

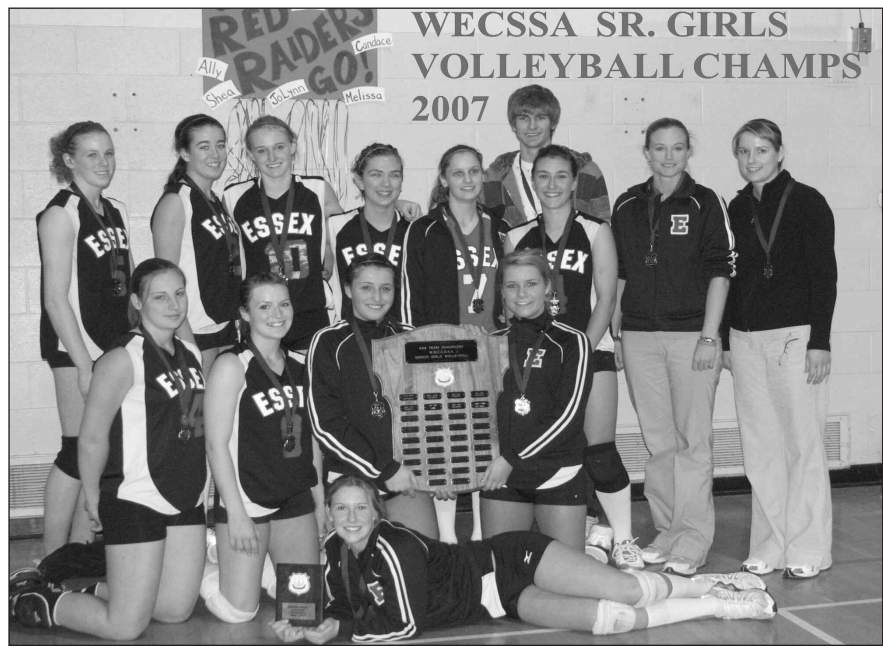
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**WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS –** The Essex Red Raiders senior girls' volleyball team celebrate their WECSSAA victory after beating Brennan in the AAA/AAAA finals Sunday. Strong defense and a skillful offence helped Essex win the three-set sweep over the Cardinals at the St. Clair College gym.

Photo courtesy of Laurie Beaten



**Atom A Forest Machine**

On Friday evening the Amherstburg Avalanche came to town for game three of the Ravens playoffs. Essex came out skating hard in the first period forcing the play, with Hook and Salty getting scoring chances early on. At the midway mark, Wheels Wuerch found the back of the net with Hook and Stafford assisting. Essex continued to force the play and Adam Zanier got robbed by the Avalanche goalie with a big glove save. The Essex D was up to the task, with the period ending 1-0.

Amherstburg came out hard looking for the equalizer, only to be denied. The play continued up and down the rink until the Avalanche tied the score at the midway mark on a scramble in front of the net. Jarvis came right back down the ice only to be denied by the Avalanche's

D. Ravens kept the pressure on and Salty banged one in assisted by Huddy, 2-1 Ravens. Both teams got into penalty trouble at the end of the period. With only two seconds left the Avalanche tied the score on a bang bang play.

The third period started with Langlois and Wuerch getting big chances on a scramble. Goalie Josh Myers made a big toe save on an Amherstburg power play. Brett Rickeard was foiled at the midway mark. Both teams trading taking turns in the penalty box, but the Avalanche were coming on. Santarossa and Morris were great at penalty killing. Hook was denied on a breakaway. Myers came up big with two big saves in the dying moments. With time running out, Salty broke away to no avail. Final 2-2. Bring it on Tecumseh!

## Raiders come up short in WECSSAA basketball playoffs

BY JAY FAWLER

After the roar of the crowd had died down and what seemed to be constant whistles stopped, Essex Senior Guard Dane Robinson remained in the gym, trying to soak it all in. The Senior Boys' Basketball team's season was over.

The boys were upset by the Massey Mustangs, 64-63, in a tough battle Feb. 19.

"I just tried to play my best," said Robinson. "I wanted to leave it all on the court, knowing I couldn't have played harder."

Robinson, who was arguably the hardest working sixth-man in the county this year, missed a desperation driving lay up in the closing seconds of the game that would have put them ahead.

"I saw that there wasn't

much time left on the clock and it just seemed right to end my career at Essex with a basket," said Robinson about his last shot.

Robinson was swarmed by four Mustangs while driving to the basket which forced him to alter his shot, missing it by inches.

The Raiders found themselves down by seven with five minutes remaining in the fourth quarter when the gymnasium erupted with chants from EDHS students. The chants disoriented the Massey Mustangs who committed four turnovers on four straight possessions.

Soon after, guard Jeff Reed fouled out with 13 points and 6 rebounds, a crushing blow for the Raiders' offense. Dane Robinson filled the void brought by Reed's exit with three straight steals that gave Essex the momentum and a tie-ball game with 23 seconds

left.

The Raiders gave up a questionable foul with 15.1 seconds left, which sent the Mustangs to the free throw line that had blessed them all night long. The gym became as quiet as it had ever been, as fans watched the first of two free throws hit nothing but mesh. The second free throw hit the right side of the rim and was grabbed by Jeremy Butler, who brought it up the court to set up the final play.

The Raiders struggled to get open, forcing Robinson to drive to the basket for the tough shot. The miss was rebounded by Matt Balkwill whose desperation shot with 1.7 seconds left was blocked.

Fifth year senior Jeremy Butler led the team with 21 points and 9 rebounds. Senior guard Dane Robinson finished with 9 points and 4 steals. Senior centre Kyle Flood, who has announced

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that he is returning for a fifth year, had 8 points and 3 blocked shots.

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