By Heather Lewis,
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WINTER SPORT UPDATES

Boys Basketball



Raider boys basketball returned to post-season play, tying for third place in their section standings with a mark of 8-6. As the eighth seed in the WPIAL 6A bracket, Seneca Valley hosted section foe Woodland Hills, whom they split with during the regular season. In a packed William Paul Gymnasium, the boys' defensive effort held Woodland Hills to 43 points, but scoring proved to be the challenge all night long. At times it appeared there may have been a lid on the rim as shots were simply not falling for SV. Despite their defensive intensity, the Raiders were unable to overcome a cold-shooting night and fell 43-32 in the first round of WPIAL playoffs. We congratulate this team for their postseason appearance, and we thank them for their effort and play all season long. The 2025-26 squad will return all but one player – senior Tyler Pepin. The future is optimistic, but we thank Tyler for his leadership and four outstanding years in a Raider uniform.

Competitive Cheer

Raider competitive cheer had an outstanding year, having qualified for both the WPIAL and PIAA championships. At the PIAA state championships, the squad advanced straight to finals following their preliminary routine and finished the weekend sixth place in the state – their highest state placement in program history. The squad capped off their season competing at the National High School Cheerleading Championships (NHSCC) in mid-February at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. The squad "threw zeros" (had a clean routine) and finished 15th in the country in their first year competing in the Large Varsity Division. Congratulations on another outstanding season!



Ice Hockey



At the time of this writing, Raider Ice Hockey has two games remaining in their regular season and are currently atop the PIHL 3A standings with an overall record of 13-3-2-0. The team will close out its regular season with games against playoff contenders North Allegheny and Central Catholic. Following those contests, the team will set their sights on capturing the 2025 Penguins Cup! Good luck, Raiders!

Swimming & Diving





Raider swimming and diving is in the final preparations for their WPIAL and PIAA championships. The regular season has ended, and the boys team finished section runner-up with an overall record of 8-4 and 5-1 in section meets. The girls finished third in the section, finishing 10-2 overall and 4-2 in section competition. With eyes focused on the postseason, Ali Waters currently sits in the third spot and Cooper Burcham in the eighth spot for top scores heading into the WPIAL Diving Championships and Katelyn Bookwalter is top three for the 100-yard breaststroke. We will recap postseason performances in March. Good luck to our swimmers and divers!

Wrestling

It is that time of year again where our boys and girls wrestling teams are singularly focused on the upcoming individual championship season.



Girls wrestling competed at the WPIAL championships on Feb. 15 and came away with five medalists and qualifiers for the PIAA West regional. Medalists and PIAA West regional qualifiers were: Everly Harrell (3rd, 100 lbs.), Adele Shih-Calabro (4th, 106 lbs.), Maddee Fischer (3rd, 130 lbs.), Kaeleigh Tuell (4th, 155 lbs.) and Hannah Hornick (4th, 170 lbs.) Good luck to our Raiders as they look to advance to the PIAA championships in Hershey in early March.



On the boys' side, the Raiders competed in sectional championships with a WPIAL berth on the line. The following three have advanced to the WPIAL championships: Riley Smith (5th, 107 lbs.), Bryce Berekstazi (5th, 114 lbs.), and Zach Hill (runner-up, 139 lbs.). They, too, are competing for a spot at the PIAA championships in early March in Hershey, PA. Good luck boys! A final season recap will be provided in March.

WHAT DOES DETERMINATION LOOK LIKE?

The answer is in the picture. It has been 48 seasons since Raider girls basketball won a section title – since 1977 to be exact – and the 2024-25 squad was determined to place their names on the banner. Not only will the banner reflect this year as section champion, but the history books will note they did so going undefeated in section play with a mark of 10-0. Not only does the photo reflect determination, but it is the very definition of what a TEAM looks and plays like. The 2024-25 team is selfless in their play, supportive of one another and strong in their mindset. They have approached each day as an opportunity to get better, they never looked too far ahead, and they have been focused on learning from every opportunity – good or bad. We can all be proud of the 2024-25 team and its coaches, for they embodied the essence of "Wearing the SV" – good humans, great competitors, and even better teammates. As the No. 3 seed in the upcoming WPIAL playoffs, we wish the girls luck in pursuit of a WPIAL title.



COLLEGE COMMITMENTS – CLASS OF 2025

Many Raider student-athletes made their college commitment official with the early signing period starting in mid-November. We congratulate these seniors in achieving their goals of continuing their athletic and academic careers at the next level. Each of you are tremendous representatives of Raider Athletics and we are proud of your efforts in the classroom, in competition, and in the community.

Name	Sport	College/University	Major
Kathryn Morrison	Track & Field	Slippery Rock	Exercise Science/PA

ALL-CONFERENCE SELECTIONS ANNOUNCED IN BASKETBALL

The Big 56 Conference recently announced its basketball honorees, and the Raiders were well represented. The following Seneca Valley student-athletes were recognized for their excellence on the court this season.

