before big game. Photo by Irfan Qurashi

McNichols paced the Wolves with 13 points.

On Feb. 6, the Wolves beat Rolling Meadows 56-53, with McNichols with 14 points and Metellus with 13.

Senior (F) and co-captain Boris Cayemite attributes the victories to "better ball movement, because we were able to take more shots."

Younatham agreed, saying that the team "really pulled through and worked hard together."

Despite their losing record, the Wolves were competitive. The contest against Glenbrook South finished with a final score of 55-51 and the game against Evanston finished with a final score of 67-52.

Younatham expressed grief over the loss against Glenbrook South.

"We were hands down the more talented team," he added. "[The result] was a step back and a big loss for us in the conference and sectional seeding."

The Wolves are seeded eighth out of 21 teams and will compete in their first playoff game on Wednesday, Mar. 3 against Lake Park, who is seeded ninth.

Williams is excited to begin playoffs, because he "wants [the team] to do whatever [they] can to extend the senior season," Williams added.

## Girls track and field enter season setting school records in first indoor meet

**W** Mary Basic  
Business Manager

Junior sprinter Kellion Gordon set two school records as she and her teammates captured five individual and one relay first place finishes that powered the small but mighty girls track team to a victory in its first indoor meet of the season Feb. 17 at home.

The team tallied 65 points to Niles North's 62, Hersey's 45 and Mather's 24.

Gordon placed first in 50-meter dash with a time of 6.8 seconds, tying the school record, and first in 200 meter dash with a time of 27 seconds, beating the school record by 0:0.4.

Sprinter Natalie Chavez, a senior co-captain, finished first in the 400-meter dash with a time of 65.9 seconds.

The 1600-meter event was captured by senior distance runner and co-captain Megumi Hoshi in 5:43.5.

The 4 X 800 meter relay team consisting of Hoshi, senior distance runners Carmin Beck and Asha Mannancheril and sophomore distance runner Jessica Sutfin took first place in 10:42:4.

In field events, junior jumper Victoria Barela placed first in triple jump with a leap of 29'6".

The remainder of the freshman-laden team consists of senior co-captain, thrower Kimberly Mercado and freshman jumper Lily Chatman.

Head coach Mark Medland expressed eager anticipation of the Hononegah Invite in Rockton (IL) on Saturday, March 6 and the Saturday, March 20 Whitewater (WI) invite, both of which will consist of 25-26 teams.

Mercado echoed Medland's sentiments.

"I am excited for the Saturday meets because they are more challenging," Mercado said. "There are a lot of good competitors from different schools and I want to compete at a high level."

The team's small numbers are the result of graduation losses. However, Medland welcomes over 40 freshmen who are ready to fill the shoes of the departed graduates, Medland said.

"I am excited for the girls who are returning, yet at the same time it will be interesting to see what the new runners can do," Medland said.

Hoshi agrees.

"There is a lot of talent on this team, and I am excited for this season," Hoshi said. "As long as all the ladies continue working hard, we will most definitely have a great season."

## Individual winter athletes compete in state competitions

**W** Naomi Prale  
Sports Editor

This year, Niles West had its share of state qualifiers for the winter season's IHSA state tournaments. Senior wrestler Ben Rosen competed in the state wrestling tournament last Saturday, Feb. 20. He lost in the first round of the championship.

"I wrestled as hard as I could, and as tough as I could," Rosen said. "I didn't get the result I wanted, but I left everything out there and couldn't be prouder of it."

Junior Katelynn Johnson competed Fri., Feb 19 in the vault tournament, and finished 15th with scores of 9.45 and 9.5.

Niles West plans to send three more students this weekend to

compete in the state tournaments for boys swim and dive. Junior swimmer Konner Scott will compete Saturday, Feb. 27, in the 200-yard individual medley (IM) and 100-yard freestyle at Evanston Township High School.

"I am glad I just qualified," Scott said. "Although I didn't reach my goals, I am still excited because I have another change at [competing for] them."

Scott hopes to finish in the top 12 in either of his events, merely for a chance to "get to come back the next day for finals. That would make me happy."

