

Team hits rough stretch over break

By Kevin Fiorenzo
staff writer

After a successful start to the season, the women's basketball team is struggling to stay at .500 after a rough 1-3 stretch over Christmas break.

On Dec. 14, the Lions were 5-4 overall, 2-0 in conference. The team returned in January to start a stretch of tough non-conference games. Their first game back was at Case Western Reserve on Jan. 7.

Behrend's offense was ineffective for most of the night as the team failed to have anyone score over 10 points.

On the other end of the spectrum, their defense was unable to stop Case Western's explosive offense, which had four players scoring in double figures. The Behrend women were unable to get any rhythm going and ended up being routed 69-49.

Coach Roz Fornari attributed the tough loss to inactivity. "Perhaps (it was) too much rust at this point from the break or injuries or just lack of focus," she said.

The squad continued its road trip on Jan. 9 at Hiram College where they were able to turn their fortunes

around. The Lions were led by forward Amber Krumpe, who had 14 points and 9 rebounds. The game was tight most of the way but the women were able to eventually pull out the win by a score of 57-47.

Next on the schedule, the team returned home for a game against Thiel on Jan. 11. The Lions got production from Krumpe and Carly Cochran, who scored 15 and 12 points respectively, but the rest of the team was ineffective. Thiel capitalized on this and kept Behrend's offense under wraps. In the end, the Lions suffered an embarrassing rout at the hands of Thiel by a score 73-51.

After the game, the team's emotions reflected the score. "Team morale seems to be down after the last few games, so we need to find a way within ourselves to change that feeling," said point guard Erica Mozdy, who had six rebounds.

Unfortunately, team morale did not be rising after the next game. The squad suffered another home defeat, this time at the hands of Washington and Jefferson on January 13 by a score of 70-50. Once again, the offense was stalling and the team defense, a perceived strength, let the team down

"Our defense is letting us down at the moment. You need a tremendous amount of energy to play defense the way we do. We need to go back to basics and get back on track here in the next week," said Fornari.

Guard Nikki Pacinelli agreed with this assessment, "We still need to work on helping on defense and attacking more offensively."

The women got that chance Jan. 15 at Lake Erie College in what was a tough conference match up.

"They, like every other team in our conference, are very beatable. All we need to do in order to win is play like we can, and play together," said Mozdy.

Unfortunately the team was not able to escape Lake Erie with a win losing a nail biter, 59-58.

While the last few games have been discouraging for the team, they and their coach remain optimistic that they can still turn it around.

Pacinelli said, "Our expectations have stayed the same. Just to keep working hard and keep trying to form a winning team. We hope to come out on top in our conference and prove that even though we're young, we have a lot of heart."



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY/BEHREND BEACON

Captain Erica Mozdy has been leading the team in assists and steals so far this season; helping her team get points and stopping the opposition.

Swim team heats up in Florida

Lions ready to pick it up in 2003



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sophomore Christine Williams will play an instrumental role in the success of this year's team.

by Lyndsey Boor
staff writer

While most of us were shoveling out our driveways from the winter blizzards, the Behrend swim team was enjoying the warmth of the Florida sun. Both the men's and women's swim teams traveled 19 hours to compete against other college teams from the Florida area.

"The swim meet was just a fun thing put together by the coaches and the aquatics director of the pool we were at. Nothing too serious," commented

swim coach Josh Heynes.

The trip wasn't all vacation, though. The team practiced hard both in the pool and up and down the Florida coastline. Not only did the Lions have to adjust to a different weather climate, but the pool they raced and practiced in was twice as big as the pool in the Junker Center.

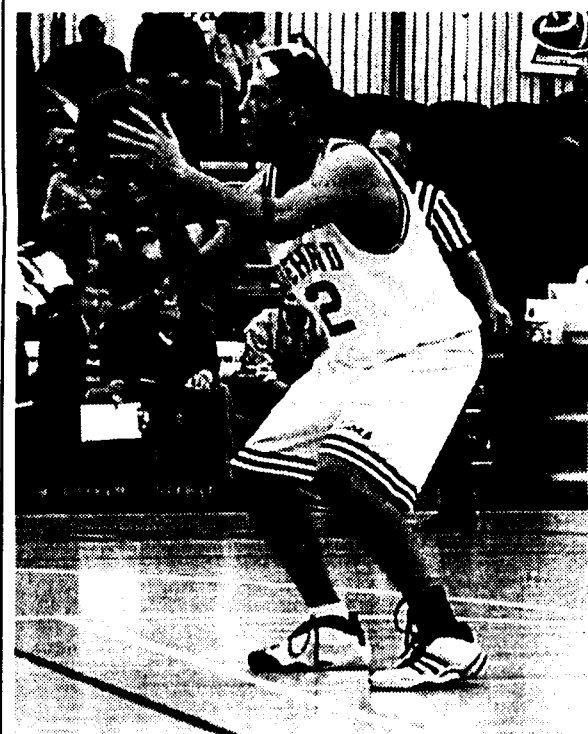
"It was a 50 meter pool so it made things very interesting in practices, since most of the team has never swam in a pool that size before," said Heynes.

