

Women realize there's no "I" in team

Lady Lions try to get on track

by Brian Gregory
Collegian Staff

The Lady Lions knew at the beginning of the season that this would be a long grueling year. And the first two weeks of the season have been just that.

The Lady Lions (1-3) began the season by finishing second in the Creative Imprints/Day's Inn Tournament by beating Bridgewater State 82-69 before losing to Lycoming in the finals 74-56. Then last Tuesday, they dropped a decision to Marietta 71-58. And on Monday, they dropped one to a very tough Defiance team 93-66.

"We're struggling right now," said Coach Fornari. "We're not playing well together as a team."

The Lady Lions did look good in the tournament. Against Bridgewater State, the Lady Lions were led by Melanie Banas (9.3 ppg), who seemed unstoppable, scoring 18 points in the first half en route to a 20 point game. Nikki Schultz (10.0 ppg, 9.3 rpg) lived up to her reputation as 'most improved player' by tossing in points and grabbing 11 boards.

"We had a lot of enthusiasm and confidence (vs Bridgewater State)" commented Fornari. But after Lycoming we lost it and stopped doing the little things we need to do to win."

Against Lycoming the Lady Lions fell behind very early and just could never come back from the deficit as they fell 74-56. Reed led all Lady Lion scorers with 18 points and Schultz and Marlesse Schlott collected 13 boards a piece down low.

"We haven't found our niche yet," said forward Emily Marini, "but it will come soon in the future."

On the banks of the old Ohio River the Lady Lions lost to Marietta by 13. The game showcased a great individual effort by Schlott (11.5 ppg, 14.5 rpg) who scored 18 points and brought down 24 boards. But, once again there was limited team support and no one picked up the slack.

"We've had a lot of good individual efforts this season," Fornari stated. "We're just not being effective as a team. We're lacking a lot of intensity."

"This (intensity) starts in practice," continued Fornari. "It's hard to keep up the intensity because Niki Bohn was out with a family emergency and Schultz was sick last week."

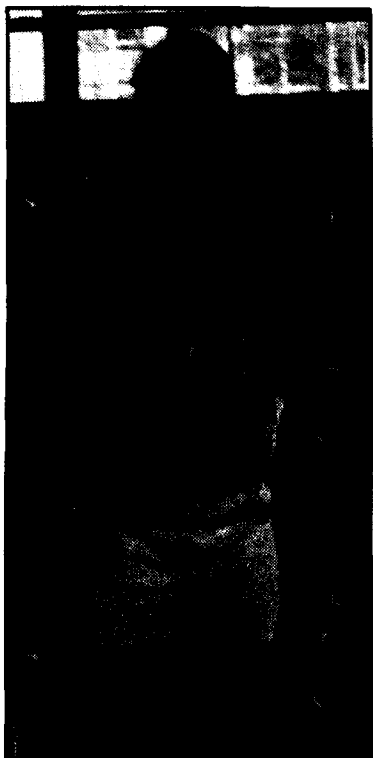
Another great individual effort was turned in by Marini (8.8 ppg, 5.5 rpg) as her box read: Marini 5-5 10-10, for 20 points. She also contributed 15 rebounds. However, Defiance was just way too strong and way too fast.

"(In the) Defiance game we were down early and in the first half we fought back," stated Fornari. "However, in the second half we folded, but only to their pressure."

Fornari has decided to change the offense and defense. This started after the Marietta game. Bohn sees this helping. "With the new offense we're starting to become a team, but we're still too individualistic."

The Lady Lions will travel to Nazareth, New York to participate in the Nazareth Tournament this Saturday and Sunday.

Behrend will return home on December 8th against SUNY-Fredonia. Tip-off is at 7:00 P.M. in Eric Hall. WPSE will broadcast the game live.



Collegian File Photo
Hot potato: ATW Marlesse Schlott gives up the rock.



Schlott having impressive season

by Julie Stocker
Assistant Sports Editor

"She is a very inspirational leader on and off the floor," said sophomore forward Erin McCormick about teammate and this week's athlete of the week, senior center Marlesse Schlott.

As well as a hoopster, "Schlottie" also plays softball on the Penn State-Behrend women's softball team. She usually bats in the four hole, and will be making the transition from first to third base this season.

To date, Schlott is second on

the basketball team by averaging 11.5 points per game, and is the Lion leader in rebounds with 14.5 per game.

"I believe that rebounding is the best part of my game. I play the post strong, and I can take anyone where I want them to go in the paint," said Schlott.

Frontcourt mate Emily Marini sees first hand how Schlott roughs opponents in the key, and is confident in her efforts.

"We work well together, and Schlott is experienced and knows what she's doing," said Marini. "I feel comfortable with her in the

post with me."

The senior co-captain also has 13 steals on the season, which is a rarity for a post player to have the team best.

