

# WINTER SPORTS PREVIEW

## Seniors ready to lead boys b-ball team

By Jason Turek  
Sports Reporter

The boys basketball team took a step forward last season in making the state tournament for only the second time since 2001. One positive aspect heading into the 2008-09 campaign is that the same coach coming back for a second season.

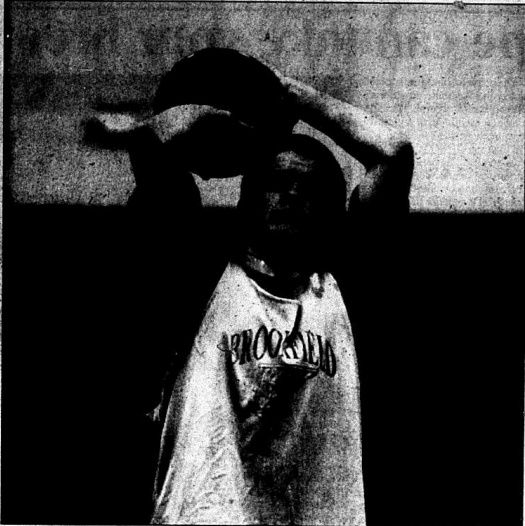
After seven coaches in eight seasons, head coach Bob Drysdale returns to the bench and is poised to take the next step in building a solid foundation in the Bobcats boys basketball program.

The team doesn't have much experience at the varsity level, but has played over the summer and in the fall league, taking part in nearly 40 games.

"They've grown from their time from the summer until now," said Drysdale. "It helped them get a jump-start to this season."

Getting back to the state tournament doesn't, at this point, appear on the team's radar, with nine seniors graduating from a team that won eight games last year. Missing will be All-Conference Colonial guard Mike Shaker, the team's top scorer, and playmaker Matt Nimer, who earned an All-Conference honorable mention at point guard. Also, lost are outside scoring threat Ben Post and forward Eric Shockey.

Although he hasn't had as much time as other coaches due to his responsibilities as assistant coach for the football team, Drysdale is getting back into the swing of things on the court. He also has four



Forward Andrew Post is one of nine seniors who will be part of the boys basketball team.

Photograph by Laurie Cobarr

players on the roster who played for the football team as well, and are trying to build the chemistry with the players who have played in the summer and fall leagues.

To get back to the state tournament, the seniors will have to take on a leadership

role. Much like last season they will be heavily relied upon, as there will be nine on the roster.

One of the key players returning is senior captain Pat Lappin, who earned an All-Conference honorable mention a season ago and was one of the team's top scorers at the forward position. Senior captain Chris Bickelhaupt returns to play at forward and will bring size inside, along with Lappin, while Scott Benzing is the third senior captain and will be relied on to lead the team at point guard. Other seniors who are coming up to varsity after playing at junior varsity last season are forward Mike Cummings, forward Andrew Post, guard Brian Slicch, and guard Jeff

Moro. Senior newcomers to the team are guards Alex Ochoboi and Tony Yasutaru. Two underclassmen will be on the roster in junior Kevin Ryan and sophomore Nick Paetz.

The team does lack size down underneath the basket, and will rely on its speed and athleticism to create offense and stop the opposition on defense. Drysdale also wants his team to be consistent the entire season.

"We need to play team basketball and be consistent on the floor," he said. "We need to move the ball and create opportunities for ourselves."

Brookfield opens the season tonight at home against Stamford Academy.

## Indoor track ready for youth movement

By Jason Turek  
Sports Reporter

The indoor track season is one that Brookfield has turned on one that gets athletes prepared for the spring season to one has athletes competing for individual and team titles. Both teams were in the middle of the pack last season, but did perform well at the state level and had a couple of state-champions.

Both the boys and girls teams will have at least 35 competitors this season and are heavy with freshmen and sophomores. The season will be one that will be a learning experience for many as they will work toward improving as the season progresses.

"We want to qualify as many kids as we can for the SWC and state meets," said coach Ed Butt. "There's a lot of chemistry on both teams. They're thinkers and hard workers."

