

The Behrend Beacon

Friday, January 24, 2003

# Women go to OT Indoor track roars out of the blocks

by Kevin Fiorenza  
staff writer

The women's basketball team played two extremely close games this past week, winning one in overtime against Frostburg and coming heartbreakingly close to winning against Lake Erie.

On Jan 15, Behrend was on the road at Lake Erie for an important conference matchup. The game was tight the whole way as both teams got solid performances from all of their players. The Lions were led throughout the game by point guard Erica Mozdy, who scored 12 points, and Amber Krumpe's 18 points. They also caught some help from freshman guard Danielle Freeburg.

While Behrend's whole team played solidly, Lake Erie performed just as well and outplayed Behrend in some key areas. Lake outrebounded the Behrend squad and didn't commit as many significant turnovers.

"We didn't play good defense, we didn't rebound well, and we had too many turnovers. When you don't play a well-rounded game in conference play, you normally don't win," said Krumpe.

The women were determined that the outcome would be different in their next game, another conference game away from home at Frostburg. The game

would prove to be another close, hard fought contest. Guard Carly Cochran led Behrend with 21 points. As in the previous contest, the team got strong support from Krumpe and her 20-point performance. Like the last game, both teams played hard the whole way through and at the end of regulation the two teams were deadlocked at 67.

In overtime, the deciding factor proved to be the team's performances at the foul line. Behrend reached the line more frequently and was 9-12 in free throws in OT. This advantage put the Lions over top and gave them an impressive 78-75 victory.

Krumpe said, "We were able to convert on our foul shots, and that was big. We got their big players to foul out, and that led us to the win."

The win raised Behrend's record to 3-1 in conference, and 7-8 overall, putting them in position to reach .500 with a win on Jan 25 against La Roche. The team is confident about its chances.

"To beat La Roche we need to play great team defense and really push the ball up the floor on offense. They don't play very good defense, so we need to execute and pound the ball into the post, which is their weakness," said Krumpe.

by Lauren Packer  
assistant sports editor

With training time lost due to the term break, the men and women's indoor track and field teams attempted to head into the Fredonia Invitational with only five days of practice under their belt.

"We had practiced for two weeks prior to Christmas break and then started up again on Jan 13 for our meet on the 18. That made training difficult, as our athletes had to train at home, if possible. Our expectations were to improve performances from a year ago at Fredonia," said head coach Dave Cooper.

Cooper's young team did more than just improve their performances from a year ago. The women's team set four new Behrend records and qualified freshman thrower Laura Maras for ECACs, while the men's team set two new Behrend records at Fredonia.

"The teams were ready and anxious to compete," said Cooper. The individual results of the meet seemed to show the tenacity of this young team. Maras hurled the shot put 37-3 1/4 for third place. Maras mark shattered the previous indoor record of 23-3 held by Adrienne Abney. The throw also puts her in line to break the outdoor shot put record of 36-1 by Amy Mudrak in 1997.

Another freshman who made an immediate impact was Staci Banaszek. Banaszek finished second in the triple

jump, third in the high jump, and recorded new Behrend records in each event. Banaszek went 34-1/4 in the triple and 4-10 1/4 in the high jump.

Cross-country stars Jess Knapp and Jessica Sarver also helped pace the women's squad this past weekend. Sarver finished third in the 4 X 400 relay, along with teammates Amanda Van Tassel, Claire Manelick and Bethany Crooks. Sarver also placed fourth in the 1500 meters in 5:04.24 and fifth in the 800 meters in 2:31.56.

Knapp broke the record for the 1000 meter with a time of 3:21.24 for a fifth place finish. Knapp held the previous record for the 1000 meter.

The lack of organized training did not seem to shake the women's team or the men's team.

"When you have to train on your own, you tend to step it back a bit. You don't have your teammates to push you. For six new records to be set and the women to qualify for ECACs, I'd say it was a very productive meet for us," said Dave Masilunas.

Cooper expected a lot from his athletes and his athletes responded. Corey Pulson and Jason Kuntz broke two records. While Isiah Meek, Mike Barlett, and Masilunas are all within striking distance of new records and first place finishes.

Pulson placed fifth in the shot put and set the new Behrend record with a dis-

tance of 41-7 1/4. Kuntz finished fourth in the 200 meter and set a new record with a time of 24.14.

Meek placed first in the 55 meter hurdles with a time of 8.08, just .03 seconds off the Behrend record which Meek holds. Masilunas finished fourth in the 55 meter hurdles and was just .58 seconds off Meek at Fredonia. Barlett finished third in the 800 meter and needs only to drop seven seconds off his time of 2:06.67 to break another record.

Behrend heads into this weekend's invitational at Slippery Rock with a new mindset on training. Based on the team's performances without organized training, Masilunas says that the Lions plan to step it up in practice this week and really come out roaring at Saturday's meet.

"We are hitting it hard in practice this week based on the mindset that coach has to break us down to build us back up. Our confidence is higher and our mental preparation is definitely higher than last week. We will be better with a meet and a week of intense practice under our belt," said Masilunas.

"We have a good team atmosphere so far. We have some of the best coaches around, and coach Cooper really has things rolling. We are going to do good this year. If we stay healthy and keep kids running, we're going to be real good."

## Lions heating up

by Zoe Rose  
contributing writer

With the wind chill in the negatives, the Penn State men's basketball team is still able to keep some heat going with game. A little more than halfway done with the season, Behrend has maintained its front-runner position in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (3-1) and has a 9-5 non-conference mark on the season.

Behrend's skillful 6-6 center James Curren surpassed the 1,000 point mark during the Frostburg State game. With 1,007 career points, Curren is pursuing Don Plyler (90-94) with 1,079. Curren is currently second in the league with field goal percentage and fourth in scoring, earning him regular national attention.

