

Lions jump on opportunity

Behrend rallies to beat Pitt-Greensburg; wins AMCC title



Guard Danielle Freeburg had a good showing against Pitt Bradford scoring seven points in seven minutes of play.

By Kevin Fiorenzo
staff writer

Winning the regular-season conference title was a goal for the women's basketball team at the start of the season and they reached that goal on Saturday with a huge win at rival Pitt-Greensburg.

There was a lot on the line before the game on Saturday. The winner of the game would win the title and earn the right to host the conference tournament. Behrend came in as underdogs even though they won the two teams' previous contest, 64-63 in overtime.

At the start, it looked as though Pitt Greensburg would get its revenge. They came out playing strong and went into the half with a 36-28 lead. The Lions knew at the half that it was desperation time and that they needed to step up their play.

"We knew that it was do-or-die time in the second half and we didn't want to go back to Greensburg this weekend. We had a gut check and really stepped it up," said forward Amber Krumpe, who had 11 points and six rebounds.

After the break, the Lions came out playing much better and took control of the game. Their top players started playing to their potential and began taking the Bobcats out of the game.

Leading the way for the Behrend squad was guard Danielle Bemis, with 16 points and four rebounds, and guard Erica Mozdy, who had 14 points, nine rebounds, and six assists. Guard Carly Cochran also did her part, adding 11 points and eight rebounds. Overall, it was a superior team effort and led to Behrend's 71-68 victory.

"We were able to take advantage of some key opportunities towards the end of the game and convert on some big shots," said Krumpe. "We also got defensive stops when we really needed them."

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The win gave the Lions home-court advantage for the conference tournament. The Behrend squad will face off against Frostburg State on Friday. It took Behrend an overtime to win at Frostburg the first time the two teams met in the regular season. At Behrend the Lions took the regular season sweep over Frostburg, 73-66.

The Lions hold the top seed, but they still feel that they don't get the respect that they deserve.

"I think that hosting this weekend is a huge advantage because we don't have to travel, we have our own fans, and we are playing in a comfortable environment on our own court. I still don't think people honestly view us as the No. 1 seeds," said Krumpe.

The Behrend women know that to win the tournament will be a tall order, but they definitely know what it will take to emerge victorious.

"As always, defense will win the championship for us," Krumpe said. "If we play all out for 40 minutes, no one can compare."

Housing
and
Food Service
Athlete
of the Week
PENNSTATE
Eric

Michael
Sandretto

Photo
Not
Available

SPORT: Diving
CLASS: Freshman
DATE: Feb. 24

Michael Sandretto
(Monroeville/Gateway)
was named this week's
Beacon/Food and
Housing Athlete of
the Week.

Sandretto was a gold medalist at the Grove City Invitational in the one and three meter dives on February 21 and 22. He finished with a final score of 295.45 beating out Joe Kennedy of Bethany College (291.15).

Next up for the blue and white will be the ECAC tournament beginning February 28-March 1.

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

Track team tearing it up

by Lauren Packer
assistant sports editor

Coach Dave Cooper can't believe how well his teams are doing. Neither can his athletes.

Behrend broke 10 meet records at this past weekend's Mt. Union Invitational. Also, Behrend qualified a record 13 athletes for the ECAC Championships at Tufts University in Boston, March 6-9. Event times and personal bests dropped at abnormal rates and both the men and women's teams took second place, finishing behind Mt. Union.

"We were really fired up," said hurdler Dave Masilunas. "It was our last indoor meet of the season and we knew it was our last chance to qualify people for ECACs. Last year, we qualified some people, but I think this year we doubled that number."

That seems to be the theme of this year's squads. Break a record, set a higher new record, and then shatter the

new record.

Sophomore hurdler Isiah Meek smashed his previous 55 Hurdle record with a time of 7.92, down from 8.02. Not far behind Meek was Masilunas, crossing the finish line in 8.04. Both hurdlers qualified for ECACs.

"I don't want to say I'm superstitious but, I eat the same things on meet days, said Masilunas. "I wear the same things. I wear the same blue boxers and now I've started writing the time I want to get on a post it note and wearing it during the race," said Masilunas.

All superstitions aside, a lot of the success can be attributed to Cooper's concentration on recruiting. Behrend is a young team, just gaining experience, and Cooper continues to reload his talent every year with a talented group of freshmen.

"Just two years ago, we didn't even field hurdlers or pole vaulters indoors. On Saturday, we placed second, third, and sixth in the hurdles and first, sec-

ond, fourth, and sixth in the pole vault," said Cooper.

On the men's side, pole vaulters Matt Beckman, Donnie Hackworth, and Steve Feder will make the trip to ECACs. All three have successfully cleared 13 feet, with Feder setting the new record of 13 feet and 7.5 inches.

The men's 4 X 800 Relay team also qualified for ECACs, but it came with controversy. Mt. Union officials claimed that Behrend did not do all of the required laps and made the third and fourth legs of the relay run an extra lap during their race. Upon further review, it was decided that Behrend did in fact do all of the laps and the times of the extra laps were erased.

For the women, the tough season continued. Eleven women from Behrend made the trip to Mount Union and they walked away with four first place finishes, two-second place finishes, and two third place finishes. They set four new records and three women qualified for

ECACs.

Sophomore captain Jessica Sarver repeated her success in the 1000. Sarver dropped nearly six seconds off her time to set the record. Teammate Jess Knapp also is achieving great success.

"Jessica has placed consistently and always gives 100 percent. She missed ECACs by six hundredths of a second in the 1000," said Cooper. "The women's team amazes me."

The Lions are now focusing on ECAC Championships, as well as the outdoor season. They will be looking for continued improvement and want more ECAC qualifiers for the outdoor season.

"Our goal is to be able to take a bus to ECACs because we will have so many people that qualify," said Masilunas.

At the rate the Lions are tearing up the turf—warm up the bus.

Ready for AMCC's

by Zoe Rose
contributing writer

It's all over. Or has it just begun?

Penn State wrapped up the 2002-2003 regular season last week with wins against Medaille and Pitt Greensburg. The Lions post-season begins Friday at home with the second round of the AMCC tournament.

Their 10-2 conference record has earned the team to host the final four of the AMCC this Friday and Saturday. Finishing the home-stretch with a 2-0 week, the Lions saw action last week against Medaille and Pitt-Greensburg, ending with an 18-7 overall record.

The Pitt-Greensburg Bobcats gave it their all to stop Behrend in its winning streak, playing a tough game in overtime (76-71). The Lions held a steady lead throughout the first half sending the Bobcats into their locker-rooms at the half trailing 41-31. However the fight wasn't over yet.

Battling back in the second, with 59 seconds remaining, Pitt-Greensburg nar-

rowed the gap 66-60.

Fouled on a jumper with 49 seconds to go, the Bobcats made the foul shot to shorten Behrend's lead to three. With 13 seconds left, a crucial three-pointer was made by the Bobcats that tied the game at 66 and sent it to overtime. In overtime, the Lions outscored the Bobcats 10-5 to clinch the conference win.

Last Thursday, Behrend traveled to Medaille to hand the Mavericks an 80-50 loss. An impressive first half solidified the Lions' win, making 19 of 34 from inside the arc for 55.9%. They sank five of 10 three-pointers for an even 50% to end out the first round of action, with a halftime score of 43-16.

Helping the Lions to outscore Medaille 37-34 in the second half were James Curren, who pitched in 17 points, followed by Casey Ponsoll with 13, and David Hairston with 10 points, eight boards.

AMCC's

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The Lions will need James Curren's 17.8 points per game in the AMCC tournament.