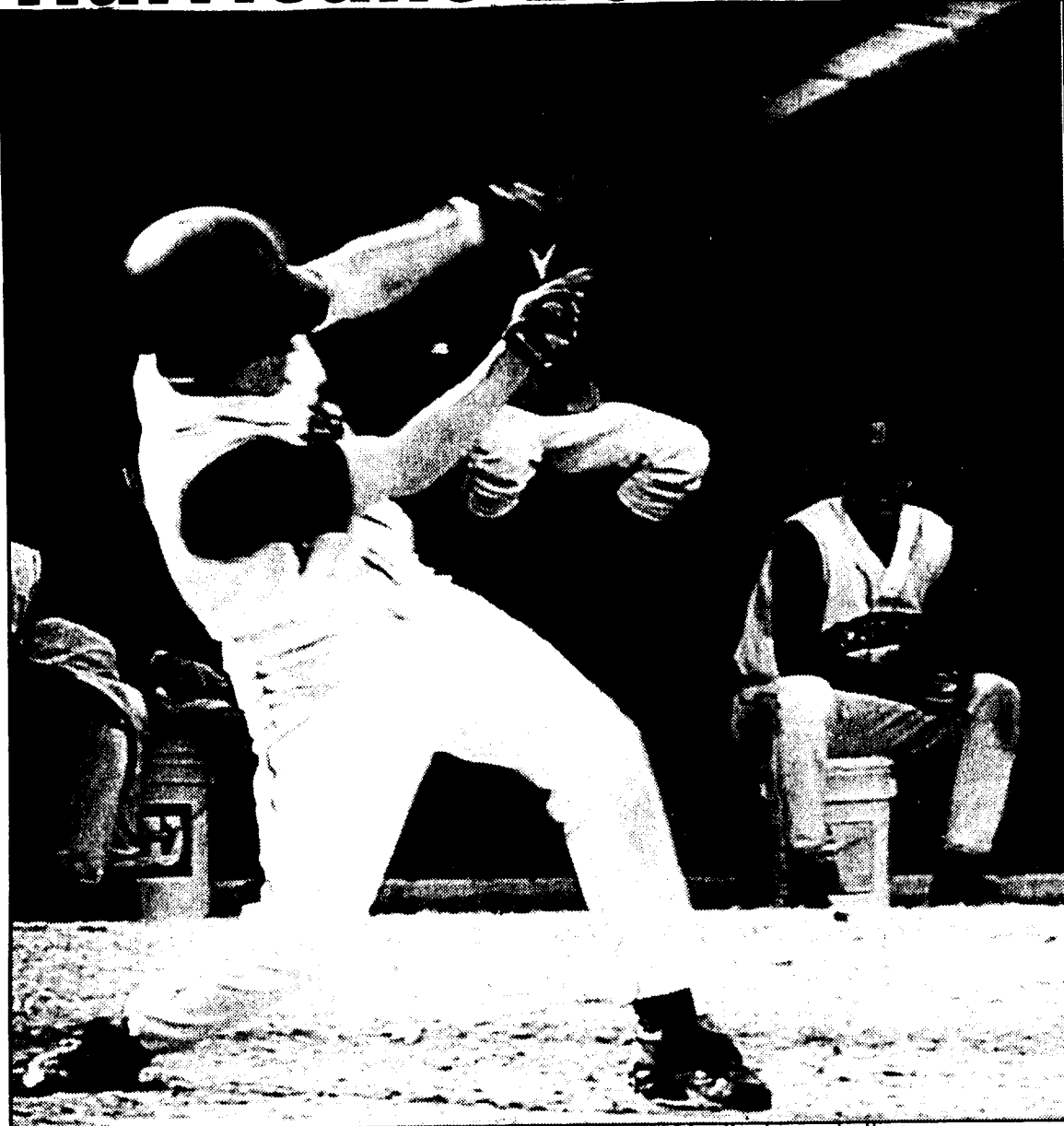


# Hurricane Behrend sweeps through Florida



Junior transfer Mitch Heckner has made an immediate impact for the Lions, batting .500 so far this season.

by Kevin Fiorenza  
staff writer

The baseball team's season got off to a rough 0-4 start, but all it took to get back on track was a trip to Florida, where the Lions swept all their games.

Behrend began with four losses in Kentucky. While they were disappointed, the team and their coach were able to learn from their mistakes.

"After we struggled in Kentucky, we reviewed some things, and our younger players gained greater understanding as to what is required to be successful in the college game," said coach Paul Benim.

Next up for the team was a week long trip to Port St. Lucie, Fl. over spring break. There they played games against Norwich, St. Scholastica, Delaware Valley, Scranton, Webster, and Wentworth.

In all of the games, Behrend emerged victorious. The players competed well and got the job done.

Some key players as of late include pitcher Ryan Seyler, with a 2-0 record and 2.00 ERA. In the offensive categories, outfielder Mitch Reckner has a .500 average, 14 RBIs, and 21 hits.

