

Lady Lions

DOWN SOUTH: Spring training

by Brian Gregory
Collegian Staff

It's that time of year again. Time to lace on the spikes, bring out the bats, slide into home base, try to hit a home run, and swing batter batter swing.

The Lady Lions are just five days away from the beginning of another exciting season, and they are preparing to head to Florida to start the season.

"It should be a great year. We have a solid group of returning players. We expect a lot of good things from them," said Head Coach Paul Benim.

The Lady Lions will endure a grueling week of practice and games as they plan on playing ten games in five days.

"We'll be looking for contributions from all 16 of us. Fourteen plus the two of us (Benim and Assistant Coach Bill Graham). It's going to be challenging, but that is what spring training is all about. We're going to get out there and sure it's going to be busy, sure it's going to be hot, sure it's going to be challenging, but we think that we are ready for it," said Coach Benim.

Returning to the infield for the Lady Lions this year are shortstop Becky Reed. Reed batted .369 with 28 RBI's and 20 runs scored for Behrend last year.

Returning at third base for Behrend this year is Sue Mazur. Mazur batted .297 with 37 hits and 24 RBI's in 41 games.

Returning to first base this year are Marlesse Schlott and Jen Leone. Schlott had 28 RBI's and 20 runs scored last year. Leone hit .250 in limited action last year.

In the outfield the Lady Lions will be Michelle Carino, Julie Stocker, and Megan Musante. Carino played a strong center field for Behrend last year. Stocker batted .392 with a club-record 32 RBI's last year while playing right field.

At catcher this year is speedster Emmy Arnett. Arnett, who is known for her bunting and stealing as well as her work behind the plate stole 17 bases last year.

Benim also welcomes a strong group of freshmen to the team this year.

In the field, new additions

include Beth Calhoun, a standout pitcher and outfielder who batted .542 last year for Harborcreek High School.

Another quality pitcher is Heather Norder, who went 9-0 with an 0.76 ERA last year at Harborcreek.

The talented list finishes with Casey Koza, a talented catcher from Pittsburgh who batted .438 last year, as well as two other standouts Shannon Angel and Melissa Fishel.

The ace on the mound this year will be senior Cherie Varrassa. Cherie went 16-8 last year with 18 complete games, 115 strikeouts, and a 2.20 ERA. Complementing her will be Norder and Calhoun.

"All three are solid pitchers...and we feel very comfortable with that, said Assistant Coach Greham. "I think that the hitting will come around and we will get runs.

Coach Benim echoed this, "I think that our pitching has to be our strength. That's the difference between our wins and losses last year. Our pitching kept us in the ball game. We have many good hitters like Stock(er),

Schlott, etc. who can really poke the ball."

What do the coaches expect to learn in Florida? Assistant Coach Graham thinks, "with the ten games in Florida it will give everyone a chance to step up. Who will step up and get that two-out base hit or make that key play."

Coach Benim agrees, "In Florida the chemistry and gelling of the team...will be put together. People will

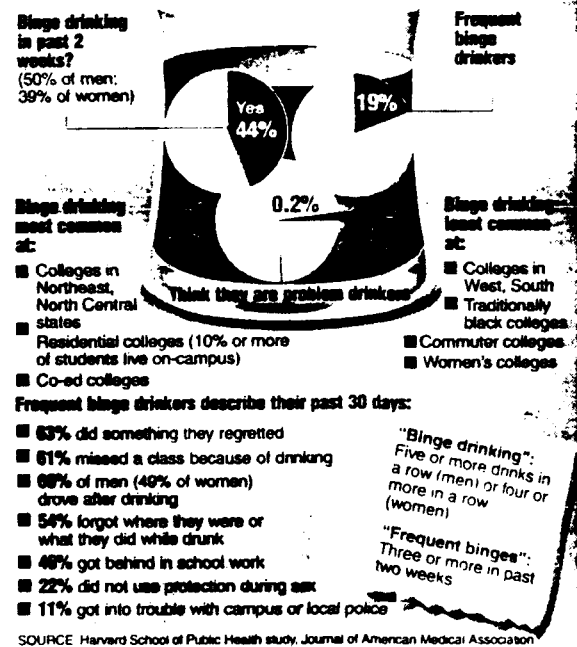
have to hold on to get through it. By March 21st against Mount Union, we'll be ready with a line-up."

"This team should be a really quality ball club. If we can get our attention focused (we should be able to) achieve our high expectations," concluded Benim.

The Lady Lions begin with Bridgewater State on Monday, March 6th.

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From The Bench by Joe Mottillo

During the Erie Panthers 4-3 overtime win over Charlotte last Sunday, Brian (one of my esteemed sports' writers) and I commented on the game during the second period. The conversation went something like this: Brian: How many people do you think are here?

Joe: 10, 27, maybe 4.

PA announcer: Debbie, get your kids out of the aisle, they're blocking Ed's view.

This shows how many or how little people are in the crowd. Then again, the Panthers have not won a championship since they played their games on the frozen harbor down by the lake.

I have two words for the sad state of baseball, Pedro Bourbone. The Cincinnati Reds signed the 48-year old pitcher, who hasn't played in 15 years, making him the first replacement player signed by the Reds. FIFTEEN YEARS! My dad played more recently (That was eight years ago in the father-son softball game during my last year of little league.) I think he might be next. Matter of fact, the Collegian staff might be putting together a team. I think we could beat the Phillies. (Gotcha Russ)

Lawrence Taylor versus Bam Bam Bigalow: LT, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING? Doing infomercials is one thing, but the WWF? Wrestlemania? By

doing this you have brought a stupidity level to what is considered one of the greatest careers at linebacker.

LT, if you need the money that bad, play baseball.

Ninety percent. That is the chance given to Sterling Sharpe to be able to return to pro football in the 1996 season. Sharpe, who will miss the 1995 season because of a neck injury, did not accept the Packers' \$200,000 salary offer. The offer is a far cry from his \$3.2 million contract. Sharpe's agent, William Black, said this of the team, "There's an unwritten rule... you don't release a player when he's hurt." Packer's general manager, Ron Wolf, said, "Research indicates (that) no player who has had that type of surgery returned." I feel that Wolf and the Packers are unwilling to take a chance on Sharpe, the team's all-time leading receiver, and did a very unprofessional move in releasing Sharpe when he was hurt.

Speaking of the Panthers, Paul Krake, the backup goalie, got called up leaving Francis Ouellette as Erie's only goalie. In comes Mark Maksin from the Erie Senior League. Maksin got called up for the two recent Panther games. He has also received as much playing time as me. Here's to Mark Maksin and the rest of us sandlot goalies.

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