

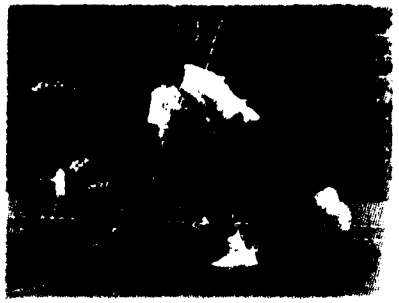


Q&A with Ryan Smith
Smith, the assistant baseball coach, is working his way towards a masters while helping coach Paul Benim lead the baseball team to victory. Read more about him on page 4B.

Section B Sports

Mike Bello, Sports Editor

Schedule Crunch
The tennis team played six games in three days this past weekend. Find out how well the Lions did against the competition on page 3B.



Calendar of Events

Behrend Athletic Events

- Friday**
Men's Tennis @ Pitt-Greensburg 4 p.m.
Women's Water Polo @ Grove City Invitational, TBA
- Saturday**
Men's and Women's Track and Field @ Western PA Championships @ Geneva 10 a.m.
Men's Tennis @ Frostburg 12 p.m.
Women's Softball @ La Roche (DH) 1 p.m.
Men's Baseball Grove City (DH) Behrend Baseball Field 1 p.m.
Women's Water Polo @ Grove City Invitational, TBA
- Sunday**
Men's Tennis @ Penn State Altoona, 10 a.m.
Men's Baseball Thiel Behrend Baseball Field 1 p.m.
Women's Softball Penn State Altoona (DH) Behrend Softball Field 1 p.m.
- Monday**
Men's Golf @ Westminster, 1 p.m.
Men's Tennis @ Fredonia, 3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday**
Women's Softball Buffalo State (DH) Behrend Softball Field 3 p.m.
Men's Baseball Allegheny Behrend Baseball Field 3 p.m.
Men's Tennis @ Lake Erie, 4 p.m.
- Wednesday**
Women's Softball @ AMCC Tournament, TBA
- Thursday**
Men's Tennis @ Fredonia, 3 p.m.
- Friday, April 19**
Women's Water Polo @ Southern Division Championships @ Villanova, TBA
Women's Softball @ AMCC Tournament, TBA
Men's Baseball @ AMCC Tournament, TBA

Intramurals Schedule

Friday
Intramural Badminton: Men's and Women's Singles; Men's, Women's, and Coed Doubles - \$3 - Teams must pick Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday games.

All entries must be at the intramural office by 4 p.m. on the scheduled date

Baseball cruises to 21-4 record

by Mike Bello
sports editor

It wouldn't be inconceivable if any team struggled from exhaustion when it had to play seven games in four days. Then again, the Behrend baseball team this season isn't like other teams.

"Great teams keep improving over the course of a season," said Chris Shearer. "This team is just starting to realize its potential."

The Lions, playing through a stretch of 11-of-13 home games, ran their winning streak to 10 after a sweep of La Roche on Thursday. Behrend improved to 21-4 overall and 9-1 in the AMCC. And with all but two games left in the season scheduled at home, they aren't looking to put an end to that anytime soon.

"We have put ourselves in the position we wanted to [be] heading into the home stretch of the season, first place with everyone else chasing us," said Jake Boyle, one of nine seniors on the team.

The Lions have vaulted their way to first place in the AMCC because their lineup is dominant from the first through the ninth positions, producing scores that look like they came from a video game. Credit goes to the pitching staff as well, which has developed into a solid unit, allowing four or fewer runs in the last nine games. During that same stretch Behrend scored 12 or more runs five times.

The Lions hosted Pitt-Greensburg on a soggy Monday afternoon, but once again the Lions' offense was anything but. Behrend scored 10 runs in the first inning on their way to a 19-0 rout, and then followed that up with a 15-2 win in game two.

Tony Azzato went 3-for-3 with a team-high four RBIs in game one,

while Boyle blasted a three-run home run. Keith Lepionka scored two runs and drove in three runners, and Vince Canzano scored two runs and added two RBIs. Adam Best scored four runs in the leadoff position, while five other players scored two runs. Ryan Seyler gave up two hits in five innings and whiffed eight to record the win.

The Lions have dominated opponents recently because the lineup and pitching staff have almost no weaknesses.

"There have been times throughout the season where certain individuals have struggled and somebody has been there to pick them up," said Shearer. "This team is not being carried by one individual and that is what makes us a dangerous team. On any given day, any one of us can carry the team."

On Sunday, the Lions traveled to Case Western Reserve, a team with a misleading 2-10 record heading into the doubleheader. Lepionka drove in all of Behrend's runs in a 5-2 win in game one, while freshman Chris Kechisen gave up two runs on two hits in a 3-2 nightcap win.

