

Swim teams out to prove they're for real

by Kate Levinsky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

The Penn State Behrend men's and women's swim teams have begun their second season of competition. Behrend will host five home meets in the Junker Center.

Coach Josh Heynes sees a bright future.

"Overall, we want to improve on the previous year," said Heynes. "We want to try to score more points, and get swimmers qualified for the NCAA III at the end of the year. Expectations are high for (us), both as a team and individually."

The women's team consists of only sophomores and freshmen. The sophomores are Tara Braden (Erie/Fairview), Kristin Campbell (Saxtonburg/Knoch), Amanda Brown (Spartansburg/Corry), and Hollie Stash (N. Huntingdon/Norwin). Braden transferred in from Gannon, while Campbell, Brown, and Stash have grown from last year's collegiate experience.

The newcomers include Amy Jaskolski (Irwin/Norwin), Samantha Cibula (Bradford/Bradford), Jana

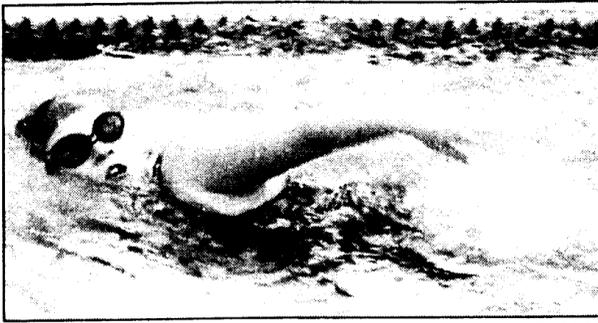


PHOTO BY KRISTIN RODGERS

Freshman Amy Jaskolski swims a lap in the Junker Center pool.

Bahnak (Ardara/Norwin), and Christine Williams (Seltzer/Pottsville).

On the men's side, senior Jon Harding (Tunkhannock/Wyoming Seminary) and junior Ben Atkins (Pleasantville/Titusville) will provide team leadership. Harding and Atkins bring experience from playing on the water polo team. Sophomores Chad Holzshu (Greenville/Reynolds), Dario Kis (Erie/Central), and Brian Vallor (Pittsburgh/Baldwin) also played on the water polo team.

Freshmen Robb Christensen (Rochester, N.Y./Gates-Chili), Justin

Lucas (Houston, Texas/Cypress-Texas Falls), Casey Doody (Scarborough, Maine/Cape Elizabeth), Liam Barnes (Titusville), Eric Phillips (Monroeville/Gateway), Lucas Dushac (Indiana, Pa.), and Alex Fertelmes (Cabot/Knoch) are other players who doubled for water polo.

Freshmen Scott Frison (Port Allegany/Port Allegany), Wes Gourley (Harborcreek), Tom Vignolini (Fombell/Riverside), and Joe Deely (Pittsburgh/Taylor Allderice) round out the roster. Atkins and Kis will serve as this year's team captains.

"I believe our biggest strength is that we have a lot of balance on the team," Heynes said. "We have athletes willing to put in the work to get us to the regional and national level."

The Lions' main goals are to win more dual meets and to get individuals and relays qualified for NCAA Division III Championships at the end of the season.

"The biggest obstacle is getting over our main weakness, and that is not knowing our own potential," said Heynes. "We have a ton of talent and ability, we just have to harness it every time we go to a meet."

The Lions practice Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 6:15 to 7:30 a.m., Monday through Friday from 4 to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 8:30 to 11 a.m. to prepare for their meets.

The season began on Nov. 6, when the team traveled to Buffalo State. The men got their first win with a score of 125-93, while the women only lost 110-83.

"Many of our swimmers were as fast or faster than they were at the end of last year," said Heynes.

The teams will compete against Gannon on Tuesday, and then at the



PHOTO BY KRISTIN RODGERS

From top to bottom, freshman Alex Fertelmes, sophomore captain Dario Kis, freshman Eric Phillips, and junior captain Ben Atkins waded in the pool while listening to head coach Josh Heynes run practice.

ECAC Division III Championships Nov. 30 through Dec. 2. The Gannon game will be the first official college meet at Behrend.

"Gannon is a very strong Division II school," said Heynes. "They have a huge squad, which means they will have all of their lanes filled in every race. Swimming against

these faster schools will hopefully make us faster by the end of our season. Competition will be great! I believe our top swimmers on the men's side will win, or place with in the top two of each event."