It was up to Curren to bring Behrend back into the game against conference rival Frostburg State last Saturday. The Bobcats were in control the entire first half of action, as they quickly grabbed a 23-8 lead in 11 minutes of play. Behrend began to shine some light on the courts as Curren took over, scoring nine points in a 12-4 spurt that brought the squad within 35-31 with a little over three minutes on the clock. Frostburg State came back drilling a three-pointer to take a 38-33 lead going into the locker room.

The Lions trailed throughout the entire contest, making several charges before they crawled within three, 63-60 with 12 seconds left. Curren posted game-highs of 24 points and 12 rebounds, followed by Joe Lucas and David Hairston with nine a piece. Behrend had trouble overcoming the poor start, and shot 7 for 22 for 31.8 percent in the second half. The Bobcats pulled away with a hard-fought win 65-60.

The squad turned things around, however, when they welcomed Fredonia State to their home turf on Thursday. Cold shooting by the Blue Devils helped the Lions in gaining a 41-26 lead at the half. Continuing his strong presence on the court, Curren led all scorers with 19 points and a game-high seven boards. Casey Ponsoll followed with 14 and six rebounds, and Hairston added 10 to the score.

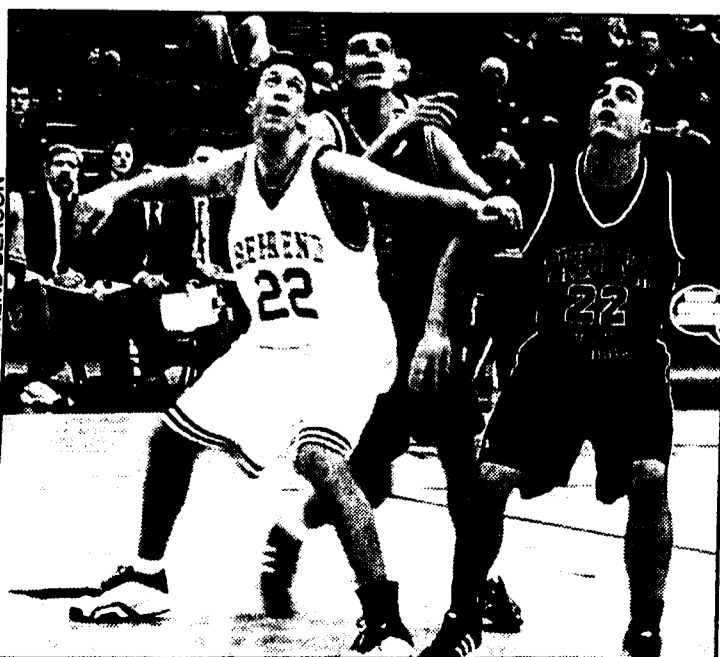
The Lions kept their free throws well above average during the second half, shooting (5-7) for 71.4 percent. Behrend stayed in complete control making (10-20) from inside the arc for 50 percent, compared to Fredonia's (9-25) for 36 percent during the second half. The Lions dominated the Blue Devils in three-pointers, holding them to (1-6) for a measly 16.7 percent, with hot shooting from Ponsoll and Joe Lucas, Behrend sank three of six in the second half.

Behrend next looks to host conference rival La Roche Saturday with an 8 pm tip-off. Following a visit to Oberlin on Monday, the Lions will have back-to-back conference match-ups at the Junker Center hosting Pitt-Bradford on Jan 29 and Penn State Altoona on the first.



Casey Ponsoll has been a constant offensive performance so far this season.

## Q&A with 1000 point scorer James Curren



**Beacon:** How does it feel to be in some elite company in Behrend's 1,000 point club?

**Curren:** To be in the company of the other players in Behrend's 1,000 point club is a great accomplishment. There have been some real good players to play at Behrend, and to be in the same group as some of them is a great honor.

**Beacon:** Going into Saturday night, did you think you'd hit the 1,000 point milestone in that game?

**Curren:** I was trying not to think about whether I would hit 1,000 during the Frostburg. I won't say I didn't think about it all, but I was definitely more focused on winning the game. Which, unfortunately, we couldn't pull out the win.

**Beacon:** Could you walk us through the play where you broke the 1,000 mark?

**Curren:** I am not exactly sure of the play in which I hit 1,000, because it was a close game, and the game wasn't stopped. So to tell you the truth, I couldn't tell you about the play.

**Beacon:** Hitting 1,000 in the middle of your junior season has given you plenty of time to chase the all-time school record of 1,466. Which would be bigger for you in your senior season; leading the Lions to an AMCC title, or becoming the Behrend's all-time leading scorer?

**Curren:** I am not thinking about breaking the school's all-time scoring record. Especially now in the middle of trying to win the AMCC's and make it to a postseason tournament. People have already said things to me about breaking the record, but whatever happens, I would much rather help lead the team as far as we can possibly go, this year and next year.

Housing  
and  
Food Service  
Athlete  
of the Week

PENNSTATE  
Erie

Laura  
Maras



SPORT: Women's  
Indoor Track & Field  
CLASS: Freshman  
DATE: Monday  
Jan. 20

Laura Maras (Bethel Park/Bethel Park) was named this week's Beacon/Food and Housing Athlete of the Week.

Maras established a new school record for the women's shot put with a throw of 37 feet 3.25 inches. With her performance Maras also qualified to compete in the ECAC Championships in late February.

Next up for the men's and women's track & field teams will be another indoor event at Slippery Rock on Saturday.

Housing and Food Service Athlete of the Week is selected by the Sports Information Staff.