

Curren reflects on Ice storm breaking record blasts Erie

by Kevin Fiorenzo
sports editor

It would have been just another win for the men's basketball team on January 10 against Penn State Altoona if not for the unique accomplishment of one of its players.

After four years of stellar play and numerous achievements, senior center James Curren earned perhaps his greatest individual accomplishment when he broke former Lion Rick Demski's career scoring record of 1,466 points on Saturday.

The record-breaker came on a layup with 2:30 left in the first half. Curren finished the game with 22 points and 14 rebounds. His current all-time point total following the game was 1,500.

"It's nice to have the record, but if it wasn't for my teammates I wouldn't have been able to do it," said Curren.

Along with his teammates, Curren is also grateful for the support he got from his family and friends.

"There was a lot more support than I expected. My family is at every game and everyone has just been great," Curren said.

The record is another remarkable feat for the 6 foot-6 inch center. In his career at Behrend, Curren made the all-AMCC team three times and is the defending AMCC player of the year. It's very possible that Curren could repeat that achievement if the season continues on its current path.

Along with co-captains David Hairston, Casey Ponsoll and Mike Schodt, Curren has helped lead the Lions to a 10-1 overall record. Their sole loss so far this season came against Skidmore at Daytona Beach over Christmas break. Since the loss, the team has won all four of its games by double digit margins. The Lions are also 2-0 in the AMCC.

At this point in the season, Curren is averaging 16.5 points and is tied for the AMCC lead in rebounds with 8.4.

Statistics cannot be the only thing to judge a great player on, and Head Coach Dave Niland acknowledges that it is Curren's other talents that make him unique.

"What makes James unique is his work ethic. He works harder than probably any player I've coached," said Niland.

Curren was recruited by some

Division II colleges his senior year at Warren Area High School, but eventually decided that Behrend was the best fit.

"I started out being recruited by a few D-II schools, but that tapered off and at Behrend I had the opportunity to play right away," said Curren.

Niland immediately recognized Curren's abilities as a player.

Niland said, "What struck me was that he was a high school player coming into the college level and was already physically and mentally mature."

That ability has allowed Curren to become a leader on the Behrend squad, and both he and his coach agree that he has improved much of his game since arriving at Behrend.

Curren said, "I think I've become a better passer and I have a more extended shooting range."

"His physical conditioning has improved the most. It was always good, but he kept working at it constantly," said Niland.

That work ethic that Curren possesses can often be a good and bad thing for a player.

Niland said, "If James has any weakness it's that he's too hard on himself sometimes in trying to improve his game. That's also a sign of a great player too in that he's never satisfied."

Now that Curren has set the scoring mark and has achieved essentially every individual accolade a player can receive, he is now focusing hard on the one achievement that has eluded him so far: a conference championship.

"We're a veteran group so anything less than a championship this season is disappointing. It's definitely our main goal," said Curren.

Though basketball obviously takes up a huge chunk of time for Curren, especially in season, he is still able to maintain a typical college life.

"I like to play video games, hang out with my friends and goof around just like a lot of other students," said Curren.

After the season has concluded this year, graduation will be looming soon after and Curren is settling his plans for after he leaves Behrend. He is majoring in Business Management and plans on attending graduate school. Basketball will definitely be a big part of his life, though.

"I'm looking at basketball as a career for myself. I think I would like to be involved as a coach."

After four years of great play, Curren is now looking back on his career fondly and sees being a part of a basketball team as a unique experience.

"I like basketball because you need all five guys working together to succeed. I love being a part of a team," said Curren.

Now with the achievements and records he's accumulated, Curren will surely be remembered as one of Behrend's great athletes.

Curren said, "I hope I'm remembered as someone who worked as hard as I could and was a good teammate."

by Lauren Packer
editor in chief

Students and faculty alike awoke on the morning of Tuesday, January 27 to a painful reminder of what happens when Mother Nature and Old Man Winter combine forces.

A complex weather system assaulting much of the Midwest states, in addition to a southern band of precipitation, were to blame for the formidable weather, according to the Weather Channel.

And according to reports, at least 44 deaths from Kansas to the Carolinas were linked to the two-day winter mix of snow, sleet, rain and freezing rain. Two deaths occurred in Pennsylvania because of traffic accidents linked to the snow.

Tom Atkins, meteorologist for WJET-TV and instructor of meteorology at Behrend, explained why the weather was rain and not snow.

"What happened on Tuesday was a result of a warm layer of air called a loft," Atkins said. "The rain actually starts as snow, but then it meets the warm air and changes to rain."

"Even though the temperature was barely at 32 degrees, we had six days of subfreezing temperatures that froze the ground. And when the rain met the ground it froze instantly."

Tuesday's snowfall totaled only 2 inches, but almost a half-inch of rain fell on the roadways first, creating a slick base for pedestrians and motorists.

Local school systems and business throughout the Erie area operated on two-hour delays, followed by cancellations. However, nearly every school district, including Edinboro University, made the decision to cancel classes for the remainder of the day.

Erie area schools last closed in 2000, according to the Erie-Times News.

Penn State Behrend remained open after an altered schedule, with classes beginning at 10 a.m. and the child care center closed entirely. Behrend last canceled class because of a snowstorm in November 2000.

