

SPORTS

Ice melts from under their feet

By Chris LaFuria
sports commentary

The 1980 Winter Olympics revealed a turning point for the sport of hockey in the United States. Fans gathered behind a team of young prodigies who dismembered the Goliath-like Soviets and conquered Finland to bring the gold medal to the states. 25 years later, the sport, that takes a backseat to the mainstream sports, is tarnished. In 1980, students, children and youngsters dropped everything to join forces and defeat the world. Now, the National Hockey League refuses to give up any amount of money to play a handful of games.

Wednesday February 16, 2005 will live forever as a day of infamy for many fans around the country. As NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman put it, "This is a sad, regrettable day that all of us wish could have been avoided."

A situation which locked players out of financial negotiations quickly turned into a season-long cancellation due to the failure in establishing a consensus for a salary cap. Both sides, the players and owners, bargained back and forth before deciding to cancel the season. The players decided that a legitimate salary cap for each team could be found at \$49 million. The figures of the owners were about \$6.5 million less than the players' consensus. As a result, the NHL will miss all 1,230 games scheduled this season.

All of this havoc erupted after the 2004 season, when NHL teams found themselves barely making any revenue. Even with the massive sales of players' jerseys, tickets, vendor and other miscellaneous NHL products, the salaries of the players outnumbered the profit of most teams, leaving many teams in the red.

This cancellation means more than just one season down the



National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman announces that the current NHL hockey season has been canceled at a press conference in New York City on Wednesday, Feb. 16

drain. It will leave a stain on the game, which will take more than bleach to remove. A countless number of factors lie in the equation of this disaster. Many of the elite players, such as Mario Lemieux, Brett Hull, Steve Yzerman, Ron Francis, Dave Andreychuk and Mark Messier, are either in their forties or quickly approaching the declining years of their careers.

On the other end of the spectrum, many international superstars will have to wait one more year to exhibit their talent, due to the subsequent cancellation of this June's draft. Besides the players them-

selves, hockey, which has struggled to gain American popularity, takes two steps backwards in their progression for recognition. This season was supposed to mark the commencement of a television deal between the NHL and NBC in which more games would be displayed on national television, possibly adding to the popularity of the game. Unfortunately, this is a two year agreement, and, with this cancellation, half of the deal is wasted.

The Tampa Bay Lightning won last year's Lord Stanley Trophy for winning the Stanley Cup. This year, no champion

will be crowned. The last time there was no champion awarded was in 1919, when a flu epidemic plagued the league (coincidentally, that was a year after the Red Sox won their last championship...a generous curse sharing).

Another concern about the end of the season lies in a description by Nashville Predator forward Jim McKenzie. "The scary part now for hockey is do the fans come back? We're not baseball, we're not the national pastime," stated McKenzie.

In 1994, a strike left the Major League Baseball season in shambles. However, due to the popularity and tradition behind baseball, it recovered. Fans quickly recovered their aggression towards owners and the seasons continued.

In an online poll conducted by Slam Hockey, 18,669 people were asked if they were hopeful that the 2005 season would be saved. 11 percent said "Yes." 28 percent said "No." Two percent responded, "Don't know."

An astounding 60 percent of the people said that they didn't care either way. This is very dangerous. Now, players and owners have not only salaries to worry about but also whether or not the fans will return and hockey will recover.

Undoubtedly, there has been a blemish placed on the sport of hockey in the United States. While the game flourishes internationally, the U.S. exert respect for a struggling sport with financial issues. If the league finds grounds for compromise in the matter of salary, then, possibly, a resurrection for the sport may occur. Owners and players alike need to get their acts together and do what's best for the sport. Play on!

Men's tennis team goes 1-1 in season opener

By Amy Frizzell
managing editor

The men's tennis team opened its season over the weekend with a double header at Baldwin Wallace. The Lions' dropped its first match against Baldwin Wallace 0-9 but quickly rebounded in its second match defeating Tiffin 7-2.

"Against Baldwin Wallace, our inexperience really showed. You could tell we were nervous because they're a tough team," said Head Coach Jeff Barger. "We came back and beat Tiffin which helped get our confidence back."

The team achieved great success last year going 14-7 which tied the school record for most wins in a single season. It also won AMCCs defeating Frostburg by just one point. The Lions suffered a great loss this year losing five of its seven line-up players. Sophomores Brian Espin, who will be filling the No. 2 position, and Matt Meyer, who will be in the fourth spot, are the team's only returning players to the line-up, they will also lead the team this year as co-captains.

