

SPORTS

Men's and women's soccer teams make improvements to squads, ready for season

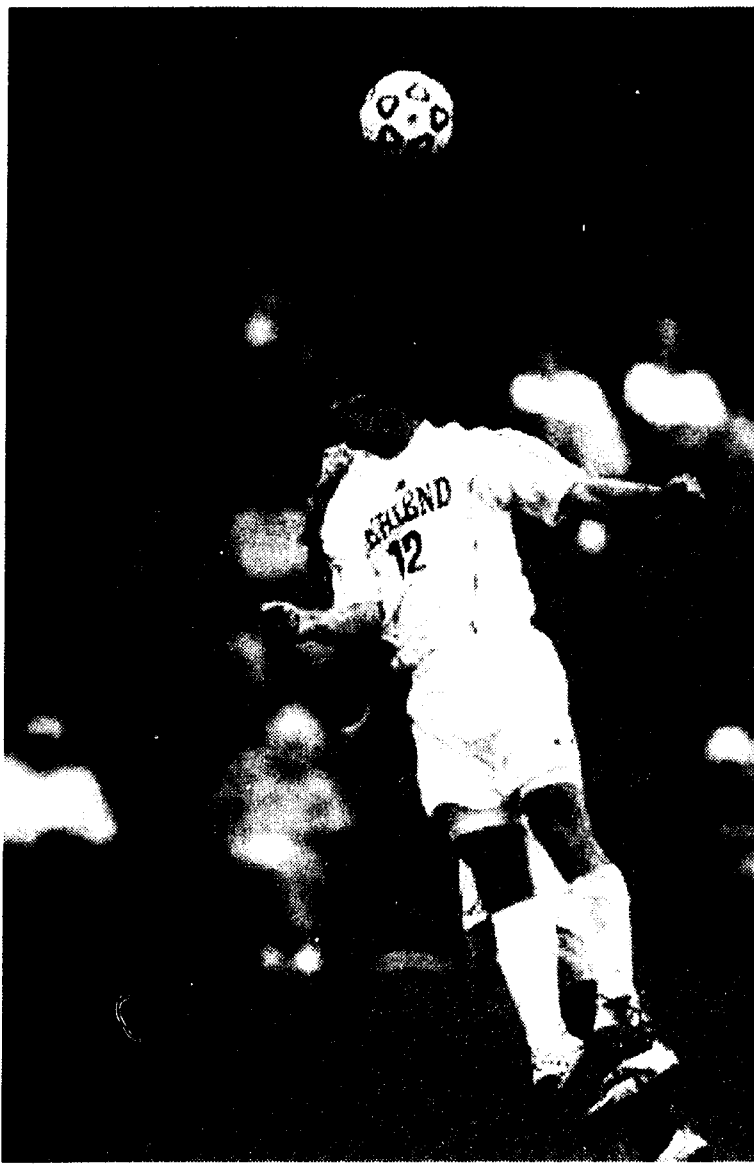
By Ashley Bressler
contributing writer

After two years of falling just short of the AMCC title, the Women's Soccer team is determined to claim their deserving position at the top. Last season, the Women experienced a difficult loss in the finals to Frostburg State. They went out with pride as their season concluded due to the double over-time 3-2 loss. As this team has never been one that is easily discouraged, the ladies made an impressive appearance in the ECAC Tournament shortly after. The 2004 Women's season came to an end with a final standing record of 14-6-1, a very satisfying feat.

As for the Men's 2004 season, head coach Dan Perritano said he was very happy with the regular season, but that it's not important to focus on the actual record. It should be more about improving with each practice and each game. This was thoroughly demonstrated as the men towered over teams such as Hilbert (6-1), Lake Erie (3-0), Pitt-Bradford (5-0), and Mt. Aloysius (13-0). In the 2004 season, the Men's team ended with the record of 12-6-1 as the fifth seed in the AMCC Championships.

For a number of years in the spring, both Men's and Women's teams have participated in the TOPSoccer Program, headed by the Men's coach, Dan Perritano. The TOPSoccer organization is a community event that usually lasts for eight weeks, (March through May). The organization's sim is to provide disabled children in the Erie area with the joy of the soccer experience. The age range for the children has gone from as young as four years old to those in their early twenties. TOPSoccer is purely a community activity and has earned much support from the Erie area. Each Wednesday, the children arrive at the fields and are paired with a member of the Men's or Women's team. The players take the children into the exciting world of soccer as they teach them simple skills such as dribbling, passing, shooting and throw-ins. Without a doubt, everyone benefits from the TOPSoccer Program. The participants get a chance to learn and enjoy the art of soccer, and build friendships with the players. To the members of the teams that come to the program and dedicate their time to touching the lives of these children, the organization is fulfilling the cycle of support from the community, which has contributed to their success for years.