Lepionka went 2-for-4 in the first game, including a two-run home run in the seventh, while Best scored two runs in the eighth. Behrend won 19-0 and 15-2 and currently own a 9-1 record in the AMCC, good for first place.

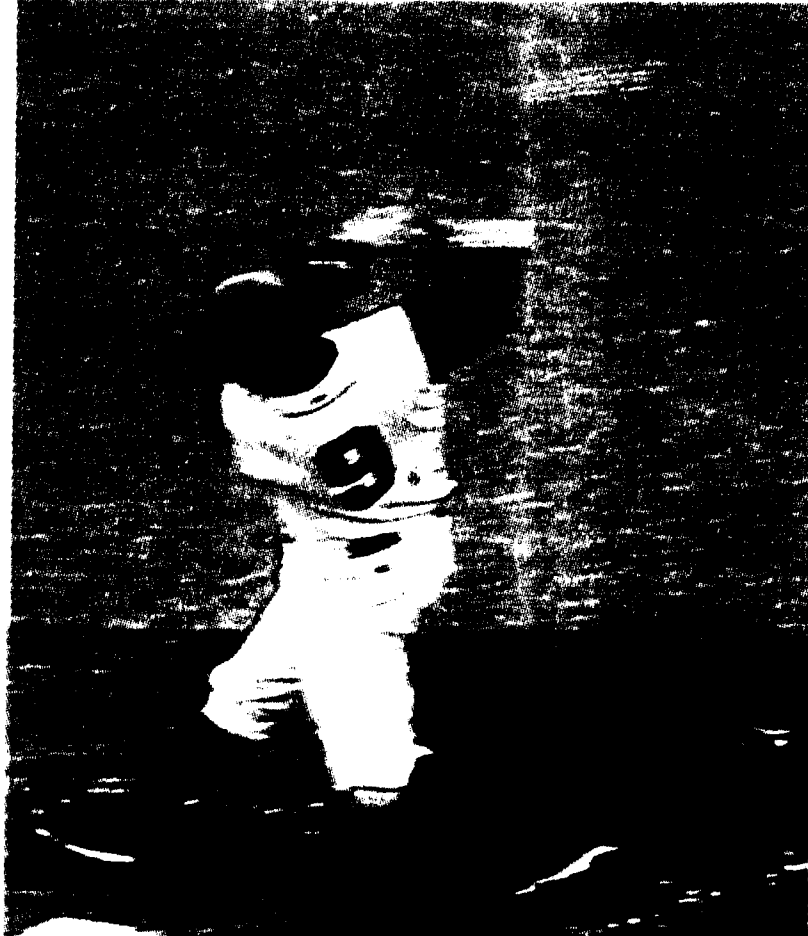


PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON

Senior Jason Karas crushes a grand slam Monday in the second game of a doubleheader against Pitt-Greensburg. Behrend destroyed Greensburg 19-0 and 15-2 and currently own a 9-1 record in the AMCC, good for first place.

BASEBALL DOMINATES
continued on page 4B

Simple steps Behrend can use to attract larger crowds

After some deep thinking (mostly over some delicious Ben & Jerry's ice cream, on sale, of course), I decided that my last column wasn't finished yet. As you recall (and when I say "you", I mean the three of you who read it), I stated that Behrend athletics lack support because a) students have

other things to do, and b) this is a Division III school.

Personal foul
Mike Bello
sports editor

I also said that I didn't know what the school could do to help attendance. But now that I have had more time to think, I realized (thanks to some painful brain freezes) that I do have some solutions, although getting them implemented is another story. So without further adieu, here are my plans for every sport.

Basketball - Sure, it can be exciting to watch any basketball game, but wouldn't it be more exciting if dodgeball was incorporated into the game? Both teams would guard their basket and if the other team tried to dribble down the court, your team could whip another basketball at the opposing player(s). The only problem is most players would go down with injuries after the first half.

Baseball/Softball - Bench clearing brawls are rare in college sports, but what if they were mandatory? Think about it. If every time a player got hit by a pitch, they'd have to charge the mound, wouldn't you want to attend the games? Of course, some pitcher who thinks he's all big would plunk the little guy. But that's why teammates are allowed to join. Points are awarded as well if the teams can assemble a pile of players as seen in "Naked Gun."

Volleyball - Spikes are a normal part of the game, but what if when a player got mad because of a spike directed at them, the two players were allowed to settle the score off the court (maybe in a ring)? It's like Tonya Harding meets Gabrielle Reese. Plus, because the players are so close to each other, little kicks or punches under the net would be perfectly legal.

Soccer - You can't slide tackle, or throw elbows? Not in the newer version. Slide tackling, with metal spikes too, as well as throwing elbows and fists is not only allowed, but encouraged. Not even the goalie is protected under the new rules, which will soon be adopted by both the MLS and the WUSA.

