

Men's water polo finishes fourth in Eastern Championships

By Kyle Woodside
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Last weekend, Behrend's water polo team traveled to New London, CT to compete in the Division III Eastern Championships at Connecticut College, but first they finished up their regular season with a competitive game against Slippery Rock on Oct 20 at the Junker Center.

The game was Senior Night, which was to honor lone Behrend senior and captain, Steve Schleicher. As for the game itself, Behrend wanted to make a statement that the Rock stopped here. Harry Truman might be nice to use as inspiration, but Slippery Rock had some history on their side too, unfortunately for the Lions, as they defeated Behrend 15-5 in their previous meeting. Despite the earlier thrashing this season, Behrend didn't just roll over and die this time around. Although the Lions threw paper and scissors out there, the Rock won by a 10-7 score.

"Our team played very well against a team which is just outside of the Top 25 rankings and who was ranked 19th when we first played them," Coach Tristan said. "We managed to play well despite the fact that they have scholarship players and we don't. I hated to see that Slippery Rock had four players that I once tried to recruit. Their bench is much deeper than ours is. Another thing that affected us was that they are Division II and we are Division III. Overall, I was pleased with our effort. The opponent took advantage of the three times when we let our guard down; this is when they

scored some costly goals, so that was the difference."

Andre Pranckevicius led Behrend with a hat trick. Anthony Spoto had two goals and Roy Cho and Brandon Thiel contributed in with a goal apiece. Goalie Leandro Azevedo made 18 saves and Conor Powers made three saves.

Two days later, the team began to battle in the Eastern Championships. The first day started off with a promising and thrilling sudden-death overtime victory against the host Connecticut College by a 7-6 tally. Schleicher scored the game-winning goal 1 minute and 24 seconds into sudden death for the Lions after two scoreless overtime periods.

"We got our lead and then we became impatient, which made us force things and let them back into the game," Tristan explained. "We also had four guys in foul trouble, so we had to play carefully."

Spoto and Cho netted two goals each, while Schleicher, Pranckevicius and Justin Thoresen each added a goal.

Coach Tristan had a tough decision to make after this game: either rest his starters for the second game versus Johns Hopkins, which was meaningless in the final tournament place rankings or try to beat MIT in the third game in order to get into the championship game. The choice was made to let the "B" squad for Behrend get the majority of the playing time. Johns Hopkins took advantage of this and won easily, 17-5.

Despite the rest that was intended for the Behrend starters, some still saw playing time in the game, which caused fatigue in the MIT game. Being the third game in six hours for Behrend and not having much to eat that day didn't help

the fatigue level either. MIT won, 14-3, putting Behrend in the third place game, a match-up with W&J the next day.

Behrend managed to claw their way to a tie at the half, but came up short against W&J, 10-6. "Impatience hurt us again, but obviously the fatigue from the previous day did as well," Tristan said.

The loss put Behrend in a fight for fourth place vs. Connecticut College. Tristan told his players to "take patience to the limit" and use the shot clock to their advantage to wear down the defense instead of just throwing the ball at the net at random times to bail the other team out.

Behrend won in dominating fashion, 12-6. The score was 12-2 before Tristan started substituting in the fourth quarter. "We did not allow a counterattack goal in this game. I am proud of that, as well as the fact that we finished the same as we did last year. It's only a matter of time before we are in that championship game."