Both players received all-conference honors in both singles and doubles. Along with being named to all-conference teams, Espin also received the team's rookie of the year award. Meyer received AMCC co-newcomer of the year along with the team's most improved player. They will be joined by freshmen Miles Boyea who will fill the No. 1 slot, Todd Guarnieri filling the third slot, James Myer taking the fifth slot and finishing out the line-up will be Trevor Dougherty at six.

"We overall played well. The freshmen really stepped up for the players we lost," said Meyer. "Baldwin Wallace is a

tough team but Tiffin is division two and that shows a lot that we beat them."

The blue and white only gave up two points against Tiffin. Espin and Meyer provided a win at second doubles, 8-1. Following them was Myer and Dougherty bringing in a win at third doubles, 8-5. Espin also tallied up a win at second singles in three sets, 5-7, 6-4, 7-6. Guarnieri contributed a win at third singles also in three sets, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6. Meyer followed him with a win, 6-2, 6-1. Myer logged his first singles win at 6-2, 6-4 along with Dougherty at six singles winning, 6-4, 6-4.

The Lions will next take on Waynesburg on Saturday. During last year's meeting with the Yellow Jackets the blue and white fathered a 6-3 win.

"It was a good match last year but not an easy one," said Barger. "It will be a good measuring stick to see where we are in the conference. They have been where the other teams in our conference have been."

To prepare for the upcoming match the team has gone back to basics, working on fundamental skills. They've also been working on improving doubles play.

"The singles line-up is stronger than doubles," said Meyer. "We're getting better as we get used to playing with each other."

On Monday, the team will take on Westminster, then they will head to Hilton Head, SC for its annual spring break trip. While there they will be playing six matches against teams such as Mt. Union, Eastern Nazarene, Elizabethtown and Seton Hill.

"It's good to go down there and get some practice in," said Meyer. "It brings the team together."

Women's Water polo starts season at Bucknell

By Steve Schleicher and
Anthony Spoto
contributing writers

Feb. 19-20 the women's water polo team traveled to Bucknell University to compete in the Bison Invitational. They opened up Saturday morning in an exhibition game against Michigan State's Club Team.

Sophomore Brittany Yost scored the loan goal for the Lions in a loss. After the game Head Coach Joe Tristan remarked, "It was good to start out with an exhibition game because it allowed us to get game experience without the pressure of worrying about stats or a record."

The blue and white matched up

with division I George Washington for their second game of the tournament. Sophomore Cara Ludwig scored Behrend's only goal resulting in a loss.

Early Sunday morning the Lady Lions were at it again this time taking on division I Maryland. The early morning game kick started the offense as they tallied six goals. Ludwig led the scorers with a hat trick, Yost scored two and fellow sophomore Alexis Puhala added a goal.

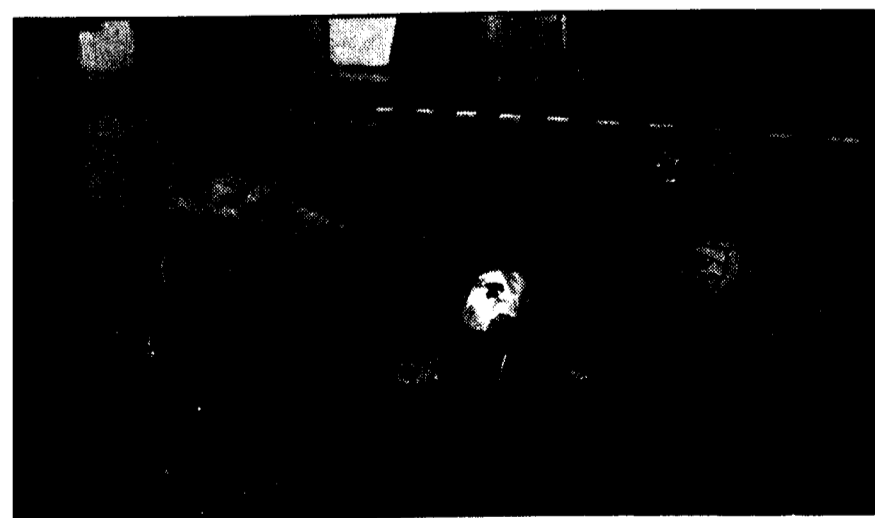
"I felt this was our best game during the tournament," said Ludwig. "We were able to move the ball around the perimeter more effectively allowing us to have a few good lucks at the

goal." After the hard fought loss against Maryland the Lady Lions had to come back to face nationally ranked (14th) Hartwick. Despite facing long odds, the girls played a great game but fell short scoring a single goal.