The National Weather Service placed Erie County under a winter storm warning, stating that "freezing rain and sleet will continue into the early afternoon. Some additional ice accumulation will be likely. This amount of icing will make driving very hazardous and may bring down tree limbs and power lines."

Ice and snow began falling early in the morning and changed to snow by mid-afternoon. The ice draped cars, walkways, pathways and railways and left the campus looking more like a skating rink than a series of roadways and pathways.

"I almost fell several times," said Samantha Cibula, COMBA 06. "My friend cut her leg on the ice."

Commuters had mixed emotions. "I live by the mall and Interstate 90 and it was horrible," Carolyn Tellers, ENGL 08, said. "If the university had regards for our safety, they would have canceled class."

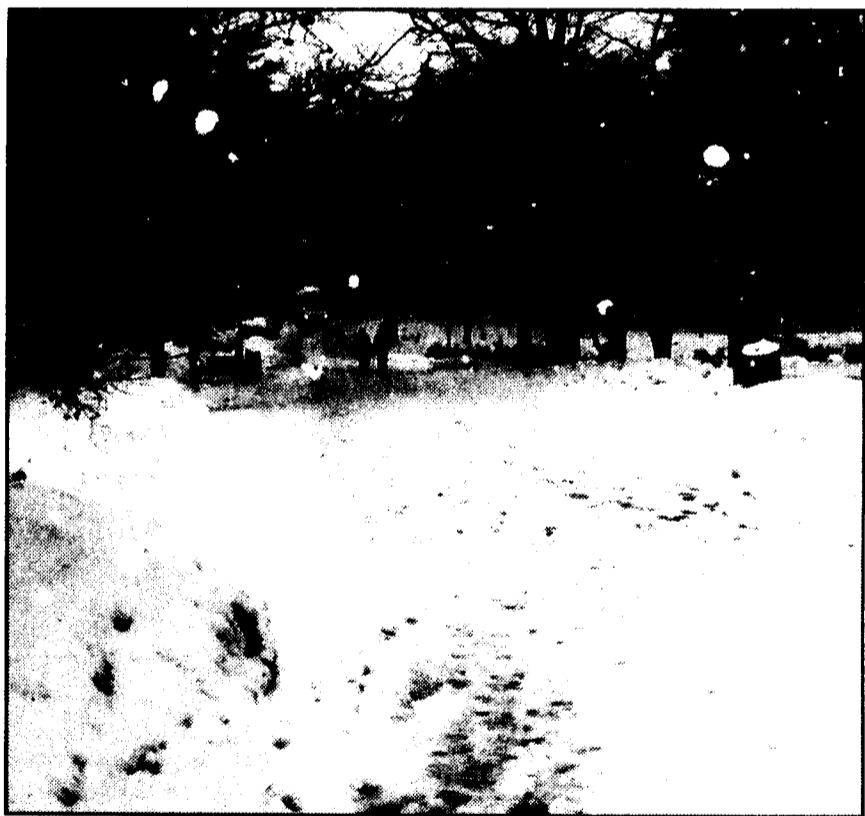
Tom Szymanowski, COMBA 08, disagrees. "I saw it as no challenge," Szymanowski said. "I could see where others would have a problem. Concern for safety should be a priority by the university. I didn't think Tuesday was the worst. I think last Friday was the worst."

-The Associated Press contributed to this report.



PHOTO BY HEATHER MYERS/BEHREND BEACON

Senior center James Curren scored 22 points against Penn State Altoona to become Behrend's all-time scoring leader with current total of 1,500 points in January.



PHOTOS BY DANA VACCARO/BEHREND BEACON

During a freak snow storm in late January, students braved the weather and near freezing temperatures as they made their way to class. The college operated under a two-hour delay, as the Erie School District and Edinboro University suspended classes for the day.

Science building overflows

by Daniel J. Stasiewski
managing editor

Students with classes in the Science Building were pleasantly surprised when a burst water pipe led to the cancellation of classes.

According to John Reem, director of operations, the water pipe was part of the sprinkler system.

In a routine patrol, officers from Police Services discovered water on the floor of the Science Building. Further inspection led to the discovery of 5 feet 2 inches of water in the Science Building basement.

Brookside Volunteer Fire Department was called in to help pump the water from the basement.

Reem said that the damage to the first floor of Science was minimal, but electricity was shut off to the building in order to let the boilers dry out. Four transformers also needed replacing.

The Science Building reopened later in the week, and returned to its previous conditions a

few weeks later

Even with the damages to the building, the students who got out of their classes were very excited.

"I was thrilled," said Shirelle Evans, FNC 04. "I had an exam, so I didn't care."

Evans said she used the time off to do some extra studying. "It was a heaven sent."

Lindsay Snyder, MRKTG 06, also missed an accounting exam. While she didn't use the day off for studying, Snyder seemed happy to have an extra 50 minutes for "goofing around."

Not all students were thrilled by simply having a day off. Bill Cutter, EET 06, who didn't have a class in Science was more concerned with the safety of the building.

Cutter was extremely concerned with the amount of water that accumulated before the break was discovered.

Because the break was part of the sprinkler system, Cutter questioned the safety of the fire alarm system in Science.

Maintenance is currently waiting to install a new fire alarm system.



FILE PHOTO

After a water pipe burst in the basement of the Otto Behrend Science building, over five feet of water filled the building. The flood caused classes held in Science to be canceled for one day.