

Women roar to ECAC Playoffs

by Brian Gregory
Collegian Staff

They're calling it "The Road to Bethany."

With a win last week against Thiel College the Penn State Behrend Lady Lions finished the season at 16-9 and received a birth in the East Coast Athletic Conference.

"It was a good win," said Head Coach Rozzie Fornari. "We were up 35-12 at the half. We shot well and played well. Becky Reed had a great game despite being injured."

The tournament invitation is the fourth in five years for the Lady Lions, but the first since the 93-94 season in which they advanced to the NCAA Tournament and whipped Dennison before losing 93-74 to eventual winner Capital University.

This year's E.C.A.C. tournament should be huge for the Lady Lions. It features three other strong teams including Dickenson, Misericordia, and Bethany. Bethany of course is a

team that the Lady Lions lost to twice this campaign.

"Bethany is a strong team and a strong contender to win it all," commented Fornari. "Dickenson is 15-10. They have two good power forwards and it'll be a good contest for us. Misericordia is a good team in a good conference."

The E.C.A.C. Tournament is to take place on Saturday and Sunday in Bethany. The Lady Lions square off against Dickenson Saturday at 6:00 and if they win they play Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

"We will have to get a good run on them," said Fornari on the opening round match against Dickenson. "We need to have good defense and beat them off the boards. Reed and Banas will have a good first look."

Keep on truckin': Reed [40] takes the ball through the paint and flies through the air. Nikki Schultz [50] is ready to rebound. The Lady Lions will leave tomorrow night after practice for Bethany College and the ECAC Playoffs.



Lady Lions walk on new diamond

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"Only you can allow yourself to be defeated."

The Penn State-Behrend Lady Lions softball team is making final adjustments before beginning their season next week in Fort Myers, Florida.

Head Coach Sharon Gregory says that they're ready to go. "Florida will get everybody together," she commented. "I expect to explode and rip the cover off the ball."

The Lady Lions have been practicing since early January this year and have been undergoing major aspects of change since last year. Last year's Head Coach Paul Benim accepted an administration move which made him the new head baseball coach at Behrend. Thus last May, new volleyball Coach Sharon Gregory was appointed softball coach. Also moving on with Benim to the baseball team was Assistant Coach Bill Graham. Moving into his vacancy will be Jackie Brophy.

Another huge loss for the Lady Lions was in the loss of starters Sue Mazur (third baseman) and Megan Musante (centerfield), to graduation and strong-armed utility player Michelle Carino to State College.

"We will have a huge hole at third base with Mazur gone," said senior co-captain Julie Stocker.

One of the Lady Lions' greatest strengths is pitching. Anchored by two all-star pitchers, Heather Norder and Beth Calhoun, that is about as deep as Gregory will

take it, though if they need more, out-fielder Shannon Angel may be called on for brief stints on the hill.

When questioned on the lack of depth of the pitching staff, Gregory responded, "We have outstanding pitching, and both [Calhoun and Norder] look extremely well. We will use Angel as a reliever since she pitched in high school.

Angel herself is a little weary at the idea, "I haven't pitched since high school, but I'll do the best I can."

Norder though is excited to get underway. "My arm feels a lot better than last year. I had time to get it in shape." As always in the past hitting will be sharp and a backbone of the team. Returning as leaders in hitting are Becky Reed, Calhoun, Angel and Stocker. Marlesse Schlott will also return to the team after a half year hiatus.

"Beth [Calhoun] has a strong bat and she rips the cover off the ball," said Gregory on her team's solid hitting. "Stocker looks tough, Reed will lead off followed with Angel and Schlott. Our hitting is solid top to bottom."

Defense has been a question for the Lady Lions as they made errors last year, but Gregory doesn't see many problems.

"With defense we've had some injuries, and we'll see how we set up. We're very versatile and there are a lot of options I can use."

On the early injured list for the Lady Lions are catcher Casey

Koza (back), Wilcox (broken finger), and Becky Reed (ankle). These injuries could be significant as the year goes on.

"We don't have a deep bench, but the players are very good," replied Norder. "We have a talented team. If no one gets hurt, we'll have a solid team."

As the Lady Lions ready themselves for spring training in Fort Myers, they have been doing it without the services of Reed and Schlott who have been tied

up in basketball. They will join the team and play next Monday without a day of practice.

New Coach Gregory has also made a few changes moving Angel from second to the outfield and moving Schlott to third to replace Mazur; she has implemented freshman Lisa Fox in centerfield and helped Steph Roberts get ready for catching in a back-up role.

Coach Gregory is excited about the Florida trip and the tough

schedule including two Division III games, one Division II games and seven NAIA games. "We can hold our own," she said.

As for the team, Stocker sums of the goals of the team briefly, "We're going to the NCAA's!"

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