

Out of Bounds

JASON SNYDER

'Batch' of surprises highlight 1st half of NFL season

Can you believe the NFL regular season is approaching its halfway mark already? I guess with all the excitement baseball has brought to the country, fans are having a hard time keeping up with the fast paced world of sports. But the first few weeks of the football season have set the tone and given fans a sense of who to watch in the upcoming weeks. And as you look through the team standings and the statistical leaders, you may be surprised at what you see. The NFL, so far, has been filled with a group of surprises, or in this case, they can better be referred to as a "batch" of surprises.

A number of teams that were once laughing stocks of the NFL are now making a name for themselves as playoff contenders. And a batch of teams that were expected to rise to the top of the league standings are now beginning to fall to the cellar of the NFL divisions. And in a season that was supposed to be the birth of a batch of big name NFL rookies that are supposed to be the next Joe Montana, the real rookie stars come in the form of, yes, another batch, Randy Moss and Charlie Batch.

The world of football anxiously awaited the NFL Draft this past summer to see which of the two star quarterbacks, Peyton Manning or Ryan Leaf, would be the first overall pick. Analysts were quick to point out the strengths of these two quarterbacks and what a valuable commodity either one would make for whatever team they would play. But no one seemed to mention the second round draft pick from Eastern Michigan named Charlie Batch. "Charlie Batch? Who the heck is Charlie Batch?" some fans might wonder. But the answer is quite simple. He is by far the best rookie quarterback the league has to offer in 1998. An expected 3rd string quarterback for the Detroit Lions, Batch has proven himself to Lions' coach Bobby Ross and is proving himself to the league's most dominant defenses.

He has not only turned the heads of players, but by leading the Lions to a 27-20 defeat of the Green Bay Packers last week, he is also beginning to turn the heads of fans away from those big name, unproductive rookies, and is focusing them on his arm. That arm will enter Week 8 of the NFL season coming off a 16-19 performance against the Packers. He threw for 218 yards and for the third consecutive game, didn't turn the ball over.

As for those unproductive rookies, they have thrown a combined

26 interceptions (14 by Manning, 12 by Leaf). Manning, however, comes off an impressive game against the 49ers this past Sunday. He threw for 231 yards on 18-30 passing with three touchdowns. Leaf, on the other hand, could only muster up 88 yards in his error-free game against the Philadelphia Eagles, which saw the Chargers win 13-10.

Despite the surprising start by Charlie Batch, he isn't the best overall rookie.



That title would have to be held by the Minnesota Vikings' Randy Moss. Moss is off to a Pro Bowl year in only his rookie season. He has been instrumental in the Vikes' 6-0 start, and he is already being compared to Jerry Rice. That in and of itself deserves much recognition. Moss is currently in the top five for receiving yards in the entire NFL, and has already earned the respect of defenses, often times being covered by the best in the business, as evident this past weekend against the winless Redskins' Darrell Green.

Moss, however, isn't the only surprise coming out of Minnesota. With a 6-0 start, the Vikings production must be coming from someone else too. Randall Cunningham is once again a force in the NFL and is also having a Pro Bowl year of his own. A one time unproductive quarterback for the Eagles, Cunningham has changed his mindset and is now the highest ranked quarterback in the league. This was a quarterback that once had the mindset of a running back as he came close to rushing for 1000 yards in his years with Philadelphia. But now, with Moss, Cris Carter, and Jake Reed troubling the defenses, the Vikings could be well on their way to the Super Bowl.

Another surprising team in 1998 are the Atlanta Falcons. The Falcons entered the season hoping to improve on their shameful past and have done so with a 5-1 record that has them tied with the San Francisco 49ers for the NFC West division lead. The Falcons, however, just encountered a setback this past weekend as starting quarterback Chris Chandler went down to injury. The replacement? The oldest active player in the NFL, Steve DeBerg. DeBerg led Atlanta down the field late in the fourth quarter, throwing the winning touchdown toss. Wouldn't it be great to see the oldest man in football lead the once embarrassing Falcons to the big show?

Crazier things have happened.

Speaking of crazy things, wouldn't it be strange that two teams with some of the biggest defensive players in football, combine for a 0-13 record? The Washington Redskins and the Carolina Panthers have defensive names that sound like the starting lineup for the NFC Pro Bowl team.

