

SPORTS

Men's water polo takes it to the next level Finishes 4th at Eastern Championships

By Kyle Woodside
staff writer

There's that old adage that "nice guys finish last." Coach Tristan's Lions decided that they don't believe in that adage this weekend when they traveled to Washington and Jefferson this weekend for the much anticipated Division III Eastern Championships.

The squad competed against five other teams in hopes of having a strong showing. Not only did the team have a strong showing, they placed something other than last for the first time in men's water polo history.

Fourth place isn't too shabby when you are given absolutely no chance going into a tournament with six teams competing, most of these teams being ranked in the Division III top 25 polls.

"We had a great weekend," said Coach Tristan. "Once we got going mentally, we didn't let up physically."

The Lions began the tournament by facing Johns Hopkins University, who is ranked fourth in the nation. Behrend gave a good fight, but came up short, 21-12.

Senior Nick McGrady made 12 saves in net. Freshmen Anthony Spoto and Andre Pranckevicius bombarded the goalkeeper of Johns Hopkins with five goals apiece. Sophomore Justin Ryder scored 2 goals.

Next, the team faced Connecticut

College.

"We dominated from start to finish," Tristan said about his team's 16-11 victory. "It wasn't until the third period that Connecticut created some offense and made the game somewhat respectable looking."

Ryder blitzed Connecticut with six goals. Spoto had five goals again and Pranckevicius netted three more. Junior Steve Schleicher also found the back of the net once.

In the third game, which was a semi-final match, Behrend had a tough opponent in MIT, who was last year's number one Division III team overall.

"Despite losing, this was definitely our best game of the year," Tristan said.

Behrend played an even match with MIT all the way through the first half. Impressively, it was 3-3 after the first period and 7-7 at halftime.

MIT finally managed to take some control midway through the third period until a five-minute scoreless span that carried over into the fourth period.

Going into the fourth period, Behrend was down, 12-9. MIT managed to hold on, 16-11 in a see-saw-like final stanza.

"After this game, we can say we can compete with any Division III team out there, even the powerhouses," Tristan said. "We're turning heads."

Pranckevicius had five goals in this game, while Spoto had three and Ryder had two. McGrady saved 12 shots.

MIT wrote an online article on Behrend's strong game. In the past, other schools have not had much to say about Behrend's performance, but now they are starting to realize that the Behrend men's water polo program is no pushover anymore.

The energy drained from the MIT game caused the Lions to fall to W&J, 16-10.

Spoto netted a hat trick, Pranckevicius and Schleicher had two goals each, and Ryder tallied the remaining goal.

Spoto and Pranckevicius made the Division III Eastern Championship All-Tournament Team. This was the first time any players from Behrend accomplished this feat. They have done it as freshmen.

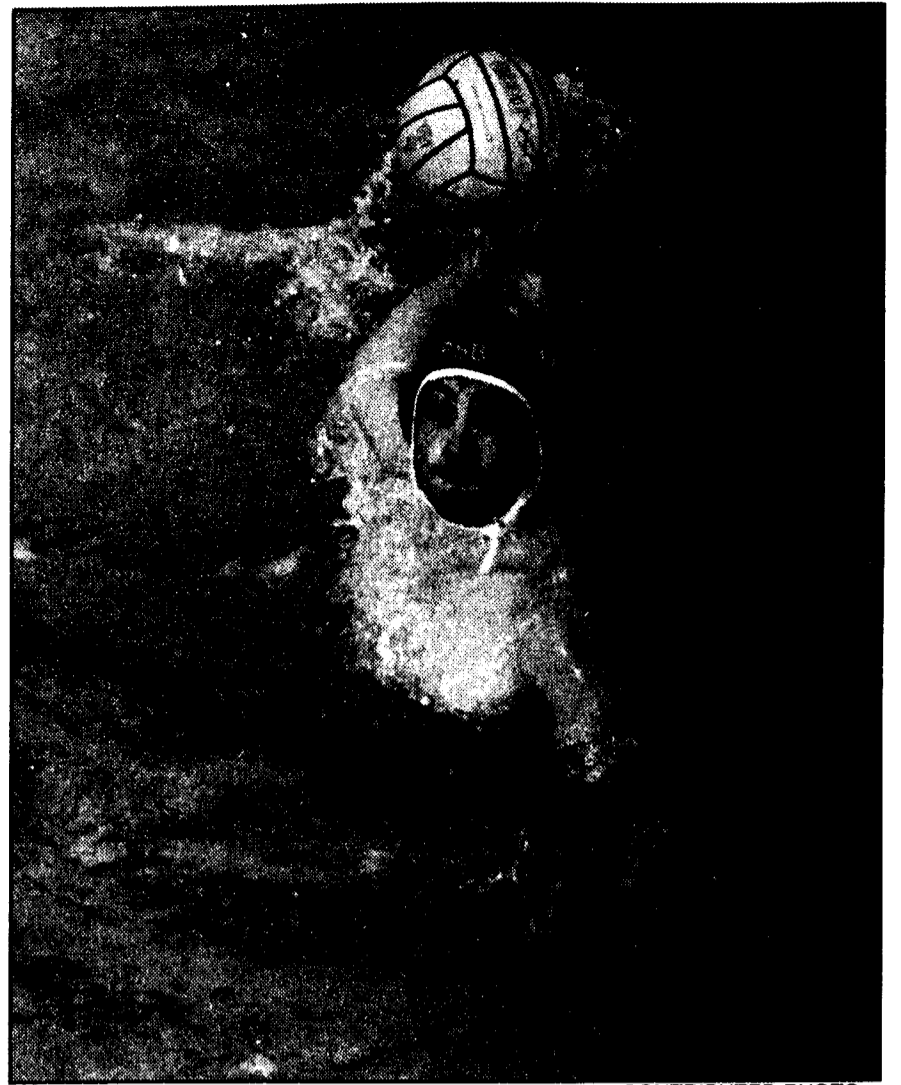
"They made history yet again," Tristan said.

