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## Symoniak leads Amherst girls cross country

by PATRICK J. NAGY Reporter



**Amherst sophomore Brenna Symoniak finished second in Division I at the 13th West Seneca Invitational held Saturday at Fireman's Park. Symoniak took second in Class A at last year's Section VI Championships to qualify for the New York State Championships. Photo by John Normile Purchase color photos at [www.BeeNews.com](http://www.BeeNews.com)**

Amherst Central's best girls cross-county runner from 2006 is back for her sophomore year.

Brenna Symoniak, who last year won the Division II race at ECICs and took second in Class A at the Section VI Championships to qualify for the New York State Championships, returns.

"She's competitive, has a good work ethic and has talent," said Amherst coach Bob O'Donnell. "That's a good combination."

Symoniak is already off to a good start, taking second in the Division I race last Saturday at the 13th West Seneca Invitational at Fireman's Park. Symoniak finished in 18:50.5.

The only other returning runner is sophomore Tori Sosnowski, who ran in the fifth spot last year. Senior captain Diane Herzog, who sat out most of last year with a stress fracture, also returns.

The rest of the team is new and includes senior Violet Penna, junior Katie Smith, sophomore Olivia May and freshman Caitlin Burke.

Amherst finished second in Division II at ECICs and third in Class A at sectionals last year. They opened the 2007 season with a fourth-place finish in Division I at last Saturday's West Seneca Invite.

Helping O'Donnell coach the team will be Amherst graduate and former standout runner Jen Koeppel, who will serve as a volunteer coach. Koeppel also ran at the University at Buffalo.

## **Williamsville East**

It's a rebuilding year for the Lady Flames.

Coach Kurt Holme returns senior tri-captains Anna Stolzenburg, Hillary Scrivanni and Colleen Lauer. All have run since their freshman year.

"They always provide outstanding leadership," said Holme. "They have shown an outstanding work ethic in practice and are great leaders on and off the field."

Stolzenburg was East's top finisher at last year's Section VI Championships, taking 26th in Class A.

Sophomore Caroline Steele should be in the starting five. Senior newcomers Mary Barker and Mary Kate Karnes will be vying for spots in the top seven.

Holme is also looking for contributions from freshman Laura Kiersz and sophomores Lisa Lipuma and Jill Cutspec.

East finished 1-5 last year. Holme is looking for the team to improve during league meets.

## **Sweet Home**

If the Lady Panthers are to have any kind of success this fall, they will more than likely have to do so without their best runner.

Sophomore Katie Niblock, scheduled to be Sweet Home's top runner, has a stress fracture in one of her legs and will be sidelined at least three weeks.

Niblock had a promising freshman year, taking fifth in the Division I race at ECICs and 14th in Class A at the Section VI Championships.

Katie's sister, Megan, who graduated in June, finished fourth in Class A at sectionals to qualify for the New York State Championships. Megan Niblock is running at the University at Buffalo. "It is going to be a blow, but think it's sort of a rebuilding year anyway," said Sweet Home coach Christine Couvutsakis. "If we're going to have a good year, we need to have the younger girls step up to the plate. If they keep working hard, they may shine through as much Katie has by the end of the season."

Runners whom Couvutsakis will look to are junior captain Colleen Kozloski, seniors Elyse Cramer and Katie Gambles, and sophomore Laura DelSignore.

Couvutsakis said team goals are for each runner to improve her times.