The Redskins signed Dana Stubblefield and Dan Wilkinson in the off-season in hopes of stopping the run. The Redskins ranked 28th in the league last season in defense against the run. One could only wonder where the Redskins would have finished if they only had a better defensive line. After all, they already had a secondary consisting of Darrell Green and Chris Dishman, and Ken Harvey sitting at the linebacker position. But with the addition of these two multi-million dollar men, the 'Skins continue to struggle and are off to one of their worst starts in franchise history. They have given up a league worst 227 points and continue to struggle offensively with only 93 total points this year. Four more consecutive losses would give Washington the worst start for any team in this decade.

Who would have thought that a team that won the NFC West title only two years ago would be trying to avoid a winless season this year, especially after signing Kevin Greene and Greg Lloyd in the off season? Well, the Panthers have had their problems not only on defense, giving up 169 points, but also on offense. With their "franchise quarterback" Kerry Collins shipped to New Orleans, the Panthers hope to start over and turn things around.

Despite the surprises so far in the NFL, the league continues to host its annual powerhouses. The Green Bay Packers, San Francisco 49ers, and Dallas Cowboys once again are legitimate playoff contenders in the NFC. The AFC looks to have the undefeated Denver Broncos (6-0), the Kansas City Chiefs, Jacksonville Jaguars, Pittsburgh Steelers, and even the Miami Dolphins and Oakland Raiders challenging for a playoff spot.

So perhaps it is too early to tell which teams will meet in the Super Bowl this January or even who will make the playoffs. But it looks as though we will be seeing some new faces in the postseason. Maybe the 1998 football season will be a changing of the guard as a 'batch' of rookies begin to blossom and those one time "laughing stocks" turn things around and realize "those who laugh last, laugh best."

INTRAMURAL ROUNDUP

Intramurals

Flag Football

M, W, COED
- Games began October 14

Billiards

M, W, COED
- Singles and Doubles play
- Schedules will be posted Sunday November 1
- Play begins Monday November 2
Registration Deadline: October 30

Bowling

M, W, COED
- Individual and team competition
- At Eastway Lanes
- Saturday November 7
Registration Deadline: October 30

Recreation

Commuter Euchre Tournament

Registration Deadline: November 6

Behrend to induct new members into athletics Hall of Fame

By Jason Snyder
sports editor

The Penn State Behrend Athletics Department will hold its eighth annual Hall of Fame induction ceremony this Saturday, October 24, at 6:00 in the Reed Commons.

As Behrend approaches 40 years of competitive athletics, the college will continue to recognize the teams and individuals that have played a significant role in the program's overall success. This Saturday evening, in conjunction with Behrend's 50th anniversary celebrations, the college will induct one individual and ten teams into the Penn State-Behrend Athletic Hall of Fame.

Former faculty athletic representative John Grode will be the lone 1998 individual inductee named to the Hall of Fame. Grode served as an instructor in engineering since 1966 and held the position as faculty athletic director from 1973-1997, a span of 24 years.

Roger Sweeting, a former men's basketball coach, will have two of his teams inducted into the Behrend Hall of Fame this year. Sweeting led his 1966-67 team to a P.S. Commonwealth Championship, which saw his team win 20 games, a mark that had previously never been reached. Two years later in Behrend's 1968-69 campaign, Sweeting and his Lions again reached the 20 win mark en route to an undefeated regular season. In those two seasons, the men's basketball program went 40-5. The 1968-69 team also had one of the best offensive attacks as they averaged nearly 100 points per game.

Former men's soccer coach Herb Lauffer will also have two of his teams inducted into the Behrend Hall of Fame. His 1971 and 1978 teams will be honored this Saturday for

their overall success for the Lion's soccer program. In 1971, Lauffer led his team to a P.S. Commonwealth Championship, which saw the team win all four of their commonwealth games, three by way of shutout. The men outscored their counterparts by 21 goals when the final tallying was complete. Due to the success of this team, five of its participants were also previously inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Lauffer's 1978 team went 7-6 on their way to capturing the NAIA District 18 Championship. The Lions defeated Mercyhurst College twice and gave Allegheny College the only blemish on their record with a 1-1 tie.

