

Pitching up and down for Lions

by Nick Zulovich
Sports Editor

The Penn State-Behrend Lions baseball team has tried to pick up where they left off from their Florida trip. The Lions have had to hit the road for their first four games up north, traveling to Oberlin last Saturday and Thiel last Monday.

The Lions earned a split against Oberlin, falling in the first game 8-2, then bouncing back to shut out Oberlin in the nightcap 5-0.

Bob Vadala was roughed up in the first game, giving up six runs on eight hits in just two innings of work. Matt Holian came in relief of Vadala and pitched well, striking out nine in five innings. But the Behrend bats did not come to life after scoring their two runs in the first inning.

Freshman John Ronan twirled a masterpiece in the second game, shutting out Oberlin on just three hits over seven innings.

Ronan feels he's ready to pitch at any moment.

"I am confident when I go out there. I believe I can do the job, just give me the ball," Ronan said.

Ronan was a little surprised to be one of the starters for the Lions, but he feels like there is no time like the present to start playing well.

"I didn't expect this much playing time my freshman year, but we are pretty much all freshmen on this team. So we have to pick it up from the start. We can't wait around for everyone else," explained Ronan.

Head Coach Paul Benim said the field conditions at Oberlin were decent, but that the temperatures fell nearly 30 degrees while the Lions were in action. Conditions were much different than what the Lions enjoyed in Florida.

"You have to get used to the environment [up north]. There is a big difference between 80-87 degrees and 45. It does take some time [to adjust]. I think pitchers have the advantage until the hitters get used to the cold. We need

to play some games up here to get a better understanding of the conditions," stated Benim.

Monday at Thiel the Lions earned a split again. The Tomcats shut out the Lions 7-0 in the first game. Behrend took the nightcap by a score of 8-1.

Errors were the story of the in the first game against Thiel. The Lions committed five errors in the game,

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leading to six unearned runs. Daryl Schmidt took the loss on the hill for Behrend.

The second game was a much different story for the Lions. The Lions' bats did a much better job scoring eight runs on eight hits, while the defense was steadier, committing just two errors.

Vadala came back with a strong start after pitching poorly just two days earlier. He went the distance giving up just one run on three hits.

"It was really nice to see Bob come back with a good performance," said Benim.

With the splits over Oberlin and Thiel, the Lions now stand at 8-3 on the season.

The Lions enter the most difficult part of their schedule this week. Behrend will be one of five teams competing in the Capital College Tournament in Columbus, Ohio.

The Lions will play eight games in four days starting on Thursday. Along with Behrend and Capital College, Shawnee State, Fredonia State, and Ohio Wesleyan will be vying for the tournament title.

"We think we are in a good position coming in with an 8-3 mark," Benim said.

Playing as many games as the Lions will in a short period of time will take a toll on the team, especially the pitching staff.

"Thursday, Friday, and Saturday we'll probably have six guys start those games. Sunday we might have a pitcher who started Thursday pitch that day," explained Benim.

A total team effort will be needed for the Lions to be successful in the tournament as Capital College is a Division II school and Shawnee State is highly rated in NAIA.

Behrend as a team is hitting the ball at a .288 clip. Bill Vitron leads the Lions bats with a .411 average and 11 RBI's. John Matson is a close second with a .393 average and seven RBI's. The Lions running game has also been a big part of their offense. Behrend is 68 for 79 in stolen bases thanks to Nate Orend's 14 steals and Quinn McGuire's 11 swipes.

Meanwhile the running game for Behrend opponents has been nearly none existent thanks to catcher Marc Burchanowski. Ronan is very happy to have him as his battery mate.

"When you let some one on base, its almost like an automatic out [if they try to steal]. They are not going anywhere at first. It really helps your confidence," stated Ronan.

The pitching staff's ERA is just over four at 4.02. Ronan has been the most consistent of the staff with 23 strikeouts and a microscopic ERA at 1.06. Ronan also has two complete games plus one save. Vadala leads the Lions in innings pitched with 18.

'Fierce competitor' ATW

by Matt Plizga
Collegian Staff

"John is a fierce competitor when he steps onto the field" proclaims first year baseball coach Paul Benim. His intensity and pitching earned freshman John Ronan Housing and Food Service Athlete of the Week honors.

For the season Ronan has been dominant on the mound earning

two wins and a save in three outings. Even more impressive is his 1.03 earned run average.

"Ronan is a great pitcher, he hits his spots and works hard each time out," catcher Marc Burchanowski said.

Despite not having overpowering velocity on his fastball John has 23 strikeouts in just 17 innings. Even more impressive is the 6 base on balls he has given up over the same

span.

"Getting ahead of hitters is an important part of my pitching strategy. I try to out think the batters and keep them guessing as to what I will throw next," stated Ronan.

John also has two complete games and a three hit shutout that featured nine strikeouts vs. Oberlin.

"Ronan has been our strongest pitcher thus far. He is sneaky

and effective," says Coach Benim.

Ronan believes his most important asset on the mound is his attitude. "I'm confident when I'm pitching. You have to believe in your own abilities to pitch well" he declares.

Battery mate Burchanowski believes "John wants the ball in his hands in big games. He knows he can get the job done."

Ronan's experience pitching

against a high level of competition at Mercyhurst Prep High School in Erie and in American Legion has enabled him to make a smooth transition from high school to college baseball. Coach Benim feels that his background has allowed him to become "a very intelligent pitcher."

Behrend IM update

by Nick Zulovich
Sports Editor

Though it seems like the semester might not even end, intramurals are in the home stretch with just five events remaining.

Six on six volleyball is currently going on with over 40 teams competing for the top spot.

Soccer will begin the week of April 1.

Applications for modified softball are due by Friday, March 29. Men's, women's and coed teams can be entered. Teams are allowed only two former varsity players per team. Current varsity softball and baseball players are not eligible to participate.

Fraternities are allowed to enter two teams to earn points, but residence halls and independent

teams are allowed just one team to participate.

A mandatory meeting for a modified softball team captains will be Monday, April 1 at 5:30 in the Erie Hall classroom.

Friday, April 5 is the deadline for entries for intramural swimming and badminton.

Swimming includes nine events with a champion crowned in each event. The competition will be held at the Eastside YMCA on Buffalo Road Sunday, April 14 starting at 3 p.m.

The Badminton tournament will begin April 10. Singles divisions for both men and women, as well as doubles for men, women, and coed, are available. All entrants must check the glass case near the intramural office April 8 to find out when matches are scheduled.

No schedules will be mailed to the participants' mailboxes.

The points races are more heated than ever. In the fraternity division, Kappa Delta Rho leads the pack with 1,966 points. Sigma Tau Gamma and Tau Kappa Epsilon are close behind with 1,771 and 1,733 points respectively.

Jolly Ranchers [1,305 points] lead the independent division by almost 700 points over The Bigg Spank [608].

First Lawrence West also have a sizeable lead over Perry One in the Residence Hall division. Lawrence has racked up 921 points compared to Perry's 478.

If you have any questions about any of the intramural schedules and deadlines, call Rob Wittman, at x6280.

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