

Men's tennis team ready for AMCC season

by Mike Bello
sports editor

Sunny weather. Tennis on outdoor courts. No school. First win.

The men's tennis team had one exciting week during its trip at Hilton Head, S.C. With the conference schedule starting up on Saturday, the Lions know they are well prepared to face any team that comes their way.

"We have a strong team," said Steve Broussard. "We saw a couple of excellent teams in Hilton Head, and one that was our caliber. We had no trouble beating them (Hiram). Since that is more of the caliber team we will play, it gave us a lot of confidence coming home to play some conference matches."

"Playing against Division II schools, we know where we stand and the fact that the teams in our conference are gonna be easier than those schools is definitely a boost to the confidence," said Sundeeep Bhatia.

On March 8, in its last game of the trip, Behrend defeated Hiram College

7-2. The Lions (1-5) dominated in singles play, winning all four of the day's matches, but dropped their two doubles matches.

Dave Cooper began play with 6-3 wins over Hiram's top player, Neil Donovan. Mike Oey followed that up with 6-2 and 6-0 wins. Brent Carlson won the first match against Nick Swetye 6-3, before losing 6-2. Carlson rebounded to soundly defeat Swetye 6-1 in the third match. Jacob Hillman completed the singles sweep with 6-3 and 6-4 wins.

Bhatia and Oey started things off in doubles play with an 8-3 loss to Hiram's top two players. Jacob Cornwell and Broussard gave the Terriers a run for their money in the second game. Hiram (1-2) had to go an extra set before winning 9-8. Hiram forfeited two singles matches and one doubles match, as well.

The Lions didn't fare as well in the other two games at Hilton Head, losing by identical 9-0 scores to Belmont Abbey and Winona State, both Division II schools. But playing those

two schools, and following it up with a win against a Division III school, gave Behrend the chance to observe its weaknesses.

"Certain weaknesses were that the games we lost were due to impatience and trying to go for the win rather than playing with strategy," said Bhatia. "So if the players can work on that aspect, the team can definitely have a great chance against all the conference teams."

Behrend will host Pitt-Greensburg 11 a.m. on Saturday at the Pennbriar Athletic Club in its first of eight conference matches. Behrend defeated Greensburg 5-4 and 7-2 last season. Since Behrend was the only AMCC team to compete over spring break, the Lions are counting on their first few games to give them an advantage. Just as important, the Hilton Head trip gave the players a chance to gauge where they stand as a team.

"Our three doubles teams are solid as a rock, and our top three singles will be real tough to beat," said Broussard. "With that core to the team, we are

confident that we [can] beat anyone in our conference."

Behrend found out how difficult Division II schools can be at Hilton Head, as they won only five sets against Belmont Abbey out of more than 90 on March 5. Belmont Abbey (7-5), though, defeated both Hiram and Winona State (6-6) 9-0 in South Carolina.

The Lions fared better against Winona State on March 4 despite dropping all nine matches. Carlson, in the No. 3 singles match, forced his opponent into an extra set in the first match before losing 7-5 and 6-2. Carlson and Hillman lost the team's second doubles match 8-5.

Still, the trip did give the players a lot of memories, including an early taste of summer.

"The 80 degree weather was definitely a highlight, especially after coming back to Erie and seeing snow on the ground," said Broussard. "But on the court, our first win of the season felt great."



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON
Junior Doug Smith and the Behrend Lions are set for their opening conference game against Altoona after fun in the sun at Hilton Head.

Offense struggles as softball goes winless in Florida

by Zoë Rose and Mike Bello
staff writer and sports editor

Relaxing during spring break was not on the schedule for Penn State Behrend's softball team, even though it went to Florida for spring training. Several rough patches became apparent as a fairly young team got to see action while learning to trust each other on the field. Playing several single games against an array of teams such as Clark University and St. Mary's College, the Lions pulled out with a struggling 0-9 pre-season mark.

Sophomore Brandy Polinick believes the record doesn't measure how much experience the team gained from playing nine games in six days.

"The team came together by the end of the week in Florida. We just needed to get out on the field and play with one another and that's what we did," said Polinick.

