

FROM FRONT PAGE

Program gives kids chance to be active

new people and make some new friends," said junior Matthew MacArthur. "We have a lot of people from both teams and everyone I've talked to about TOPSoccer has told me how much fun they had. It's really a good time for everyone involved."

The program, run nationally by the U.S. Youth Soccer Association, takes place from 6-7:30 p.m. every Wednesday on the main basketball court. Perritano begins the night by asking the kids, "Who wants to play soccer?" They scream out in unison, "I love soccer!"

Perritano then leads the children through several skill exercises, from kicking the ball through each other's legs to off their knees, to dribbling races across the gym. Some are able to execute all of the exercises, some struggle with the exercises, and then some kids fail to pay any attention to Perritano's instructions.

It doesn't matter what they do, as long as they stay active. Perritano believes this is the most important reason for the children to join the program.

"I hope that they gain an appreciation for their abilities, for their ability to be active, for their ability to reach a physical potential," said Perritano. "That's really what it's all about, to get these children to understand they can do anything they want to. To help children realize their physical potential and equally, to have fun—that's the goal of this program."

Every child interacts one-on-one with a specific Behrend soccer player for all eight weeks. The first night, on March 13, was a reunion of sorts for some players and kids who teamed up last year.

Falk remembers how difficult a time he had communicating with his autistic child last year. The child's father often helped Falk interact with the boy, because he did not have any language skills. This year's a different story.

"I have already seen a new kind of kid," said Falk. "This year he is more comfortable with me and we were able to work alone together without the help from his father. I was worried that my child would have forgot me in the span of a year, but to my surprise, he had a smile when I said 'hello' to him again."

For most of the hour and a half, the



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Dan Falk, left, takes a break with his player during program.

athlete volunteer and their child do individual exercises, from dribbling to shooting to whatever the child feels like doing. One boy, the biggest child in the program, drop kicked his soccer ball and nearly took the head off a female player. At the same time, a younger kid dribbled his way around the gym, the same thing he did all night.

"I'm so happy. You're doing so good," said his personal player.

"The best part of the program is just seeing the smiles and excitement on the kids faces when they are playing," said Mandy Gesuale. "I hope the kids take away an appreciation for the sport of soccer and most importantly I hope they can look back and say they had fun during the program."

No matter what they do, most of the children are oblivious to the fact their parents are watching from the sidelines.

"He did not look forward to it at all," said Mary Rose Castano, the mother of Billy, 12. "He's very shy and he doesn't want to try new things. Since he's been here, he hasn't paid a bit of attention to me so he's already having a ball."

Fifteen minutes later, Billy did acknowledge his mom, with a wave and thumbs up from across the gym.

For Jim Mantsch's son, Tom (11), it was a different story.

"All week long, that's all I hear is, 'When's soccer? When's soccer?'" said the elder Mantsch. "He looks forward to it everyday. He wakes up and says, 'Daddy, time to go to soccer. And I tell him, 'You have to wait until Wednesday.' He loves it."

At the end of the day, each child gets a chance to score a goal against one of the soccer players, who is more than happy to skip past the ball as it heads into the net. The whole crowd—children, players, coaches, and parents—

chants the child's name as they line up their shot.

"That's fun, to see the spotlight's on them," said Perritano. "Again, just seeing the excitement when the children come back each week. It's something I look forward to every Wednesday."

Perritano believes the volunteers are the most important aspects of the event, because the children learn more working with individual players than with a group as a whole.

"I think the relationship that they develop is really critical to the program," said Perritano. "Our players have done a great job of rapport building and getting to know each child on an individual level. There are some challenges, dealing with a lot of different types of children and a lot of different ability levels."

"To be able to break things down one-on-one helps, and also to have that relationship—that player/coach relationship, that volunteer/player relationship—I think is really important."

But at the end of each day, Perritano knows that the players learn as much about themselves and about others as the children learn about soccer.

"I like our players to understand that it's very important to try to reach your physical potential because we all don't have the same physical potential," said Perritano. "Our players, and all of us—not just our players, but our coaches—have gotten a lot from athletics and a lot from soccer. We have a lot to be thankful for. This is our opportunity to give something back to the game of soccer, and to help people."

Falk hopes that the program will leave an impression on the kids they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

"Through attending this program, I want the children to just have lots and lots of fun," said Falk. "Most of these children are involved in a lot of other activities so motivation is not really necessary. Just getting them active with soccer hopefully, we can make an impact on their lives which they will never forget."

PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON
Andee Kuroda pushes the ball across the floor with his head, imitating the actions of coach Dan Perritano.

FROM PAGE 1B

Softball wins season's first four conference games

trip, then they were erased against rival Pitt-Greensburg on Saturday, when Behrend exploded for 30 runs in 10 innings.

"The first game against UPG was a fun win," said Diehl. "That team is struggling for pitchers, so we used it as a kind of batting practice. The second game we were able to get everybody a chance to play and give them some confidence as well."