"The Bison Invite was a tough tournament to start out our season," said senior captain Samantha Cibula. "I think we are the only women's team at Behrend that faces Division I team consistently throughout our schedule, and starting the season against three DI schools isn't easy for anyone. It was our first tournament and we came back to Behrend knowing what we had to work on, we have a tough season

ahead and are looking forward to the challenges the season presents."

That loss brings the women's record to 0-3. The blue and white start inter-league play March 6 against University of Michigan, and the Indiana Hoosiers before heading to Colorado Springs for spring training at the Olympic Training Center.

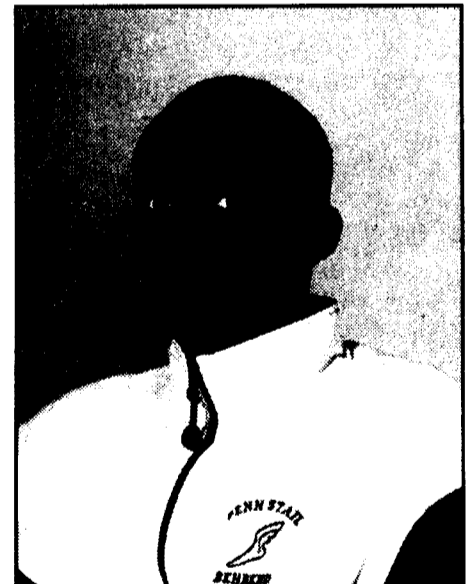


The women's water polo team scrimaged the men's water polo team in practice Thursday afternoon. Freshman Amanda Wiest looks for an open teammate at the opposite end of the pool.

Senior Spotlight



Erin Troester
Women's Water Polo
Driver



Isiah Meek
Men's Track and Field
High Hurdler

Behrend Beacon: What are your plans for after graduation?

Erin Troester: I plan on going to graduate school to get my master's degree in special education. I plan to teach autistic children and behavioral/emotional support when I am done with my master's.

Isiah Meek: I am going to move back to New Jersey, get a job as an accountant and make a lot of money and never come back to Erie, Pa., because it's too cold and it snows a lot up here.

BB: What will you miss most about Behrend?

ET: I love Behrend. Once I was here, transferring to UP was never something that crossed my mind. I have had to many great opportunities here, both in the classroom and in the pool. It has been great to represent my school in DIII swimming and water polo, which is something I wouldn't have been able to do if I hadn't come to Behrend. I will also miss my friends a lot because they have made my college experience amazing.

IM: I will miss the whole college atmosphere and all of the friends that I made.

BB: What is your favorite memory from your sport?

ET: My favorite memory is when I scored the game winning goal against W&J my sophomore year with 8 seconds left on the clock. Making that shot boosted my confidence and made me feel good to contribute so much to my team.

IM: My favorite memory is being all-ECAC for the past three seasons and being ranked amongst the top hurdlers in the nation.

BB: What is your funniest or most embarrassing moment?

ET: My funniest memory is traveling to Division III nationals in California my sophomore year when Sarah McGarvey read her in her horoscope "you will experience transportation problems today." Sure enough, one of the engines on our plane blew and we had to turn back to Chicago. And then, our flight to L.A. was rerouted. By then, the car rental place had given away our 15 passenger van. And when we finally got a van, we ended up driving around in circles on the L.A. freeway. Of course, the plane prank on the return trip is something I will always remember with a smile.

IM: My funniest moments are the slip-ups I've committed, my roommates know all about that.

Sign up for Intramural 6 vs. 6 Volleyball. Men's, Women's, and Coed entries will be excepted at the front desk in the Junker Center or online through the athletics website. DEADLINE: MARCH 4 @ 4 P.M. Contact Rob Wittman with any questions (rww3@psu.edu).

WE NEED WRITERS!

If you're interested in sports and are driving your friends crazy because you think you're the next Dick Vitale or Jillian Barberie, write for us! Contact Sam Cibula at sac252@psu.edu or Sara Kamber at sak926@psu.edu.