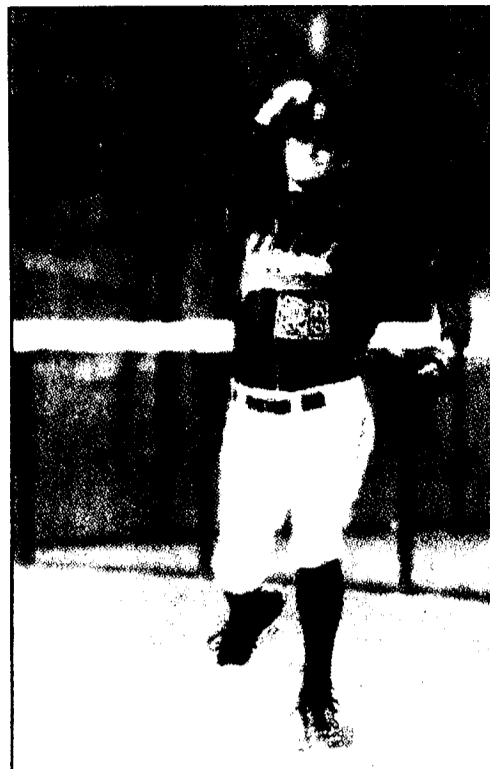


Baseball team makes an impressive start

By Matt Waronker
assistant sports editor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Penn State Behrend baseball team opened their season winning an impressive eight out of their first nine games. The Lions, who traveled to Port St. Lucie, Florida, over spring break, earned a hard fought 7-5 victory over nationally ranked St. Scholastica. The win against the nationally-ranked Saints was followed by victories over Mount St. Vincent, Cazenovia, Manhattanville, Kenyon, and Western Connecticut State. In their eight victories the Lions outscored their opponents 81-33. Behrend's only loss of the trip came on the front end of a doubleheader against Western Connecticut State. The Colonials defeated Behrend 4-1.

Senior second baseman Mike Stetz led the Lions through their trip to Florida and batted an impressive .447 with 10 RBIs and was a flawless 5-for-5 on stolen base attempts. Ryan Smith led Behrend on the mound. Smith, who was named the AMCC Baseball Pitcher for the week of March 19, highlighted an impressive spring trip with two saves and one win, while not allowing any runs throughout the week. Smith ended last season with a record of 4-4 and an ERA of 2.98 and was second in the AMCC in saves with six and in appearances with 23. The Lions will rely on Smith to lead what looks to be a strong, albeit young, pitching staff. The Lions pitchers, including only one senior, primarily consist of six sophomores and five freshmen.

Sophomore Ryan Smith, who was named AMCC baseball pitcher of the week on March 19, winds up for a pitch.

"Our pitching, although young, played very well in Florida," said head coach Paul Benim. "Our pitchers, because they are so young, really have to compete. They have to continue to do what they've done thus far and build off of that. For this team our pitching has to be a constant."

Although the Lions ride an 8-1 record into their regular season opener against conference rival and AMCC preseason favorite Frostburg State, Benim sees a completely blank slate for his Behrend team. "As good of a start as we've had, we're still 0-0 in league play," said Benim. "We need to put ourselves in a position to compete for a conference championship. We feel good about playing such a high level of baseball and the team deserves a lot of credit for their performance, but all we can do is take last week and build off of it."

First-year assistant coach Brian Hirschberg attributes much of Behrend's recent success to the team's ability to keep their focus. "As long as the fellas stay focused and keep their focus they'll be able to take this momentum into the weekend," says Hirschberg. "If we take that mentality into these upcoming games we'll be able to build off of our success in Florida."

Behrend's trip to Frostburg State is scheduled for this Saturday, March 24. The Lions who finished last season with an overall record of 28-17-1 lost all three of their match-ups against Frostburg State. The team was shutout in both games of an early season doubleheader and then fell again to the Bobcats in a close 8-7 heart-breaker in the AMCC conference tournament.



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Senior first baseman Tony Kordeck is ready to start the 2007 season after missing all of last season due to an injury.

HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICES ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



NAME: Mike Stetz
SPORT: Baseball
CLASS: Senior
DATE: March 19, 2007

Mike Stetz (Johnstown/Bishop McCort) got off to an outstanding start for his senior year, leading the Behrend Lions to an impressive 8-1 in Fort Pierce, FL over spring break.

Stetz started all nine games and led the team both at the plate and in the field. He hit a team high .459 from the plate, racked up 12 RBIs, and crossed home plate 11 times. The senior also stole four bases, recorded 26 assists and 13 putouts.

Men's baseball is scheduled to travel to Frostburg State on Saturday, March 24. They will open at home on Wednesday, March 28 against Medaille. For game day information contact the baseball office voicemail at 814-898-6322.

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

Trivia Question of the Week

What golfer coined the term "caddy?"

Send your answer to dnb5003@psu.edu

Who do you think will make it to the Final Four?

Email your opinion to dnb5003@psu.edu

Softball team visits sunshine state

By Kara Struski
sports editor

The Behrend Lions softball team returned from spring training with more than just a tan. The Lions brought back six victories from their annual spring trip to Kissimmee, Florida as well as added excitement for the 2007 season. The team is looking to defend their title and repeat as AMCC Champions this season.

The team is returning eight of their nine starters and 15 letter winners from the 2006 squad. Last year the team went 34-10, winning the AMCC championship to dismiss three-time defending champions, Pitt-Bradford. The Lady Lions also received an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament hosted by Ithaca College.

Over Spring Break, the team went 6-5 in Florida to start off the season. Sophomore pitcher Julie

Koman says that the trip did more than just give them a chance to play in the sunshine.

"The trip helped us come together more as a team and helped us realize the kind of team we need to be to get back into the NCAA tournament," she said.

Koman, who was named the 2006 AMCC Pitcher of the Year, is starting this season right where she left off. She was recently named the AMCC Softball Pitcher of the Week on March 19 and led the Lions to four wins and one save in her eight appearances in Kissimmee. Koman was also recognized as the ECAC Softball Pitcher of the Week. Sophomore center fielder, Katie Whitby, was also recognized as AMCC Softball Player of the Week on March 19. Witby went 15-for-31 (.484) at the plate. She racked up 12 runs, three RBIs and went a perfect 5-for-5 on steal attempts.

While in Florida, the team did more than just play softball. They got the chance to enjoy team dinners, visit Cocoa Beach, attend an Atlanta Braves game and spend a day at Universal Studios.

Head Coach Stacy Pondo agreed that the spring training trip plays a major role in preparation for the season.

"The trip helped us in many ways," Pondo said. "We were able to see each individual's playing capability in the field and up to bat and also played some very tough competition which helps us to prepare."

Pondo returns for her fourth year as head coach and believes the team has the focus and drive to remain at the top of the AMCCs. With 10 freshman players returning for their sophomore seasons and only four upperclassmen, the team is

"Our goal is to go out and play hard every game whether we win or lose."

**-Stacy Pondo
Head Softball Coach**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sophomore pitcher Julie Koman, who was named ECAC South Division III pitcher of the week, winds up for a pitch.

young but confident after many got AMCC and NCAA playoff experience under their belts last season. Although she realizes the pressure of defending the AMCC title, the team's goals remain the same. "Our goal is to go out and play hard every game whether we win or lose," Pondo said.

Junior outfielder Lauren Lubic agrees that focus and drive are key components to success. "A goal for us this season is to be in the game mentally and physically for all seven innings," said Lubic.

A highlight of the trip on the field for Lubic, Koman and sophomore second baseman Nikki Kaschauer was the win against nationally ranked Ramapo College from New Jersey. The Lady Lions defeated the Roadrunners 7-3.

Off the field, the same three players agree that team bonding was the general highlight of the trip.

"We are a family. We stick together no matter what the situation presents," said Kaschauer.

The Lady Lions are getting ready to kick off AMCC play on the road. They are scheduled to play Wednesday, March 28 at 3 p.m. against Medaille College and Mt. Aloysius on Saturday, March 31 at 1 p.m.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sophomore center fielder Katie Whitby, who was named AMCC Softball player of the week, gets ready to make a catch.