

Men's baseball team starts off season 5-2 after southern swing in Florida

by Dylan Stewart
sports editor

The Penn State - Behrend men's baseball team got their season off to quite a different start in 1998 as compared to the start they had only a year before in 1997.

The Lions traveled down to Fort Pierce, Florida and came away with a solid mark of 5 - 2, as compared to their dreadful 1997 mark of 0 - 8.

"One of the biggest differences this year was that we had many more experienced players that knew what they needed to do," said head coach Paul Benim. "I think that we really have a good group of guys on this team, and if you have good quality people, I think that you will be successful. The roots to success are high quality people," added Benim.

Timely hitting, strong defense, and dominating pitching performances highlighted the week, and played a major part in the Lions' success.

As a team, the Lions batted a healthy .316, compared to their opponents mere .256 batting average.

"Our overall statistics were outstanding," said Benim. "If we are able to swing the bat that well for the whole year I think that we will be able to put up some very big numbers by year's end," added Benim.

Senior captain Marc Burchanowski led the team offense with 10 hits in 25 plate appearances, which equals out to an even .400 batting average.

Sophomore Mike Thompson also had a big week as he came away 9 - 19 at the plate with a team leading .473 batting average, while freshmen Matt Slavonic had an impressive week going 7 - 15 with a .466 average. Both Thompson and Slavonic also came away with a team leading six RBI's apiece.

However, the most glaring advantage the Lions held throughout the week came on the basepaths.

Behrend stole an amazing 32 - 33 bases, compared to their opponents 4 - 7 steals. The lack of opponents' stolen bases is due in large part to the cannon right arm of senior catcher Marc Burchanowski, with also a little help from sophomore catcher Dylan Stewart.

Behrend finished 5th in NCAA Division III in steals two years ago, before dropping to 18th last year. If the Lions continue to burn the basepaths at this rapid pace, don't be surprised to see them back in the top five at the end of 1998.

On the pitching front, the Lions hurlers were able to come away with a low 3.18 ERA (earned - run average).

Sophomore Rob Green led all hurlers with a 1.13 ERA, while also leading the team in strikeouts with sixteen in twelve innings pitched.

Sophomore Corey Walters also contributed in the effort with six strikeouts in six innings pitched, and a 2.33 ERA.

The Lions started their week out with an exciting 9 - 8 come from behind victory against Earlham College.

Sophomore center fielder Jeremy Brubaker proved to be the one - man wrecking crew in the contest, as he was 3 - 5 at the plate with a double, triple, and a clutch solo homer in the seventh inning.

Behrend found themselves down 8 - 7 in the bottom of the seventh when Jeremy Brubaker came up to bat with 1 out. Brubaker then proceeded to mash a 1 - 0 fastball 375 feet over the right field fence to tie the game and send it into extra innings.

"It was awesome," said head coach

Paul Benim.

The Lions then went on to take the game in the bottom of the eighth by a score of 9 - 8.

Junior transfer Ryan Smith came away with the victory as he came on in the 7th and 8th innings to nail down the win.

"It was a huge come from behind win," said sophomore Dylan Stewart. "It was real nice to start the week off with a victory and get that 0 - 8 Florida monkey off our back from the get go," added Stewart.

The Lions next had to play Delaware Valley later in the same day.

Behrend lost the contest by a score of 3 - 2, as they were handed a taste of their own medicine by being defeated in the bottom of the seventh.

The Lions started the game off by jumping ahead by a score of 2 - 0 in the first inning, before the Behrend bats fell into a coma for the rest of the game as they were never again able to put up a single run.

The Lions were out-hit by a count of nine to six, while also committing three errors compared to one error by Delaware Valley.

Jeremy Brubaker led the offense as he was 2 - 4 from the plate with two singles.

Rob Green pitched five strong innings, giving up two earned runs and striking out four.

On the second day of the Florida swing the Lions were able to knock off Anna Maria college of Massachusetts by a count of 6 - 4.

Trailing 3 - 1 in the fourth inning, Behrend used an error, an HBP, and basehits by Dylan Stewart and Kit Bower to jump ahead to a 4 - 3 lead. In the sixth inning, Ryan Smith singled and stole second and third base, before scoring what proved to

be the game winner on David Williams' perfectly executed suicide squeeze.

Freshmen James Calpin received the victory, going four innings, while striking out and walking 3 batters.

Ryan Smith came on for an inning and a third, giving up one hit and striking out two to nail down the save.

Corey Walters and Ryan Smith each smashed two hits apiece to lead the offense for the Lions.

On day three of the trip the Lions were able to sweep a pair of games from Norwich University by scores of 6 - 3, and 15 - 1.