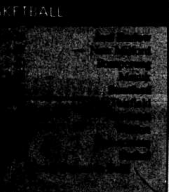
Along with Butt, Courtney Allen will be coaching, while Beth Goins, will help out as an assistant.

Last season, Mike Marston won the Class M pole vault title and will try to repeat the feat this season. She will also compete in hurdles, while senior captain Beth Magin competes in the long jump and sprinting events. Senior captain Noelle Gruzdzinski will be running the distance events along with junior captain Rose Willey. Sophomore Kristy Fino will be competing in the sprint and hurdles events, while fellow sophomores Samantha Carlucci (mid-distance), distance), Emily Lezonsky (sprint), Aileen Tobin (mid-distance), and Caitlyn Stauffer (sprint) will also try to make an impact. Freshman

Tia Alexander will be a versatile member of the roster. Butt is excited to be teaching the younger kids the different events and has been blessed so far with good weather. He and the other coaches have had an easier time than in the past, as the track on the stadium field has been available to them for practice.

"It's a big plus for us," said Butt. "It will definitely help us in developing the younger kids and get us ready for the season."

Sophomore Chris Ackell



## Swimmers prepare to bust out and shine

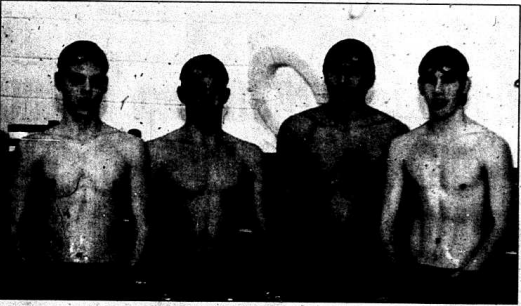
By Jason Turek  
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The Brookfield swim team has had an amazing year over the past seven seasons. Along with five consecutive conference titles, it has finished runner-up the past two seasons. This season will be a challenge for the Bobcats as they will be without a top swimmer and sport a team with new roles looking for another winning campaign.

Brookfield's success has been quite an accomplishment, as it carries the least amount of swimmers and divers among the top conference teams. Last season, it had less than 20 members and still compiled a 12-2 record. It will have a more swimmers, 24 altogether, to carry its standards in this season's campaign.

Over the years, coach Brian Reiff has had a couple of top swimmers or divers that have had an opportunity to win conference titles. He doesn't have that caliber of swimmer at the moment, but does have some that have potential to be that. "We don't have a big gun, but have a collection of solid swimmers. We don't have a lineup that can match the top of someone's lineup with speed," he said. "This is going to be a group effort."

Reiff's big gun in the pool last season, Matt Sorena, conference and Class M champ in 500 freestyle and 100 butterfly, has graduated, along with Connor Dunn, conference record-holder in diving. Each of Reiff's teams have relied heavily on leadership and depth on the boards will be junior Dembowski, Kevin Janofsky, James Moon, and Dujie Jelaska, will be relied upon to lead the Bobcats to once again have a successful season or divers that have had an opportunity to win conference titles. He doesn't have that caliber of swimmer at the moment, but does have some that have potential to be that. "We don't have a big gun, but have a collection of solid swimmers. We don't have a lineup that can match the top of someone's lineup with speed," he said. "This is going to be a group effort."



From left to right, senior captains Nate Dembowski, Kevin Janofsky, Dujie Jelaska, and James Moon hope to lead the swim team to another winning season.

Photograph by Mike Kidd

Grossman, and Mike Becker, who Reiff believes has the possibility to bust out and might be a star in the waiting.

Five sophomore swimmers will be looked upon to score big points with Janco Cornelius and Blake Holton leading the way, along with Sam Roman, Cody Picard, and Kyle Tolle. Three freshmen will come into the season with high hopes to have big swims from the outset in Jeff Magin, Jack Dunn, and Andrew Kretsch.

Diving has been a strong suit for Brookfield over the past five years with Adam Duffield, Matt Ryan, and Dunn. At the moment, Reiff doesn't have that go-to diver to score big points, but has six on the team and will try to get four of them to the conference meet, something that hasn't happened in his previous six seasons.