It is difficult for most competitive swimmers to adjust to a larger pool

size, but the teams took it all in stride.

The hard work over the break will hopefully prove helpful for the teams in the coming weeks. In only five weeks the Behrend swim teams will face off against Grove City and other teams at the three day conference meet that will be hosted by Grove City.

It won't be an easy five weeks though. The teams have a lot of double meets on Fridays and Saturdays throughout this month. Although the next couple of weeks will be tough, the swim teams are eager to prove themselves at conferences on Feb. 28th.



Junior James Curren is only 49 points shy of 1000 for his career here at Behrend.

by Zoe Rose
staff writer

The new year started off on the right foot as the Penn State Behrend men's basketball team carried it's way with three straight wins to a 8-4 overall mark on the season. The Lions have started out the semester with a 1-1 count, including a loss to non-conference rival Thiel last Saturday (69-67), and an important win against Lake Erie on Wednesday (60-50).

With this recent win, the Lions are looking to keep their No. 1 ranking with a dominating 3-0 conference standing. Attempting to keep their perfect conference standing, Behrend will travel to face Frostburg this Saturday.

There was a scarce crowd at the Junker Center Saturday night and half of them seemed to be cheering for Thiel. The Lions started out slowly as the first half saw the Tomcats make 16 of 25 shots for 64 percent holding Behrend to 10 of 23 shooting for 43.5 percent.

Behrend fell behind Thiel early on in the game. Tying it up only once during the entire first half of action, 3-3, with 18 minutes left still to go. A missed three-pointer by junior forward Casey Ponsoll marked the end of the half, with Thiel leading 38-30.

Down at the half, the Lions roared back and never let the Tomcats have more than a six-point lead before taking over (43-42) with 14 minutes of play left. Some noise was heard at the home court as two free throws by senior guard Steve Merrill increased Behrend's lead to ten with only 2:14 left to go. A three-pointer by Thiel evened out the score at 66 with :26 seconds before the Tomcats pulled out the game, 69-67.

In 26 minutes of action, junior center James Curren shot 8 of 13 for 20 points

and made all four free throws. He gathered 11 total rebounds, two assists and two blocks. Merrill also assisted the Lions with 12 points and a steal, while sophomore forward Jared Clough scored nine points, and sophomore guard Tom Lulich had eight. Curren now has 951 career points and has led the Lions in scoring seven of nine games.

Behrend is ranked seventh in the nation in scoring defense at 57.8 ppg and they are also the best free-shooting team in the AMCC at 72percent. But Behrend missed some crucial free-throws in the last few seconds of the game.

"We always work hard on free throws," said coach Dave Niland. "We usually are one of the better foul shooting teams in the league. We did not shoot them well at the end of the game the other night and it cost us," said coach Dave Niland. Foul shots that are missed are more noticeable in a tight contest when the score deviates by one or two points.

"During the end of the Thiel game we just totally fell apart as a team" said Casey Ponsoll. "We made a lot of little mistakes that kind of snowballed into big plays for Thiel."

Even after such a frustrating loss, Ponsoll knows this will not have a harsh affect on the team during the upcoming games.

"After a tough loss like that however, you just have to forget about it and bounce back the next game and I am confident that we will."

Unlike some students, the men's basketball team didn't see anything relaxing about the recent break. Two games were played right after the start of the New Year, the first being at the Behrend Tournament playing against Allegheny.

Curren led the Lions again with 20 points and eight boards, pushing the team to a 27-19 score at the half against the Gators. Behrend's 12 of 22 shooting for 54.5 percent in the second half gained the Lions the one point that won that game 53-52.

After beating Buffalo State in the first round in the Behrend Tournament 58-55, the Lions took on RIT making an outstanding 11 of 13 foul shots for 84.6 percent in the second half of action. The Lions kept their winning streak alive by defeating RIT 50-41.

Next up for the Lions will be a visit to conference rival Frostburg State on Saturday.

Wonder what's going on in Behrend sports? Turn to the new home of the sports calendar on the back page to find out when and where you need to go to support your Lions.

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