

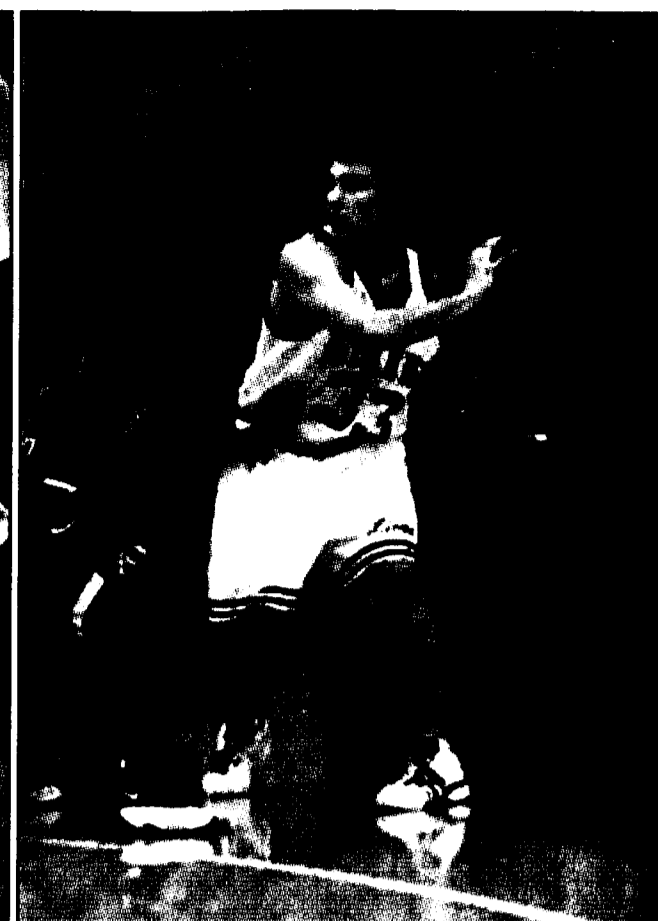
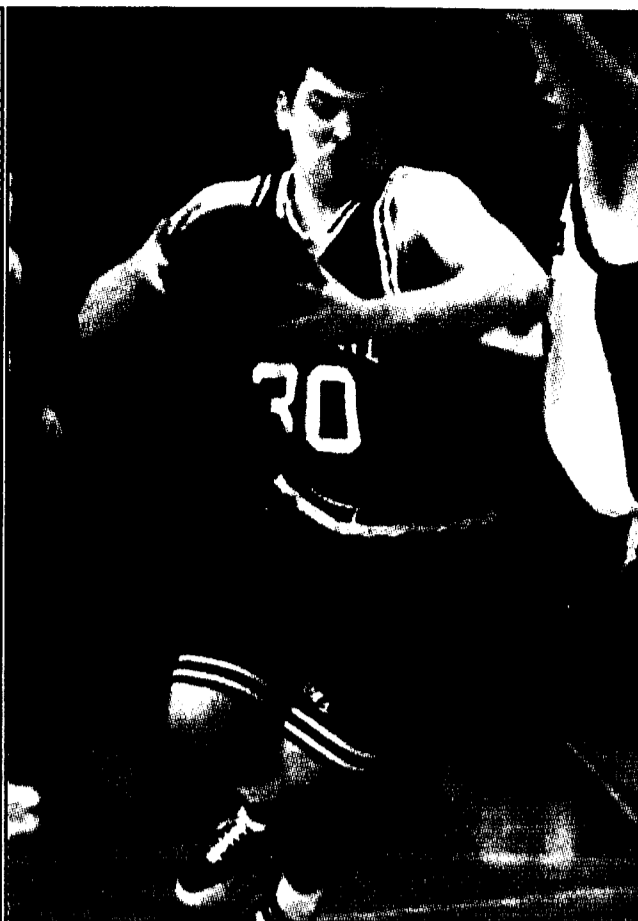
2005/2006 Penn State Erie Men's Basketball Team

04/05 BEHREND RECORD: 0-0
LAST GAME: Season Opener

PROBABLE STARTERS:

No.	Ht.	Yr.	Name	PPG	RPG
10	5-10	SR	Justin Jennings	3.8	2.3
22	6-7	SO	Kevin Buczynski	7.8	4.5
30	6-3	SO	David Gahan	8.0	3.2
33	6-3	FR	Drew Seker	N/A	N/A
34	5-9	FR	Ben Gasbarre	N/A	N/A

Coach: Dave Niland



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Men's basketball begins Saturday

By Chris LaFuria
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Head Coach Dave Niland enters the annual Tip-Off Tournament with 199 wins and will be seeking his two-hundredth victory. Behrend, coming off a 19-8 record in 2004/2005, is in search of its fourth NCAA appearance. With a strong defense that has led the league in lowest defensive points per game average, the Blue and White will host Wesley in the season's opener. Senior Justin Jennings and sophomores David Gahan and Kevin

Buczynski are the returning statistical leaders.

