

Weather plays havoc with spring games

Softball drops 2 to Wilmington | Baseball waits for snow to melt

by Zoë Rose
staff writer

Spring weather is supposed to begin on March 20, right? However, it was another white wonderland as Erie got hit with several inches of snow, causing the softball team to reschedule its game last week against Penn State Altoona.

With the amount of snow that fell, it was impossible for the field to drain in time for the doubleheader. Last Sunday however, the Lions visited Wilmington to play a doubleheader, but lost both games (9-3, 9-1) to drop to 4-11 overall this season.

Intermittent wet weather can be troublesome for players who practice continuously, but then have to wait when the games are postponed. Cheryl Peterson said postponements can affect the team's immediate focus, but they do not disrupt the long-term focus.

"It affects the team's short-term focus for the week," said catcher Cheryl Peterson. "It's frustrating not to be outside, but with knowing the games are rescheduled ahead of us, we look toward the next set of games and how to prepare our best for those."

In the first game against Wilmington, the Lions racked up 10 hits, but could only plate three runs. Becky Corbin, Roberta Baker, and Charity Marsh each collected two hits to lead the offense. Jennifer Miller gave up seven earned runs in seven innings of work.

The offense struggled in the second game, as the Lions had only three hits. Erika Mack drove in Corbin for the team's only run. Stephanie Covert pitched 6 2/3 innings, giving up seven earned runs.

The Blue and White were scheduled to play a doubleheader against Frostburg today at home, but once again the Lions had to postpone the game.

The postponed Altoona game has now been rescheduled for April 14 and likewise, the Frostburg game will be made up at a time to be announced.

With a 4-11 overall mark, the Lions know they need to improve against non-conference teams so they are better prepared for the AMCC teams.

"What needs to be focused on, to gain



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY / BEHREND BEACON

Sophomore Brandy Polinick was named the AMCC's softball athlete of the week, hitting .455 with two RBIs and two stolen bases as Behrend split a pair of doubleheaders.

more wins, is more team unity," said Lindsay Patton. "Our team has a ton of it, but we need to continue supporting each other and boosting the confidence level of each player."

"I think we lost (to Wilmington) because we were not ready to play," said coach Kellie Diehl. "It was a last-minute decision to go down there. We need to be ready to play at anytime because the weather dictates when we play, that's what we need to focus on."

Focus is not the only key aspect the team needs to improve.

"The elements that are crucial are not to mess up the basics," said Patton. "Good throws, good fielding and good batting is necessary to beat any team."

The Lions are scheduled to play La Roche on Monday and Fredonia on Thursday, as well as Lake Erie on April 6. The team will return to campus Sunday evening and attempt to take the tarp off the field. With the forecast calling for clouds and temperatures in the 40s Saturday and Sunday, the players know they may finally get their season off the ground.

by Mike Bello
sports editor

Frustrations continue to grow as the baseball team has cancelled game after game because of the late winter weather that's hit the area recently. The Lions have already pushed back their first conference game of the season against Altoona three times, from Saturday to Sunday to Tuesday. It can be a very impatient time for the players.

"I think you can tell how frustrated the weather makes the team," said senior outfielder Jake Boyle. "I sometimes am driving along thinking about not playing because of the weather and become so upset that I want to jerk the car into a bridge embankment. Well, not really, but it is very irritating."

The team was scheduled to play at Allegheny on Wednesday, but that too had to be postponed. The Lions were supposed to play John Carroll today at 1 p.m., originally scheduled for March 16 in Cleveland, but that game had to be cancelled. The team's next home game is against Fredonia on Tuesday at 1 p.m.

With the weather forecast calling for cloudy skies with temperatures in the 40s Saturday and Sunday, the Lions may finally get the chance to clear their new field for a few games. The news wasn't all bad for the baseball team, though. The teams plays Frostburg on Saturday, and Pitt-Bradford on Wednesday. So even if the snow persists into next week, the Lions will get the chance to shake the rust at the two road games.

For many players, the interruption in the season prevents them from finding that groove that helps build momentum as the school year comes to an end.

"The hard part about not playing for a week or more is that you can't get into that groove and stay there," said catcher Luke Bundy. "Team-wise, we just take a positive approach that we will play eventually and it helps knowing that other teams are doing the same as we are because of the weather."

Once the snow melts and the field drains, the players will remove the tarp. They then will finally get the chance to practice outside, and hopefully, play their second home game of the season.

But for now, the players are forced to practice indoors at the Junker Center, and after so many indoor practices both before and after spring break, they can be excused if they seem mad.

"I can't stand waking up, looking outside, and seeing snow on the ground and realizing that another game is cancelled and I have to spend yet another practice indoors," said Boyle. "It is a

disgusting feeling."

