

This week's senior athletic profile

Kate Costanzo: Searching for an AMCC title and the perfect life



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Kate Costanzo hopes to someday be as hard-working as her parents and as much of a success as her brother.

by Kate Levdansky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

The Lions' women basketball team is 7-9 overall and 3-1 in the AMCC, with senior Kate Costanzo leading the way. Costanzo is the co-captain along with the three other seniors - Katie Weigold, Erin Phillips, and Christine Charnock.

Costanzo started playing basketball at the YMCA in third grade. Her parents placed her in several programs when she was little: baseball, soccer, dancing, and basketball.

"It didn't take long for me to decide I didn't enjoy dancing," said Costanzo. "I ended up playing soccer for a couple of years, and I continued to play softball through high school. But, I really grew to love the game of basketball."

After graduating from Kittanning High School, she continued her education and basketball career as a guard at Behrend. The words education and basketball go hand-in-hand for Costanzo.

"My coaches have been a big influence on me. They have helped instill a level of confidence in me and have showed me what it takes to be dedicated and successful at something. They have taught me count-

less lessons, and have taught me so much about life," said Costanzo. "I prepare myself mentally for each game by thinking about what I need to do, what the team needs to do, and reading over the scouting reports."

There are also several pre-game superstitions that Costanzo has to "take care of" before she can play. For instance, her "pre-game meal" has to be from Wendy's, she always wears the same socks, and she has to hit five shots in a row right before the game.

Off the court, Costanzo's parents have taught her what it takes to be successful through all of their hard work, and in the process, they raised a very loving family.

"They have enjoyed my basketball career just as much as I have," said Costanzo. "They have never missed a game, and they are always driving at least two hours to get to them."

Her parents make the time, even though her mother is a busy teacher and her father sometimes works double shifts.

"If I can become the people they are, I'll know I was a success," said Costanzo.

Since Costanzo grew up playing basketball during Michael Jordan's peak years, he is of course her basketball role model.

"I have always looked up to him as a player, and I now admire his comeback for the love

of the game."

Away from the game, Costanzo's brother is her role model.

"I have always wanted to be just like him," said Costanzo. "I wish I had my life figured out like I think he does. He just got married, has two master's degrees, and will be a college professor soon. I look up to him for the person he is - goal oriented, intelligent, and a very caring individual."

Costanzo said she thinks it is easier to manage time during the basketball season than the offseason.

"I have classes all day, and then the evenings are for practice and homework. When you know you only have a certain time to get something done, it always gets done," said Costanzo. "In my spare time, I hang out with my friends, watch movies, drink mocha choca latte, and eat out." Although, she is kept busy with practices, which are usually held from 4 to 6 p.m. or 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., the team also lifts twice a week.

During some of her other spare time, Costanzo grades homework assignments for a math professor and tutors a student in trigonometry. She is majoring in mathematics and minoring in statistics.

"I chose to go into math for one reason," said Costanzo. "Math is POWER!"

When Costanzo graduates from Behrend, she wants to become certified in secondary education. Her future plans include getting a good teaching job in the Pittsburgh area, coaching, and beginning a family.

In five years, what does Costanzo have hoped to accomplish?

"I want to get a job that I enjoy," said Costanzo. "I also want to raise my family close to my parents, and live in a sub-division where my best friends are my neighbors. That way our families will be friends and our kids will grow up together. Wouldn't that be the perfect world?"

With the season winding down, Costanzo has a few more goals she would like to see the team accomplish before her career at Behrend is over.

"Down this final stretch of the season, I have three things in mind: helping my team get to the conference tournament, winning the title, and having fun all along the way," said Costanzo. "We won the title my freshman year, and I think the rest of my teammates deserve to feel the way the four remaining seniors did then. Cutting down the net in Erie Hall in something I will never forget."

"Then, last year, we got an NCAA tournament bid. Every college athlete dreams of making it to NAAs, and we had that opportunity. It was incredible. My basketball experience at Behrend has been absolutely amazing, and I would not trade it for anything."