Outfielder Adam Best has 11 stolen bases, a .394 average, and 13 hits. Also contributing heavily is outfielder Tim Stafford, with a .483 average and 14 hits.

After Behrend's very successful trip south, the team came back and played Hilbert on Wednesday. The Lions were in control through the entire contest and got solid production from everyone. They scored in all three of the first three innings and put the game out of reach with four runs in the seventh inning.

Behrend also got solid production from its pitching staff, which gave up only two runs and seven hits. Jason Shaffer got the win for Behrend by pitching three stellar innings, giving up just one hit and accumulating four strikeouts. The Lions also got impressive pitching for three innings by Matt Symanski.

With the win, Wednesday against Hilbert, Behrend's record rose to 9-4 and they now must prepare to play conference opponents, starting Saturday against Penn State Altoona. With the team's current success, their expectations for that game and the rest of season are very high.

"Our goal is to make the conference tournament and compete for the championship," said Benim.

"Our league is tough. Right now, five of seven teams are above .500. All the league teams have improved and it will be a battle."

# Softball team struggles over Spring Break

by Lauren Packer  
assistant sports editor

They say diamonds are a girl's best friend. But for the women of the Behrend softball team, they might want to find a new best friend. The softball diamond has not been kind to the Lions in the young 2003 season.

In eight Florida, spring-training games, Behrend chalked up one win and seven losses. The Lions only win came against Ohio Wesleyan, 11-9. Two of the seven losses were decided by one run. However, Behrend's offense sputtered in the other five losses as the opponents outscored the Lions 25-1.

It was a talented freshman class who stole the show in Florida. Leacy Sauer went 4-for-4 in her first collegiate game. Hurler Kim Raft also gave a great performance in her first collegiate start in the circle.

Head coach Kellie Diehl said in the Lions season preview that this season was going to be challenging. Currently, they are on a five-game losing skid.

"We still have some things

to learn and some things to focus on, but I see it coming together by our first home game," said infielder Charity Marsh.

Their season is still young and so is the team. The Lions will look to senior captains Cheryl Peterson and Emily Allen for leadership. Junior pitchers Becky Corbin and Stephanie Covert will continue to be a force on the mound, along with newcomer Raft.

"We definitely are contenders this year with the majority of our squad returning and a strong freshman class stepping up to the challenge of college level," said Peterson.

With the ability and age of the team so varied, Behrend looks to continue its hard work in practice and sets its sights on two AMCC match-ups against Pitt-Bradford and Pitt-Greensburg.

"We were looking to come back with a couple of wins and to step up our level of play. When the team was playing well, we were all playing well. Defensively we were on fire," said Peterson.

The Lions hope to silence a Pitt-Bradford team who owns the third highest team batting

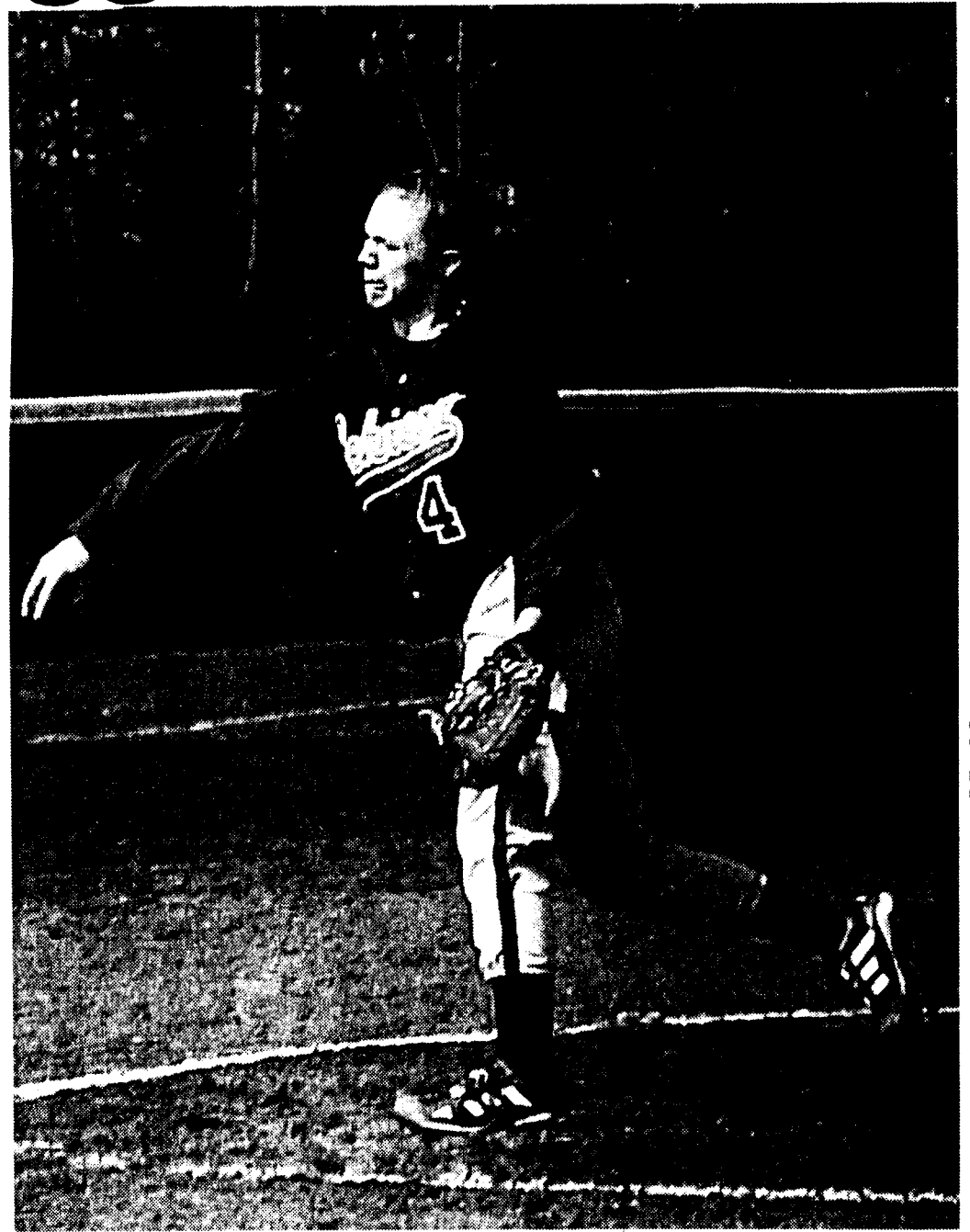
average in the AMCC. Behrend might run into trouble with Pitt-Bradford's scoring ability, averaging 4.6 runs a game. The Lions team ERA is 4.46 and they are averaging only 2.25 runs per game.

