



**Athletic Profile**  
 ve Cooper not only is captain of the men's tennis team, he once helped save a student from falling into Wintergreen. Read more about it on page 5B.

# Section B Sports

Mike Bello, Sports Editor

**Know your game?**  
 March Madness is approaching, and so is the Beacon's contest to see who can predict the winners of the NCAA Tournament. See Page 6B



## Calendar of Events

### Behrend Athletic Events

**Friday**  
 Men's Swimming @ ECAC Championship TBA

**Saturday**  
 Men's and Women's Indoor Track and Field @ ECAC Championships TBA

**Sunday**  
 Women's Softball vs. Clark/Waynesburg 9/11 a.m.

Men's Baseball vs. Hiram, 5 p.m.

Men's and Women's Indoor Track and Field @ ECAC Championships TBA

**Monday**  
 Men's Baseball vs. Shenadoah, 11 a.m.

Women's Softball vs. St. John Fisher/Beloit 1/4 p.m.

Men's Tennis vs. Winona State, 2 p.m.

**Tuesday**  
 Men's Tennis vs. Belmont Abbey, 9 a.m.

Men's Baseball vs. Mt. Union, 10 a.m.

**Wednesday**  
 Women's Softball vs. Wartburg/Dominican 9/11 a.m.

**Thursday**  
 Women's Softball vs. Marywood/Worcester 9/11 a.m.

Men's Baseball vs. Emory & Henry, 10 a.m.

**Friday, March 8**  
 Men's Tennis vs. Hiram, 9 a.m.

Women's Water Polo @ Southern Tournament 9/11:30 a.m.

Men's Baseball vs. Maryville/Wesley 10 a.m./1 p.m.

Women's Softball vs. Ursinus/Kenyon 11 a.m./1 p.m.

**Saturday, March 9**  
 Men's Baseball vs. Beloit, 10 a.m.

Women's Water Polo @ Southern Tournament 11:30 a.m./4 p.m.

**Friday, March 15**  
 Women's Water Polo Behrend Tournament vs. Mercyhurst Junker Center, 6 p.m.

## Intramurals Schedule

**Friday**  
 Intramural 4 on 4 Coed Volleyball - \$3

All entries must be at the intramural office by 4 p.m. on the scheduled date

# Men's basketball falls in ECACs



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON  
 James Curren scored 41 points on Feb. 22 against Frostburg in the AMCC semifinals, the most scored in one game in 30 years at Behrend. He was only four points short of the all-time single game record of 45.

by Zoë Rose  
 staff writer

The pride of the Behrend Lions grew enormously throughout the season with their 18-9 overall mark. After defeating Lake Erie, the No. 7 seed in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference, the second-place Lions roared onto the courts to play a physi-

cally demanding and emotional game against Frostburg, ranked third. The Bobcats came out with an 83-74 win, but that did not put a damper on the 2001-2002 season.

The Lions then gained a chance to continue on in the postseason, accepting a bid for the No. 5 seed in the 2002 Eastern College Athletic Conference Division III men's Southern Region

Basketball Championship Tournament. The Lions lost in the opening round of the ECACs 67-61 to the Lebanon Valley Dutchmen, ranked fourth. Lebanon advanced to the semifinals and will play top-seeded Franklin & Marshall College. The Blue and White never lost focus throughout the game, as there were several lead

changes.

"The team took a large step this year from last year," said Steve Merrill on the recent end to their season in the ECAC opening round. "We all contributed to the success of the team in one way or another."

The semifinals of the AMCC heated up, as the Lions were ready to pounce on the Bobcats. The game was played as expected, with a dogfight that led to neither squad being able to gather much breathing room in the first 20 minutes of action. At the 11:29 mark of the first half, Behrend was down 16-11 before going on a 10-5 spurt to tie the game at 21.

The Blue and White gained control with four free throws from James Curren, along with a 3-pointer by Matt Keith to up the score to 32-30 in the half. The lead tossed back and forth until the end of the half, when the score was tied 36-36.

Behrend secured another tie during the second stanza when they evened the score at 53-all. The Bobcats went on a 9-0 run to gain the biggest lead of the game, 62-53, with 9:24 to play.

Curren dominated the courts for the Behrend side as he shot 15-of-20 from the floor for a game-high 41 points. The Lions fought until the end as the Bobcats secured their victory by making 7-of-8 free throws in the final minute.

After the game against Lebanon Valley, Curren ended the season as the

No. 1 scorer on the team. Season accomplishments for Curren include 15.8 points per game, 7.8 rebounds per game, and a solid 54.3 shooting percentage from the floor. Following in second was Casey Ponsoll with 11.1 ppg, and Merrill with 10.3 assists and 10.2 ppg.

With his impressive 41-point game, Curren tied the third place record for the most points scored in a single game in Behrend's history. Glen McKinney also scored 41 points in a game, during the 1971-1972 season. Landing in first place with 45 points in a single game was Doug Zimmerman in the 1969-1970 season followed by 43 points by Jim Golemski in Behrend's 1962-1963 season.

Frostburg State went on to face Pitt-Bradford in what was an invigorating championship final. Last Saturday afternoon, Bradford earned the AMCC title, pushing the Bobcats into overtime before outlasting them 102-99.

Keith is the only Lion not returning next season. Merrill, the team's only junior, will provide the most experience next year.

"I think that we had a great season, even though we didn't finish the way we wanted to," said Tom Lulich on the season. "We came together as a team and grew as a team and because of that, next year we will be even better."

After the game against Lebanon Valley, Curren ended the season as the



## Behrend baseball begins new era on new field

by Mike Bello  
 sports editor

After a rather difficult 2001 season, the Behrend baseball team heads into spring training armed and ready to begin its first season on the brand new, recently completed baseball field. What's not new, however, are the faces who will lead the charge.