Two divers from last season, sophomore Trevor Sniffin and junior Alanna Poppe, have made significant improvements, along with sophomore Kevin Farrell. Also competing on the boards will be junior Mark Timmerman, sophomore

Jonathan Gianazza, and freshman David Russo.

"Diving is a big part of our success," said Reiff. "If we can get the quality up, it will make a huge difference in where we place."

With many kids defining new roles on the team, Reiff doesn't know what kind of lineup would be the best to put up against teams until the season gets underway. Throughout the season, he will experiment and get an idea of what lineup matches up well for the regular and post-seasons.

"We're going to explore who we are, but that doesn't mean we're not going to be competitive," said the coach. "We don't plan on losing dual meets. We

plan to win them."

Brookfield will also have the luxury of five home meets at the Dive Shop in Brookfield, which has also given the squad a place to practice, along with the GreenKnoll YMCA in Brookfield.

Reiff believes defending conference and State Open champ Pomperaug will be at the top of the league, along with Newington, Joel Barlow/Immaculate, and Weston. The defending Class S champions Only time will tell if Reiff has another winning team.

"The kids train hard and want to be a contender," he said. "They're not quite there yet, but we have the capability of being there in the end."



## COMMUNITY NOTES

### New Year's Day Race

The 22nd Annual New Year's Day Brookfield Lions/James O'Brien Run for Sight will be held on Jan. 1. The traditional 4-mile run begins at Brookfield High School at 11 a.m. Registration cost is \$20. Check-in on race day starts at 9:30 a.m. Cash awards, a post-race raffle and refreshments will be available for all runners. Long-sleeve T-shirts will be provided to the first 100 registered runners. All proceeds of the race go to the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation and other locally supported charities. For more information, please call 203-775-6190 or 203-775-1729; e-mail: [bjr@grystonracing.net](mailto:bjr@grystonracing.net); download a race form at [www.grystonracing.net](http://www.grystonracing.net); or register on-line at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com).

### BBSA registration

The Brookfield Baseball and Softball Association will be holding spring registration on Jan. 15, 22, and 29 from 7-9 p.m. at the Brookfield High School cafeteria. Baseball is for boys ages 5-18 who must be at least 5 years of age on or before April 30, 2009. Softball is for girls who are ages 5-16 and must be at least 5 years of age on or before Dec. 31, 2008. Fee due at registration will vary according to the league. Registration is open to Brookfield residents only. White pants are required and will be available for purchase at sign-up. Applications forms will be available at the Brookfield Parks and Recreation Office, the Brookfield Library, and during the registration times at the Brookfield High School Cafeteria. A With any questions regarding sign-ups please call Tom Pisarik at 203-740-7722.

Baseball Clinic: BBSA will be running a clinic for boys ages 5-12. Players in the Majors division will be able to use wood of metal bats for the 2009 spring season.

Coaching certification: BBSA will continue to follow the Babe Ruth Headquarters notification that all those who are interested in coaching either baseball or softball, this coming 2009 season and beyond will have to be certified. Anyone interested must contact the Babe Ruth Web site at [www.baberruthbaseball.org](http://www.baberruthbaseball.org) and follow the directions. If coaches have been certified for 2008, they will be fine for the 2009 season. Any questions please send an e-mail to Fern Sniemak at [smenyka@aol.com](mailto:smenyka@aol.com).

### Fall/winter programs at CSC

The Connecticut Sports Complex on Lanesville Road in New Milford is still accepting registrations for the following fall/winter programs: Flag football, Youth and adult leagues will kick off Jan. 7. Field hockey, co-ed, are still available in the youth girls program. Success in the boys and girls soccer for kids ages 3-13. For more information or to inquire about registrations, call 860-350-0655, or visit the Web site at [www.ctsportscomplex.com](http://www.ctsportscomplex.com).

SWIMMING		Bethel	
12-17	New Fairfield	1-20	Torington
12-19	Weston	1-23	Cheshire, Sacred Heart
12-23	Bromell-Stanford	1-27	Holy Cross
1-2	New Milford	2-03	Oxford
1-02	Masuk	1-23	Joel Barlow/Immaculate
1-05	Newtown		
1-09	Watertown		
1-13	Pomperaug		

Home Meets in Bold