

A season to remember...Part One

by Matt Buser
staff writer

With a team-record 26 wins against only four losses, an unblemished 12-0 in conference play, and an appearance in the Elite Eight of the school's first-ever NCAA Division III National Tournament, you would think the Behrend men's basketball team would take a minute to rest on its laurels.

Not a chance. "We certainly are proud of what we've accomplished," commented Behrend Head Coach Dave Niland. "But for us, the coaching staff and returning players, the 2000-2001 season has already started."

The Lions have turned their focus to the 2000-2001 campaign, even though their appearance in the NCAA Division III Elite Eight was only two weeks ago.

in assists with 94, and also scored eight points and grabbed four boards per game.

They will be counted on heavily next season as the team's veterans.

"They were just as important as our seniors as far as playmaking and hitting big shots," said Niland. "I think they're excited about the chance to lead a new group of players coming in here in the direction we need to be, as far as work ethic and team concepts."

Sophomores Bill McKinney and Greg Dunn will also return after seeing action in many of this year's games.

"Greg and Bill have both come a long way," commented Niland. "They've gotten physically stronger, and they work extremely hard in practice. Even though they were key contributors this year, minute-wise, it certainly will be more next year."

Freshmen Kevin Dubyak, Steve Merrill, and Matt Henderson, after spending a year in the system, will also see their roles increase next season.

Next year's team, and the teams to follow, can look at the 1999-2000 Behrend men's basketball team as inspiration and an example of excellence.

"You can use it as a benchmark, saying 'Look, guys, this is how hard we need to work to get to the tournament,'" said Niland. He continued, "It goes back to the old saying, 'It's amazing what you can accomplish when no one gets the credit.' And that's really been this team, nobody cared about the individual stuff."

Niland added, "Our kids know that past performance doesn't ensure future success. It's present performance, as in staying in shape and working on our game that'll help us reach our future goals. We're already looking forward to starting on next year. We have to."

In addition to continuing the success the team enjoyed as far as wins and losses, Coach Niland also hopes to see the same atmosphere at next year's games that he witnessed this season.

"My hope is that we continue the excitement that the men's and women's teams have generated. We had great crowds this year," said Niland. "We hope that

we're starting a little bit of a tradition here, and we don't want it to end because Erie Hall is closing. We want to start a new tradition at the [Athletics and Recreation Center]. It's going to be a great place and a beautiful facility, and we want people to come out and support us, and I think the student body will."



PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER
Ashley Orris (23) will play an important role in the success and development of next year's team.

**NEXT WEEK...
PART TWO OF A
SEASON TO
REMEMBER**



PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER
The men's basketball team displays their defense which was a key component to their success this season.

Although the team is graduating four seniors, they will have an outstanding group of returning players, and also are making strides toward bringing in a new class of freshmen for next season.

We will talk about the incredible careers of the four seniors, Andy Lawrence, John Park, Nate Willson, and Chris Hughes, in next week's *Beacon*. Returning sophomore guards Matt Keith and Andy Berchtold, and junior guard Ashley Orris also played important roles in the unprecedented success of this year's team.

Keith made 45% (92/207) of his three-point shots, and averaged 10.7 points per game, third best on the team. Berchtold shot 50% from the field and three-point line (59/119 and 17/34, respectively), and averaged six points per contest. Orris led the team



PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER
Matt Keith's impressive 50% shot percentage from the foul and three point lines made him a clutch shooter for the Lions.

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