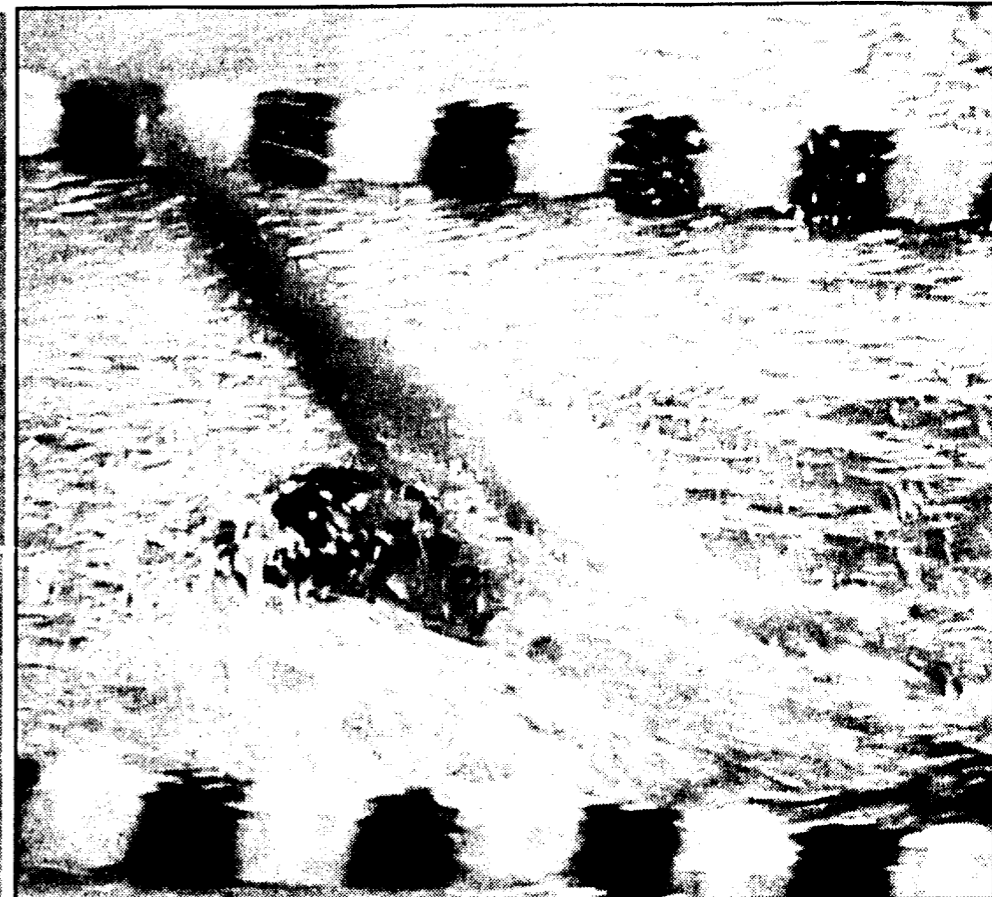
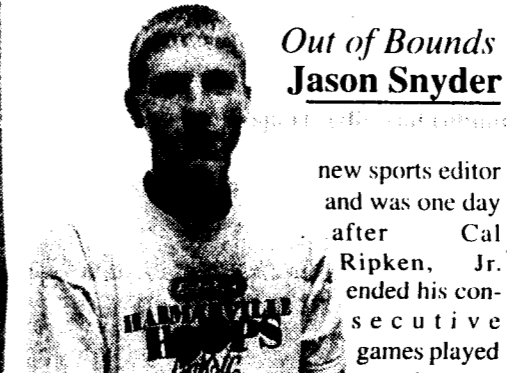


PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON

Casey Doody swims the backstroke portion of the 400 medley relay on Saturday at the Junker Center against Alfred. The men lost 150-77 and the women lost 123-64 to drop their records to 1-2 and 0-3, respectively. The Lions, however, did not have time to rest after the match, as they prepared this week for meets at Grove City/Mt. Union today at 6 p.m. and Edinboro on Saturday at 1 p.m.

'Out of Bounds' is out

Three and one-half years ago, I walked from the Academic Building to Reed with the then editor-in-chief of The Beacon. I was probably about three inches smaller than I am now, a little more shy, and a lot less involved. It was the day that I found out I would be the paper's



Out of Bounds
Jason Snyder

new sports editor and was one day after Cal Ripken, Jr. ended his consecutive games played streak at

2,632.

So I said to the then editor-in-chief, "Are we allowed to write about national sports in the paper?" She said yes. So I did. I named it 'Out of Bounds' and gave it a headline that read, "It ended on Cal's terms." The first column read, "As quickly and unceremoniously as Cal Ripken, Jr.'s consecutive games streak started, it ended."

That was my first sports editorial that ran in The Beacon. This is my last.

I've had the privilege to share my thoughts on the home run race of '98, Michael Jordan's retirement (the second one) and his return at Daytona and the shock waves that shut down sports after planes wrecked into buildings last September.

We've had some big stories these past few years - some fascinating, some sad and some that were memorable for their own reasons. Amongst those things lies one overriding

theme that explains the road sports has traveled. Simply put, sports aren't what they used to be. The road was so much more intriguing when sports heroes were role models and contracts weren't so complicated.

I mentioned Ripken earlier for a reason. Remember these next names as well, because there's a reason for them: Gretzky and Lemieux; McGwire and Sosa; Magic, Larry, Michael, and Isaiah; Stockton and Malone; Robinson and Olajuwon; Montana and Rice. This isn't a lesson on sports history. It's simply a reminder of a time when athletes could be looked up to and sporting events were entertaining based on their principles rather than on overpaid athletes who play more to the fans than for sake of the game.

The 1990s seemed to be a painfully slow transition in sports from a time of innocence to a current state of greed and ridiculous antics. No, sports weren't perfect prior to the last decade. They were just more respectable.

