

# SPORTS

## Track teams gear up for outdoor season, head to Clarion Invitational

By Stephen Wingerter and Justin Bootes  
staff writers

The men's and women's track team kicks off its ninth season this Saturday. The meet will be against Clarion and hosted there as well. Head Coach Dave Cooper is excited about this new season and has high hopes for the athletes.

"Our focus will be to get as many ECAC qualifying performances as possible. We had six women at indoors and we'd like to have as many outdoors," said Cooper.

On the women's side, there are many potential records to be broken in most of the events. Both the 110 high hurdles and the 400 intermediate hurdles records should fall. It isn't a question of if, but how soon, how often, and who will hold the record when the season is over.

Junior Nikki Mineweaser currently holds the 110 record but sophomore Becky Gonzalez had the fastest time in the indoor 55 hurdles and could beat Mineweaser's time.

Another record expected to fall is the 400 intermediate. However, Mineweaser Gonzalez and sophomore Erica Smith are all capable of claiming

this record.

Freshman Leisl Soergel shows potential by rewriting the 800 meter record and possibly the 400 meter but she has to beat out senior Claire Manelick to do it.

Coming from the indoor season, junior Staci Banaszek holds all of the indoor jump records as well as the high jump outdoor. It is a matter of adding inches to her long and triple jump records to claim the outdoor record.

Cooper looks at the varying combinations of athletes and sees promising records in the future. The 4 x 400 record is held currently held by Mineweaser, Manelick and senior Marlana McNutt but sees this record as being broken. Soergel, Mineweaser and Manelick when joined by sophomore Leslie Gentile also show potential for setting the 4 x 800.

Currently the women's side of the track team is facing a shortage of athletes. With 13 team members, the only event with adequate numbers is the hurdles.

"Our biggest problem is fielding throwers. We have but one, Samantha Baldensperger, who hopes to improve the javelin record, but we field no one in the shot, discus, or hammer throw,"

said Cooper."

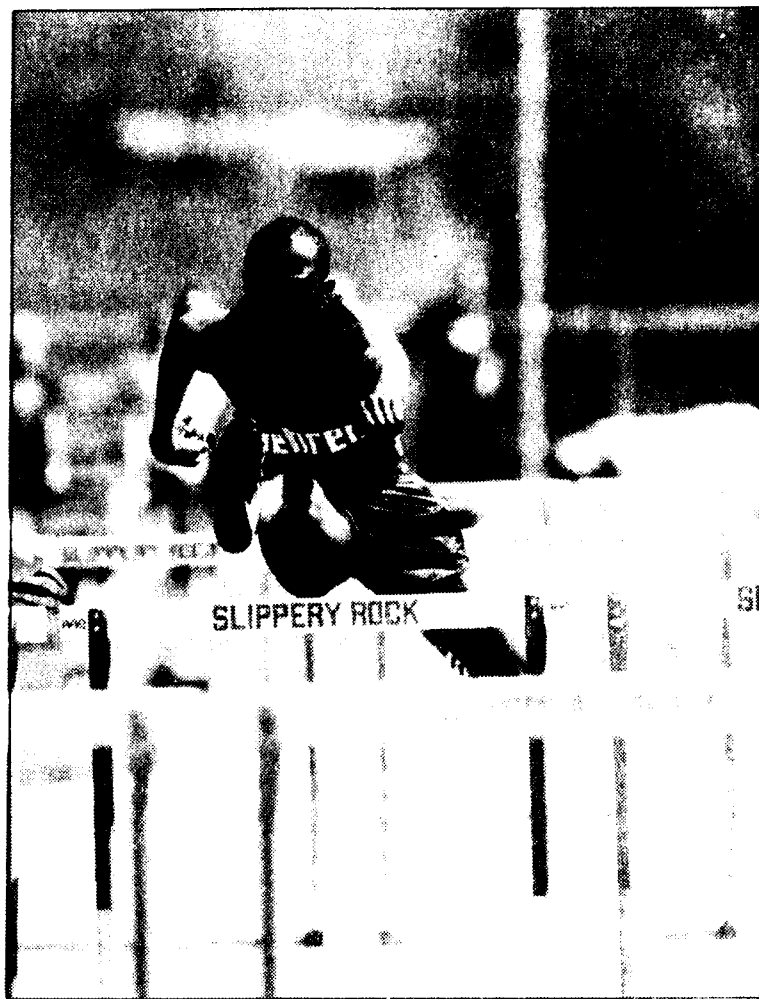
For the men, high expectations have been the key to the success of the team. The indoor squad broke six school records this year.

