

SPORTS

Behrend Men's Soccer experiences highs and lows

By Kelly Houghton
staff writer

With high energy and biting aggression, our men's soccer team traveled to Altoona, Pennsylvania this past Saturday with high hopes of securing their first AMCC conference game. However, the cards didn't unfold as hoped, your blue and white lost a hard fought match 0-1. In regards to the game, Captain Brian Blaszczyk said, "Altoona was a hard fought battle. Unfortunately, we didn't come out on top."

Although disappointed, PSB shook the loss and started their engines Wednesday evening while on the road against Hilbert University. Behrend failed to play at the level of a lesser Hilbert squad, a team that struggled exceptionally during their 2004 season, failing to win a conference game and finishing with an overall record of 1-14. Last fall, Behrend mutilated the Hawks 6-1. This year, they repeated the feat, dominating all aspects of the game and shutting out Hilbert 4-0.

Blaszczyk stated, "We knew we were a better side than Hilbert, but we still had to come out and compete and we

did." Head Coach Dan Perritano was also pleased with the win, stating, "We played well and took care of business." The win improved the men's record to 6-2.

Last night in action, Behrend battled a talented Capital University squad. Coach Perritano knew before entering Thursday's contest against the fifth ranked team in the region that an arduous challenge was near. However, he was anxious to "play at home against a good team."

Although Coach Perritano believes that his squad has room for improvement, he is pleased with play so far this season. "We have a clear picture of what we want to accomplish," Perritano said, stating that winning the conference and earning a spot in the NCAA tournament are ideally in their plans.

This weekend will also showcase a men's soccer game. Saturday, October 1, is Parents and Families weekend on the campus of Penn State Behrend. If you're looking to entertain your folks while they're in town, show them some Nittany Lion spirit by cheering on your blue and white Saturday at 3 p.m., live and local from the Behrend fields. La Roche, who currently holds a record of 3-5-1, will be traveling to Erie for this AMCC conference match.



Emily Zimmerman/THE BEHREND BEACON

Senior midfielder Justin Reese dribbles through a Capital University player. The game ended 2-2 and was called due to darkness and player injury.

Men's water polo making strides despite obstacles

By Kyle Woodside
staff writer

Have you ever had to play on a basketball court that had a shorter free throw line, a shorter three-point line, or a higher rim? The answer is most likely no, I presume. That's unfortunate, because you can't relate to the Behrend men's water polo team then.

The squad is forced to play opponents in pools that are each laid out in different dimensions. Gannon is one of those pools. The Lions squared off against them on September 21 and lost, 12-10. "The water polo association doesn't require the same size pool everywhere like in many other sports where the courts or fields are the same size everywhere you go. It would be quite expensive if colleges were forced to redo their pool dimensions. Our pool is a good one - one of the best in the league. If a college wanted a pool of our caliber, then that college would have to charge all its students a lot more in their tuition rate per year in order to have a pool like ours," said Coach Joe Tristan.

Coach Tristan isn't using the small pool as an excuse for losing the game, however. "Yes, the small pool throws our plan off a bit because we are used to a bigger pool and then are forced to play in a smaller pool, but we were tied 10-10 with four minutes left in the game. I was thinking at that point that if we played good defense, we could force overtime and pull out the win because defense leads to offense," Tristan said. "We just didn't seem to get any luck in the final minutes. I felt a couple calls by the referees hurt us and so did our execution."

"I was proud of my guys though," Tristan exclaimed. "I couldn't have asked anything more from them. We were down 6-2 at one point in the third quarter, but my guys are resilient. They fought

hard, and managed to tie it against a Division II team."

Facing a lot of Division I and II schools along with nationally-ranked Division III schools is yet another obstacle the Lions have to overcome.

Behrend tried to bounce back from the Gannon game by competing against a tough W&J squad on Saturday night at the Junker Center. However, W&J pulled out a 10-6 victory. Anthony Spoto and Roy Cho each scored two goals for the Lions. Justin Thoresen and Rodolphe Acelor also netted a goal apiece. Conor Powers had five saves in goal. Leandro Azevedo had four saves and a team high of six steals.

The crowd seemed very irked with the referees during most of the second half. Screams of "Can't you see that was a foul?" echoed through the Behrend crowd. Tristan feels that the game was called well, however.

"If you throw a ball into a crowd of people, referees are less likely to call a foul because it is a bad pass. On the other hand, if there is no one in the area of the pass except the person receiving the pass on the offensive team, then there is more of a chance for a foul because there is more room for the offensive player to try to make a play. Our passes were forced into crowds, which justifies the refs' judgments. W&J did a good job of clearing our guys out and we didn't," Tristan said.

In the first quarter, Behrend seemed to be clicking on all cylinders. "We played 'our game'," Tristan said. "From the second quarter on, little things killed us such as W&J's goalie scoring right before the end of a quarter. We seemed to retaliate with fouls instead of trying to play our game. They scored five goals on us in the second quarter. If you take away that one bad quarter, then we

would have had a much tighter game."

As history shows, Behrend used to get blown out in almost every water polo game. As more and more seasons have passed, the margin of victory for opposing teams has dropped considerably. This is one sign that the Lions are not a team just to be played, but rather to be prepared for.

"Teams like W&J used to beat us by at least six goals," Tristan observed. "The same goes with Gannon, Slippery Rock, etc. Now, we are making games competitive. We still have some bugs to iron out, but once they do, we will get the wins instead of just making it a close game. We're on the verge of winning. It's just a matter of when we'll take that leap forward."

Behrend's overall record is 1-11, but looks to improve on that mark at home for a rematch with Gannon on October 5 at 7 p.m.

The Behrend Beacon sports page is still interested in more writers. Please email your article ideas to Chris LaFuria at sportseditor@psu.edu.



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