Junior diver Zach Rothstein and senior diver Ryan Zimmer will compete tomorrow at Evanston as well.

"I feel like both [Rothstein and Zimmer] dove exceptionally well at the sectional meet. Both of them cleared 350 points. I am excited to see how they finish up the season at state," Scott said.

# SPORTS



Girls hoops sparks spirit resurgence

**w Naomi Prale**  
Sports Editor

Basketball season is here, Niles West. Whether it is anticipating March Madness, waiting for the end of the NBA season or watching the competitive girls varsity basketball team win a regional championship for the first time since 1985, the enthusiasm is contagious.

The girls varsity basketball team has only brought an increase in school spirit with its hard work and dedication to the sport and our school.

If anything, the school spirit has increased because of the girls' performance. This is the first time, in a long time, that the team has worked so hard to achieve so much. I would like to dedicate a column to their perseverance, which has contributed to destroying all opposition that the team has faced these last few games.

The stands are packed, the classes are showing more school spirit for basketball than ever before and the varsity girls are using the school's support to their advantage. They are winning. Players like sophomore Jewell Loyd make everyone else excited and eager to watch basketball.

It is a funny thing. The lackluster performances of other sports in the past (football anyone?) have elicited some school spirit, but never has enthusiasm been as heartfelt as the school spirit seen these past few weeks.

## The girls varsity basketball team's victories have only brought about an increase in the school spirit

The Niles West "whiteout" against Glenbrook South brought out students of all grades, wearing white, and chanting cheers in the stands, clearly helping the Wolves to the victory they needed. The team beat GBS in overtime 49-46. Some students made posters for their friends on the court, supporting them in the stands.

With such success, one might expect the girls to walk around like *prima donnas*, put up on pedestals. The amazing thing however, is that these girls are solid citizens, seemingly unimpressed by themselves. They are all academically focused. Many of them are AP students, and all work hard and get good grades.

The girls also provide support to other sports teams during the season. Last week at the varsity boys basketball game, the team made posters supporting the varsity pomms dancing at the game, and rooted for the boys team.

The effects of the girls' victories is not lost on students. People are clamoring to go to games. My Facebook™ feed revealed one student writing to another wall to wall: "just recovering from the awesome WIN varsity had tonight!" mere hours after the girls clinched the win over Maine South on Monday.

Minutes before, another student wrote via Facebook™ that he "bleeds red." Students have become more excited about sports and may become more eager to sign up for sports themselves and enrich the athletic programs.

The girls compete tonight against GBS for the sectional championship. With the entire school behind them, I have the utmost faith they will succeed.

## Wolves prepare for sectional championship

**w Adriana Zalloni**  
World Editor

The varsity girls basketball team will compete for their first sectional title since 1981 when they take on Glenbrook South tonight a 7:30 p.m. at Niles North.

The Wolves defeated the Maine South Hawks 52-33 in the first round of the sectional game on Feb. 22 behind sophomore guard Jewell Loyd. The co-captain tallied 24 points, followed by fellow G and senior co-captain Kelly Kleppin with a total of 14 points. Senior (G) co-captain Jaelyn Gremley scored 11 points as the forward returned after being out for three weeks with back spasm.

The team advanced to the sectional by edging the Evanston Wildkits on Feb. 18 in a 41-40 overtime nail biter. The victory made the Wolves regional champions for the first time since 1988.

The Wolves held the lead for most of the game, until the Wildkits caught up in the fourth quarter, tying the score with seconds remaining in regulation. In overtime, senior center Michelle Poskrobko fouled out. Senior (G) co-captain Allie Guiang made the final basket with seconds left in overtime.

"That game was what basketball is all about," Guiang said. "It is about working hard, picking up your teammates, making sacrifices and going for it. We did all these things and ended up with the championship."

"[In the game against Evanston,] we started out strong and played our hearts out, Kleppin said. "We [would not go] down without a fight. As for [Poskrobko], she did what she had to do, and took one for the team by fouling out."