The 1981 men's baseball team will also be inducted to the Hall of Fame this year. The men led by head coach Shorty Stoner, won the NAIA District 18 Championship going 20-11 in the process. The team opened their season in convincing fashion, hitting five of their record 16 home runs in the opening game. The team is considered the biggest power hitting team in Behrend history.

The women's volleyball team of 1984 will be honored this weekend for their impressive season that saw them finish 23-12 on their way to winning the program's first ever NAIA District 18 Championship. Led by head coach Jan Wilson and the team's three All-District performers, the women placed second in the Women's Keystone Conference. The '84 season saw the women record a total of 874 kills and 225 serving

aces. During the inaugural Hall of Fame year, the women's basketball team added to the spirit of the occasion. In the 1991-92 season, the women won Behrend's first ever ECAC Championship as they earned re-

gional and national rankings with a 23-4 record. The rankings were the first for the women's basketball program, and the 23 wins is still a record for the Lions. Jen Banker coached her team to a fifth place ranking in the nation for defensive field goal percentage.

Shortly after the success of the women's basketball program, the Lady Lions softball team also went on to win their first ever ECAC Championship in 1992. Brett Banker's team finished with a 22-6 record that saw the women score nearly eight runs per game. The women followed that season up with another ECAC Championship in 1993. The team won 29 games, which are the most wins in a season by any team in the college's history.

In Paul Benim's first year as head coach of the Lions, his team's 29-6 record was the fourth highest winning percentage that year in Division III. Both of those championship teams will be rewarded for their outstanding accomplishments in those back-to-back seasons by being inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The 1993-94 women's basketball team will be the most recent team to be inducted into the Class of 1998. The women still remain the only NCAA team in Behrend's history. They battled to a 21-6 record that placed them in the NCAA Playoffs. Roz Fornari coached the women to a first round playoff victory against Denison College. The women then lost to the eventual national champs.

The two women's softball teams along with the two women's basketball teams that will be inducted into the Behrend Hall of Fame this Saturday combined for a 95-22 record in their remarkable seasons.

AMCC Athletes of the Week

Abby Crilley, Tyler Travis, and Bethany Cummings all receive Athlete of the Week recognition

Behrend has had an impressive week in the AMCC, as the women's soccer team captured the regular season AMCC Championship and the women's tennis team also won the championship by defeating their rival Frostburg State this past Sunday at the Tennis AMCC Championships.

The Lions added to their week by having three of their athletes named as AMCC Athletes of the Week in their respective sports. The cross-country team had both a male and female rewarded with this honor.

Abby Crilley, in her first ever collegiate race, finished in 16th place at the Pitt-Bradford Invita-

tional this past Saturday. Crilley is a sophomore from Harmonsburg, PA, where she attended Linesville High School. She ran the 2.6 mile course in 18 minutes. Crilley should be an important addition to the women's team entering the AMCC Championships this Saturday, October 24, at Behrend at 11:00 a.m.

Tyler Travis also ran an impressive race at Pitt-Bradford, finishing fifth with a time of 27:38 on the 4.7 mile course. Travis is also a sophomore from Edinboro, PA. He attended General McLane High School before coming to Behrend.

Sophomore soccer player Bethany Cummings received a well deserved Athlete of the Week for her role in the

women's soccer team's second straight AMCC regular season title. Cummings comes from Myerstown, PA, where she attended E. Lebanon County High School. She assisted the winning goal against Carnegie Mellon in the women's 1-0 win. She then went on to score in the 3-0 rout of Frostburg State to clinch the title.

Overall, the week in the AMCC belonged to Behrend and their continuing success in the conference. These individuals all played an important role in leading Behrend athletics in the right direction heading into the final weeks of the fall sports season.

The Behrend Classifieds

SPRING BREAK Cancun, Florida, etc... Best hotels, parties, prices. Book early and save! Earn Money plus free trips! Campus reps/organizations wanted. Inter-campus programs. 1-800-327-6013 www.icpt.com

Jason- You owe me lots of presents this weekend.

Danielle I wish that H and L were in 805 Ayodele

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