Behrend racked up only eight hits in the 20-0 win over Greensburg in the first game. Peterson went 4-for-4 in the first game, with three doubles, three runs scored, and four RBIs. Corbin, Emily Allen, Peterson, and Roberta Baker each scored three runs, while Allen knocked in three runs. Corbin picked up the win on the mound, giving up four hits in five innings, while striking out five.

In game two, Miller drove in four runs to lead Behrend to a 10-1 win. Mack and Charity Marsh each scored three runs, while Aleigha Powder drove in three runs. Lindsay Patton had the only multi-hit game, smacking two of the team's seven hits. Covert picked up the win on the mound, giving up one unearned run in five innings.

Next up for the Blue and White is a doubleheader at home against Penn State Altoona at 1 p.m. on Saturday. The Lions play an away game against Wilmington Sunday before playing four straight home games.

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This week's senior athletic profile

Bill McKinney: Shaking the rust not difficult for this star

by Kate Levdansky Petrikis and Mike Bello
assistant sports editor and sports editor

Bill McKinney, a senior runner on the track and field team, actually played basketball at Behrend for the first three years of his college career.

"I learned a lot from coach [Dave] Niland," said McKinney. "Behrend basketball has given me many great experiences over the three years that I played. One of the most enjoyable seasons was the year we made in to the NCAA Division III Elite 8. I enjoyed basketball, but I just thought it was my time to move on to something different."

McKinney decided to participate in a sport he started in sixth grade, track and field. This previous indoor track season was the first time McKinney had run in three and a half years.

"It feels good to be back running again after a long break from the sport," he said.

"Bill is a really good athlete," said Greg Cooper, who coaches the relays, 400, and 800 meter runs. "It took him only about three weeks to adjust to the grind of training."

"Basketball kept him in shape, and he's been preparing for the season since last fall. The biggest reason he is doing so well is because he is so dedicated to the sport."

McKinney said he was confident coming back this season because Dave Cooper, his coach from Union City High School, attained the position of head track and field coach.

McKinney said the coaches at Behrend have taught him that hard work and self-discipline lead to success, both on and off the playing field.

"He really doesn't have any weaknesses," said Dave Cooper. "But having coached him at Union City, and even though I don't directly coach his event, it helps to know his personality and who he is as a person. So yeah, it really helps that I've coached him before."

"He doesn't really need coaching," added Cooper. "He's the type of athlete who strives to be his best without having to be motivated by someone else."

Greg Cooper ran with McKinney at Union City, since he is only a year older than McKinney. The relationship they built at Union City works to their advantage at Behrend.

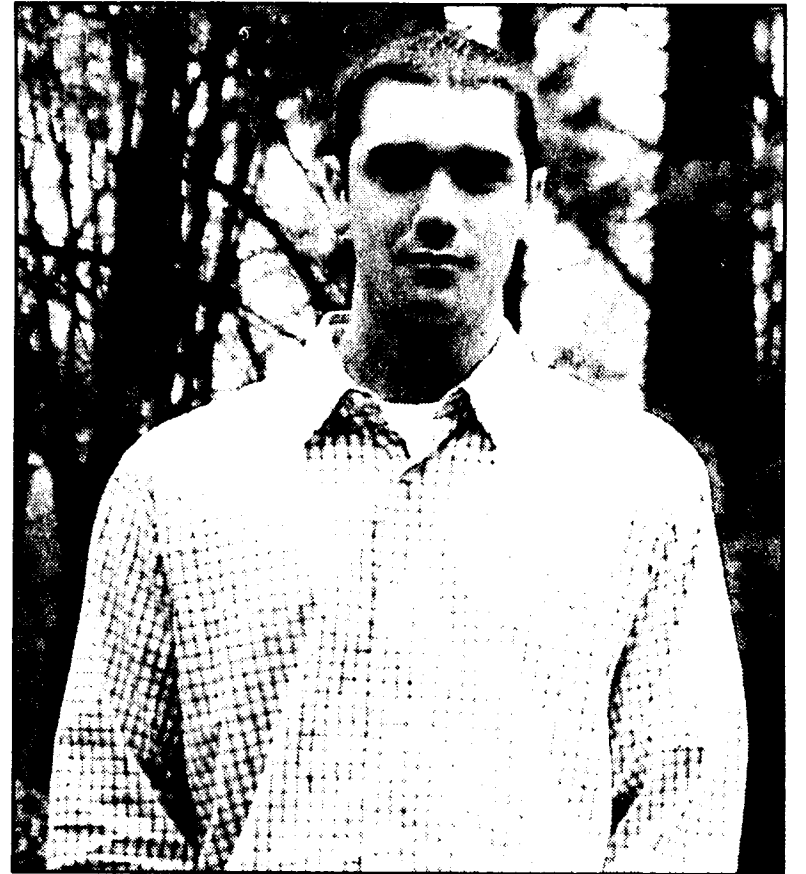


PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Bill McKinney played basketball his first three years at Behrend before rejoining his old track and field coach at high school this year.