On Tuesday, Feb. 15, the girls defeated district rival Niles



Loyd focuses to shoot against Evanston. Photo by Irfan Qurashi

North 48-39 in the regional semifinals despite what the players described as a lackluster effort.

"Tuesday, we didn't have the start we wanted," Poskrobko said. "Then we all started playing better and were able to come back and keep the lead until the end of the game."

On Friday, Feb. 12, the Wolves defeated Waukegan 52-32 to take the Central Suburban League South (CSSL) for the first time since 1985.

"Our biggest motivation for our game against Waukegan was the fact that [the game was for] the conference championship," Kleppin said. "We played hard in the first half and the second half which was a big part of why we were successful."

Kleppin attributes the team's success to their desire to win.

"We are successful because we come out fired up and ready to play," Kleppin said.

Head coach Anthony Konsewicz was extremely impressed with the support from the fans.

"[The game on Jan. 29 against Glenbrook South] was a memorable one to put us into a tie for the conference," Konsewicz said. "The outstanding crowd and support from the fans will not be forgotten anytime soon."

Konsewicz said that he believes the key to a successful postseason lies in the team's willingness to improve.

"We need to keep building momentum," Konsewicz said. "We need that willingness to get better each day at

practice to keep us rolling [in] the post season."

The Wolves' record currently stands at 26-5 (8-2 in CSSL), and they are ranked #11 in the *Chicago Sun-Times*' Super 25.

Loyd, who leads the team with 23.2 points, 12.2 rebounds and 4.0 assists per game, was named to the both the CSSL all-conference and *Sun-Times* all-area teams. Kleppin shared all-conference honors while Gremley received honorable mention all-area.

## Boys track and field team has high hopes for season

**w Dan Machalinski**  
Staff Writer

The boys varsity track team is off to a mediocre start this season, according to senior co-captain Dimitri Tripkos (thrower), who explained that the team has "a big list of expectations for the season."

Senior co-captains George Davros (distance runner), Gabe Nash (sprinter), Kimo Bajumunde (hurdler), Danny Lohan (high jumper) and Tripkos hope to send seven to eight people to state this year, exceeding the six they sent last year.

Although the team lost two of their first three meets to Niles North and Deerfield, head coach Chris Vivone said that he is "not too concerned with winning and losing, but more concerned with getting guys in a lot of events. As a team we are still trying to figure out our best runners."

This enables Vivone to "put a freshman or sophomore on varsity if they have the best times," he added.

On Feb. 5, at the City Meet 1 against Niles North, Northside, Lake View, Lincoln Park and Mather, Von Steuben, Gordon

Tech, Clemente, Marshall and Orr, Schurz, Northtown, Brooks and Roosevelt, the Wolves placed second. The team was defeated by district rival Niles North.

Despite the loss to North, Tripkos explained that even though the expectation is to win, "if we don't [win first place], we expect a very close second [place]."

On Feb. 12, the Wolves competed in the City Meet II, finishing first by over 100 points. Davros led the team by placing first in the both the 1000 and 1600 meter runs.

At the Suburban Meet on Feb. 19 the Wolves took a step back narrowly losing to Deerfield, finishing in second place. The team garnered 135 points. Davros expects to compete at the state meet and receive the all-state recognition.

"If I can qualify for the state meet, I would be every happy," he said. "I am [hoping] to go all-state in the mile [run], and qualifying for the state meet is the first step."

As for the team, Davros sees much "potential in the team."

"I definitely believe we could have a bunch of guys compete at the state [competition]," he added.

According to junior Joseph Ivanov, the team has to "work on many things" in order to improve. His personal goal is to make himself faster, because he "got really slow over the last year."

The solution? Vivone continues to emphasize the importance of training in the weight room. To do so, Vivone has teamed up with the varsity football coaches and trainer Fernando Perez to help make the track team stronger.

"We are doing some different lifts that really concentrate on our core, glutes and hamstrings," Vivone said.

The Wolves will compete next in the Suburban Meet II on Saturday, Feb. 27 at 9 a.m. in the fieldhouse.



Junior Curt Lee prepares leap. Photo by Irfan Quarshi

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