The team, though, can work on fixing weaknesses that build up over time.

"It's almost like another preseason to prepare for the next half of the year," said pitcher Charlie Sevin. "It's a time when we can work on little things that we were doing wrong at the start of the season."

What's even worse, as far as the team is concerned, is that it has yet to settle in the brand-new field the players have anticipated since construction began. The Lions have had only a limited number of practices and only one game so far on the field.

Missing a few games is one thing, but the team's hopes that sunny weather will be in store come April 6, when the Lions play their first of six home games in 11 days.

"A lot of mental preparation goes into baseball, along with looking forward to playing, [and] then it is gone," said Bundy. "So it is very hard to stay mentally tough day after day in the gym."

"I think the best thing we can do as a team is to keep practicing and try to prepare for practice as if it were a game situation," said Sevin.

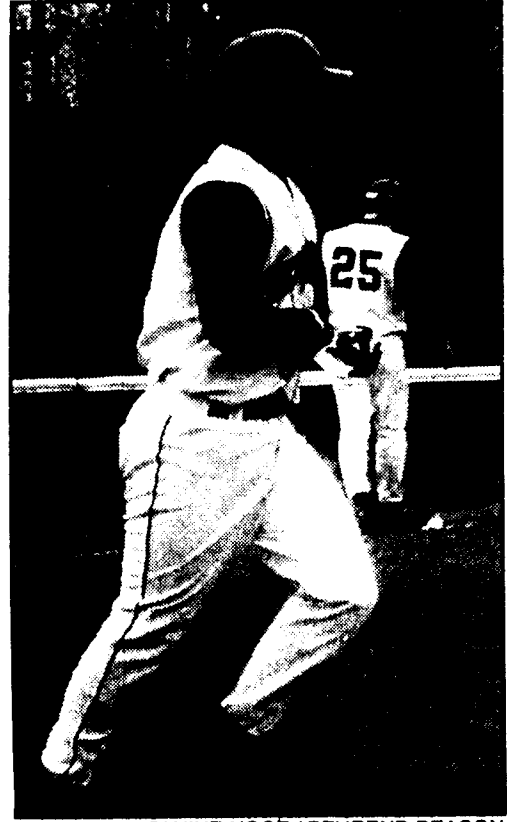
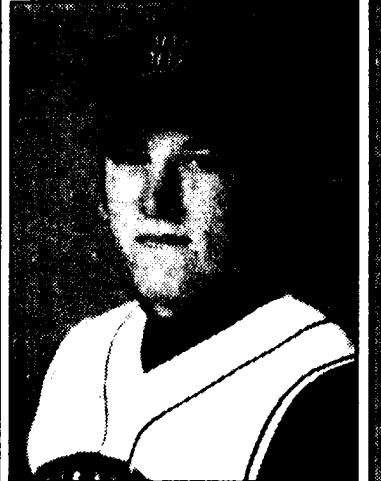


PHOTO BY JEANINE NOCE / BEHREND BEACON
Keith Lepionka, foreground, and Jake Boyle, background are two reasons the Lions are 7-3 so far this season.

Housing
and
Food Service
**Athlete
of the Week**

PENNSTATE
Erie

Jake
Boyle



Boyle, a senior outfielder from Maplewood High School, went 3-for-4 with three runs and two RBIs in a 12-0 win against Hiram on March 19. Boyle is hitting .452 this season with 15 runs, 19 hits, 15 RBIs, and two homeruns. Boyle is also second on the team with six stolen bases.

After several recent cancellations, the Lions return to the field to play a road game Saturday against Frostburg at 1 p.m.

Q & A: Who's Behind the Scenes?

Staff assistant Marcia Jensen shares her thoughts from many years at Behrend

by Kate Levinsky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

Marcia Jensen's interest in a clerical career began in high school and continued at Erie Business Center, where, in her senior year, she was assigned an internship in a local attorney's office.

Upon graduation, she was hired by the firm and worked for four years until the birth of her son. She took time off to stay home with her children. A few years later, she worked part-time in her church office and then started full-time in the Mercyhurst College athletic department. In 1986, she came to Behrend, and has been here ever since.

Beacon: What is your title? What jobs do you do?

Jensen: My title is staff assistant in athletics at Penn State Behrend. My jobs include answering the phone; greeting visitors and students; arranging meetings; proofreading for mailings; processing all budget items for athletics; keeping current records for all sport teams - updating rosters, files, and requesting eligibility checks for all student-athletes; assisting with fundraising events for athletics and our annual Hall of Fame Induction; working with the development office to keep the alumni addresses current; and other daily activities that take place in the department.