Behrend began its season with Clark and Waynesburg on March 3. Becky Corbin gave up three earned

runs in six innings and scored her team's only run in a 5-1 loss to Clark. Behrend had only three hits in the game.

Stephanie Covert pitched well against Waynesburg, giving up three earned runs in six innings of work. Behrend's offense, though, faltered again in a 4-0 loss. The Lions could only produce three hits.

The Lions' offense struggled the next day against St. John Fisher, as Behrend smacked two hits in a 14-2 loss. Cheryl Peterson and Covert each had one RBI.

After enjoying an off-day, Behrend played two more games on March 6. Behrend's offense had trouble finding a pulse in both games.

Corbin produced the team's only hit in a 10-0 loss to Wartburg. Corbin had two of the team's four hits in a 8-0 loss to Dominican later in the day.

Softball, like most physically and emotionally demanding sports, cannot be played if a player does not trust one's abilities first. After feeling self-



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON
Freshman Erika Mack and coach Kellie Diehl head into the weekend ready for Pitt-Greensburg after a difficult learning experience in Florida.

confident, the next step would be to unite as a team by trusting your teammates. This is exactly what coach Kellie Diehl was looking for.

"We a very young team with only one starter from last year's team," said

Diehl, "so we need to get to know each other on the field better and we did that in Florida. So now I'm hopeful that we're more comfortable with each other."

"That's what spring training in

Florida is all about. It's not about winning games, it's about getting to know your teammates and what skills we need to improve on."

On March 7, the Lions' offense found the spark it had been missing the day before. Behrend pounded out seven hits in a 13-5 loss to St. Mary's and 11 hits in an 11-10 loss to Worcester.

Kelly Woods scored two runs and had two hits against St. Mary's, while Charity Marsh added two RBIs. Emily Allen added two hits, one run, and an RBI.

Against Worcester, Allen pounded out three hits and Woods contributed four RBIs. Marsh and Polinick each drove in two runs, and Erika Mack scored three runs. Cheryl Peterson and Marsh scored two runs each as the Lions had as many hits (13) as their first five games combined.

The offense lost all momentum in its last two games of the break on March 8. Peterson and Roberta Baker smacked two hits each, but the Lions

couldn't push a run across the plate in an 8-0 loss to Ursinus.

Nicole Miller gave up three runs in seven innings, but Behrend still dropped a 3-0 decision to Kenyon later in the day.

This Saturday, the Blue and White head into conference play by hosting Pitt-Greensburg in a doubleheader. Polinick knows what it will take to defeat Greensburg.

"For us to get a win against Pitt-Greensburg, the team is going to have to be focused on playing the best that we can and putting good defense with our great offense," said Polinick.

Track and field sends 8 to ECACs

by Scott Soltis
staff writer

The indoor track and field ECAC championships were held at Tufts University over spring break, and Behrend sent eight athletes to compete. The team performed well, but had to contend with some very skilled athletes.

Coach Dave Cooper was glad that the team made it to the event.

"There were over 70 teams represented at the meet," said Cooper. "While no Behrend athletes scored points, it was a good learning experience, and will prepare us for the outdoor championships."

Isiah Meek set a new Behrend record in the 55 hurdles when he ran an 8.05. Still, Meek finished 22nd with his effort, which illustrates just



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON
Chris Ober practices the long jump at the Junker Center as Lindsay Schulte watches from the background.

how good the competition was. The other Behrend athletes ran into the same level of opposition in all of the races.

The 4x400 relay team comprised of Keith Cerroni, Billy McKinney, Mike

Barlett, and Dave Ober finished with the 25th best time of 3:32.25.

McKinney also competed in the 500 and ran his second best time in that event with a 1:08.49. This was good for a 16th place.

The highest placer on the men's side was Jay Davids. He high-jumped a height of 6-1.25 to claim 14th overall.

On the women's side, Jessica Sarver ran a 4:58.37 in the 1,500 against some stiff competition. Amanda Van Tassel competed in the 500 and ran a time of 1:24.86. Both Sarver and Van Tassel took 22nd place in each of their events.

With the outdoor season just around the corner, the team has built some momentum. The team got a taste of a championship setting at the indoor ECACs and is hungry for more. The Lions are anxious to begin competing outdoors and to start qualifying athletes for the next round of championship competition.

