

Women's Basketball looks to turn things around

Track and Field kicks off indoor season

By Sara Kamber
co-sports editor



Sophomore Brittany Mays will get another crack at playing Penn State Altoona this Saturday. Mays was hurt early on in the game during the two teams first meeting at Altoona where Behrend took the loss.

The women's basketball team has skid to 5-7 in the conference and dropped their last three contests.

First came consecutive losses to the top two teams in the AMCC conference and then a loss to Medaille, ranked third, last Tuesday. But with the next four out of six games at home, all conference match-ups, the Lions are ready to turn things around.

"We have been on a long road trip," said Head Coach Roz Fornari. "I am happy for our players to be home for a while and have a chance to play on their own floor."

Even though the team came up short against Medaille, the blue and white played a solid game shooting 50 percent from the field and going 11 for 14 from the line. Both teams played about the same, shooting similarly in field goals, free throws and three pointers. Unfortunately, with senior Amber Krumpke out due to an injury, Behrend gave up 19 offensive rebounds, which turned out to make all the difference in the tight game.

Sophomore Rachel Slomski picked up the slack scoring a career-high 23 points and also grabbed eight boards. Off the bench this season, she is second on the team in scoring averaging 10.4 ppg.

"Rachel played a nice game (against Medaille)," said Fornari. "She ran the floor hard and had several impressive shots, including knocking down her free

throws. I think she will use this game to build on."

Sophomores Tenesha Aden and Brittany Mays also had solid games finishing the night with 16 and 11 points respectively. Aden had 22 points and 3

boards against Penn State Altoona in their last meeting, while Mays was out with an injury she sustained early on in the game. Altoona is currently sitting pretty at four in the AMCC and Behrend hopes to be the team to knock them

down a few spots.

"We didn't close out the game last time," said Fornari. "We just need to play hard for 40 minutes and have good bench contributions with Krumpke being out. There is a chance she will be back but her knee needs time to get rid of some swelling. Krumpke is handling it well and so is the team."

Three players reached double-digits versus Altoona: Aden, Krumpke and Slomski. Free throws were an issue in the loss; the blue and white missed 11 shots in the second half in the close four-point loss. In their last two games, the blue and white have shot more than 75 percent from the line.

"The key to winning this weekend will be to practice hard and to go into the games with confidence," said Slomski.

Behrend is seventh in the AMCC right now. To make the AMCC tournament at the end of the month, they will have to be in the top six. This weekend, Behrend hosts the fourth and last place conference teams.

"I just think what we need to do is play," said Fornari. "We have good enough players, enough talent to win, we just need to put the pieces together."

The Lion's won easily against Mt. Aloysius on the road, 65-40. The Mt. Aloysius Mounties are 2-16 overall and 0-11 in the conference.

Mixing in a little pleasure with business, the women's team will honor players' parents during Parents Weekend. Next weekend, the team will honor seniors and alumni.

By Alyssa Peconi
staff writer

The men's and women's track and field teams began the indoor season on Jan. 21 at the Slippery Rock Invitational, where many team members showcased outstanding performances.

Senior Isiah Meek qualified for the ECAC tournament in the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 7.96. Junior Staci Banaszek also qualified for the ECAC's with a distance of 35'1" in the triple jump.

Two Lion's took first place times, Brad Ruffo in the 5000-meter and Eric DiLuzio in the mile. Diluzio's time in the mile set a new all-time record for Behrend. Jon McKinney also came out with first place honors in the triple jump.

At the Case Western Reserve Spartan Relays on Jan. 29, the men's team qualified another athlete for ECAC's. Senior pole-vaulter Donnie Hackworth reached a height of 14' to qualify. Banaszek also qualified in the long jump with a distance of 16' 9.5", which is also a Behrend record.

The Lion's recorded three first-place finishes on the men's team. Meek dominated in the 55-meter hurdles, along with McKinney in the triple jump. Hackworth's ECAC qualifying pole vault performance rounded out the winners.

The women's team had similar luck with two athletes taking home three first-place spots. Banaszek took home first place honors in the long jump and triple jump. Banaszek has now qualified for ECAC's in both the triple jump and long jump. Liesl Soergel also won the 800-meter with a time of 2:26.32.

"We have made great marks for this early in the season," said junior Nicole Mineweaver. "I can't wait to see the performances the team will have during the rest of the indoor season and what the outdoor season will bring us."

Men's basketball in a conference deadlock

By Kyle Woodside
staff writer

Who said winning the AMCC conference would be easy? Good thing it isn't because the automatic NCAA bid should be earned, not given away on a silver platter. So far this season, Behrend is earning their chance at this bid with a 9-3 conference record, which is tied with Pitt-Greensburg for first place.

Last weekend the team journeyed to Frostburg and Pitt-Greensburg for their most competitive weekend of conference play so far this season. Frostburg held off a second half rally to defeat the Lions, 61-59. Senior Jared Clough had 19 points and eight rebounds while freshman Kevin Buczynski added 11 points off the bench.

Behrend recovered in nice fashion the next day by beating Pitt-Greensburg, 73-58. This game was not nearly as close as the last contest between these two teams, which was decided in overtime with a Pitt-Greensburg win at the Junker Center.

A balanced scoring attack stifled the opponents on this day, especially in the second half in which Behrend outscored the rival, 48-27 on a deadly 57 percent shooting. Senior Tom Lulich had 17 points and nine boards. Clough and senior Cam Mascara added 16 points apiece. Buczynski contributed another solid game off the bench with 15 points and nine rebounds.

"Frostburg was a tough loss. It was a hard fought game, but they were the better team that night," senior guard Joe Lucas said. "But it was really good that we could bounce back and get a win against the first place team in our league

[Pitt-Greensburg] the next night. The second half against Greensburg was probably the best we have played as a team all year long. We got contributions from everyone, and our freshmen played great."

On Tuesday, Behrend traveled yet again to face struggling Medaille, who has yet to win a game this season. As expected, the Lions pummeled the Mavericks, 59-37. Clough and Lucas led the charge with 10 points each. Everyone on the squad got to see playing time in this game.

Team play continues to be vital to Behrend's success. Many of the team's members model the 2001 Duke championship team in which team play was the X factor that was attributed to the team's run through "Bracketville."

Former Duke guard, Shane Battier, once said, "I've always enjoyed the success of my teammates. I knew if each of us performed his job at a high level, we'd be successful. So whenever my teammates did something really well, I always made sure they knew from me that I wasn't jealous, but rather that I was happy for them. It was an easy thing for me to do because of the great guys we had on our team."

With only six more games in the conference remaining, four of them to be played at home in the Junker, the men's team will rely on team work to close out the season on a winning note. If Behrend holds on to the top spot in the conference, they will secure home court advantage for the AMCC tournament.

This weekend, Behrend is slated to play two home games against AMCC foes: Friday against Mount Aloysius at 8 p.m. and Saturday versus Penn State Altoona at 6 p.m.

HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICES ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

**** Cyndi Morales ** Women's Swimming ****

In last Tuesday's meet at West Virginia and Jefferson, Morales became the first ever female to qualify for ECAC's. She finished with a time of 5:25 in the 1000 yard free-style. With this time, she set Behrend's pool record, team record and swam her personal best in this sport.

The Behrend Lions will compete at the ECAC Invitational, Feb. 10-12.

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