The Lions trailed game one by a score of 3 - 2 in the sixth inning when Dylan Stewart led off the inning with a single, then stole second, before advancing to third on a fielder's choice. Stewart then scored to tie the game and send it into extra innings by coming home on Dan Orelski's suicide squeeze.

Behrend then put the game away in the eighth, scoring three runs on hits by Mike Thompson and Matt Slavonic, and another on a squeeze by Jeremy Brubaker.

Corey Walters was very tough in his first start of the year, going six innings, while allowing only two earned runs and striking out six without issuing a single walk.

Freshmen Dave Oldach pitched a scoreless seventh and eighth inning, striking out three to earn the victory.

Mike Thompson had two singles to lead the Lions at the plate.

The second game of the twinbill was never even close as Behrend jumped out to an 8 - 0 lead after the first inning, before the game was stopped in the fifth inning with the Lions winning 15 - 1.

Freshmen Joe Thompson went three innings of work, allowing no runs, and striking out four. Morgan Saeler came on to close out the game by throwing the last two innings, allowing one earned run.

Mike Thompson again led the Behrend offense with 3 hits, 3 runs scored, and 2 RBI's.

Jeremy Brubaker, Kit Bower, Matt Slavonic, and Shawn Headly paced the rest of the offense with two hits apiece, as the Lions smashed out a bruising 16 hits.

Day four of the trip provided much of the same as the day before, as Behrend pounded Swarthmore, by a merciless score of 15 - 2.

Sophomore Rob Green was sharp on the hill as he went a complete game seven innings, while allowing no earned runs and striking out twelve. Green also only allowed four hits the entire game, while only allowing two runs, both of which were unearned.

Freshmen Matt Slavonic paced the offense with three hits, two runs scored, and one RBI.

Jeremy Brubaker and David Oldach each had two hits and three RBI's, while Marc Burchanowski and David Williams each came away with two hits apiece.

Dylan Stewart had two HBP's (hit

by pitch), as he again looks to lead the team in '98, as he did in '97 in finding the baseball with his body.

The only big letdown of the week came on the final day of the trip, as the Lions looked to avenge their only loss of the trip when they earlier fell to Delaware Valley 3 - 2 at the beginning of the week.

The Lions however forgot to bring themselves to the game, as they were handed a medieval beating by a score of 12 - 1.

"It was a complete physical and mental breakdown," said Dylan Stewart. "Although they threw a good pitcher at us, they were no team we couldn't beat. I thought they were a very beatable. We just never gave ourselves a chance," said Stewart.

Delaware Valley's 6'6" senior right-hander struck out twelve Lions, while only allowing one earned run.

The only Lion worth mentioning happened to be senior Marc Burchanowski, as he went 2 - 4 with one RBI.

"The end result of the week was very good," said coach Benim. "Our players are capable of making many things happen, and if we play the way we are capable, we should continue to win ballgames," said Benim.

The Lions will next be in action when they travel to Thiel College next Tuesday for a doubleheader. Behrend will not play a home contest for at least two more weeks. Exact dates will be available in next week's issue.



courtesy of Behrend Athletics

Third baseman junior Ryan Smith and sophomore shortstop David Williams get themselves ready to make a play.



courtesy of Behrend Athletics

Senior captain Athlete of the Week Marc Burchanowski gets dirty while blocking a wild pitch.

Intramural Roundup

POINT SYSTEM STANDINGS

	Fall	5v5	Pong	4vb	6vb	Socr	Msb	Swim	Bad	Total	Rank
FRATERNITY											
Sigma Tau Gamma	1196	66	295	0	0	0	0	0	0	1557	1
Delta Chi	775	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	925	3
Zeta Beta Tau	1030	41	240	0	0	0	0	0	0	1311	2
Tau Kappa Epsilon	730	33	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	853	4
Sigma Kappa Nu	155	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	188	5
INDEPENDENT											
Rush Violators	1633	98	170	0	0	0	0	0	0	1901	1
Jolly Ranchers	935	18	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	1018	2
Scrubs	716	38	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	834	3
Niagara	228	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	228	5
Mustangs	266	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	276	4
RESIDENCE HALL											
Perry 2	300	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	325	2
Niagara 1 West	30	0	235	0	0	0	0	0	0	265	3
Perry 1	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	4
Porcupine	205	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	355	1
WOMEN'S											
Lemon Heads	785	0	220	0	0	0	0	0	0	1005	1
Theta Phi Alpha	435	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	435	2
Team Niagara	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	3
Alpha Sigma Tau	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	4
COED											
Milk Duds	775	0	110	120	0	0	0	0	0	1005	1
Scrubs	625	0	30	110	0	0	0	0	0	765	2
KDR-Theta Phi	560	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	560	3
ZBTNA	170	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	210	4

SCOREBOARD Spring '98

TEAM RECORDS

Men's Baseball 5-2

Women's Softball 1-7