

Out of Bounds JASON SNYDER

Flutie's NFL troubles behind him; Bills' success is next step

Buffalo Bills' quarterback Doug Flutie is leaving more than just an unsuccessful past in the National Football League behind him. At the midway point of the 1998 NFL season, Flutie has already forgotten his troubled background, and is now leaving in his tracks some of the league's best pass rushers, quarterbacks and teams on his way to the ultimate football dream, a Super Bowl championship.

Now it may be hard to associate the Buffalo Bills with a Super Bowl championship, seeing as how they are most remembered for their infamous Super Bowl flops in the first half of this decade. The early '90s were a joke when mid-January rolled around and the Bills received their annual "Super Bowl Slaughter" by the NFC's most dominant team. These continuous embarrassments gave the country a team to laugh at and love to see lose. Even Bills' fans themselves must have hoped for some other AFC team to take over the reins of their conference and be victim to the NFC's streak of dominance. What makes even a bigger mockery of Buffalo's woes, however, was the fact that the Denver Broncos were able to take those reins that the Bills couldn't control and steer the AFC to a Super Bowl victory.

However, at the same time that Buffalo receives those pitiful laughs, a window of opportunity for the AFC and the Bills has been opened. The Broncos were the straw that broke the NFC's back, and now the chance for continued AFC success is theirs for the taking. So without the burden of the AFC's credibility on their backs, the Bills can feel confident, if given the chance, to win that elusive NFL championship.

After an 0-3 start, the Bills have won five straight games to move them into a four-way tie atop the AFC East. Some might ask, "what has accounted for this sudden success in Buffalo?" The answer may be too small to see and too quiet to hear, but his presence in the Bills' line-up can't be ignored. The 5'9", 176 pound Doug Flutie is playing at a much higher level than his size may indicate. Flutie has quickly established himself as one of the league's most efficient quarterbacks and is emphatically putting to rest the criticism over his size and unsuccessful NFL past.

Flutie's professional football career started in New Jersey, playing

for the United States Football League. After one season there, he attempted to move his game to the NFL. After unproductive seasons for the New England Patriots and the Chicago Bears that saw him start only 14 games in 4 seasons in the late 1980s, Flutie made probably the smartest decision of his life. He moved his game to the Canadian Football



League and wasted no time in making a name for himself. In 1991, Flutie broke Warren Moon's CFL single season passing records for attempts, completions and yards. He was rewarded with the league's Most Valuable Player award for the first of six times. Following his breakthrough year in 1991, he was signed by the Calgary Stampeders in March of 1992. He was once again named the league's MVP, leading the Stampeders to the Grey Cup championship.

After four seasons in Calgary, Flutie signed with the Toronto Argonauts. He played his final two seasons in Toronto and wrapped up the most storied career in CFL history. The Argos won two straight Grey Cups behind the arm of Flutie. He was named the league's MVP for an unprecedented sixth time in only seven years. His final season saw him throw for 5,505 yards and a club record, 47 touchdowns.

Flutie's overall accomplishments in the CFL didn't go unnoticed by the NFL. On January 20 of this year, Flutie signed with the Bills as a free agent. He was seen as a backup for the multi-million dollar paid Rob Johnson who was also signed this past off-season. However, with injuries plaguing Johnson throughout this '98 season, Flutie took full advantage of the opportunity. At age 36, Flutie has the Bills headed in the right direction. In only three starts, he has thrown for 1087 yards and has led the Bills past the league's toughest teams. Buffalo has handed San Francisco and Jacksonville their first losses of the season and just upset Miami this past weekend.

With the Bills' success, Flutie is suddenly Buffalo's hero...or magician as some people are beginning to call him. His "magic" has him ranked fourth in the NFL, joining the league's most efficient veterans. Randall Cunningham

(age 35), Vinny Testaverde (34), Steve Young (37), Doug Flutie (36), and Neil O'Donnell (32) are ranked 1-5 in the NFL for passing efficiency.

Fans in Canada and throughout the United States are beginning to follow Flutie's every move. Fans love to watch him scramble and elude the league's biggest defenders. Even I, a

one-time mocker of the Bills, am beginning to cheer for the unexpected underdog. My laughs are beginning to shift from Buffalo's once humorous Super Bowl losses, to Flutie's defenders who can't seem to grab hold of the small and old quarterback. What those defenders are beginning to grab a hold of, is the understanding that Flutie is one of the last quarterbacks you want to be facing when Sunday rolls around.