The Lions return nearly all of their starting lineup from a year ago, including nine seniors who form the

core of a team ready to put last season behind them. The Lions not only finished 18-20 – the first time in four years they didn't reach 20 wins – but lost the AMCC championship game in the bottom of the ninth inning against Pitt-Bradford, 4-3.

What's worse, the team did not get the chance to play any games on campus due to the construction of the field. All of that is about to change. Coach Paul Benim said the players are primed to begin play on their new

field, located east of the lower Reed parking lot.

"I would think so. I know I am," said Benim. "We actually for the first time practiced on that field, which would have been Monday (Feb. 25). That was probably one of the greatest days of my life and definitely one of my best Behrend days."

"The new field gives the team a renewed enthusiasm and desire to perform," said senior Jake Boyle. "We all want to make the first full season on the new field a memorable one and show that the college made a wise investment. I personally can't wait until we get to play the first game on it."

Boyle and senior Jason Karas, both possible June draft picks, lead the charge on offense for the Lions. Boyle (OF), last year's AMCC MVP, hit .400 last season with eight home runs, 43 RBIs, and 50 hits, while scoring 48 runs. He also stole a team-high 11 bases. Karas (3B) batted .387 and tied the school record for RBIs in a season with 49. Karas added four homers with 31 runs and 49 hits.

Craig Ottaviani (SS) hit .322 last year, with 38 hits, 15 RBIs, and 46 runs scored. Luke Bundy (C) had 30 hits while batting .300, knocking in 18 runs and scoring 20. Shortstop Kurt Himrod (.340, 18 hits, 12 RBIs) and catcher Chris Shearer (.337, 31, 15) provide added punch senior punch on an offense that hit a team-record .335 last year.

With an abundance of seniors on the team, Benim knows the team is prepared for the season and its difficult conference opponents.

"We're definitely going to rely on our experience," said Benim. "That's pretty important to us (nine seniors). Walt Weiss said it best when he said experience doesn't mean anything until you have it. We're fortunate that we have a lot of it."

"Of course we can win the (AMCC) title," said Pifer. "As a team we believe in our goal to win our conference. But there is always work to be done. We have to improve each time we practice and each time we have a game."

The three other seniors will play a



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Senior Craig Ottaviani throws to Chuck Sevin on Monday during the Lions' only practice on their new field so far this year. Behrend plays their first home game on March 23 against Penn State Altoona.

key role for the Lions on the mound. Chuck Sevin led the team with a 3.27 ERA, striking out 24 in 33 innings. Brian Pifer pitched 29 2/3 innings, striking out 34 with a 5.46 ERA. Southpaw Bob Palivoda returns in top form after an arm injury in 2001.

The team will also rely on three junior pitchers, who were the top three starters last season. T.J. Aldrich pitched 43 innings with a 4.40 ERA and racked up 38 Ks. Kevin DUBYAK had a 6.44 ERA in 43 1/3 innings with 28 strikeouts. Ryan Seyler started nine games, pitching 50 2/3 innings with a team-high 45 strikeouts and a 4.44 ERA.

Rounding out the staff are freshmen Chris Kechisen, Jason Shaffer, Matt Szymanski, and sophomore Bill Zore. Other position players include junior first baseman Keith Lepionka (.330, five home runs, 37 hits, 28 runs, 22

RBIs), sophomores Mike Coutts (OF), Tim Stafford (OF), Tyler Wiand (2B), Tony Azzato (3B), and Adam Best (OF), as well as newcomers Vinnie Canzano (SS) and Marc Barrett (C).

Behrend begins its season during spring break when it plays seven games in seven days in Fort Myers, Fla. The Lions will look to improve on their game in an outdoor environment, as they've had only one practice outdoors so far. The conference season begins March 23.

The players look forward to the Florida trip, which gives them a chance to work out the little things that often make the difference in games.

"Whenever you play a game, you play to win, but our Florida trip gets

**BASEBALL SPRING TRAINING**  
 continued on page 5B

## Scholarship fund

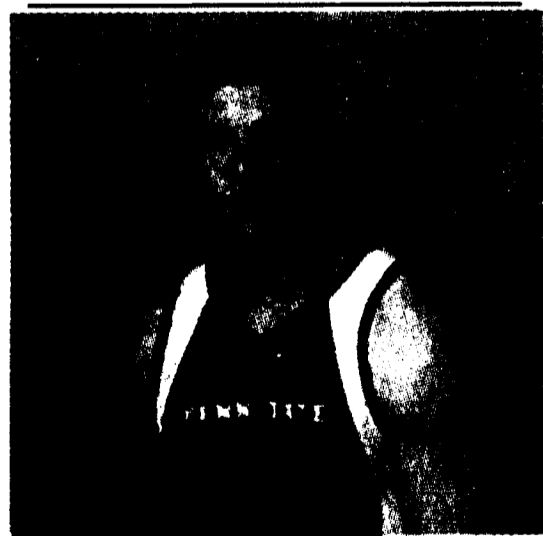


PHOTO COURTESY OF GOPUSPORTS.COM

A memorial scholarship fund has been set up in memory of Kevin Dare, the Penn State athlete who died Feb. 23 at the Big Ten Indoor Track and Field Championships.

Dare, 19, died when he fell to the ground head first while making a pole vault attempt at the championships in Minneapolis.

Dare is a former Track and Field Junior U.S. national champion and Pennsylvania high school pole vault champion.

The Dare family has requested that all contributions in memory of Kevin be made to:

Kevin Dare Pole Vaulting Memorial Scholarship Fund  
 Penn State University

Old One Main  
 University Park, PA 16802

Checks should be made out to Penn State University.

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