I've shared a lot of opinions since my first story on Ripken. I'll conclude with a recap of the top 10 most meaningful events in sports that I've had the pleasure to write about. You'll see that sports truly lie in the eyes of the beholder.

10. NASCAR popularity rises.
9. Yankees win again and again.
8. 1998 was greatest year in sports, ever.
7. Wayne Gretzky retires.
6. Sept. 11 halts play
5. Joe DiMaggio, a link to the days of baseball greatness, dies.
4. Dale Earnhardt, racing's biggest icon, dies.
3. McGwire, Sosa home run race of 1998.
2. Michael Jordan retires from the game he loves...then returns because he loves it.
1. Ripken, the man who saved baseball in the mid-'90s, takes a seat after 2,632 consecutive games.

So, as quickly and unceremoniously as 'Out of Bounds' started, it ends.

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PHILLIPS

record chasing may generate on the team, the players are still keeping a level head about it all.

"Erin has had an excellent career here and deserves to get that record," said Costanzo. "Our focus as a team, though, remains the same. Take each game as they come and leave it all on the floor. Scorers get their points; she'll get them. And when she does, we'll celebrate."

Phillips has to average less than 13 points per game over the next three games in order for her to break the record at home against Pitt-Bradford on Jan. 30. One would think her teammates are more excited than she is.

"Erin is an excellent player and knows the game of basketball extremely well, she deserves to go down in the record books," said Charnock. "I just hope she breaks it at home in front of a lot of fans."

"It is obviously a very exciting thing for her as

well as the team," added Weigold "and we are going to do everything we can for her to break it. ... I just hope I get the assist that helps her break the record!"

On Saturday, Behrend hosted Frostburg in a game that the Lions used cruise control to win. Behrend, up by 17 at the half, never looked back in winning 80-50. The win improved the Lions' record to 3-1 in the AMCC, and coincidentally all three of those wins have been by 30 points or more.

Costanzo was a force on the court, sinking 6-of-8 floor shots and all six of her foul shots for 19 points. Phillips, 96 points from the record coming in, added 16 in only 16 minutes of play. Mozdy sank 14 points and seven rebounds, and Carly Cochran added 10 points. The Lions shot 42.9 percent from the floor, just above their average of 42.4 percent on the year. Frostburg (1-2, 3-10) shot

33.9 percent, but more importantly the Lions sank 25-of-32 foul shots (78.1 percent) compared to Frostburg's 39.1 percent (9-of-23).

The Lions play five of their next six games - all against the AMCC - on the road, but that does not worry the players.

"Playing away games is always challenging, especially against AMCC opponents because many of them have rubber courts," said Charnock. "When you're on a run though, it's hard for any team to beat you."

"The hoops are the same size, the team is the same, so really everything else shouldn't matter," said Weigold. "It's kinda fun playing away. It's always a great feeling to beat a team on their home floor!"

Dave Young.

The Lions hope that with a little luck, and a lot of hard work, the team will be successful during the indoor meets and ECAC Indoor Championships, set for March 2 and 3. The players' commitment is, according to Cooper, the most important part of the team.

"The team has a solid work ethic which is crucial from the start."

The way the Lions are preparing, that work ethic may just last from start to finish, taking them to the outdoor ECAC championships and quite possibly some top finishes. All the pieces are now in place.



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Freshman Allison Skiff maneuvers around two Frostburg opponents on Saturday at the Junker Center. Freshman Crystal McGarvey trails on the play. The Lions play three road games before returning home on Jan. 30 against Pitt-Bradford at 6 p.m.

COOPER

"We can only take about half the team to each indoor meet and most of the meets do not keep a team score so we keep a low key approach to indoors. We do look forward to breaking school records for indoors," said Cooper.

The women's team this year includes Lyndsey Boor, Tara Burgess, Heather Efav, Lynn Hermann, Jessica Knapp, Clairissa Manelick, Marlena McNutt, Melissa Mong, Brandi Napenas, Andrea Sanko, Jessica Sarver, Lindsay Schulte, Jen Smialek, Suzanne Szafran, and Amanda Van Tassel. Efav, Manelick, McNutt, Sarver, Schulte, Smialek, Szafran, and Van Tassel will attend the Fredonia meet on Saturday.

The men's squad this year includes Carl Alberico, Dan Alvis, Ian Ashcraft, Mike Barlett, Nick Benkovich, Joshua Carmichael, Keith Ceroni, Frank Croft, Ryan Dabrowski, Jay Davids, Chris Deeb, Stephen Feder, Jason Ferrier, Brian Gaines, Matt Grimme, Donald Hackworth, Matt Heidecker, Matt Hurray, Clayton Kirschner, and Chris Laugelli.

Also making the roster are: Chad Lausberg, Chad Lindell, Tim Linden, Dave Masilunas, Nick McGrady, William McKinney, Isiah Meek, Chris Ober, David Ober, Nick Peth, Russ Phillips, Brian Pratt, Kevin Ritzert, Jason Saeger, Rafael Scarnati, Tim Schultheis, Steve Werner, Brian Wheeler, and