

Ebinger leads Lady Lions

by Greg Kristen
Collegian Staff

"A lot of fire and inspiration," said Coach Roz Fornari of her Lady Lions playing in their first ever NCAA Division III playoff game last night in Erie Hall.

The game started with the Lady Lions controlling the ball from the tipoff. The game was settled at a 4-4 tie when Wendy Ebinger, the offensive star of the night for the cagers, hit her first of five 3-pointers to give them an early 7-4 lead.

The tempo changed in that instant as they went on an 8-1 run in the next three minutes to up their lead to 15-5 at 15:38.

"They did exactly the game plan that we needed them to do," said Fornari.

With 11:50 left in the first half, the Lady Lions smothering defense and transition offense built up a 23-11 lead frustrating Christi Clay, the star for the Big Red of Denison.

Fornari said, "We tried to get out on her as quickly as we possibly could and that was an asset to us."

The Lady Lions took their game to another level as they went on a 21-4 run in the next five minutes. With 7:00 remaining in the first half they broke the game wide open 44-15 with Ebinger's third 3-pointer of the half. With that, the Big Red called a timeout to settle down their outplayed team.

After the timeout they came back out and held the Lady Lions for two minutes while they

mounted a slight comeback with a 5-0 run of their own, cutting the lead to 44-20. Fornari, seeing that, called a quick timeout to relax and focus the team.

The last four minutes were probably the most even part of the first half as the teams clawed and scratched with a slight edge in scoring going to Behrend 8-7. The half ended with Behrend holding a monstrous 52-27 lead.

The second half started right where the first half left off, as the Lady Lions went on a 5-0.

Denison realizing the rout, slowed the tempo down at 14:29 and actually led in scoring in the second half with Ebinger on the bench. Fornari said, "Our team is not quite the same when she's (Ebinger) not on the floor."

With Ebinger back in, they picked up their defense and went on another 5-0 run culminated by an Ebinger three. After that they rolled all over the outmatched Big Red by going inside to the likes of Anne Bonner, Heather Shearer and Karen Strait, going up 72-44 by 12:25.

Ebinger caught fire again as she reeled off eight straight points for the cagers and by the 11:40 mark they had upped their lead to a commanding 80-44.

With the lights almost turned out in Erie Hall, Fornari slowly removed each senior as they had executed the game plan to perfection. The last six minutes was the time for the seniors to reflect on their domination in their last game in Erie Hall.

The last minutes of the game

were for the second team. Even though they were outscored 29-13 in those last minutes the game had already been secured by their senior teammates.

With 1:34 left, all the seniors on the bench gathered for their last huddle in Erie Hall showing the finished product of their

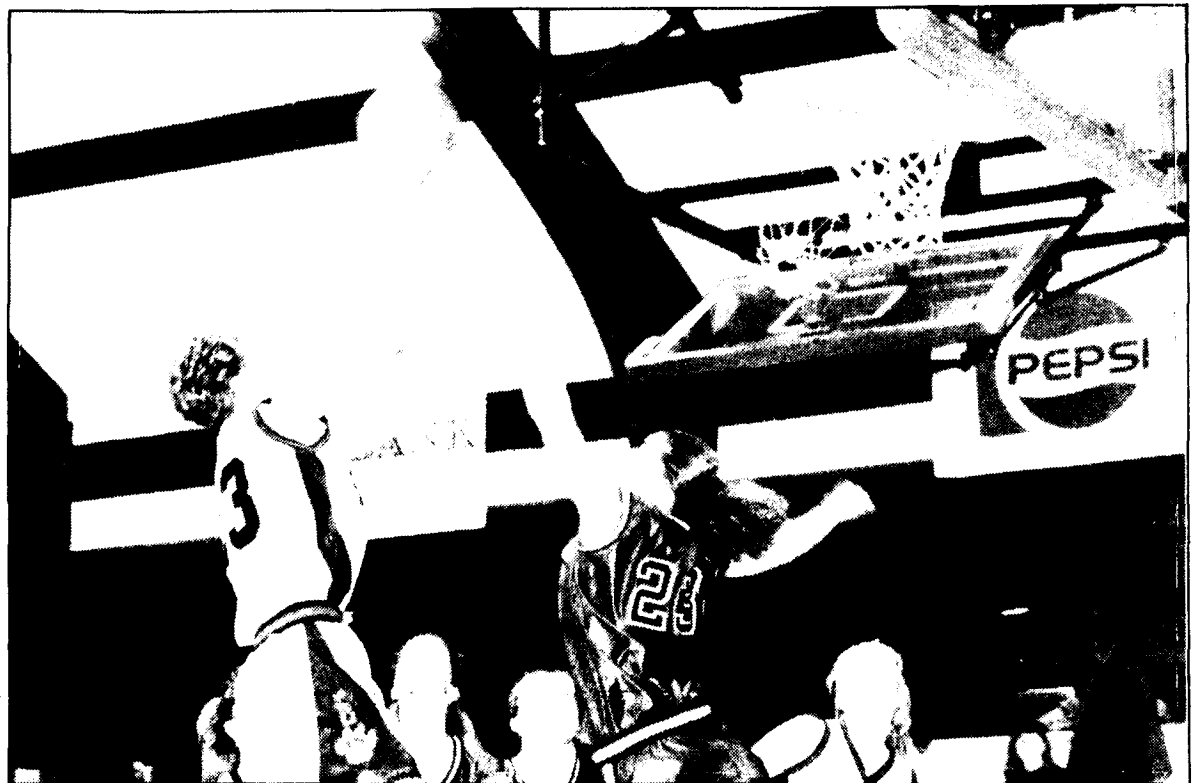
experience and domination.

Fornari said of the seniors, "Every senior played their part all year long and this is like the celebration."

Ebinger was high scorer with 29 points by shooting 12-14 from the field and 5-6 from the three-point arc. Bonner netted 21

and Michelle Grover chipped in 16 points and 7 assists.

When the smoke cleared, the Lady Lions 92-73 victory was the most impressive win of the year. They played their game and when it was all over they even shared their victory with the fans by cutting down the net.



Jen Colvin/Photo Coordinator

Going up strong: Anne Bonner shoots over a Denison defender.

History made!

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Last Sunday night the Lady Lions basketball team was announced to the first ever NCAA tournament in Behrend school history.

Paul Benim, sports information director summed up their bid saying, "If you knock

long enough and hard enough you're bound to wake somebody up, and that's exactly what they did."

Becky Swartz added, "When I saw it (the bid), it was a reinforcement of what I thought, but just seeing it there was unbelievable."

The long and hard road this year finally paid off for the team.

For the past three years they have fought long and hard for their goal.

Herb Lauffer, athletic director said, "The team has not only done well this year but they have proven over the last three years going 61-17 that they can compete with the best in Division III."

Behrend basketball history has been successful with the help of many people.

Lauffer said, "I would like to credit Rosalyn Fornari and Rob Wittman for their contribution. I would also like to give credit to Jenepher Banker. It was through her efforts and hard work over the last five years that these young women were recruited and have remained in this program and performed so well up to this point."

This year has been the dream the team has been looking for. With the assemblance of the players they have, it has come true. The six seniors have been the stabilizing force for the team and although their careers at Behrend are winding down, they have carved their mark forever in Lady Lions basketball history.

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