In the race to be at the top, this year's teams will prove to be worthy contenders. Leading the Women's team this year are senior captains, Kacie Burns, the talented midfielder who racked up many impressive goals in past seasons, and Stephanie Bowen, the top defender from McMurray/Peters Township who is an accomplished three-time first team AMCC winner. Patrick O'Driscoll, head coach



Contributing Photographer

Senior Brain Blaszczyk goes up for a header during one of last year's games. Blaszczyk will lead an eager Lions' squad this year.

for the women, is very optimistic for the ladies this season and has confidently set the standards high with hopes of winning the AMCC Championship, which will send them straight into the National Finals.

"We are excited for the 2005 season to begin. We have one of the

most experienced teams we have had in some time at Behrend with six seniors. We return nine players from last year's ECAC semi-final team and we also have 10 talented freshmen that we are adding to our roster. Our main goal is to win the AMCC Championship and advance into the NCAA National Tournament. If we work hard as a team and get behind our common goals, then I think we can achieve this. As always we will be up against some stiff competition in the AMCC. Frostburg, Pitt-Greensburg, and LaRoche are always tough opponents. We play some challenging non-conference games before opening up conference play on September 24," O'Driscoll said.

The Women have a total of 22 players this season, 10 new freshmen and 12 returning players. So far in the season, the ladies have been focusing on training hard, getting to know one another's style of play and perfecting a few promising formations that will hopefully send them sailing into the finals.

The Men's team has all the spots covered as refined players top the line-up. Juniors D.J. Craven and Sean Ruhlman will lead the forwards. Mark Cipriani and Justin Reese will put their three veteran years into action by controlling the midfield position, while Brian Blaszczyk and Dan Bash support the defense with confidence and ease. Working together will be crucial for the men this season and it is a task that they have proven to do well. Learning to know one's teammates' playing agendas, styles and abilities is important to all teams, and is no different with the men of the Behrend soccer team. These players spend hours each day with one another and form a unique bond and support group for one another. As Dan Perritano said, "They are friends on and off the field."

The ultimate goal for this season has been to play collectively as one unit, in other words, to be familiar with each other so that predicting a teammate's next move is apparent to the rest of the team. This season, the team will be changing things up a bit by altering their play from past years and so far the team has adapted remarkably well. This can only mean one thing: we will all be able to watch as the Behrend's Men's Soccer Team defeats the competition.

The Women's Soccer team will open their season on September 3 for the Herb Lauffer Tournament, which includes three other teams, Washington and Jefferson, Baldwin-Wallace, and Juniata. The Behrend Women are scheduled to play W&J, and the tournament will take place from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. As for the Men's team, they will also begin the season with the Herb Lauffer Tournament on September 3. The men will take the field from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and will first be playing Juniata.

Women's volleyball team to start off season with high expectations and spirits

By Amy Frizzell
contributing writer

The volleyball team will kick off its 2005 season at the Marietta Tournament this weekend at Marietta. The team will begin play against Ohio Valley, followed by Denison, and Marietta and Seton Hill on Saturday.

The Lady Lions began training for their season on August 22 and has been practicing two to three times a day. This year the team has decided to make an AMCC Championship and an

automatic NCAA bid its goal, something that was denied them by Frostburg State University in the finals of the AMCC tourney last year.

"Last season our players learned to train more intensely and make better decisions during play. They have returned eager to continue with the positive momentum from 2004 and push for more success," said head coach Phil Pisano.