But, by far, Schlott's claim to fame this season is her numbers from behind the three-point arc. Number 52 has taken only one shot from down town, and hit it. So, through four games this season, Schlott is shooting 1.000 percent from three-point range.

"I wasn't really surprised when it went in," commented the shooting fool. "I was really happy to surprise people because

they know I usually don't shoot from out there."

Besides perfect three-point shooting for the rest of the season, Schlott, along with the other Lady Lions, has set high goals for the remainder of the season.

"We want to make the NCAA playoffs," stated a confident Schlott. "But if we don't, we figure an ECAC playoff berth will be right behind us."

In order to experience a post-season, Schlott and the Lady Lions will have to rebound from a current three-game losing

streak. The worst part is, they'll have to do it on the road, as they prepare for the Nazareth Tournament this weekend.

"[This tournament] is supposed to be one of the best tournaments we've ever been in," concluded Schlott. "We will have to run our offenses, do up our defenses, and keep up the intensity."

Marlesse added that the Lady Lions will also look to "rebound, kick the ball out, and run with it."

It would just figure that the first step of that process would start with Schlott.

Mitchell gets coaching chance

By Cathy Harasta
Dallas Morning News
Knight-Ridder/Tribune News

IRVING, Texas - Many college basketball coaches dream of the right combinations of cloud-grazing height and four-digit SAT scores. Laura Mitchell, the first-year coach of the University of Dallas Lady Crusaders, just wishes she could drive the team rental van to games.

At 24, Mitchell must wait until her next birthday to meet the age requirement of some auto rental companies. Visitors to the UD campus' Maher Athletic Center frequently peg her for a player. That she easily can run the court with the Crusaders has been her strongest selling point.

For months, Mitchell has waited for this weekend. her debut as a college head coach will come in Conway, Ark., on Saturday, when her team plays Hendrix College. As many programs tip off in many towns, Mitchell, a former player at

Irving Nimitz, will try to make a name for the small, private school that sits quietly beside Texas Stadium.

"It would be nice to build something here," Mitchell said as she sat in her tiny office. "I've been too busy to be nervous. But I'm also so excited about Saturday, to see how we match up. We're very limited in who we can get."

She has no scholarships to give and must focus on athletes who are students first. In recruiting, it has helped that Mitchell, 5-10, played for UD in the program's finest season, 1992-93 when the Crusaders went 12-13. The previous season, the team went 1-15, with the lone victory coming on a forfeit.

Mitchell took a winding route to UD, playing for Hill Junior College, Guilford College in North Carolina and Eckerd College in Florida before her single season as a Crusader. She said a sense of adventure caused her to change schools, but it also

reflected her growing devotion to basketball, which had not been her first love.

"I used to hate basketball," she said with a laugh. "I started out as a gymnast and grew up too tall." She outgrew gymnastics in time to start on the Nimitz junior varsity squad a sophomore.

Some people still call her "Vanilla," the name that stuck during high school. Mitchell who majored in English and journalism, graduated for UD in 1994, began to lose her nickname with her first coaching job last fall. That was a short-term assignment as the freshman coach at a Detroit-area high school.

Last November, she returned to UD and began assisting then-coach Jim Jackson (not the Maverick), for whom she had played. After he resigned, the school named Mitchell the interim coach last March. Not until June did she gain the head coach title.

"It was a long three months of not knowing whether I would get

the job," said Mitchell, who lives in Lewisville to be near graduate studies at the University of North Texas in Denton. "I knew I was really young to be a head coach. I was on needles and pins. I didn't know how to plan."

She said her part-time status meant she had no employee benefits and, as a single mother, her concerns led her to inquire about other jobs. One local restaurant manager told her that she lacked enough waitressing experience for his establishment and that she had better hope the coaching job came through.

It did. As her debut nears, Mitchell said she and her team are growing into a meaningful relationship. UD belongs to the TIAA and, though NAIA in status, is a provisional member of NCAA Division III.

Mitchell praised the help she has had from part-time assistant Von McDade, a former standout at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee who played in the CBA. Plus, at 29, McDade is

old enough to drive the rental van.

A well-read copy of 101 Dalmatians sits not far from a Pat Riley-authored coaching tome in Mitchell's office. Her son, Adrian, who will turn 2 on Dec. 2, prefers the dalmatians to Riley's wisdom. Adrian, though already a decent dribbler, also appears to prefer hockey and the Dallas Stars to all other sports and teams, his mother said.

Theirs is a two-career family; Adrian models clothing for print and cable ads.

"I need six more hands, two more brains and two more calendars," Mitchell said.

She did not say, but did not have to, that she wants her program to reflect her energy.

"They're pretty tough players," Mitchell said with a grin.

It takes one to know one.