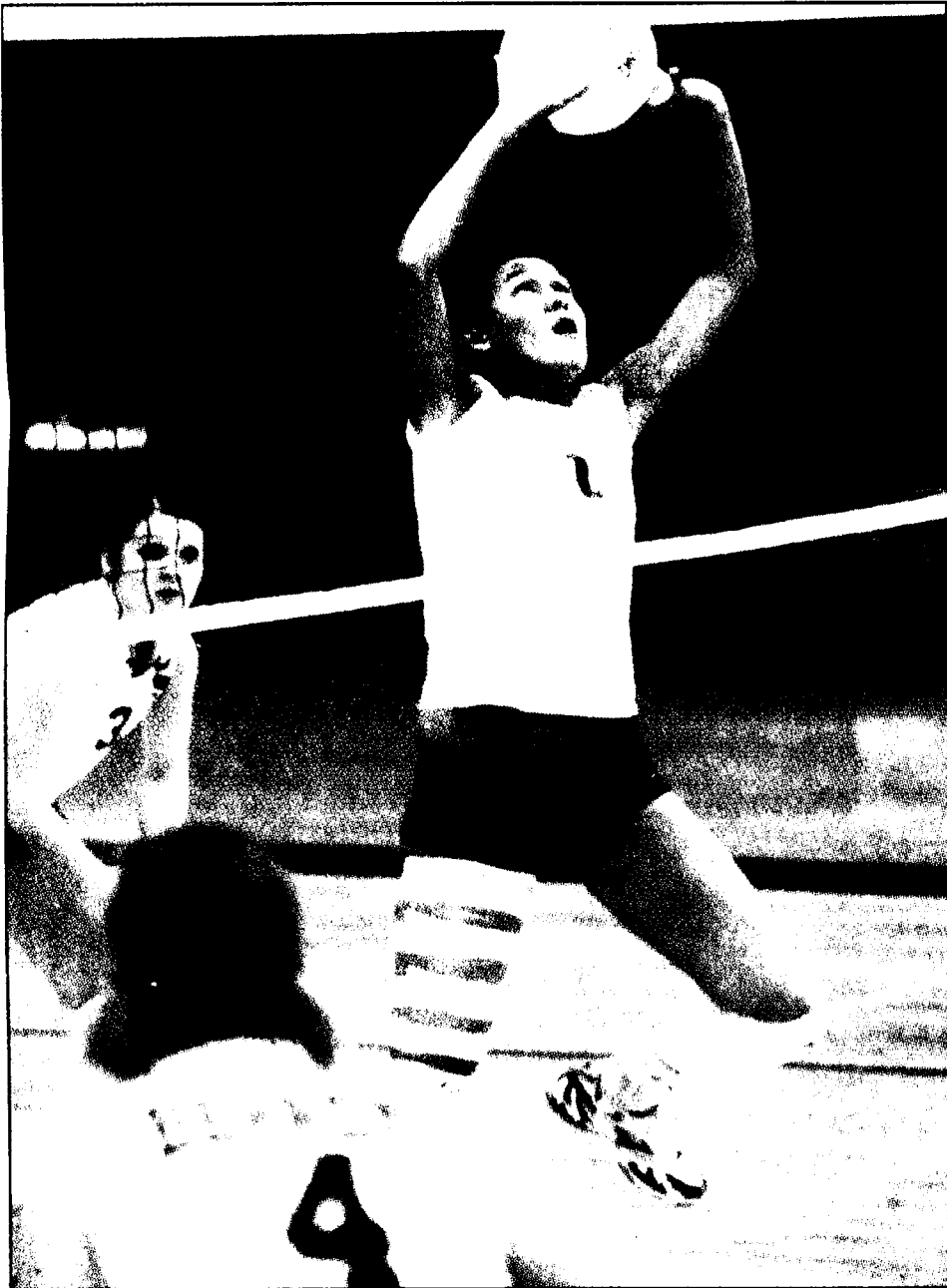
Based on the fact that Behrend's water polo team has only been in existence for six years (one of the youngest water polo teams in the nation) and that the older programs like Slippery Rock (who have been around for over 30 years) have had success, the championship game might just be a few years around the corner.

This weekend the Lions will wrap up their season at the Southern Division Championships at the Naval Academy in Maryland. Behrend is slated to face Princeton at 11:20 a.m. and local rival Gannon at 2:50 p.m. The rest of the games will be determined by how the Lions fare in the first two games.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sophomore Anthony Spoto looks to shoot in a recent water polo match. The Blue and White finished fourth in the Eastern Championships.



HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICE ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

NAME: Amanda Evans
SPORT: Women's Volleyball
CLASS: Senior
DATE: October 24, 2005

Behrend's Amanda Evans (Upper St. Clair/Upper St. Clair) was named Housing and Food Services Athlete of the Week. Amanda helped the Behrend Lions to an enormous road win against the defending Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) champs, Frostburg State in three games 30-17, 30-21 and 31-29. They also defeated Catholic 3-1 on October 23.

Evans had 46 assists against Frostburg State and 56 assists in the win over Catholic. "Amanda has been playing excellent volleyball all season. She's a major reason for our success thus far and is focused on capturing a conference championship," said head coach Phil Pisano. The Behrend Lions are a perfect 7-0 in the AMCC and have an overall record of 22-7. The women's volleyball team can be seen in action at home on Saturday, October 29 against Mount Aloysius at 1:00 p.m.

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

Men's soccer gets ready for postseason play

By Heidi Weismiller
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The final week of season play concluded this week with one win and one loss, putting the Behrend Men's soccer team in the fourth seed for the conference championships. The Lions ended their regular season 12-5 overall and 6-3 in the AMCC conference.

The wet and muddy Lions walked away from Mount Aloysius on Oct. 22 with a 5-1 win. Andy Lesser set the pace early in the game. After only five minutes he scored and was assisted by teammate Josh Serafini. Only 10 minutes later, Lesser secured the lead when he put in his second goal of the night.

Midway through the first half, Rob Milani added goal number three for the Lions.

Shortly after the second half began, Justin Reese aided Lesser with his third goal of the night, putting the Lions at four goals. Behrend's fifth

goal by Chris Smith came shortly after. The only goal for Mount Aloysius was scored late in the game with no chance of a comeback. Behrend's defense played a great game, allowing only four shots by the opposing team.