As for the ECAC Division III Championships, the Lions are training extremely hard. The performance at ECAC will dictate the rest of the year's training before the ECAC Championships at the end of February. Competition for this meet will be against all ECAC schools up and down the East Coast.

"This is a fast meet each year, so our team has to not only qualify for events, but must get in the fast heats of each race," said Heynes. "There are no preliminaries and finals at this meet. It is a one-time shot, and then the event is complete."

"This season we will face another tough schedule," Heynes said. "I believe we can rise to the occasion. We are looking forward to the ECAC Division III Championships in December, and the AMCC Classic at Grove City. We are definitely looking forward to turning some heads, and to show other teams the improvements that we have made in just one year."

Lions avenge tough AMCC loss

By Jason Snyder
Staff writer

Behrend cross country coach Dave Cooper knew all along that his men's team was the best in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference. He believed all they needed was a healthy team on a good day.

The Lions answered the call this past Saturday at the NCAA Division III Mid-east Regional meet at Lehigh, Pa., avenging their tough conference loss to Frostburg State with an 18th place finish. AMCC champion Frostburg settled for 20th.

"The men knew they were the best in the AMCC, but illness prevented them from doing it at the AMCC meet," said Cooper. "Beating Frostburg at regionals was high on their list of priorities."

The Lions accomplished their goal in convincing fashion. They topped their conference rival by 114 points by placing their top five runners before Frostburg's number three man crossed the line. Their accomplishment was a far cry from the conference championships when Frostburg held four of the race's top seven spots.

Kevin Ritzert, as he did all season, led the charge for the Lions with a 75th place finish out of the 200-runner field. He crossed the line in 27:53.

Mike Barlett and Dan Croft, who were plagued with illness at the conference championships, returned to claim 99th and 123rd places, respectively. Matt Sprang finished in 117th place with a time of 28:47. Clayton Kirschner, who had a breakthrough run at the conference championships, continued his late-season success with a 128th place finish.

Haverford College paced the field, winning the regional meet by plac-

ing their five runners in the top 10. They topped second-place Elizabethtown by 56 points. Both teams qualified for the NCAA Division III National Championships.

The AMCC individual champion Andrew Musinguzi of La Roche placed fifth in the meet to qualify for nationals, as well. J.B. Haglund of Haverford won the regional meet with a time of 24:58.

Although the men accomplished one goal, they fell short in their quest for a top 15 performance with their

18th place finish. Cooper hoped the men could duplicate or improve on the 1998 team's 15th place finish, but fell 173 points short.

"It was a season-long, determined effort to finish well," said Cooper. "This season should establish a benchmark from which Behrend will consistently improve."

Improvement will be the key for the Lions next year as the men should return with their top five runners intact

Other Lions finish breakout year

by Jason Snyder
Staff writer

It was a statement year for the Behrend women's cross country team that set standards never before accomplished in the team's short history. The Lions ended their run this past Saturday with a 16th place finish at the NCAA Division III Mid-east Regionals, their best finish ever at the season's final meet.

Coach Dave Cooper realized the women's potential to finish well at the regional meet, hoping to make big strides coming hot off the heels of the team's first ever Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference championship two weeks ago.

The women finished 39 points short of Cooper's goal of a top 15 performance, but their finish was six positions better than their previous best of 22nd last year. The women finished with 532 points and topped AMCC rival Frostburg State by 215 points, placing all five of their scored runners ahead of Frostburg's number three runner.

Jessica Knapp, who paced the women's team for most of the season, crossed the line first for Behrend in

82nd place with a time of 20:30.

Knapp was challenged by teammate Lyndsey Boor who finished three seconds behind in 85th place. Boor paced the Lions last season at the regional meet with a time of 20:49.

Andrea Sanko, who challenged Knapp all season, finished in 102nd place, followed by AMCC's Newcomer of the Year Claire Manelick in 116th.

"Lyndsey Boor and Clair Manelick stepped it up for the women," said Cooper.

Boor and Manelick consistently closed the gap between themselves and teammates Knapp and Sanko, allowing the Lions to be more competitive in the big meets.

Suzie Szafran finished in 147th place to round out Behrend's top five.

Moravian College won the regional meet by 41 points over Dickinson State University. Both teams qualified for the NCAA Division III National Championships. Moravian's Heidi Wolfsberger won the individual title with a time of 17:52.

The Lions should return all of their runners from this year's team and will have plenty of time to build on their accomplishments.

Cooper gets teams 'caught up'

by Jason Snyder
Staff writer

Behrend cross country coach Dave Cooper didn't have much time to get to know his runners after he was hired in late August. Cooper and his teams traveled to compete at Buffalo State one week after the new coach was put at the helm.