Ledwin hired as AMCC commissioner

by Mike Bello
sports editor

Donna Ledwin was hired as the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) commissioner and sports information director. She is the league's first commissioner ever.

Ledwin, who will take her position in late spring, currently serves as the commissioner and sports information director for the New Jersey Athletic Conference.

"Since my family relocated to the Pittsburgh area in late August, it just made sense to pursue opportunities closer to home," said Ledwin in a

press release. "The AMCC is a young conference with tremendous potential, and I am excited to be part of their organization."

Besides her positions with the NJAC, Ledwin is a member of the NCAA Division III Membership and Nominating Committees and the Executive Committee of the NCAA Division III Conference Commissioners Association.

She has also served as an athletics administrator at the Notre Dame of Maryland, New Rochelle, and Yale. Ledwin received her B.A. from Fordham University and her M.B.A. from Boston University.



FROM PAGE 1B

NCAA playoffs are far superior to NBA ones

Those big contracts carry a lot of weight in the NBA, and they allow the players to do what they please. Maybe someday the NBA will learn from the NCAA.

Another big reason the NCAA is better than the NBA? The talent pool is spread out in college sports. In professional sports, a few teams have the chance to buy the best players. This throws everything out of whack.

On the college level, there are so many talented players distributed on so many teams that it's hard for one school to completely dominate the

courts like the Bulls used to and the Lakers do now. Sure, you have schools like Duke, Cincinnati, and Kentucky that are near the top year after year.

But looking back at the end of the NCAA season and division playoffs, nothing is ever certain, except that you won't find gaudy players trying to hog your TV. Who's going to be the Cinderella? Who's gonna fall when no one expected it? No one knows, and that's why March Madness doesn't make me so mad.

Baseball finishes spring trip with 6-3 mark

in three runs. Boyle drove in three runs, and Jason Karas added two hits and two RBIs. Shearer and Canzano both added two RBIs. Boyle, Canzano, and Azzato each sent one over the fence against E & H. Kevin DUBYAK picked up the win, giving up four runs in eight innings.

The Lions then won both games on March 8 in which the outcomes weren't decided until the last inning. Behrend gave up one run in the bottom of the seventh inning but survived to win 7-6 over Maryville. Later in the day, the Lions scored one run in the top of the seventh to win 4-3 over Wesley (1-4).

Lepionka cracked three hits, while Boyle scored two runs. Four other players each had two of the team's 13 hits. Seyler won his second game of the trip, pitching five innings and giving up one earned run.

Boyle scored two runs and had two hits, including a home run, against Wesley. Ottaviani cracked two hits, but the star of the game was Aldrich. The junior right hander pitched all seven innings, giving up three runs while striking out six to improve to 2-0 on the mound.

The Lions ran into a wall that was called Beloit on March 9. Bundy had three hits, but Behrend could only

produce six total in a 7-0 loss. The Lions didn't fare much better in the second game of the doubleheader, dropping a 20-6 decision to Beloit (3-7-1).

Boyle had two hits and scored two runs in game two. Bundy and Lepionka also added two hits to the effort.

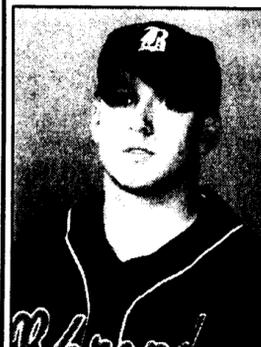
Despite the last two losses, the Lions are primed for any opponent that comes their way.

"The thing we learned is that our team is very strong and that we can play with anyone we go against," said Seyler. "We have a lot of confidence, we feel that we can win every game."

Housing and Food Service Athlete of the Week

PENNSTATE
Erie

Ryan Seyler



Seyler, a junior from Franklin, led the Behrend Lions to a 6-3 record at Fort Myers, Fla. last week during spring training. In 10 innings, Syler allowed only two earned runs for a 1.80 ERA. Bolstering his pitching performance, he struck out seven for an overall 2-0 record.

The Behrend Lions travel to John Carroll University Saturday with the junior varsity team beginning at 1 p.m. in their first game since the Florida trip.