On Oct. 25, another wet and muddy afternoon, the Lions were faced with a bigger challenge. They played Medaille College, 8-1, and came home with a 2-0 loss. Both teams played with a lot of skill. The game could have gone either way, as

both teams had about the same number of shot opportunities. Medaille, unlike Behrend, was able to capitalize on two of their opportunities.

The Lions, who are fourth place in the conference, start the conference championship this Saturday at 2 p.m. They will be matched up at home against the fifth place team, Frostburg State.

"The game could have went either way, as both teams had about the same number of shot opportunities."

Support your Blue and White men in the conference championships this week! Good Luck Lions!

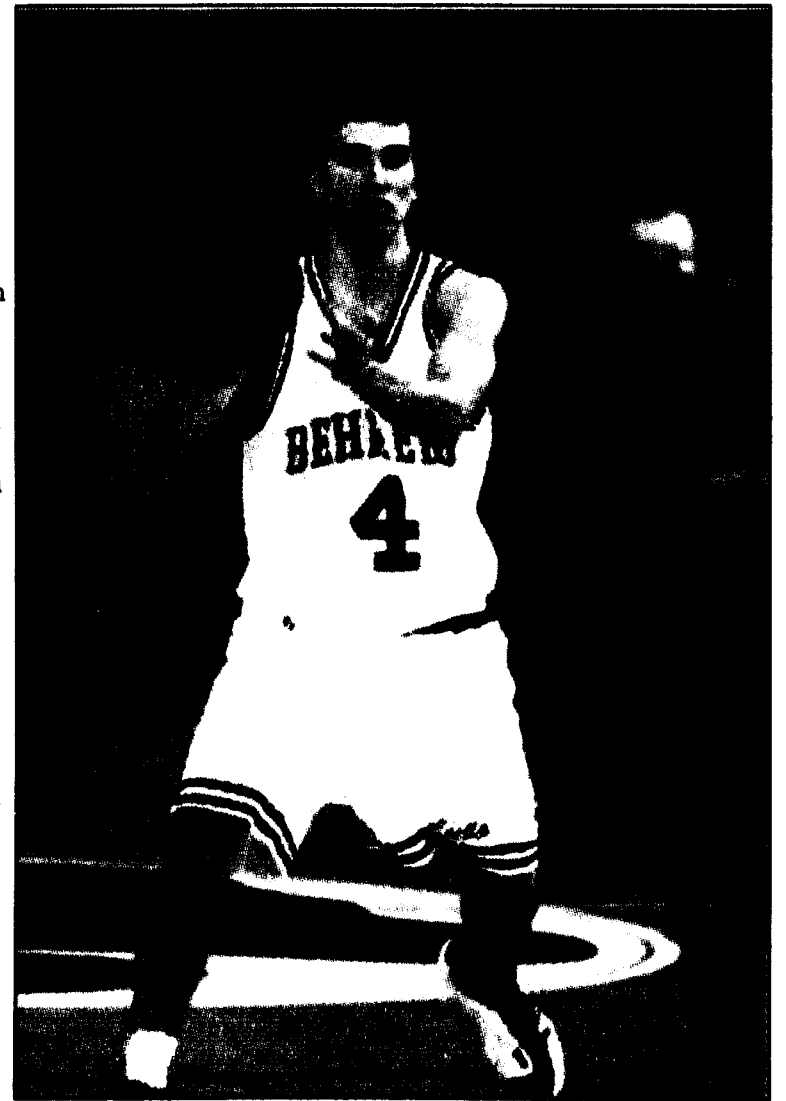
Men's basketball receives award

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The Collegiate Basketball Officials Association (CBOA) recently awarded the Behrend's men's basketball team with the Schoenfeld Award. The Schoenfeld Award is annually given to a college or university which the CBOA identifies as having "the highest degree of sportsmanship, character and ethics among their players, coaches and spectators." The award is the highest honor that the CBOA annually gives.

The Schoenfeld Award is in memory of Sam Schoenfeld, a former college basketball player who possessed a great deal of energy, honesty and a charismatic personality. He was also one of the founding fathers of the CBOA. In 1956, Schoenfeld was taken by a brief illness so the CBOA chose to memorialize him with an award that displayed his characteristics. Head coach Dave Niland said, "It is an honor for our team and the university to receive an award that symbolizes such positive characteristics."

On Nov 19, the men begin their season in the Behrend Tournament against Wesley at 8 p.m. They hope to begin their journey for another award, on the night of the conference championship. The Lions are led by seniors, J.J. Ferguson and Justin Jennings. Out of the 16 players on the roster, 13 of them are underclassmen. Look for these underclassmen to have breakout seasons in the upcoming years.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tom Lulich dishes out a pass during a game in the 2004-2005 season.