

Year for the Ages

National attention, the End of an Era, and conference championships highlight Behrend athletics in 99-00



Erie Hall goes out with a bang; men's basketball just refused to go out

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

With a 64-60 win over Alvernia College on March 2, Erie Hall's storied history as the home of the Lions ended. *

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 win also propelled the men's team to the second round of the NCAA Division III Tournament where they would defeat Rochester Institute of Technology.

Behrend continued their dream season with a win over Cortland State to advance to the Elite Eight.

Salem State stopped the Lions one game short of the Final Four with a 75-69 victory, despite a gutsy effort by the Behrend players.

The miracle run of the Lions made their 1999-2000 season, a "season for the ages."



Women's basketball qualifies for ECACs

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. 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.

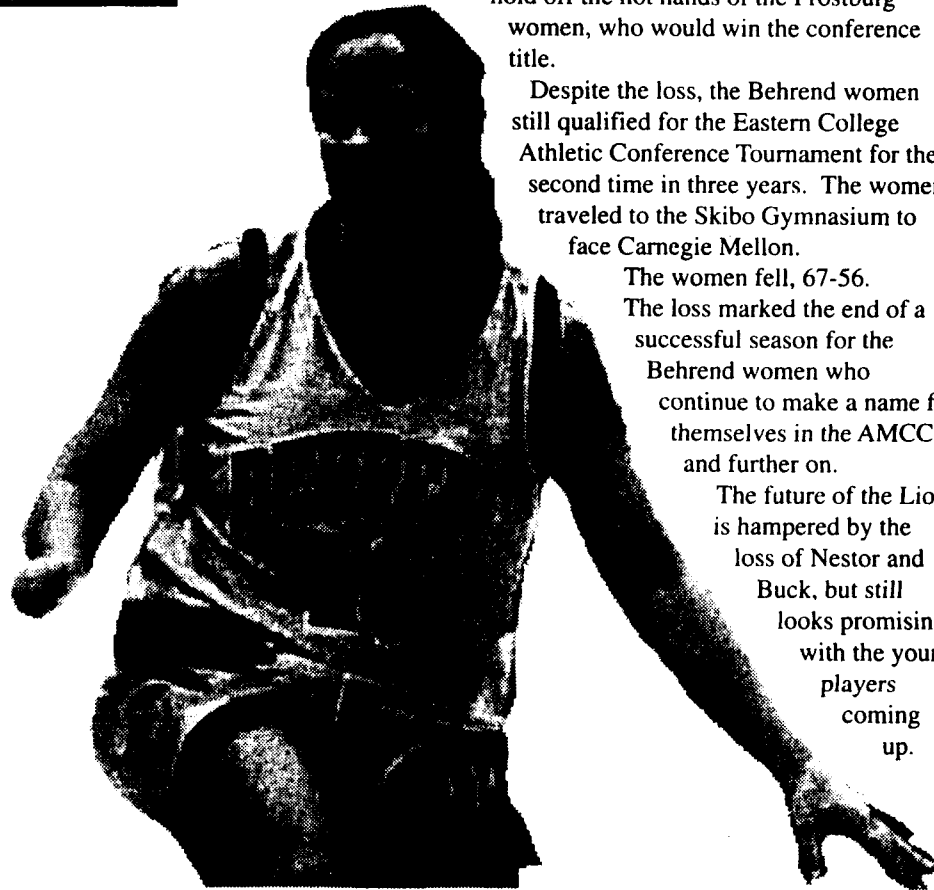
In the AMCC championship game, the Behrend women couldn't hold off the hot hands of the Frostburg women, who would win the conference title.

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 women fell, 67-56.

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.

The future of the Lions is hampered by the loss of Nestor and Buck, but still looks promising with the young players coming up.



Erie Hall's basketball tradition unmatched

Since 1953, Erie Hall has served its main function as the home of the Behrend Lions basketball teams. The facility has been the home of many memories and has added its own mystique as the Lions' home court.

Although the building has been criticized by some as being small and an uncomfortable space for sporting events, Erie Hall has built a tradition of being the home of the Lions and a tough place for visiting teams to play.

Athletic Director Brian Streeter recognizes that tradition. "Erie Hall has had a great tradition with this campus. It's a wonderful place to play as a home court advantage. The fans are part of the game, everybody in the facility is part of the game. You can't beat a better environment."