"I think it helps tremendously," said Greg Cooper. "If he thinks we're not working hard enough, he'll tell me and I can believe him because I know he's not lying."

"It's easier for him, too, because, even though it's been four years since he ran track, he knows the system (that Dave Cooper installed at Union City). So it's not like he's had to adjust to a whole new style of coaching at Behrend."

In previous years, McKinney focused on the 800-meter run, but this year he is concentrating on the 400-meter dash. He also runs a leg of the 4 x 400 relay team.

"McKinney runs the relay, and he's the type who doesn't want to pass the baton off," said Cooper. "He wants to race until the end, and that's why he's been successful so far."

McKinney prepares himself for each meet by training hard, and then by resting up a day or two before the meet. McKinney believes the team will continue to improve through the last meet of the season.

McKinney holds two indoor track records at Behrend: the 500 and the 4 x 400 relay. The other people on the relay team are Keith Cerroni, Mike Barlett, and Dave Ober. McKinney qualified for the ECAC Indoor Championships in both events.

As far as his biggest influence is

concerned, McKinney's parents rank at the top.

"They instilled upon me the values and guidance that are essential to being successful in life," he said. "They have sacrificed a lot to shape me into the person I am today."

McKinney said when he is not working out for track, where practices are held 4 to 6 p.m. daily, he can be found in the library. This could explain why McKinney's best characteristics are self-discipline and his work ethic.

"Bill is definitely a leader," said Greg Cooper. "He is a hard worker who's work ethic is outstanding. He is more than capable of leading the entire team to victory. If I tell him to go 100 percent, he will go 100 percent every time out."

McKinney likes to golf in his spare time, if weather permits. He also likes to fish and lift weights.

McKinney is majoring in accounting. "I am good with numbers and I enjoy the problem solving aspect of the profession," he said.

After graduation, McKinney plans to attain a job with an investigative service. After enough years of experience, he hopes to join a government agency in the field of investigation.

Lacrosse holds its ground against Pittsburgh, Grove City

by Guy Reschenthaler
wire service editor

For the Behrend lacrosse team, two of its three hardest games are out of the way. Playing Pittsburgh last Friday and Grove City Saturday, the team came upon some fierce competition, as expected.

Away at Pitt, the team scored one goal off the stick of attacker Mark Scabillon. The Lions played hard and some rookies adjusted to the fast-paced game of lacrosse.

The following day at Grove City, the team looked and felt better, playing outside with one game already under their belt. The defense played well, the midfielders were making fast breaks,

and the offense was putting heat on the Grove City goalkeeper. Scabillon continued his streak by scoring another goal.

Despite losing its first two games, the team is looking up and ahead. According to veterans, Pitt, Grove City, and West Virginia are the three best teams in the league. There is no place to go down from here on it.

The team's attackers are Chris Agosti, team captain Keith Snead, Craig "Virginia" Ferguson, and team captain Mark Scabillon. Midfielders include Brian Conway, Steve Aveard, Rick Hammer, Tom Sucheveh, Justin Tiano, Steve Smith, Jeremy Green, Guy Reschenthaler, Shaun Lawrence, Mike Fritts, Justin Lucas, Bryan Haring, Scott

Lee, Jim Busa, and Steve Omecinski. Team captain Chancey Hartwig, Jon Fallon, Liam Bames, and Jake Jones anchor the defense. Team captain Mike May and Clint Wyckoff tend the goal.

The scheduled Sunday game against Grove City was supposed to be played at the Behrend Fields. Due to the maintenance department's failure to line the fields, the game had to be cancelled.

This weekend the team will compete in the Pitt Shootout. At the tournament will be some great teams, including a few from Canada. Behrend will face CMU, most definitely, and other teams as well.

After the Shootout, the Lions are slated to play Slippery Rock, Allegheny, Bethany, Duquesne, and WVU.

FROM PAGE 1B

out on top again, winning 14-4.

"IUP is an experienced club team, but they did not have the strength to keep up with us," said Heynes. "It was good to see my B squad step in and earn a win. They played 90 percent of the game, while the starters had a turn on the bench. Being able to run our offense, and do different things was great to see our B team do."

Freshman Amanda Prischack scored her first career goal ever this game.

"This was a great confidence boost for us," said Heynes. "To finally see us work together as a team, to pick up the plays I call, and to come out with three wins was awesome. We have three weeks until our next tournament at Indiana, Bloomington, so we need to do a lot of conditioning."

"Their pool is 25 yards by 30 meters, which is the biggest pool we will see this year. So, swimming has to be at the forefront to help us move the ball

around the pool. Our defense is pretty much set, we just need to work on our shooting and offense plays more. If we are more efficient we will be less tired."

At the tournament, Behrend will be competing against Mercyhurst, Gannon, Washington & Jefferson, and Indiana. The tournament is being held April 5 and 6. Heynes said his goal for this tournament is to come out 2-2, thinking Gannon and Indiana are just too strong for Behrend.