



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Freshman Jen Osbourne, left, attempts to field a throw from the outfield to tag out freshman Lindsay Patton. Junior Emily Allen, right, backs up the play at the Lions' brand new field.

Softball team ready for spring training despite inexperience

by Zoë Rose
staff writer

The sun is starting to shine and a new season has arrived for the Penn State Behrend softball team. The excitement is brewing as the Blue and White will not only welcome nine newcomers, but first-year coach Kellie Diehl.

After going 6-6 in league play last season and finishing 12-17 overall, the Lions look to rebuild themselves, which also includes replacing seven starters. Despite this fact, they are ready to start the 2001-2002 softball season.

Returning senior Kelly Woods gives the Lions a boost with experience and leadership. Woods, an outfielder, hit .358 with 14 RBIs last season, and is a three-time all-conference selection.

"I feel that my responsibility as the only senior is to motivate the new girls to be aggressive and take charge," said Woods on leading the pack.

Adding punch to the lineup for the

Lions are junior outfielders Emily Allen, who hit .464 last season, and Cheryl Peterson. Peterson, who also catches, was named to the honorable mention all-conference team as a freshman, and labeled all-conference left fielder as a sophomore, hitting .458 with 19 RBIs and 12 doubles. Other sophomores include pitchers Stephanie Covert, and Becky Corbin, and outfielder/second baseman Brandi Polinick.

Skilled freshmen include infielders Roberta Baker, Erika Mack, Charity Marsh, Jenny Miller, Jennifer Osborne, Lindsay Patton, and Dominique Petergal. Contributing in the outfield are Kara Daniel and Aleigha Powder.

Having a young team is a vital aspect which the squad needs to use to pull together early on in the season.

"I think that it is wonderful to have so many new players," said Woods.

"Being a young team, all of our upperclassmen have stepped up to help lead," said Peterson, "but also our rookies have stepped up to strive for

a common goal, a great season."

Playing until April 23, the Lions have a long season ahead of them. First up is a series of 10 games in Fort Myers, Fla. during spring training.

"It will be a very good chance for our younger players to get some playing time and get comfortable with playing at the college level against very good teams, before having to come back and go right in to our conference games," said Polinick.

"We feel prepared and eager to step on the field," said Peterson. "Working on running plays for different situations and hitting and bunting helps to bring the team focused and ready to take on the upcoming challenges."

Conference action begins on March 16, when the Behrend softball squad hosts Pitt-Greensburg. The Lions host Pitt-Bradford on March 19 and then Penn State Altoona on March 23. Every one of the Lions' games after spring break are doubleheaders (seven innings).



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Sophomore Stephanie Covert will be counted on to carry the load on the mound for the Lions.

This week's senior athletic profile

David Cooper: Hero doesn't let anything keep him down

by Kate Levinsky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

Dave Cooper lived in Almy Hall his sophomore year, which is near the Wintergreen Gorge. One afternoon, Cooper said he heard a fire truck coming up Jordan Road. He quickly learned that someone had fallen into the water, and he ran to the Gorge to see if he could help. The person had fallen into the water and was unconscious. Three volunteer firemen, a teacher, and Cooper walked him out on a stretcher, where they met more firemen and a life flight helicopter. The victim made a full recovery, and Cooper became a hero by saving a person's life.

These days, Cooper said he is simply enjoying his last semester at Behrend. Cooper came to Behrend with the intention of going to University Park after two years.

"After only my first year here, I changed my major so that I could stay. I love pretty much every thing about this school, and the people that I have met here. That is, with the exception of the parking," said Cooper. "Over the past five years I had seen some great improvements to the athletic programs at Behrend, such as the new facilities and new coaches. I hope the programs continue to grow."

Cooper started hitting tennis balls when he was 6, but actually started playing tennis at the age of 13. He then continued to play at Mt. Lebanon High School in Pittsburgh. His high school tennis team competed very well.

In his senior year, Cooper's high school tennis coach, Chuck Stall retired after 27 years. At the team's lettering banquet, Cooper introduced Stall and presented him with an award for his service over the years. Cooper said that this was his highlight in his high school tennis career. Cooper also played soccer, wrestling, and track at Mt. Lebanon.

"I wanted to play soccer for Penn State Behrend, but it would interfere with classes too much," said Cooper. "But, I wanted to stay involved in sports, and tennis was the best fix."

Today, Cooper is the captain of Behrend's tennis team.

"As a leader of the team I want everyone to have fun, but I also want their best effort on the court," said Cooper. "I like tennis because there is no time limit. As long as you can win the last point, you can never lose a match."

Cooper holds the No. 1 position on the team. He plays first single and first doubles. He has to play the best player from the opposing team. The place an athlete is on the team is determined by how they do against teammates. Before the sea-



PHOTO BY ROB WYNNE / BEHREND BEACON

In order to calm himself during matches, Dave Cooper sings songs to himself, especially "American Pie" and "Jack and Diane."

son started, they played each other to determine the ranking on the team.

During matches, in order to stay calm between points, Cooper sings songs.

"I do this so the last point does not affect the next," said Cooper. "I do not know what my favorites are, but I find myself singing "American Pie" by Don McLean, and "Jack and Diane" by John Cougar Mellencamp a lot. Both are great songs that I grew up on, but why I related them to tennis I may never know."

The highlight of Cooper's tennis career at Behrend occurred at the end of last season. Behrend had its awards lunch to honor great players such as Cooper. But Cooper intended on missing the ceremony in order to study for finals.