Senior Isiah Meek broke the 55 meter hurdles with a time of 7.74." Junior Harry Balwick took home the mile run record with a time of 4:38.90 and sophomore Brad Ruffo broke the 5000 meter run with a time of 16:11.81.

The individual events weren't the only events improved upon this season. The 4x160 team with a time of 1:16.12 took the school record. The 4x 800 relay team ran a time of 8:05.07 broke the previous record.

In the field area, Shane Rock jumped 44' 2.75" in the triple jump to capture the school record.

"Our plan from the start is to work through the indoor season with a slight taper before ECAC's, and then build upon that in the outdoor season," said Cooper "We have the talent to send multiple athletes to both championship meets. Last season was the best in the program's history, with both teams earning their highest finish at ECACs, and I expect our teams to be even stronger this year.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Senior hurdler Isiah Meek will work to reset the record books this season while qualifying for ECAC's and NCAA's.

## Baseball drops three in Kentucky Senior Spotlight

By Chris LaFuria  
staff writer

After a three game stint in Owensboro, Kentucky, the Lions baseball team arrived with experience, determination and a list of goals to achieve when AMCC league play starts. Against the Bearcats of Brescia, the blue and white dropped three games after poor offensive showings.

"We have not hit our stride offensively," Head Coach Paul Benim said, "We have capable hitters, we just haven't been consistent."

In the three game series, Behrend fell to Brescia 7-4, 1-0, and 6-3. While the defense held the opposition to only 21 hits throughout the series, the Lion sluggers only came through with 11. After such a performance, the top priority that needs addressed before the season begins is, indeed, the offense.

The first game of the series saw Brescia displaying an obvious offensive advantage. Over the first four innings, the Bearcats scattered 7 runs with little resistance from the blue and white. Ray Devaul, who was nearly flawless in his first two starts, gave up three earned runs (five total) on six hits, while striking out only three.

Sophomores Mike Stetz, second baseman, and designated hitter Tim Nebel led the offense. Both reached base twice on singles. Singles were the only hits managed as the Lions failed to hit for extra bases. However, Behrend managed to put four runs up on the board with 5 hits in the first game of the series.

An offensive struggle of a pitchers' dual could be the argument in the case of the second game. The 0-0 deadlock was finally broken in the bottom half of the sixth inning as Bearcat catcher Tanner Hoel drove in the games only run. Junior pitcher Chris McCartney displayed a brilliant performance as he let up only one run on four hits in 5.1 innings of work. The lone hit for the blue and white came from junior center-fielder Shane Elzer.

"McCartney pitched good enough to win. Offensively, we did not scratch for a couple," said Benim. "Baseball is a game created to make you fail. Statistics run wild and even when you're a good hitter, it may be a bad figure. We will win a 1-0 game later this season and be on the flip side. That's the way the game is."

The final game of the series saw Behrend fight their way to a 3-2 lead, only to find themselves bitten by the "Bug of the Bullpen." Senior pitchers Jason Shaffer and Matt Szymanski each threw for three innings while giving up two runs between them. In the bottom of the sixth inning, Brescia fought back to tie the game up and finished with three runs in extra innings to end a 6-3 come-from-behind victory.

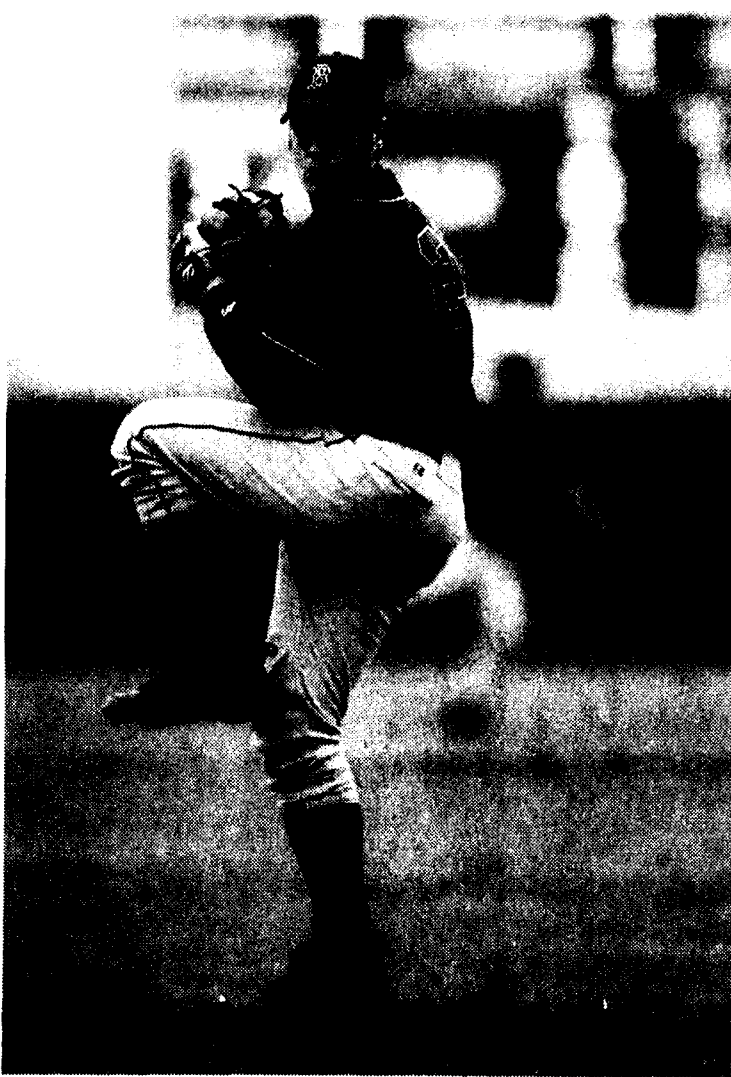
Stetz, Elzer, Nebel and juniors Eddie George and Greg Samson each recorded hits, with Nebel notching two. However, the deciding factor in this game was that Behrend left 11 men on base while the Bearcats left only four. If the blue and white could drive in more runs and gain more support for their pitchers, some of these scores may have been reversed.