The Lions look to improve on their 47 percent shooting from the floor, 36.9 percent from behind the arc, 71 percent from the free throw line and 66.3 points per game.

In last year's Tip-Off Tournament, Behrend won their first game over Case Western 71-58, but followed the victory with a 63-58 loss to the Adrian squad from Michigan. After the tournament, the men will play at home against Westminster on Nov. 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Behrend men's basketball team is looking for leadership from young players such as sophomore Dave Gahan (left). With the loss of such valuable seniors as Doug Merski (right), the Lions look to improve on last year's 19-8 record.

Lions cross country finishes strong in regionals

By Kelly Houghton
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In last Saturday's Mideast Regional, Behrend's men and women's cross country teams ran hard in competition at Dickinson College. The men's team finished 20 out of 42 teams, while the women pushed themselves to the limits, finishing 31 out of 46 teams.

Junior, Brad Ruffo, finished the 8k race with a team best of 26:21. This impressive time awarded him with a twelfth place finish out of 270 runners. For the women, freshman standout Jenn Bailey ran the most notable race as a blue and white Lady Lion, finishing the 6k in 24:02. Bailey's time awarded her with a thirty-sixth place finish. Sophomore, Leisel Soergel, also ran considerably well for the Lions, finishing with a time of 26:26.

Overall results on the women's end of competition included Dickinson College placing first in the Regional meet, while Haverford College led the way for the men. Both of these teams, in addition to other top finishers, will advance to next weekend's NCAA division III championships, hosted by Ohio Wesleyan University. While neither women's nor men's team will be traveling to Ohio Wesleyan, Brad Ruffo will be traveling solo to represent Penn State Erie.

Although the doors to the 2005 season are practically closed, many highlights and triumphs occurred over the course of the last several months. Jenn Bailey was recently named to the AMCC All-Conference Team, in addition to being awarded the honor of Newcomer of the Year in the conference. She also excelled at the AMCC championships where she took second place. It is safe to say that this freshman has quite a promising career ahead of her at Penn State Erie.

However, Junior Brad Ruffo's accomplishments have surely been the highlight of Behrend's season. Ruffo's stellar season launched at the Lions opening match and continued throughout each of Behrend's six contests. In fact, Ruffo was the top finisher for Behrend in each of their six competitions. Ruffo was also named the AMCC's men's runner of the year after breezing by all other runners on the course. This first place finish at the

AMCC championships has never before been achieved by a Penn State Erie runner.

Ruffo is also the first Lion to qualify for the NCAA tournament, an extremely remarkable accomplishment. This weekend, Ruffo will travel to Ohio Wesleyan University where he will proudly represent Penn State Erie at the national tournament. Freshman, Jason Bem, was also named to all-conference list and on Oct. 29 at the AMCC championships, was the seventh male runner to cross the finish line.

However, the most impressive aspect of the cross country season occurred on the women's side of competition. A Cinderella story took place; and although a pumpkin wasn't turned into a carriage and mice weren't turned into white horses, average students were transformed into competitive runners. At the beginning of the season, the ladies found themselves in a bind for participants. With only three female runners, the Lady Lions had little hope for a competitive season. However, recruitments were found, some of which had never run before. Head coach Dave Cooper commented on the way in that the girls "gelled together," ultimately running as a team. Behrend's assistant cross country coach, Greg Cooper, worked closely with the newcomers and produced what would become quite an exceptional group of female athletes. Not only did the girls form great friendships throughout the season, they also placed second at the AMCC championships.

Overall, each Lion had a great season, as they pushed themselves to their extremes and immensely contributed to the overall result of each race. In fact, both the men and women's teams placed second in the AMCC conference this season. "Next season, our goal will be the same as this year; we hope to win our conference," said Coach Dave Cooper.

Next season, Behrend will have to achieve this feat without the leadership and experience of two talented seniors. The women will be losing Nicole Minesweaver while the men have to retire the shoes of Harry Balwick. However, next year's team should be just as tough as the 2005 squad. "We hope to pick up right where we left off," said Coach Dave Cooper.



