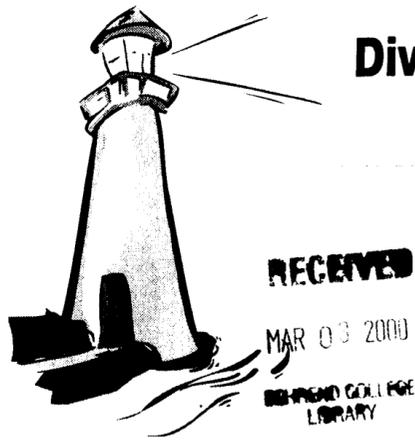


BEHREND



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LIONS VICTORIOUS!!!

An era ends as Lions advance in NCAA Tournament

by Matt Buser
staff writer

It's official. There will never be another intercollegiate basketball game played in Erie Hall.

Thursday night's 64-60 win over Alvernia College was the final game in Erie Hall's storied history, and it was a game those in attendance will not soon forget. Behrend opened up a sizeable lead on Alvernia, who battled back, but ultimately fell to the Lions.

Alvernia brought an 18-9 record to the contest, and had won the Pennsylvania Athletic Conference Tournament to earn the spot in the game. Behrend's win improved their overall record to 24-3, and added to their school-record for wins in a season.

The game's early going was evenly played. Behrend's first basket was an Andy Lawrence three-pointer at 18:36 to make the score 3-2. Alvernia and Behrend exchanged baskets and leads, and at the 10:19 mark, the score was tied, 14-14. Alvernia led by three points with 4:36 to play, and then Behrend got hot.

A Matt Keith three-pointer from the left corner tied the score at 23 with 4:25 to play. Then guard Andy Berchtold made two free throws to give Behrend the lead at 25-23. Keith then made a pair of unanswered threes on Behrend's next two possessions, and Behrend led 31-23 with 2:12 to go. Alvernia's next two possessions resulted in Behrend steals, which were converted into a Keith two-point shot and a three-point play for Ashley Orris, respectively,

capping the 16-0 run, and leaving Behrend with a 36-23 lead with 1:36 remaining in the half.

But Keith wasn't done yet. After an Alvernia basket, Keith hit a three-pointer from five feet behind the line to make the score 39-25 with :49 to play. Both teams failed to score on their next possessions, and the score remained 39-25 going into the half.

Behrend cooled off during the second half. Alvernia outscored Behrend 21-9 in the first twelve minutes had reduced the Behrend lead to 48-45 with 8:08 left in the contest.

"We've done that a lot this year," said Keith. "We have a tendency to go up by 16 and then let the other team come back, make it an exciting game for Erie Hall."

"Everybody makes a run, it's college basketball," said Lawrence. "We knew it was going to happen. We didn't want it to happen, but we just tried to stay calm at the end, make our foul shots and win the game."

A pair of Berchtold free throws and another Keith three-pointer opened the game back up at 55-47 with 6:43 to play. Alvernia again chipped away at the lead, and the score was 60-58 with 1:11 remaining. Orris made two key free throws at 1:01, but Alvernia responded with a basket at :42 to make the score 62-60. Behrend got a key offensive rebound and Chris Hughes made a clutch basket with :10 to go to give Behrend a 64-60 lead. When Alvernia committed a backcourt violation with :01 on the clock, the victory was sealed.

"I'm very proud of my team," said Behrend Head Coach Dave Niland after the win. "We played an

outstanding Alvernia team tonight." He continued, "It took our best effort to win the game, and I think it could have went either way. I'm very, very proud of my players."

Coach Niland had nothing but compliments for the Behrend players that contributed to the win. "I'm very proud of Andy [Lawrence], the way he played tonight. Matt Keith was outstanding. I thought Ashley Orris handled the ball unbelievably well against pressure, he did really well. John Park gave us what he normally does, intensity and rebounding. Nate Willson, the first time he actually ran was tonight. Everyone who sees us play a lot knows what he gives us, he's our middle linebacker, and I feel very happy for him, he really wanted to play."

Willson was "about 40%" according to Niland after suffering an ankle injury in Saturday's AMCC championship game. Chris Hughes was in foul trouble most of the night, and faced numerous double teams throughout the contest, but Niland said, "I think he played very well under the circumstances."

Lawrence scored 13 points on five of eight shooting. Keith made six of nine three-pointers and finished with 20 points. Orris scored ten, grabbed six boards, and dished out six assists. Willson had five rebounds and four assists, and Hughes finished with 11 points and four rebounds.

The players were also proud of the win. "I can't explain the feeling," said Lawrence. "I just feel great for Behrend, and Coach Niland has worked so hard. We're getting the new gym next year, and this is going



PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER

The Erie Hall crowd rushes the court for the last time after the Lions won the last game ever to be played in the facility. Behrend advances in the NCAA Division III Tournament with the win.

to be good for the program."

Lawrence never doubted that the team could win. "I knew we could do it. People looking on the outside might not think that we could have, but I know what we're made of."