"Coach called me and ask why I did not sign up to go," said Cooper. "Then he told me that I should really try to make it."

On that advice, Cooper decided to attend the lunch and was awarded the Most Valuable Player award for the tennis team last year.

"It was a total surprise. I did not even know there was such an award," said Cooper.

Another memory Cooper reflects on from college is something he said he will never forget. The Friday night before two conference matches against Lake Erie and Frostburg, Cooper broke a rib.

"The next day, I played and finished both matches," said Cooper. "Ouch! I knew we were going to be short handed and the team needed me, so I played through the pain."

This could be why Cooper said his best characteristics are that he is a team player and gives 110 percent.

Cooper said in order to manage time, he plans out his weeks ahead of time, making sure that he has time set aside for everything. Practices are held indoors at 8:30 p.m. when the weather is bad, but when the weather breaks practices will be outdoors at 4 p.m.

Cooper is majoring in electrical engineering, because he loves working with cutting-edge technology. After graduation, Cooper is returning to Pittsburgh to spend the summer fishing and working cars with his brother whom he has not seen much of during the last five years. After a summer full of relaxation, Cooper will be off to work.

He hopes to work in Pittsburgh, but said it is hard to find work there. So, he has decided to take a job in California with NavAir, just outside of Los Angeles.

"I wanted to do hardware design, and they had an opening in this area," said Cooper. "Plus, I do not want any more snow."

Dave's nickname, Cooper, is nothing special. But it works for him. "There are lots of Daves, but there is only one Cooper," he said.

As far as the season goes, Cooper sees Behrend near the top.

"We have a good chance to winning the conference," he said. "We are stronger than last year, and the conference has gotten weaker."

AMCC Men's Basketball All-Conference Honors

First Team

Matt Beacom Pitt-Bradford
Pierre Bowery Frostburg
Sean Brown Frostburg
James Curren Behrend
Brandon Henderson Lake Erie

Honorable Mention

Kenny Edwards Altoona
Steve Merrill Behrend
Ryan Moye Greensburg
Casey Ponsoll Behrend
Tony Tibayan Lake Erie

Second Team

Eric Goodson PS Altoona
Jason Luther Pitt-Bradford
Jabari Matthew La Roche
Doug Schneider Bradford
Marcess Williams La Roche

Most Valuable Player

Matt Beacom Bradford

Newcomer of the Year

Ryan Moye Greensburg

Coach of the Year

Karl Radday Greensburg

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us prepared for the start of our season when we return back to Erie," said Pifer. "But also in Florida, with each game, we try to improve and play better than we did in the one before."

"Florida is a time when the new players familiarize themselves with the returnees and the team begins

to gel into one distinct unit fighting for the same goal," said Boyle. "We hope to come back readily prepared to attack AMCC play."

The Lions are hungry for a title and for revenge after last year's ninth-inning fallout. For the seniors, finishing their careers at Behrend with a title, and possible ECAC

postseason berth, is the only way to go.

"There is always work to be done," said Bundy, "and if we keep working the way we are there should be no reason that we don't bring home an AMCC title this year."

Water polo team ready to hit sophomore season with full force



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON

Freshman Christine Williams practices with weights in the Junker Center pool on Wednesday in preparation for the upcoming season.

by Kate Levinsky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

Last season, Penn State Behrend had its first look at women's collegiate water polo. Now, with a year of experience under the belts of six veteran players, and the addition of seven newcomers, the Lions have a positive outlook entering the 2002 season.

"Last year we just got our feet wet with this program, and this year we have an opportunity to make a big impact," said coach Josh Heynes. "It is only our second year, and we are already better than we were last year at this time."

This year's squad returns six second-year players who will rely on their experiences from last season to lead the team. The veterans include Sarah McGarvey (Butler/Butler), Ann Marie Havey (Bethel Park/Bethel Park), Hollie Stash (North

Huntingdon/Norwin), Amanda Tuscan (Warren/Warren), Amanda Brown (Corry/Corry), and Lauren Packer (Fleming/Bald Eagle Area). McGarvey and Brown return as the leading goal scorers from a year ago, while Packer led the team from the cages with 164 saves.

Newcomers include sophomore Tara Braden (Fairview/Fairview), a transfer from Gannon University, Moe Moe NG (Erie/McDowell), Katy Benak (Newport, WA/Newport), Jana Bahnak (Arcadia/Norwin), Samantha Cibula (Bradford/Bradford), Erin Troester (Erie/ Mercyhurst), and Christine Williams (Pottsville/Pottsville). Williams will lead the team from the 2-meter offense position, while Braden's scoring ability could make a big difference from the outside.

Six of the 14 women are on the swim team, and the other eight have

been training and working hard by themselves since January. Everyone came together this past Monday for their first team practice.

Practices are Monday through Friday from 4 to 6 p.m., and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m. Plus, the athletes are giving up their spring break to stay at Behrend and train for the first tournament.

The Lions will begin the season at the Southern Tournament at Slippery Rock on March 9 and 10 against Grove City, Slippery Rock, and the University of Michigan. The Lions then host Cornell, Colgate, Penn State, IUP, and Gannon in Behrend's own tournament March 15-16.

"Beating teams is not in the plan. We just want to have a good showing, or a better showing than last year," said Heynes. "Since it is our first tournament, we will be a bit rusty,



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON

Sarah McGarvey uses an unusual, everyday item for weightlifting practice.

but we should come out just fine. Game experience is what we are looking for. We need to have intensity, and be aggressive when we play."