

Lions overpower Lake Erie to break four-game losing streak

by Mike Bello
sports editor

After what seemed like an improbable turnaround in early December for the women's basketball team— it ran together a three game winning streak to get back to .500 — the Lions have dropped four of their past five games heading into the main core of their conference season. Five of their seven games in January are against AMCC teams.

Behrend hosted Lake Erie on Wednesday in a game the Lions absolutely dominated from start to finish in winning 86-54. The win improved Behrend's record to 5-8 overall, 2-1 in the AMCC. The Lions went into the locker room with a 44-25 lead in front of 156 fans, and then played most of their bench in the second half.

Erin Phillips went 8-of-14 from the floor for 20 points, which allowed her to pass the 1,300-point plateau. Phillips now has 1,313 points and is chasing the women's all-time record of 1,409. With 12 games left, Phillips just has to average eight points per game, a far cry from her 15.8 PPG average. Rick Demski (1987-91) owns the all-time points scored record with 1,466, and Phillips only has to average 12.75 PPG to break Demski's record.

Seniors Kate Costanzo and Christine Charnock both had solid games for Behrend, scoring 15 and 14 points, respectively. Sophomore Crystal McGarvey grabbed a game-high eight rebounds, while freshman Bambi Lewis dished out four assists on the night. Sophomore Erica Mozdy added nine points and four steals.

The Lions returned from a 17-day layoff last Saturday when they traveled east to play Buffalo State University. Just like Buffalo residents had to dig out from the several feet of snow, Behrend had to dig out from an early 43-27 deficit. The Bengals, though, were just too much for Behrend to overcome any sort of early troubles, as Buffalo State cruised to a 78-53 win.

The Lions, plagued by shooting woes and turnovers the whole day, hit only 31 percent of their shots and handed the ball over 38 times, including 26 steals by the Bengals. Phillips was 6-of-12 from the floor for 15 points, while Costanzo added 10 points. Phillips also grabbed a team-high nine rebounds, but Buffalo State's early first-half shooting (48.6 percent)

ended up being the difference.

The team celebrated the end of the fall semester by touring the sights and sounds of bustling Las Vegas a week before Christmas. The players, who played two games at UNLV's home court while in Nevada, got to visit the Hoover Dam, ride to the top of Vegas' version of the Eiffel Tower, and even catch a show of "Lord of the Dance", among other stops.

"The highlight of the trip was seeing all of the sights of Las Vegas," said Charnock. "Every hotel on the strip had something unique and different about it."

On Dec. 18 - the Lions' first game since a 78-54 loss to Penn State Altoona on Dec. 8 at the Junker Center - Behrend played its first game against Cal Lutheran. The game proved to be a nail-biter to the end.

The Lions rallied from a 35-29 halftime deficit, but Behrend proved too selective with its shots as the team lost 61-60. The Lions had one of their best games offensively, hitting 55.6 percent of their shots, as well as two-thirds of their foul shots (20 of 30). Cal Lutheran, on the other hand, hit only 39 percent of its floor shots and 57 percent of its foul shots, but took 30 more field goal attempts than Behrend.

Phillips led all scorers with 23 points and contributed 10 rebounds, while Costanzo added nine points and a game-high 11 rebounds. Charnock Mozdy both contributed 10 points to the losing effort. Behrend was again plagued by a turnover disparity, 34 to Cal Lutheran's 16.



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON

An open Allison Skiff calls for the ball from freshman teammate Bambi Lewis during the Lions' 86-54 win against Lake Erie on Wednesday.

The next day the Lions played Delaware Valley, but the Lion defense was not on the prowl like the day before, giving up the most points all season in an 83-66 loss. The team fared well when it had the ball, shooting just over 40 percent, but Delaware scorched the Lions for a field goal percentage of 52.5. Phillips, for the second day in a row, sank 23 points and had 10 rebounds, while Mozdy added 11 points and four assists.

The Lions know that even just the two games played in Vegas can be a valuable resource for upcoming games against more familiar opponents.

"We faced some strong competition in Las Vegas; it was a good learning experience as a team," said Costanzo. "Our challenging non-conference games will definitely help us out in the AMCC."

The Lions host Frostburg (1-0, 3-8) on Saturday at 2 p.m. before playing two non-conference opponents early next week at home - Washington & Jefferson (5-5) on Monday (7 p.m.) and Fredonia (5-4) on Thursday (7 p.m.). Once the Lions get those games out of the way, eight of their last nine games will be against the AMCC, which means they will have to work extra hard to improve upon their current 1-1 conference record.

"The AMCC will be an interesting battle, anybody can beat anybody on any night," said Costanzo.

Charnock echoed the same idea. "Our conference is tougher this year than in the past," she said, "but as a team we are up for the challenge."

This week's senior athletic profile

Matt Keith: Overcoming tragedy to take advantage of college years

by Kate Leviansky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

Senior basketball player Matt Keith admires many athletes, but there's one in particular he'd like to play a little one-on-one with, no matter what the outcome would surely be.