Sophomore Brandon Thiel and Junior Brandon Sieber were given props by Coach Tristan as being exceptional in the water.

"They were role players for the four scorers this weekend," said Tristan. "They were the two men behind the scenes. They were the ones that got things rolling and made the plays unfold to help us be successful."

Behrend looks forward to travelling to Princeton this weekend for the Southern Division Championships. They play 17 ranked U.S. Naval Academy at noon on Saturday and then Slippery Rock at 4:40 later that afternoon.

"The guys are playing well, and the training's starting to show," Tristan said of his team.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Freshman Anthony Spoto tallied 16 goals, six steals and three assists in the four games. Spoto along with freshman teammate Andre Pranckevicius made the Division III Eastern Championship All-Tournament Team. Pranckevicius netted 12 goals for the blue and white.

Correction: The Oct. 22 issue of the Behrend Beacon stated that senior goalie Nick McGrady held the single season record for most saves. McGrady currently holds the career record for most saves

Nittany Lions give disappointing performance

By Mike Tomko
staff writer

Happy Valley wasn't so happy following Penn State's abysmal performance against the 4-2 Iowa Hawkeyes Saturday. Iowa defeated the Lions by the score of 6-4, which those who only saw the score of the game might have confused it for a baseball game. The Nittany Lion offense was non-existent because of predictable play calls and a lack of execution.

"I don't know what to feel," said Matt Guidish. "Honestly, four points in a football game is not even capable of being called pathetic, pathetic would be a compliment. I am not sure I have a desire to see this team play ever again."

The Lions first points came on Iowa's first offensive possession when, on fourth and five, the snap went over punter David Bradley's head and then out of the back of the end zone for a safety.

On Penn State's second drive of the game, kicker Robbie Gould missed a 51-yard field goal. Despite starting this drive at the Iowa 24 yard line, the Lion's offense was unable to move the ball and ended up losing 19 yards on the drive, giving Gould a much more difficult kick to make.

Following the missed kick, Iowa be-

gan the drive with good field position and moved the football down to the Penn State eight yard line, but the Lion defense stepped up and held the Hawkeyes to only a field goal. Iowa then led the Lions 3-2.

Quarterback Zack Mills, who struggled throughout the game going 7-19 for 82 yards, threw his first of two interceptions in the second quarter to Iowa defensive back Sean Considine, who returned it 50 yards to the Penn State ten. Mills other pick came later in the second quarter. Once again though the defense, which has been the only bright spot on the team all year, came up big and held the Hawkeyes to only a field goal, increasing the Iowa lead to 6-2, which is how it stood at the half.

A glimmer of hope occurred when the Lions blocked the Hawkeyes punt in the third quarter. The punt was recovered by Andrew Guman at the Iowa nine yard line, but once again the Lions offense sputtered gaining only one yard on the drive and then culminating with a missed 25 yard field goal by Gould.

In the middle of the third quarter, the Penn State fans finally cheered, when Zack Mills was removed from the game after being hit while trying to throw a pass. Michael Robinson, who lead the team in receiving yards for the game making three catches for 52 yards, but

struggled at the quarterback position completing only two of nine passes and throwing two interceptions, replaced Mills.

Entering the fourth quarter, the Lions still trailed 6-2, but after a penalty and some positive offensive plays, the Lions were in striking distance positioned to come up with some points at the Iowa 10. After a one yard run by Tony Hunt, a Penn State penalty moved them back to the Iowa 14 and on third down, any excitement that was left in the crowd was taken away when Robinson threw an interception to Iowa defensive back Antwan Allen and returned it to the Iowa eight.