For such a small facility, Erie Hall is seen as having its advantages that larger gyms are unable to have. "Here, you feel every pass, you feel the sweat, you see the sweat. A kid can shake his hair and the sweat will hit the wall behind you. Not too many gyms have that," added Streeter.

Behrend men's basketball coach Dave Niland realizes Erie Hall's advantages saying, "it always has been (a tough place to play)." He added, "Brian Streeter has been able to create a fun atmosphere in Erie Hall. Yeah, it's an older building, but when you think of college basketball, certainly on the east coast, you think of Erie Hall."

Streeter concluded, "there's so many things that this facility brings, but the tightness of the whole place is probably the best thing. You've got an old facility that has served the college for 48 years, and it's still serving it right now. And it will, it's never going to end. Erie

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Hall will still have a unique part of student recreational life on campus."

The building will continue to serve as an important recreational center on campus, but its tradition as the home of the Lions will end. On February 16, the Behrend men and women hosted Pitt-Greensburg in the last regular season game in Erie Hall.

"The End of an Era" came with the Behrend men winning their first round game in the NCAA Division III Tournament. The gym was packed, living up to Erie Hall's tradition of sportsmanship and success.

Women's soccer wins title in dramatic fashion

The Lions advanced to the ECAC playoffs this past fall after winning their third AMCC Championship in as many years on October 31.

Behrend opened the AMCC Championships against Lake Erie in the semi-final match. Behrend defeated Lake Erie 3-0 en route to the championship game against AMCC rival Frostburg. But the Bobcats were no match for Behrend, as Frostburg was shutout by goalkeeper Michelle Malatesta, as the Lions captured their third straight AMCC title by winning 2-0.

Playing in difficult weather conditions, the Lions fell one goal behind at halftime after a goal by Villa Julie's second leading scorer Kerri Harman. Not to be outdone, Behrend's Bethany Cummings tied the game at one a piece at the 65th minute. The game would remain tied throughout the rest of regulation and almost two overtime periods. Heroics provided by Penn State goalkeeper Michelle Malatesta allowed the Behrend Lions to remain tied with the opposing Mustangs.

With 38 seconds remaining in the second overtime, Penn State Behrend's Amy LaRocca kicked the shot heard 'round the campus' when she scored the winning goal. Her goal helped to advance the Lady Lions to the semi-finals in the ECAC Tournament.

Conference Dominance Women's tennis three-peat

The women's tennis team three-peated as Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) champions this past fall season.

From the start, the women's tennis team was poised to win their third AMCC title in as many years. Behrend dominated the AMCC from the beginning of the season and they ended up with an overall record of 17-2. Most important, their conference record was a perfect 10-0, which secured them the top seed at the conference tournament. Besides being undefeated in conference play, the women's tennis team also set a school record for wins by winning 17 matches.

Behrend also dominated the all-conference teams, with six players being named to one or more All-Conference teams. Penn State Behrend's Julie Leininger, Jamie Brubaker, Angela Albertson, Jen Morton, and Christine Chan were named to the AMCC All-Conference singles first-team. Julie Leininger and Jamie Brubaker also were named to the AMCC All-Conference doubles first-team. AMCC All-Conference recognition also was given to Emily Rubin, AMCC All-Conference singles second-team, and Christine Chan and Jen Morton for AMCC All-Conference doubles third-team. "They all played very well," women's tennis coach Jeff Barger said.



Unlikely Champs Men's soccer upsets Frostburg for championship

The Penn State Behrend men's soccer team claimed the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) championship this past fall. The Lions defeated AMCC rival Frostburg State by a score of 2-1 en route to claiming the championship.

Men's soccer coach Dan Perritano was excited about winning a second AMCC championship. "Our players displayed a positive and enthusiastic spirit in this tournament," Perritano said. "We put away our chances to defeat a very talented team."

This is the second time that the Behrend Lions have defeated Frostburg en route to the AMCC title. Frostburg fell to the Lions in the inaugural championship 1-0 after Behrend posted a 12-8 season. Last year, the Lions set a school record by ending the season 13-9, but fell to Frostburg in the AMCC championship game, 4-0.