"If ever given the opportunity, I would want to play one-on-one with Michael Jordan. He is the best basketball player to ever play the game," said Keith. "Not to mention, he is one of the best role models for our generation. I think his comeback was great for the sport, because it increased the attention of fans. I compare his comeback to basketball, to what Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa did for baseball when they had their incredible home run race."

"I admire Jordan the most because he knew that coming back could tarnish his image, given the way his career ended. But, he does not care about his image. He loves the game of basketball, and that is all that matters to him - playing."

Keith started playing basketball when he was 7 years old. His older brother Ryan taught him how to play. Tragically, Ryan was killed by a drunk driver at the age of 16. At the time, Matt was only 13. He reflected on his brother's death.

"There is not a family that is as close as my family. We have been through a lot together. Something like that can either tear a family apart or make them stronger; we chose to get stronger. My biggest influence in life is my family. I am very close with my sister. She is a beautiful person, and I love her children as if they were my own."

For Keith, playing basketball helped him cope with his brother's sudden death.

"Basketball has always been a way to get away from problems in life, which is why I love it," Keith said.

Keith has been the starting point-guard for Behrend the past three years, and the captain of the team for the past two. During his sophomore year, the Lions made it all the way to the Elite Eight in the NCAA Division III tournament.

"Which means, there [were] only eight teams in the country that [were] still playing and we were one of the eight," said Keith.

Keith made 17 3-pointers in just four games during that tournament. He also set a school record with 92 3-pointers in the 1999-2000 season, and was ranked in the top 10 in the nation for 3-pointers made that year. He is currently fourth in school history for 3-pointers made in a career. So far, he has been a part of 67 wins to only 30 losses in his



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON
Matt Keith hopes to one day go one-on-one with Michael Jordan, although how many points Keith will be spotted is still up in the air.

basketball career at Behrend.

Basketball practices range from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. and last up to 2 1/2 hours. The team also lifts for 35 minutes, three times a week.

The Lions are 8-5, and Keith - the only senior - leads the way.

"It started out with about 10 freshmen in my class and through the past four years, I'm the only one left," said Keith. "The rest of the guys on the team are sophomores and freshmen, so I get a lot of the old man jokes. I think our team is going to have an unbelievable finish to the season, because we are just starting to gel as a team."

Keith has learned many things from his coaches at Behrend. The most important is how to manage time.

"I've matured a lot as a person in my four years playing for Coach Niland," said Keith.

During the season, Keith does not hold a job because he said it is almost impossible to balance basketball, classes, and work all at once. However, during the summers, he referees for various basketball camps and leagues. He has also

worked as a coach for Behrend basketball camps, as well as Gannon University basketball camps.

"I teach the kids at the camps the same things that I have learned from my coaches; how to play the game and most importantly to be a good person," said Keith.

Keith graduated high school from North East, just down the road from the Behrend campus. At Behrend, his major is marketing, where he holds a 3.0 cumulative GPA. He plans on working in pharmaceutical sales when he graduates, and has already been in contact with Sankyo Pharma, a company based in Pittsburgh.

"In five years I hope to be doing something that makes me happy, and hopefully starting to find someone special to share everything with," said Keith. "My dream in life is popular... I want to make a lot of money and spend it on the people that are important to me."

Keith has one bit of advice to give before he graduates.

"Enjoy these times, because they are over faster than you can imagine."

THIS WEEK'S BASKETBALL PROMOTIONS:

January 12, 2002:

Coaches vs. Cancer Night
Erie Otters Relay Race

Winner Receives Otter Prize Package

"Best Seats In The House," Sponsored by Rent-A-Center and Pizza Hut

Winner is entitled to watch the game from a Couch and Lounge Chair. They will also receive FREE Pizza Hut Pizza and Pepsi Soft Drinks

January 14, 2002:

Pepsi Night
3-Point Shoot-Out

Winner Receives Pepsi Prize Package

Mt Dew Code Red Samples will be handed out at the entrance of the game

"Best Seats In The House," Sponsored by Rent-A-Center and Pizza Hut

Winner is entitled to watch the game from a Couch and Lounge Chair They will also receive FREE Pizza Hut Pizza and Pepsi Soft Drinks

January 16, 2002:

Pizza Hut and Rent-A-Center Night
3-Point Shoot-Out

Winner Receives "Spirit Survivor" T-Shirt

Pizza Hut and Rent-A-Center coupons will be handed out at the entrance of the game

"Best Seats In The House," Sponsored by Rent-A-Center and Pizza Hut

Winner is entitled to watch the game from a Couch and Lounge Chair They will also receive FREE Pizza Hut Pizza and Pepsi Soft Drinks

January 17, 2002:

Red River Roadhouse Night
3-Point Shoot-Out

Winner Receives \$20.00 Red River Roadhouse Gift Certificates

"Best Seats In The House," Sponsored by Rent-A-Center and Pizza Hut

Winner is entitled to watch the game from a Couch and Lounge Chair They will also receive FREE Pizza Hut Pizza and Pepsi Soft Drinks



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON

C. Wolf on the prowl? Sure, he may be entertaining these couch potatoes at the Junker Center during the basketball doubleheader on Wednesday, but what Mr. Mascot doesn't realize is that a Lion was spotted inside the building looking for some fresh prey. Good luck, C. Wolf!