BOYS BASKETBALL

2nd Team
Owen Congdon
Tyler Pepin

GIRLS BASKETBALL

1st Team	*2nd Team*
Gracie Cato	Legacy Joseph-Short
Brooke Dufford	
Natalie Hambly	

Coach of the Year
Head Coach Dorothea Epps

ICE HOCKEY ANNOUNCES ROSTERS FOR ALL-STAR WEEKEND

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Hockey League (PIHL) announced their 2024-25 All-Stars for their annual All-Star weekend at the Robert Morris Sports Center on Neville Island. Congratulations to the following Seneca Valley Raiders who represented the District in the 3A All-Star game.

3A All-Stars:
Tyler Garvin, Forward
Carter Hoehn, Def/For
Andrew Malichky, Forward
Jimmy Murtha, Forward
Chris Nichols, Goalie

ATHLETES OF THE MONTH, JANUARY 2025



The Female Athlete of the Month for January was girls basketball guard Gracie Cato. The senior was a key contributor to a Raider team that won its first WPIAL section title since 1977. Her 18.8 points over a 10-game stretch paced the Raiders to an 8-2 record and the No. 3 seed in the WPIAL 6A playoffs. Gracie shot a team high 45.3% from the field and 35.1% from 3-point range. She also added 4.3 assists, 2.9 steals and 2.1 rebounds over those same 10 games. Gracie's stand out game came in a win over Pine Richland where she scored 27 points, including a buzzer beating half-court shot. Her efforts on the court were recognized by section coaches as she was named to the Big 56 6A Section 1 First Team. We recognized Gracie as the January Female Athlete of the Month. Congratulations, Gracie!



The Male Athlete of the Month for January was sophomore boys wrestler Riley Smith. Riley has had a stellar year wrestling at the 107 lbs weight class despite being only 100 lbs. His current record stands at 23 and 10, going 12-5 over the last month in section and tournament matches, a remarkable improvement after only seven wins last year. Riley's stand out performance came at the Brooke Classic wrestling tournament in West Virginia. He went 4-0 on the day and won the championship match 15-0 by technical fall to secure first place and his first tournament championship win. Riley will hope to make a run to Hershey for the state tournament. For an impressive month, we recognized Riley as the January Male Athlete of the Month. Congratulations, Riley!

SV ALUM, FORMER NFL PLAYER NAMED HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

The Seneca Valley School District is pleased to announce that Don Barclay, a member of SV's Class of 2007, has been selected as the new head football coach. The Seneca Valley School Board made the appointment official during the Feb. 3 action meeting with a unanimous vote.

Barclay, a former NFL player who spent eight seasons in the league, brings a wealth of experience and hometown pride to his new role. After years of playing professionally and attending college in West Virginia, Barclay has returned to his roots, where his ties to the community run deep. "Seneca Valley has always been home for me," Barclay shared. "Growing up here gave me opportunities, from the school system to the facilities. I'm excited to pass on my knowledge and give back to the place that shaped me."

Barclay's connection to Seneca Valley extends beyond the football field. He and his wife have chosen to raise their three children in the district, all of whom attend Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School.

"I'm a fan of the public school system," he added, "and I want my kids to experience the same opportunities I had growing up."

During his time at Seneca Valley, Barclay was a multi-sport athlete, playing baseball until ninth grade and basketball through his sophomore year before focusing on football. His dedication to the sport earned him a scholarship to West Virginia University, where he graduated with a degree in business management. After a standout collegiate career, Barclay's NFL journey began, leading him to play for the Green Bay Packers and other teams.

Now, as head coach, Barclay is eager to build a strong football program that emphasizes more than just athletic performance. "Every year, you want to get better," he said. "Whether it's improving participation or helping players take the next step in college, it's about setting a foundation for long-term success." Barclay plans to prioritize speed, quickness and agility, alongside a strong emphasis on academics. "Success in the classroom represents success on the field," he noted.



Barclay also recognizes the importance of community involvement. He plans to engage youth programs and build connections between varsity players and younger students. "It's important for kids to come around, see what's going on, and build relationships with their older peers," he said. His vision includes community outreach initiatives, such as hospital visits, to instill a sense of service and pride in his players.

Heather Lewis, Seneca Valley's athletic director, expressed her enthusiasm for Barclay's leadership. "I think he'll be a tremendous role model for our kids," she said. "Don embodies the investment and commitment necessary to be the best version of yourself, whether it's on the football field or in the classroom."

On a lighter note, Barclay revealed a unique experience from his playing days: a cameo in the movie Pitch Perfect 2. "I had a small part as a beatboxer," he laughed. "It was only 20 seconds, but it's a fun memory."

As Barclay prepares to lead the Raiders, he brings a combination of professional expertise, community spirit and a commitment to developing well-rounded student-athletes.

Welcome home, Coach Barclay!