It may not be just the football success of Flutie that suddenly has Flutie Fever sweeping across the continent. I don't even think that it is his own brand of cereal called Flutie Flakes that have given him such a household name. But part of the reason that I respect Flutie is his love to just play the game. Money isn't a factor for this growing (not in size, but in popularity) superstar. He signed for only \$200,000. In sports today, that is what you make if you are just a practice dummy. But Flutie has proven he is more than that. He has his opponents looking more like the dummies, and himself: "a steal of a deal" for the Bills.

The incredible football story of Doug Flutie isn't over yet. If he continues to put Buffalo fans in the seats at Rich Stadium, the Bills will have an automatic five-year extension on their contract. The Bills need to sell 11 million dollars worth of luxury seating before December 1 to eliminate any chance of the Bills playing elsewhere in the future. Flutie helped put over 79,000 fans in the seats last week and with continued sales, Flutie's popularity could skyrocket higher than those ticket sales.

Flutie's story is probably not even over yet. Give him another week and another chapter will probably be written. But how much more can Flutie do that he hasn't already? Buffalo knows the answer to that. The playoffs would be great, a Super Bowl appearance would be better, but the ultimate conclusion to this miraculous story would be to do just that. Perform a miracle: the Bills win Super Bowl XXXIII.

Snyder is sports editor for the Beacon. His column appears every week.

INTRAMURAL ROUNDUP

Intramurals

Bowling

M, W, COED

- Individual and team competition
- At Eastway Lanes
- Saturday November 7

Registration Deadline:
October 30

3 vs. 3 Basketball

In Conjunction with Schick SuperHoops

M, W

- Games begin Monday, November 1

Registration Deadline:
November 13

5 vs. 5 Basketball

M, W

- Sign ups are in fall semester
- play begins spring semester

Registration Deadline:
December 11

Recreation

Commuter Euchre Tournament

Registration Deadline: November 6

Men's soccer tames Gators in perfect week

By Jason Snyder
sports editor

The Behrend men's soccer team will enter the AMCC Championships this weekend coming off two hard fought victories over Buffalo State and Allegheny College. With the wins, the men finished the regular season with a 12-8 record, tying Behrend's all-time record for wins in a season.

The men hosted Buffalo State this past Thursday in which they pulled off a 3-1 victory. Dan Falk scored the

game's first goal followed by Travis Lang who scored just before the half. Buffalo State was able to cut the lead in half off a goal by Paul Sterling in the 68th minute. However, the Lions were able to bounce back and clinch the win with Josh Castillo's goal in the closing minutes of the game. Behrend doubled Buffalo State for shots taken, 16-8.

The Lions then battled Allegheny College this past Tuesday. The game was much more evenly matched as the Gators scored first off a goal by Brad Smith in the 68th minute. Behrend's

Travis Lang scored in the 92nd minute to send the game into overtime. Lang once again saved the Lions in the extra session with the game-winner in the 102nd minute to give the Behrend men their first ever win over Allegheny. Assistant coach Chuck Banarich commented on the win saying, "Our team played really well. We played hard and it was a great all-around win. I think we really rose to the occasion."

Behrend will now play in the AMCC Championships this weekend at Frostburg State in Maryland.

AMCC Athlete of the Week

Tiffany Beers served with AMCC recognition

Tiffany Beers was named the AMCC Volleyball Athlete of the Week for the week of October 27 - November 2. She led the Behrend women's volleyball team to a 3-0 week behind her strong offensive and defensive skills. Only a freshman, Beers was able to record 25 kills and 27 digs in the women's 3-2 win over Pitt-Greensburg. She followed up that performance with 15 kills and five aces to lead the Lions to an important win against AMCC rival, LaRoche. Beers is from Townville, PA where she attended Maplewood High School.

The Beacon needs sports writers

Call 898-6488 for more details

The Behrend Classifieds

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Alicia,

Even though your hyper and drink all that coffee; I hope you and Dogg are always a part of me. Luv you!!

RICO

Tem

You asked for it, so here it is.

Will

Students and employees of Penn State Behrend are invited to submit a free classified ad in *The Beacon*. Types of ads may include personal messages and items for sale. Maximum classified length is 25 words. Persons who submit ads must state their affiliation with Behrend. Classifieds are meant for individual use. Official notices and group events should be submitted to the Calendar editor. Businesses must pay regular advertising rates. *The Beacon* can not guarantee the publication of all classified submitted for space purposes. Classifieds should be sent to the Classified editor at *The Beacon*, Reed Building or dropped off at *The Beacon* offices, or sent to behrcoll4@aol.com. Deadline for submission for publication in that week's paper is Monday at 5:00PM.

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