Leading the Lions offense is Marsh and Brandy Polinick. Both Marsh and Polinick contributed four RBIs during spring training. Polinick and Peterson lead the team in doubles with two apiece.

Against Pitt-Greensburg, the Lions' chances look a little better. Pitt-Greensburg sits near the bottom of every team and individual statistic in the AMCC.

The Lions are confident that they will get back on the right track. The Lions won the AMCC crown in 1999 and are hungry to win the championship again.

"The team atmosphere is very exciting to be a part of and is full of energy," said freshman Jill Wooldridge. "We look to push each other to do our best. Everyone is competitive."



Junior pitcher Becky Corbin looks to be a dominant force on the mound for the Lions this season.

# Men's basketball closes out season

by Zoe Rose  
contributing writer

Happy Valley hoops wasn't the only place where trouble was brewing. Trouble was also in Center Valley. Behrend took a seat against Desales University in the semifinals of the ECAC South Region Tournament. The Bulldogs went on to fall to No. 1 seed Franklin & Marshall in the Championship game.

It looked like Behrend had its game under control in the first half as Desales shot poorly throughout. With 33.3 percent shooting, Desales earned their halftime deficit, 28-20. The second half saw a different Bulldog team emerge from the locker room as it made 16 of 24 for 66.7 percent from the field and outscored the Lions 41-17.

James Curren and Casey Ponsoll both added 10 points to the score, followed by Jared Clough's eight points.

In the final statistics for the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference, Behrend topped the charts in scoring defense while Pitt-Greensburg was first in scoring offense. In total field goal percentage, the Lions made 45.5 percent right behind Lake Erie with 46.8 percent.

Behrend placed third in three-point field goal percentage with 36.5 percent and 71.8 percent from the line. Behrend's weakest category was in rebounds, only grabbing 31.9 per game. Individually, Curren placed first in field goal percentage with an average of 33.3 for 57.7 percent and third in scoring with 512 points.

From beyond the arc, Tom Lulich fell behind T.J. Dorsey of Frostburg State University, averaging 116 per game for 42.2 percent. Ponsoll made 43 three-pointers for 39.1 percent.

Under the guiding of coach Dave Niland, the Lions have made the postseason in six of their last seven years. Even though they may not have a title under their belts, Behrend season record for the 2002-2003 season was 20-9, two more wins than last year.

As predicted, senior Steve Merrill earned his title of co-captain displaying leadership and guiding the freshman with his work ethic. Curren drove the offensive attack and in only three years of action has surpassed the 1000 point mark with 1260 career points.

Juniors Ponsoll and David Hairston showed their true colors on the court, stepping up against the tough competitors. Hairston was number two on the team and had 141 total rebounds and shot 48.4 percent from the field.

Ponsoll followed in third with 86.4 percent from the line. Lulich and Joe Lucas earned valuable minutes with Lulich starting alongside transfer Jared Clough. Lulich played a strong game against the 99-77 win against Thiel, making six of seven three-pointers.

Off the bench, top freshman Justin Jennings made a significant impact for the Lions in his first season.

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PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY/BEHREND BEACON