Since then, Cooper has been "catching up" with a group of runners who were used to former coach Rich Hoffman.

"My first season was enjoyable, but I always felt I was 'catching up,'" said Cooper. "Learning the ropes in a different setting is new for me. The teams made the transition to the new

job enjoyable."

But as the new coach was catching up with his new runners and the new college atmosphere after 28 seasons coaching high school cross country at Union City, his teams were catching up and passing their competition.

The women's team captured its first ever Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference championship under Cooper's guidance, and the men's team challenged defending champion Frostburg State.

"Both teams have a fantastic work ethic," said Cooper. "They also had confidence in their training, which can be difficult going from one coach's program to another."

Cooper is already duplicating some of his success from his coaching days

at Union City, capturing his first conference crown in only his first season. At Union City, Cooper captured 29 league titles between his boys and girls teams and captured the boys state titles in 1996 and 1997.

The Erie Times-News sports department listed Cooper among the "Coaches of the Century" in 2000.

But with a new century comes new challenges for Cooper, who has answered the call. He has already been named AMCC Coach of the Year for the women's team in his opening season at the college ranks.

"I think the future for cross country looks great here at Behrend," said Cooper. "We have a solid group of young runners to build with."

This week's senior athletic profile

Sarah Peterson: 'Dragon' known for being center of attention

by Kate Levinsky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

Sarah Peterson, a Behrend Lion volleyball co-captain, started playing the sport when she was in seventh grade. Her position is outside hitter. She has two roles on the team. When she is in the front row she always hits from the left side, as well as playing defense in the back row on the same side.

Peterson's nickname "Dragon" was given to her by teammate Pam Walters.

"I got this nickname because at the Behrend tournament, I had a really good and hard-hitting game against Bradford," said Peterson. "Therefore, they coined me 'the dragon.' Then during the rest of the season they would always yell to 'unleash the dragon.'"

This nickname can also describe her personality.

"My two strongest characteristics are determination and hardwork," said Peterson. "I am very determined to do well and succeed, but my hard work helps to achieve my goals."

Before games, the team played silly games to relieve themselves of tension.

"We always made sure we had fun," said Peterson.

The games included "Spud," "Duck, Duck, Goose," "Queen of the Court," or a song and dance. But when it came game time, Peterson and the Lions were ready to play, which is why the team ended with a 22-10 record and an AMCC Championship. However, it wasn't just this loosening up before games that contributed to their success.

"The coaches have taught me that mental strength can be better than skill," said Peterson. "When you are losing, you have to dig deep, but you can always come back. Having the ability to do that really helped the team out a lot this year."

Peterson participates in Delta Sigma Pi, a business coed fraternity, and within that organization does a lot of community service. A few weekends ago Peterson helped serve food at the Halloween party at the Barber Center, and took part in the covering of the Flagship Niagara. Peterson said managing time is always hard, but somehow she gets by.

"It requires a lot of late nights and studying whenever I can."

Peterson even finds time to have a part-time job as a waitress at Red Lobster. All of this leaves Peterson with very little spare time.



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO

Sarah Peterson is so injury prone the athletic department gave her the Johnson & Johnson award for most visits to the trainer.

"Spare time? I have spare time? Well, if I do, I like to workout and spend time with my friends."

Peterson said she has the ability to be the "brunt" of all accidents and problems.

"No matter what seemed to be happening I seemed to be in the center of it," said Peterson. "Whether it was being hit by the ball cart, never getting my food done right at restaurants, or being knocked over by my own teammates, I have seemed to have had a hard time with injuries at college and have the 'J&J' award to prove it."

The J&J award stands for Johnson & Johnson. The athletic trainer gives it to someone who seems to always be in the training room.

Peterson is majoring in Marketing and will study abroad in Costa Rica next semester. After graduation she plans on attending law school.

"I wanted to go to law school because I have always been interested in the law and government," said Peterson. She hopes to enroll at the University of Virginia to study law. Still, Peterson can't stop thinking about the past season.

"I am really happy with the way we ended the season. We ended on top with our first ever AMCC title," said Peterson. "Winning the title had to be one of the best feelings of my career, especially since I got the game-winning hit."

"I was so excited, and was glad that our team finally got the chance to prove we were the best. It was a great feeling when we won and everybody rushed the court. I am really proud of my team, and am so glad I got to meet and become friends with all of them. I wish them all lots of luck in the future."