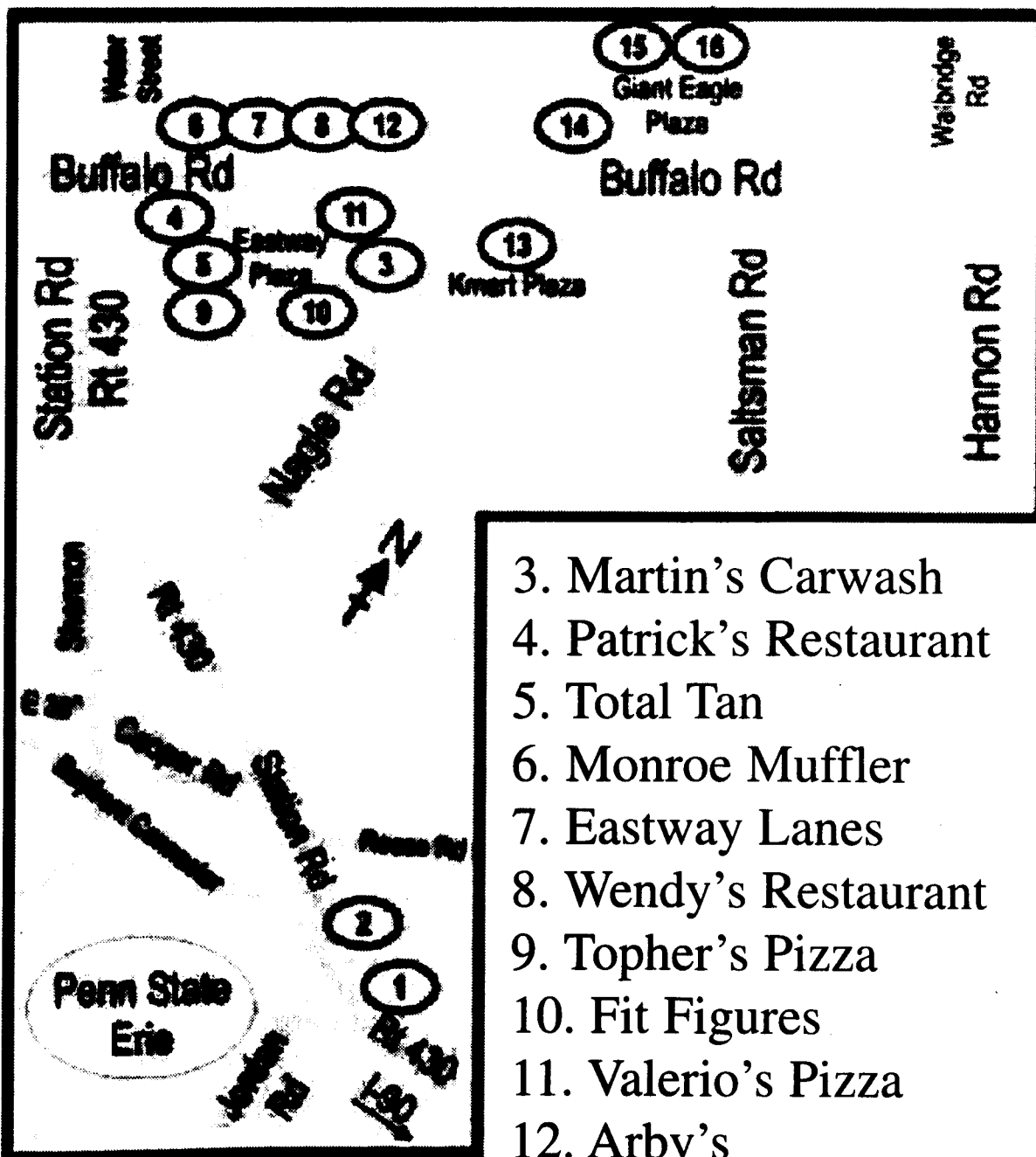
Helping the team to achieve this goal will be Pisano and assistant coach Gerry Vensel, who will both be starting their second season with the team. Leading the team will be lone senior setter

Amanda Evans, who is currently the all-time assist leader at Behrend. Joining her will be juniors Elaine Voltz and Lisa Wagner who were both named all-conference players during the 2004 season. Rounding out the list of juniors will be Karla Murray, Paige Payer and Katie Ward. The Lions will also have the help of two sophomores and five freshmen.

"The talented freshmen joining us will give us depth that we didn't have last year. They should challenge for playing time quickly and we're excited about their progress so far," said Pisano.

The team is currently ranked second in the pre-season poll just behind Frostburg State University. Penn State Altoona and Mt. Aloysius round out the last two.

"As coaches we really enjoy working with this group of athletes and are proud of their focus and effort," Pisano said. "We feel confident that we will continue to improve all season and hope to be playing at another level come playoff time."



- Map Legend**
- 1. Jack Gordon
 - 2. Maxwell's Hobby Shop

- 3. Martin's Carwash
- 4. Patrick's Restaurant
- 5. Total Tan
- 6. Monroe Muffler
- 7. Eastway Lanes
- 8. Wendy's Restaurant
- 9. Topher's Pizza
- 10. Fit Figures
- 11. Valerio's Pizza
- 12. Arby's
- 13. Hallmark
- 14. Ponderosa
- 15. Video U.S.A
- 16. Little Caesar's



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