Men and women's swimming encounter close meets

By Heidi Weismiller
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The Behrend men and women's swimming and diving teams had close meets on Saturday, Nov. 12 at St. Vincent College. The women lost 76-84 and the men lost 70-79. It is only the beginning of the season, however, the teams are working hard. Assistant coach Joe Tristan attributes the close losses to the lack of swimmers on both the men and women's sides. "We couldn't post swimmers in every event," he said. He explained that a few swimmers made the decision not to return this year so they have very small teams to work with. Head coach Jen Wallace said, "I'm sad to see the people who left go, but we will move on. Everyone is swimming well," she said. Tristan said "We had good swims across the board [on Saturday]."

The women had a good showing at St. Vincent despite the loss. Tristan explained that a skilled freshman swimmer, Annie Harris was injured in the first meet and was not able to compete on Saturday. "The loss of Harris was a setback," said Wallace. However, she said her teammates picked it up and won all but two of the events they entered. The relay team of freshman Erin Emrich, and three sophomores Melissa Pilewski, Cyndi Morales and Ashlee Marchand placed first in the 400 yard medley relay with a time of 4:40.46, beating

the St. Vincent team by over six seconds. Morales finished first in the 1650 yard freestyle with a time of 19:45.63.

The 500 yard freestyle had two Behrend girls competing. Morales finished first with a 5:46.75 and Haller finished third with a time of 6:04.96. In the 200 yard freestyle, Junior Leah Haller took second place with 2:14.20. Haller also placed second in the 100 yard freestyle with a 1:02.69 while teammate Marchand finished third coming in at 1:03.96. Pilewski placed first, and Marchand took fourth in the 50 yard freestyle with times of 27.51 and 29.13 respectively. Emrich took first for Behrend in the 200 yard IM with a time of 2:32.36.

The Lady Lions swept first and second place in the 200 yard breaststroke with Pilewski and Emrich finishing at 2:44.44 and 2:49.98, respectively.

The men's team faces the same challenges as the women's team. "We just don't have the numbers," said Tristan. "We won every event we entered," he said. Tristan feels that if the men's team had one more swimmer, they would have won the meet. Sophomore Dustin Fairchild took first place in the 200 yard freestyle with a time of 1:54.66. His Behrend teammate, junior Brandon Thiel, came in second at 1:59.28 with the first St. Vincent swimmer more than four seconds behind. In the 100 yard freestyle, sophomore Anthony

Spoto took first place with a time of 51.59, and Thiel followed in third place with a 53.36. Spoto had a close finish in the 50 yard freestyle with a St. Vincent swimmer, but managed to snag first place with a time of 23.37.

The 500 yard freestyle also had a Behrend swimmer in first place. Sophomore Dustin Fairchild finished in 5:13.75, almost 20 seconds ahead of the second place swimmer. Fairchild also took first place in the 200 yard breaststroke with a time of 2:23.27. Wallace said she is very excited to have Fairchild as a member of Behrend's team. "He has been a standout swimmer for us," she said. She also pointed out that he has not lost a meet yet this season and hopes that record can continue for him.

In the 200 yard backstroke, Thiel captured first place, coming in at 2:20.91, four seconds ahead of the second place St. Vincent swimmer. Alejandro Nieto, the only competitor who participated in the diving competition did well.

Tristan said the season will be very productive. "We are going to do very well," he said. "The people we have are working very hard and swimming well," said Wallace.

Behrend's swimming and diving team has two meets this week. One will be Friday, Nov. 18 in the Junker Center Pool against Nazareth College. The meet will begin at 6 p.m. Then on Saturday, Nov. 19, they will travel to Pitt Bradford to compete at 1 p.m.

HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICES ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

NAME: Brad Ruffo
SPORT: Men's Cross Country
CLASS: Junior
DATE: November 14, 2005

Behrend's Brad Ruffo (W. Middlesex/W. Middlesex HS) has been named Housing and Food Services Athlete of the Week. Ruffo finished twelfth out of 279 runners at the NCAA Mideast Regional at Dickinson College. He finished the 8k course in a time of 26:21.

Ruffo previously finished first in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) Championships with a time of 26:55. For this achievement he was awarded All-Conference Team honors as well as Runner of the Year in the AMCC.

Ruffo will next be in action on Saturday, Nov. 19 at the Methodist Theological School where he will be competing for a NCAA Men's Cross Country Championship.

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

If you are interested in writing about such sports as basketball or swimming, please contact Chris LaFuria at sportseditor@psu.edu or stop by the Beacon office to get your assignment. Be a part of the winningest team on the campus of Penn State Erie.