



Softball season off to slow start

By Maureen Archer
staff writer

The women's softball team lost its double-header against Westminster last Tuesday, continuing their rough start to the new season.

The team traveled to Kissimmee, FL over Spring Break and played eight games in the preseason, all of which were winless for the Lady Lions. The women are not letting the losses bring down their moral or hopes for the season ahead.

"It actually motivates us more," said senior second baseman Shelle Roberts. "We are used to coming home from Florida winless, so it definitely doesn't hurt our outlooks. The teams we played were very tough teams and they only made us stronger as a team."

This is the second season the blue and white are playing under Head Coach Stacy Pondo. Last year, the team picked it up at the end of the season winning four out of five games. This turnaround gave the team some momentum and a positive attitude for the off-season.

"I want us to improve our conference record from last year, and make the AMCC tournament for the first time in years," said Roberts.

Last year the Lady Lions missed the AMCC playoffs by a tie breaker and this year those playoffs are on every players' mind. The women have upped their expectations and are pushing themselves to play their best this season, hoping to



JENN HAIGHT/BEHREND BEACON

Freshman Lauren Lubic pitches against Westminster in Tuesday's double-header. The softball team dropped both contests against the Titans, 0-4 and 5-9.

walk away with a much better record than in recent years.

"I expect us to finally start playing the way we know how," said Roberts. "We had a rough start in Florida, but I expect us to really pick it up."

The conference season does not officially start until April 2, when the blue and white battle out a double header with Pitt-Greensburg on their turf. Greensburg has not yet played a conference game

are 3-13 on the season.

This year's schedule has been lengthened to include 18 conference games as the league grows to 10 teams. This gives the girls a greater opportunity to show their opponents what they can do and come out with a winning season.

The women will travel to Thiel on April 4 and Hilbert on April 5. Both games will be double-headers. Hilbert college is one of the newly added conference teams, along with Medaille College and Mount Aloysius.

The team is also growing and has expanded its roster from previous years which is expected to help the team succeed. Sitting on the heels of the new season, the team have nothing but positive energy and hope for the months ahead.

"Despite our record, our team is growing and really coming together," said Roberts. "We have a huge amount of potential, and we are all very excited to start our play."

The future of the Lady Lions is still unknown, but if the team continues to push itself and excel to be the players that they can be, there is a good possibility that this could be the turnaround season they have been waiting for.

HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICES

Athlete of the Week ...



Mike Barlett
Men's Track
and Field
Erie/Iroquois



On a cold and windy day, Barlett was able to take first in both the 800 meter and 4x400 relay races. He finished the 800 meter with a time of 2:03.20 and with his teammates, clocked in at 3:29.69 in the 4x400 relay.

The Behrend Lions will head to Carnegie Mellon for the Western Pennsylvania Championships on April 2.

Housing and Food Service Athlete of the Week is selected by the Sports Information Staff.

Track teams kick off outdoor season with Clarion Invitational

By Stephen Wingerter
and Justin Bootes
staff writers

Men and women's track team competed in the Clarion Early Bird Invitational along with 10 other teams and came out with strong standings.

The women put forth a good showing under bad weather conditions. Coached by Dave Cooper, one record was broken and many are on their way.

Starting things off was sophomore Becky Gonzalez in the 100 high hurdles with a time of 17.15 seconds. Gonzalez, now the record holder for Behrend, qualified for the ECAC postseason. Finishing in third place was freshman Erica Smith and sixth freshman Natalie Romano.

Smith helped out the team in the 400 IM hurdles with a time of 1:10.41; by finishing in second place. This wasn't the only event in which Smith put forth and excellent effort.

The 4 x 100 group consisted of junior Nicole Mineweaser, senior Marlena McNutt, Gonzalez and Smith finished in second

place with a time of 53.46. These ladies are showing a great deal of potential and are a vital contribution to the team this year.

As well as competing in the 4 x 400, Smith and Mineweaser teamed up with senior Claire Manelick and freshman Leisl Soergel to finish in second place with a time of 4:22.25. This time was less than three seconds behind the Geneva College team.

Junior Staci Banaszek finished in second place in the women's high jump at 5-01.00. Banaszek also took sixth in the long jump where she sustained knee injury. Despite lots of pain, there doesn't appear to be any tissue damage.

"The temperature was very cold and there was a brisk wind that made conditions very difficult," said Cooper. "I was pleased with how our women handled the tough conditions and performed well. It was a good tune-up meet with lots of D-II competition which should help us adjust to the D-I and D-II competition we'll see for the rest of the season".