The next game for the blue and white is against La Roche, who is considered one of the top contenders for the AMCC title.

"La Roche finished second in the league last season and, I believe, they are good enough to win the league this season," said Benim. "I expect our team to step up and perform. It is early in conference play, anything can happen."

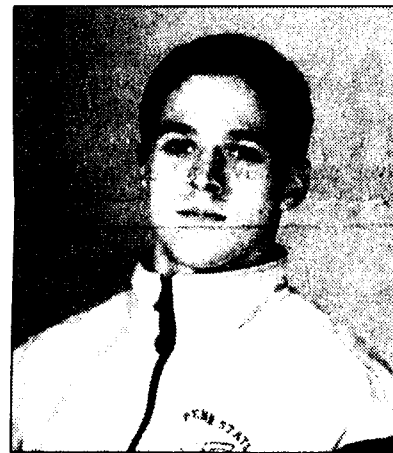
Hopefully, Behrend will play their first home game of the season on April 2 against Pitt-Greensburg. Pitt-Greensburg is currently 4-6 and have not yet played a conference game.

Behrend fell twice to Pitt-Greensburg last season, 6-11 and 0-2.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Junior Chris McCartney allowed only one run on four hits over 5.1 inning of work against Brescia this past weekend in Kentucky.



Donnie Hackworth



Kara Daniel

**Behrend Beacon:** What are your plans for after graduation?  
**Donnie Hackworth:** I intend to start studying biomechanics/robotics and their possible application in the field of artificial prosthesis.  
**Kara Daniel:** I will be moving to Ohio to complete a 10 month Americorps program called City Year.  
**BB:** What will you miss most about Behrend?  
**DH:** It would have to be my friends and all of the unforgettable experiences here, I've met so many awesome people.  
**KD:** I will miss my friend and all the good times we've had.  
**BB:** What is your favorite memory from your sport?  
**DH:** Qualifying for Nationals at IUP last year. That day I set a new school record and got a runaways clap by Slippery Rock.  
**KD:** Traveling to Florida with the team this spring break.  
**BB:** What is your funniest or most embarrassing moment?  
**DH:** About two years ago at CMU it was a really windy day and I missed the mat but managed to land on a full bottle of Aquafina. The thing exploded and got me and couple other people soaked. The crowd had a good laugh.  
**KD:** "What are you doing!?"

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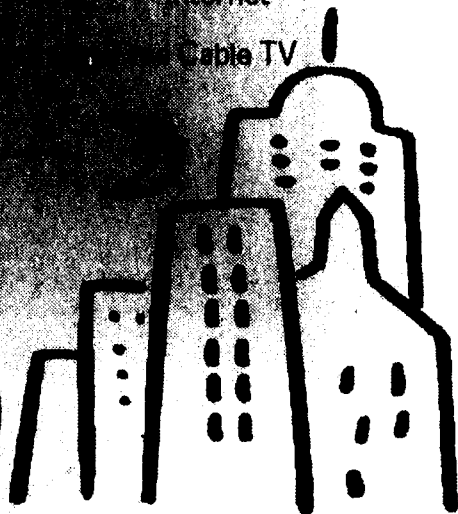
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