Beacon: How long have you been working for Behrend? How did you get the job?

Jensen: I have been working in athletics at Behrend for 16 years. I was informed about the staff assistant opening by a graduate of Mercyhurst College who, at that time, was the athletic trainer at Behrend. I applied, was interviewed and hired by athletic director Herb Lauffer.

Beacon: What is the favorite part of your job? Why?

Jensen: The favorite part of my job is interacting with students and athletes. It's nice to see them grow from a freshman to a senior and then go on to their new careers.

Beacon: What part of your job do you find the hardest? Why?

Jensen: The hardest part of my job seems to come at the beginning of the fall semester, when everything is starting up after the summer. There's never enough time to finish what needs to be done at that time, but somehow we always get through it each year.

Beacon: What kind of people have you met during your time at Behrend?

Jensen: The people I have met while at Behrend have been mostly connected with athletics. I've had the privilege of meeting Franco Harris, Jack Ham, and Rosie Greer through our fundraising events for athletics. They are Penn State grads and former Pittsburgh Steelers who have come to Behrend to help us out. The late Herb Lauffer and the late John Jageman were two special people to know. Roger Sweeting is another great person to have worked with while at Behrend, and I could go on and on about all the coaches who have been here during my time in the athletic department.

Beacon: How have the programs changed since you have been at Behrend?

Jensen: There were seven sports when I started here in 1986. We have expanded to 21 sports now, with the newest being our water sports in the newly completed Junker Center. Athletics has come a long way in the last few years at Behrend. We are strong members of the NCAA, ECAC, and AMCC, with many teams competing in and winning the various championships.



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Marcia Jensen has seen a lot during her 16 years at Behrend, but she believes the best days are still to come.

Beacon: What changes would you make?

Jensen: Overall, things are going well. One of the biggest changes that has already been accomplished is the move from Erie Hall to the Junker Center. I've seen more involvement from the campus, whether it be students, faculty or staff. The Junker Center gives everyone a variety of things to do, from using the track, the swimming pool, weight room and the all-purpose gymnasium courts. We've had the extremes of professional wrestling to formal dinners in the gymnasium.

Beacon: Where are the programs at Behrend headed?

Jensen: With strong recruiting and good coaching techniques, more of our

teams are reaching playoff levels. It's exciting to be a part of such a good program. The teams are headed upward. With the new athletic building, soccer fields, and new baseball and softball fields, the coaches have great recruiting tools to bring in more talented athletes.

Beacon: What is your best memory of working at Behrend?

Jensen: My best memories of Behrend are of all the athletes who have competed here, of the funny things that have happened, of the victories that they have earned, and the friendships that continue after they graduate.

FROM PAGE 10

up more than six deep by the entrances, because games between local rivals are always big draws. The same goes for Prep/McDowell.

But again, who's going to want to watch a Behrend/Frostburg game? Who in this town knows where Frostburg is? I never knew until I looked at a map. I highly doubt many other Erie residents ever will take the time.

Along with location, it's not difficult to find one's way to Gannon (located downtown) or Mercyhurst (located on a main street), but Behrend is out of the way for most of the community (the lazy half, or should I say, majority).

I'm not saying Behrend should try to compete with Mercyhurst, Gannon, or Edinboro (all Division II schools), because a score like 85-52 would not look good on paper. I'm just saying that bigger schools always get more attention (in the media as well as from the public), and Behrend is just too small to attract the Erie community's attention.

The Erie media should take most of the blame here, because if they don't care about Behrend, then getting the word out on the school is that much harder. People hear about the school through the media, and when the media gives little attention to Behrend, then the general public will give little attention.

Another reason, but one not so important, is the Penn State connection. One would think this

would work for Behrend, but it really works against the school. Behrend gets overlooked because there are so many Penn State fans in this area. Everyone is a Penn State fan during football season, but that doesn't mean they become Behrend fans, as well.

Why should they care about a small Division III school, even if it is a Penn State affiliate, when University Park is so much bigger and more important? People want to cheer for the big teams, the Yankees, Indians, Bulls, or Steelers. No one wants to cheer for the Expos or Clippers.

So what can Behrend do to help itself build a fan base? Well, for one thing, a football team would help. Immensely. People always go to football games, and it's the easiest way to get people to come to the campus.

Behrend has made strides with the new Junker Center and the new softball and baseball fields (although bleachers would help). But until the community can get a feel for the new facilities, the same problem will exist for quite some time.

Of course, I'm not sociologist, so I don't have the answers. I just state the problem and hope others can figure out the solutions. They're the professionals, not me. All I know is the only way Behrend will ever be recognized in the community is if the other three schools relocated to the South. Yeah, don't hold your breath for that one.