The team doesn't have long to celebrate, however, as they now will travel to Rochester, New York, and face Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) tomorrow,

Saturday, March 4. Behrend played at RIT during last year's regular season, and were beaten 64-50.

"It feels great," said Keith. "Coach told us to keep our emotions in check, because we owe RIT one on Saturday. This feels great, because it's the first time in school history, but we've got to keep everything in check and get ready for Saturday."

Coach Niland talked about

Saturday's game. "We played RIT last year, and they handled us pretty well up there. But, we've got a pretty mature group. Our seniors have been great all year about focusing the kids. My concern is how healthy we're going to be."

Details of the team's NCAA tournament results will be in the next *Beacon*, which will be available the Friday following Spring Break.

Behrend women complete season with ECAC Tournament showing

by Jason Snyder
editor-in-chief

The Behrend women's basketball team completed one of the program's winningest seasons by competing in the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Tournament after hosting their second straight Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) Tournament this past weekend. The Lions made it to the AMCC championship game for the third consecutive season, while hosting the event for the second straight season.

On February 25, the Behrend women faced the La Roche Redhawks in the opening round of the AMCC Tournament. Despite falling behind early, the women were able to come back to defeat the Redhawks after a 10-point deficit at the half. Behrend dominated the second half, outscoring La Roche, 42-21.

Behrend coach Roz Fornari commented on the come from behind win, saying, "we expended a lot of energy and emotion to do that. I think that affected us going into the championship game. We were pretty well exhausted as a team."

The Lions entered the championship game on Saturday, February 26, to face Frostburg State, the only con-

ference team to defeat the Lions previously in the season. The teams had split their season series at one game apiece. Frostburg's victory earlier in the season was sparked by Shannon Rexrode, the conference's player of the year, who dropped 29 points against the Lions.

In the championship game, the Lions held Rexrode under 20 points, forcing Frostburg to make shots from the perimeter. "We tried to take Rexrode out of the picture. I think we played her pretty tough, but we didn't guard her perimeter," said Fornari.

Frostburg shot 66% from the field in the second half to pull away. "I don't care what you do. We were playing great defense. But you're not going to stop a team that's just on a roll," said Fornari. "And they were on a roll."

Frostburg quickly extended their lead to 17 points midway through the second half behind their perimeter shooting. Behrend's Kate Costanzo slowed the Frostburg run with four 3-pointers for 20 points.

Behrend was outscored in the second half, 44-31, to take their first conference championship in their history.

Fornari commented on the disappointing loss saying, "it was really

unfortunate that we lost in our championship game here. Things don't always work out the way they're supposed to. I wanted more for our team."

Despite the loss, the Behrend women still qualified for the Eastern College Athletic Conference Tournament for the second time in three years. The women traveled to the Skibo Gymnasium to face Carnegie Mellon. The Lady Tartans jumped on top early, taking a 30-19 lead into the intermission.

Behrend kept the game close throughout the second half, cutting the lead to single digits with only minutes to go. Costanzo, again, sparked the Lions' effort with 21 points. The women still fell, 67-56, despite the effort.

"We got ourselves into a hole that we couldn't get out of. We came back at the end just like we typically do. We don't give up and that's something I'm proud of that team for," said Fornari.

The loss marked the end of a successful season for the Behrend women who continue to make a name for themselves in the AMCC and further on.

Behrend forwards Erin Phillips and Jen O'Lare were named to the AMCC

First Team for their performance this season. "They were what we played around. We built our offense around our posts. Those two were our go-to players," commented Fornari.

Behrend senior leader Carrie Nestor was named to the second team All-Conference team for the third consecutive season. Nestor doubled any other player in both assists and steals in the entire conference. Fornari questions the decision, saying, "they equate points with leading a team, and it's kind of unfortunate that they look at it that way." Fornari added, "if you were to ask me 'Player of the Year in our conference?' I would have told you Carrie Nestor. To me, the most valuable player is someone that you remove from your team, and can't win without." She added, "If I would have pulled Carrie off our team this year, we wouldn't have won without her. So, to me, that's the Player of the Year."

Tiffany Buck joined Nestor as the team's only seniors. The duo has started in every game in their college careers at Behrend. Since the pair walked into Erie Hall, the Lions have not seen an unsuccessful season yet. "Their dedication to our program is just a compliment to them. They helped us grow," realizes Fornari.



PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER

Senior leader Carrie Nestor looks to pass the ball in the 2000 AMCC Championships last week. Nestor ends her career in a Lions uniform as the all-time assists and steals leader at the College for her career. Nestor has played, and started, in 107 straight games, never sitting out a game for injury or anything else.

"Our seniors are going to have a lot of memories."

The future of the Lions is hampered by the loss of Nestor and Buck but it still looks promising with the young

players coming up.

Despite the losses, Fornari realizes that the way the Lions played in the closing games "was their reward for their hard work all season."