Penn State's dominating defense pushed the Hawkeye offense back to the one yard line. On fourth down, the Hawkeyes intentionally ran the ball out of the back of the endzone for a safety making the score 6-4, still in favor of Iowa.

Penn State never got any closer to scoring during the rest of the fourth quarter and the game was summed up by a Robinson fumble that allowed the Hawkeyes to recover and then run the clock out giving Iowa the win 6-4.

The one and only bright spot for the Lions was the play of their defense which held Iowa to only 168 total yards of offense and forced two turnovers. It is just a shame the offense was not able to capitalize off of them. Penn State (2-5) visits Ohio State (4-3) this Saturday in another Big 10 match up.

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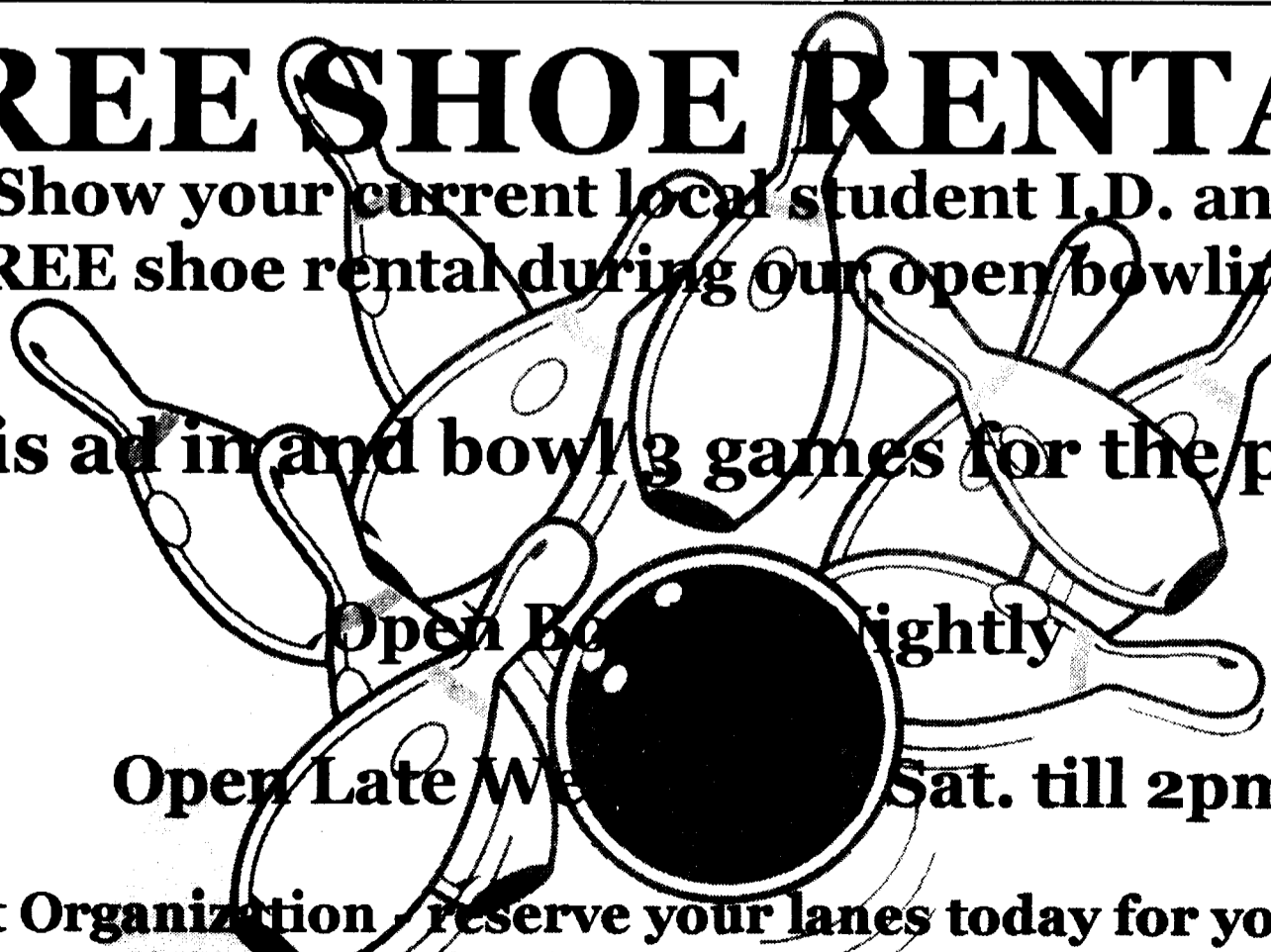
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