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Home Team Sports

CANANDAIGUA – Don't let the youthfulness of the Canandaigua ski team fool you.

Despite having just three seniors on both the boys' and girls' rosters, this year's Braves are gunning, or should we say, skiing, for glory.

Led by sophomores Jon Landre and Remi Sarkis, along with junior David Abplanalp, the Canandaigua Alpine boys have been enjoying a tremendous season on the slopes.

The Canandaigua girls, led by junior Jessie Evans are also making strides towards sectional glory come February.

So far on the season, with the weather cooperating, the Canandaigua boys have placed consistently second in the Wayne Finger Lakes League races, which consist of Canandaigua, McQuaid, Wayne, Newark, Sodus and Naples.

With the McQuaid team showing just a little more depth, Canandaigua has had to settle for being the bridesmaid.

"We are very competitive with our top three guys, but McQuaid has six deep easy," said Canandaigua coach Wade Sarkis. "They have a tremendous amount of depth."

Although the league crown might be out of reach, a sectional title Monday, Feb. 9 might be a possibility says coach Sarkis.

At sectionals, three, instead of six skiers get counted which means that the Braves can count heavily on their top three including Landre, Sarkis and Abplanalp.

"We have a decent shot at it," said coach Sarkis. "Only counting your top three, that helps us."

Landre, a sophomore, is the Braves' top gun.

So far on the season he has captured all four giant slalom race events he has entered.

Last year as a freshman, Landre placed 13th in sectionals.

He will race in both the slalom and giant slalom at sectionals.

"He should do very well at sectionals," said coach Sarkis, of Landre. "The season is still pretty young but he's leading the division standings. If he wins the divisional title, he gets an automatic berth to the state meet."

Not a bad deal seeing that this year's state meet will take place at Bristol Mountain.

"That would surely be a plus if he gets there," said coach Sarkis.

Remi Sarkis is Wade's sophomore son, and his expectations are high.

"Last year he made the all-league team by placing in the top-10," said coach Sarkis. "This year his skiing has been very consistent. He has minimized some of the mistakes he was making a year ago. He is definitely getting faster."

The junior Abplanalp is also circled on the calendar for a big outing come sectional time says coach Sarkis.

In the past, both Sarkis and Abplanalp have fine tuned their talent by participating in the Eastern League for the Bristol Race Club.

"I think David's biggest attribute is his outstanding work-ethic," said coach Sarkis. "He has really worked at this. He's put a lot of time in to become a better, and faster, skier."

The success of Canandaigua's 'Big Three' didn't come overnight says coach Sarkis.

"Those three have raced all the time – since they were little boys," Sarkis said. "They developed their skills at an early age. I think when you see a kid that put his share of time in while he was young, you'll probably see him or her have success down the road."

Four other skiers are starting to make some noise too says Sarkis.

Senior William Cotter, along with juniors Adam Jesmer, Michael Macri and Eric Perrin have each elevated their game, and could make a run for some sectional

success.

"Right now, those four are definitely competing to get in our top five for sectionals," Sarkis said. "Some are slightly faster in one event than the other. But they've been improving, and who knows what would happen if they each perform to a high level at sectionals."

Other members of the Canandaigua boys team include juniors Nick Cazer, Kevin Drake, Richard Kennedy and Derek Livelsberger, along with sophomore Timothy Meyer.

The Lady Braves have also been getting their share of second place finishes in the Wayne Finger Lakes League, with Mercy replacing McQuaid as the sixth team.

So far Naples has been the best of the bunch, with Canandaigua, featuring junior Jessie Evans, a close second.

On Jan. 16, Evans showed how talented she can be on the slopes as she captured all three of her runs at Bristol. She also earned a silver on opening day and has captured three other races on the season.

"She had an incredible day," said coach Sarkis. "I fully expect Jessie to do well in sectionals. But, she will be going up against some top-level skiers from Monroe County. There's no question she can do well but she will face some really stiff competition, especially from a super-strong Honeoye Falls-Lima squad."

Last year, Evans placed 19th and 24th in the slalom and GS respectively.

Coach Sarkis has also been impressed this winter by senior Hannah Whitehead and sophomore Mycala Stebbins.

"They both have been stepping it up big time," said coach Sarkis. "Both are former snowboarders that have done a great job re-converting back to racing. They have really been strong for us."

Other members of the Lady Braves include senior Nicole Conway; juniors Emily Macri, Elyse Woodhams and Linnea Shumway; and freshmen Hannah Bell and Hannah Strait.

"This year's girls squad have been in kind of a rebuilding format, but we are expecting good things down the road," said coach Sarkis.

Sarkis, who is in his fourth season as head coach, got his start at the helm when his older son Zack, who graduated from CA in 2007, was on the team.

"I am pretty happy with the success we've had in our league," said coach Sarkis, whose Braves are heading to the rugged Monroe County next winter.

"Our girls team has won the league title for four consecutive seasons, and the boys team has won two of the last four."