

Q & A: Who's Behind the Scenes?

Stacy Pondo meets everyday challenges head-on

by Kate Levinsky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

Stacy Pondo began working at Penn State Behrend in the fall of 2000 as an administrative assistant intern and an assistant softball coach. In the fall of 2001, the administrative position became full-time.

Before joining Behrend, Pondo was the operations coordinator for the Erie Invaders football team of the Indoor Football League. Her primary responsibilities included game day management, promotions, sponsorships, and ticket sales. In 1999, she worked for the Erie Otters of the Ontario Hockey League in ticket sales and game day management. Pondo earned a bachelor degree with dual majors in sports management and marketing from Mercyhurst College in 1999.

Beacon: What do you do as the assistant to the director of athletics?

Pondo: I have been involved in many aspects of the athletic department, including game day management, summer camps, the Herb Lauffer Memorial Golf Outing, promotions, sponsorships, registration of summer golf classes, and assisting with softball.

Beacon: How did you get this title/ job?



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Organizational skills are key if you're the assistant to director of athletics and assistant softball coach, Stacy Pondo has thrived since becoming a full-time employee in the fall.

Pondo: The position as the assistant to the director of athletics was developed in order to help assist with the growth of the sports

and activities in the athletic department. Fortunately for me, my college major, employment background, and desire to work in a

successful program such as Penn State Behrend were factors that drove me to apply for the position. I also had someone who believed in me and has given me the opportunity to work in the Penn State Behrend athletic department.

Beacon: Does being the Assistant to the Director of Athletics ever relate to being the assistant softball coach?

Pondo: Yes, both positions require you to have good communication between the person in charge and the assistant. The organizational skills that I have learned as the assistant to the director of athletics carries over to the organizational aspect of game planning and practice layout.

Beacon: Did you play softball in college? If yes, what do you believe is the most important thing to pass on to the softball athletes that you coach today?

Pondo: I played softball for two seasons at the Mercyhurst North East campus. There I started at pitcher and shortstop and carried a .419 career batting average. In 1997-98 an injury forced me to serve as a student assistant coach for the 15-5 Saints. Then, in 1998-99, I played infield for the Mercyhurst Lakers.

The most important thing that I believe can be passed on to today's athletes is that you have to be persistent in everything you

do, not only in sports, but also academically and in the work force. Hard work and dedication go a long way.

Beacon: What have you learned from your athletes?

Pondo: I have learned that each day brings new challenges. All teams will go through [their] good times and bad and whether you win or lose a game, you have to find a way to have fun. Losing tough games builds positive character and allows players to build on that experience and/or overcome those challenges.

Beacon: What do you think is the best position to play?

Pondo: I believe every position in the game of softball is just as important as the next. However, my favorite position is shortstop. You're involved in so many plays whether the ball is being hit to you, being a cut-off person from the outfield, or taking throw-downs from the catcher to get an out when base runners are stealing.

Beacon: Who is your favorite professional athlete? Why?

Pondo: I really don't have a favorite professional athlete. I follow professional teams more than the athletes. My favorite professional sports team is the Pittsburgh Steelers. I happened to love watching the Steelers play football as I was growing up. I believe they are a dedicated and hard working team that strives to

win games, and they are a team from Pennsylvania.

Beacon: Do you think softball has greatly developed over the years due to the college athletes? How?

Pondo: Yes, college athletes have more opportunities to play softball today than in the past. Softball players now have the opportunity to advance on to play ball following college at a professional level, that being the Olympic softball team.

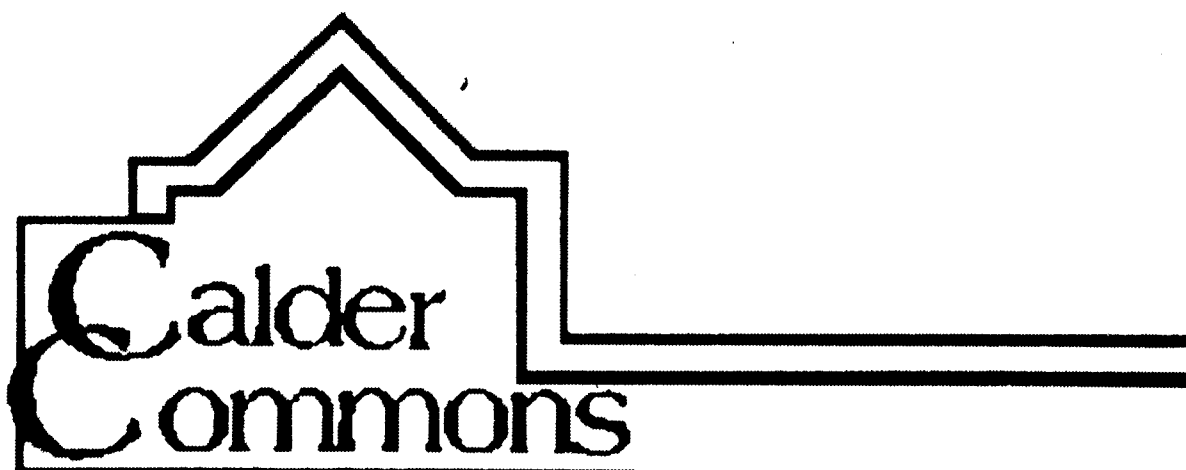
Beacon: What is the best memory you have of the Behrend softball team?

Pondo: The trips to Florida and spending time getting to know the players and how their personalities interact. Also, seeing a Behrend softball player hit five home runs (two being grand slams) over the fence within 10 games of play. This is unimaginable to most college athletes and a great accomplishment.

Beacon: What piece of information can you pass on to future athletes at Behrend?

Pondo: Have fun and enjoy every moment of your college career because it all goes by so quickly. Set goals for yourself and follow through with them. Stay focused, stay curious, and do what you say you will do.

Every week, the Beacon will engage in a little "ask and respond" with someone who doesn't make the headlines.



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