With seeing the competition of the upcoming season, the track team now has a better idea of what needs to be improved on and is headed full speed ahead.

On the men's side of the invitational, the team placed first in three events, displaying a strong performance in such dreary conditions.

Brad Ruffo, sophomore, broke the school record in the 10,000 meter run. With a time of 33:28.34, this broke the Behrend record by twelve seconds. It wasn't a surprise to Cooper that he broke the record, "but that he broke the record, this early in the season and by a large 12 second margin."

"I felt good running that well of a time this early in the season and also under the cold conditions," said Ruffo.

Carlos Lopez and Kevin Shugars, freshmen, both had top ten performances in the 400 intermediate hurdles. Carlos broke the Behrend school record as a freshman in his first meet of the 2005 season and placed second. A time of 58.05 earned him the Behrend record very early in

the season. Shugars placed fifth. "When I came the coaches made me feel comfortable and worked very hard with me," said Lopez.

Clarion proved to be a spot for ECAC qualification with Isiah Meek hurdling 15.34 in the 110 high hurdles and placing second. Isiah Meek holds the school record for the 110 high hurdles with a time of 14.76.

"I feel I can qualify in the 4x100 and the 4x400," said Meek. "This year we can have more ECAC qualifiers than ever before."

Dennis Scheuer placed fourth in the 110 high hurdles. In the 400 intermediate hurdles Lopez brought home fifth place.

The 800 was also a strong event for the lions. Mike Barlett, senior, won the event. Eric Diluzio, freshman, placed second. Harry Balwick, junior, took fourth with Brett Pollack, freshman, placing in sixth.

"I am looking forward to the SRU meet because it is close to home, and the competition will be good for all the events," said Ruffo.

Baseball finds its swing

By Sara Kamber
co-sports editor

The baseball team opened up league play last weekend with a double-header against La Roche. After splitting the two games with the Red Hawks, the Behrend Lions start 1-1 in the conference, 6-7 overall.

The first game was tight through the bottom of the seventh inning. The blue and white were up 2-1 and then took advantage of an infield error to bump up the lead 4-1. After making a few of their own mistakes, the Behrend Lions maintained a 5-4 lead going into the bottom of the seventh where unfortunately La Roche hit a 2-out game winning hit, taking the win 6-5.

Junior Chris McCartney started in game one against La Roche and battled through 5 innings to hold the lead. He struck out four and walked only two but gave up six hits. In to relieve McCartney was senior Jason Shaffer, who was, later, tagged with the loss.

Junior Eddie George knocked out two hits and a run for the team. Also earning runs for the squad was junior Greg Samson, sophomore Tim Nebel and freshman Brent Sullivan.

Game two was dominated from start to finish by the blue and white. The combination of fierce pitching and powerful at bats was too much for La Roche and Behrend came up on top with a 12-2 win. The teams were only able to get in five innings before darkness shut them down.

"It was important that our guys stepped up and bounced back in game two," said Head Coach Paul Benim. "Losing game one the way we did was hard, but our

team's resilience was great."

Junior pitcher Ray DeVaul controlled the mound for the blue and white. He fanned five, walked two and allowed only 2 runs over the five innings.

"DeVaul was overpowering at times," said Benim. "He pitched very well for us."

The Lions took advantage of every at bat during the game, with some big hits the team has been waiting to see. Junior Shane Elzer was four for four at the plate, including a three-run home run. Freshman Cody Thull was three for three.

Senior Vince Canzano had an all-around solid weekend at bat, hitting 6 for 8 with 3 runs. On the season, he leads the team in batting average at .417, hits with 17 and runs with 8. Canzano also has 8 RBIs.

"Offensively we have come along and are getting better," said Benim. "Our defense has been solid and we have improved that aspect since Florida."

On Saturday, Behrend will face its second conference foe of the season, Pitt-Greensburg. Greensburg is 2-0 in their first two games of the season, defeating Hilbert twice last weekend. Once again, the weather does not look good for Saturday's game, which has become a large factor in how much the team is actually getting to play.

"It is important to play well in the league games against Pitt-Greensburg this weekend," said Benim. "They are 2-0. And if we play well and put ourselves in a position to win two games, we will be 3-1 in the league and everyone can chase us for a while."

The blue and white will also face Case Western Reserve on Sunday at 1 p.m.

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