Water Polo/Swimming
Watching the players swim back and forth is like watching Public Access TV, but allowing the players to drown each other (or maybe just hold them underwater for a few moments) would surely bring in a large crowd. Wouldn't it? If you're swimming the 200IM, and you know the swimmer in the next lane is going to beat you, then you wait for him/her to touch the wall and swim back to you. That's when you jump lanes and drag them back, where your teammates are waiting for you. It only works, though, if they can get all the opposing players out of the race.

Cross Country/Track and Field
- Let's face it, running around in circles doesn't exactly get the juices flowing for sports fans, but what if the players were allowed to push each other around while running? You and your teammates could try to tackle the opposing team's best player and throw him/her into a creek. For Field events, you can go for the long distances in the javelin or shot put, but to create drama, you can also throw them at other players.

SPORT IMPROVEMENTS
continued on page 2B

This week's senior athletic profile

Jake Boyle: Leading the charge on the field after successful brain surgery

by Kate Levdansky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

In the fall of 2000, Jake Boyle was playing intramural football at Penn State Behrend when he suffered a concussion after attempting to catch a pass. He slipped and hit his head on an opponent's knee.

Boyle went to a local hospital in Erie. After receiving x-rays, an abnormality was discovered in the right frontal region of his brain that was totally separate of the concussion. MRIs at the Cleveland Clinic led to the discovery that the abnormality was a grade II astrocytoma brain tumor.

Doctors at the Cleveland Clinic recommended surgical removal of the tumor. But Boyle had to make an important decision about when to have the surgery. He was asymptomatic, but was encouraged by his doctor to have the tumor taken care of as soon as possible. Boyle had to time the surgery with schooling and the spring baseball season.

"I was told that there did not seem to be any immediate risk if I postponed the surgery, although they could not guarantee that there would not be any problems," said Boyle. "I knew my teammates were counting on me and I wanted to be there for them, so that is why I wanted to have surgery."

But Boyle was then offered the opportunity to play summer baseball in the New England Collegiate Baseball League (NECBL).

"This was an opportunity I would never have again and an opportunity that had never been offered to a Behrend player, so I once



PHOTO BY HEATHER MYERS / BEHREND BEACON
Jake Boyle had a brain tumor removed last August, eight days before the fall semester started. Now the senior is leading the 21-4 Lions.

again decided to postpone the surgery until after the summer season in August," said Boyle. "The highlight of playing for the Eastern Tides was just that...playing. It was an amazing learning experience being able to compete with mostly Division I and II athletes. It was even more thrilling to be able to be a major contributor to a playoff-bound team. This experience made me believe that I could perform at the same level as some kids from major baseball colleges if I worked hard enough."

Boyle was scheduled for surgery on

Aug. 9, 2001, but the hospital made a change in the surgery schedule and did not inform Boyle and his family. Therefore, surgery was re-scheduled for the following week and left only eight days before the fall semester of classes started.

On Aug. 16, Dr. Gene H. Barnett used the latest intraoperative MRI techniques during the 12-hour surgery to remove the golf ball-size tumor. The process was successful. The staff at the Cleveland Clinic was impressed with his ability to bounce back from the traumatic experience. He returned home two days after surgery and began a quick recovery. Boyle returned to classes eight days after surgery and has had no problems.

"The doctors told me no physical activity for six months, but I kept bugging them week after week to play baseball," said Boyle.

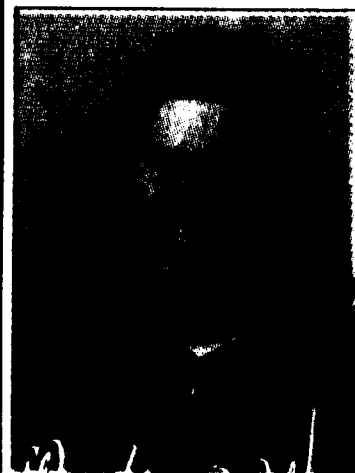
Finally, after four weeks, the doctors were tired of Boyle calling them and allowed him to return to playing baseball. Boyle was able to play in the last two games of the fall season against Allegheny.

"I have no choice but to think about the tumor sometimes, as it will be something that needs attention the rest of my life," Boyle said. "There is always the possibility it may return. But I firmly believe that everything happens for a reason and that discovering the tumor early was meant to be. It seems sort of foolish to find it so early, have the surgery and recovery go so well, and then for problems to resurface. God works

BOYLE
continued on page 3B

Housing and Food Service Athlete of the Week

Cheryl Peterson



Peterson hit .588 (10-for-17) with seven RBIs last week for the Behrend softball team. For the season, Peterson leads the team with a .403 batting average, seven doubles, 16 runs, and 14 RBIs.

The Lions will be back in action at home on Sunday at 1 p.m. against Penn State Altoona in a doubleheader conference game at the Behrend Softball Field.