

# BEACON SPORTS

## JoePa and company prepare for upcoming season

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With the season opener against Florida International just days away, the Penn State Nittany Lions football team will begin their much-anticipated 2007 campaign ranked 17 in the nation by the Associated Press poll. The Nittany Lions, who enter the season ranked fourth in Big Ten Conference play, are also ranked 18 by the USA Today/Coaches poll, 13 by ESPN, and 14 in the nation by Sports Illustrated in each of their respective pre-season polls.

Penn State will face six teams that participated in bowl games last season, three of whom are ranked in the Associated Press Top 15. In their first match-up against a ranked opponent, the Nittany Lions will travel to Ann Arbor to face Big Ten favorite, the 5 ranked Michigan Wolverines on Sept. 22. The team will then return home for what looks to be a tough October, during which the Nittany Lions will host 7 ranked Wisconsin, 11 ranked Ohio State and a potential Big Ten sleeper in Iowa.

The Nittany Lions' seven game home schedule, a blockbuster of elite competition, also includes match-ups against Notre Dame, Purdue, and Buffalo.

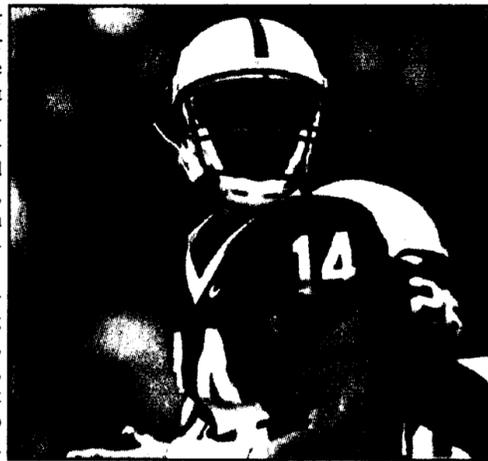
Looking to lead the Nittany Lions this season

are a trio of senior captains in All-American linebacker Dan Connor, wideout Terrell Golden and quarterback Anthony Morelli. Coupled with 12 other returning starters and 29 returning letter winners from last season's 9-4 Outback Bowl winning squad, the Nittany Lions appear prepared to continue to build off of last season's success.

Connor, the Nittany Lions undisputed defensive leader, has been named a preseason first team All-American by numerous publications. The senior linebacker is also a leading candidate for a handful of prestigious defensive accolades, including the Bednarik, Butkus, Rotary Lombardi and Lott awards. Last season, Connor earned 1 team All-American honors from The Sporting News, and was a 2 team Associated Press All-American selection. Connor was fifth in the Big Ten with 113 tackles. He recorded nine tackles for losses, contributed five sacks and two interceptions and led the team with three forced fumbles. Connor was also the lone junior among last season's three finalists for the Bednarik Award, presented to the Nation's top defensive player. The senior captain was the 13 linebacker in school history to earn first team All-American honors further cementing his place in a long line of successful linebackers at Penn State or more appropriately what fans affectionately call "Linebacker U."

Golden is the Nittany Lions' lone senior wide receiver in a deep and talented roster of offensive threats. The recipient of the 2007 Red Worrell Award as the most improved offensive player in spring practices, Golden is coming off of a six reception 2006 season in which he contributed 120 yards of offense. For his career, Golden averages 21.7 yards per catch with 18 catches for 390 yards and two touchdowns.

Leading the Nittany Lions offense is senior quarterback Morelli. After guiding Penn State to a 9-4 record last season, Morelli, in his second year behind center, looks to build off of his success late last year. After leading the Nittany Lions to victories in five of the team's last six games, and setting school single season records for pass completions with 208 and pass attempts with 386 in the process, the senior prepares for a potentially prestigious 2007 season in which he has been recently named to the watch list for a pair of national quarterback honors. Morelli has been named a candidate for both the Davey O' Brien National Quarterback Award and the Manning Award. Both awards are presented to the nation's top quarterback. In their season opener, the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Senior Quarterback Anthony Morelli leads Penn State.

Nittany Lions will host Florida International at Beaver Stadium. This is the first meeting between the two schools. Kickoff is scheduled for noon Saturday Sept. 1. The match-up will air on the Big Ten Network, on the Penn State Sports Network, and on [www.GoPSUsports.com](http://www.GoPSUsports.com), the official website of Penn State Athletics.

## Steelers new mascot raises eyebrows throughout Pittsburgh community

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After 75 years of powerful football in a city that is always watching over their beloved team, the Pittsburgh Steelers officially named "Steely McBeam" as their new mascot earlier this summer.

Upon release of this news, many fans reacted angrily, insisting that the team does not have use for a mascot- especially after 75 years. "We don't need a mascot. We are a team that takes pride in our football, not our image. The next thing you know, we're going to have cheerleaders," said Mike Wachter, a Behrend student and Steeler fan since birth.

The season has yet to begin, but preseason is well underway and McBeam's oversized head has been spotted around the 'Burgh on many occasions, including the Steelers' training camp in Latrobe, Pa., where he's receiving mixed reactions. At first glance, McBeam appears as a black and gold muppet on 'roids that looks way too excited at all times, and constantly hauls a gigantic slab of steel around to show off his superhuman strength.

What most people don't understand is why, after 75 black and golden years, have the Rooney's decided to reveal this creation to the public and have him represent a team like the Steelers. Some thought it was a joke. Many are just trying to ignore the distraction and focus on what matters most, and that is Steeler football. "We can take all the criticism in the world from the football nation, but when it comes down to it, our controversial mascot has absolutely nothing to do with how this season is

going to play out," said Behrend student and Pittsburgh native Sam DelVerne.

When you think of the average Steeler fan, it's not absurd to imagine the crowd for the upcoming season may have a few obscene words and gestures to send McBeam's way. "I didn't know Dan Rooney had drunken six-year-olds making executive decisions around the office this year," commented Behrend student Andy McLachlan.

It sure seems that way, as the mascot could only appeal to a younger audience and certainly not to how the stereotypical fan is viewed. It would not come as a surprise to me if Steely did not return for his second year next fall, judging from the public feedback thus far.

Steely McBeam, having a Scottish ring to it, isn't even a valid name for a Pittsburgh team. Pittsburgh certainly is not dominated by the Scottish nationality, so Steely needs to throw a kilt around his waist and beam his way out of existence.

Only the future will tell us how this situation will play out in the end and most fans have already decided Steely's fate and will play this one off as if Rooney never put forth the idea. "This will have no effect on our Steeler season. Our concern is football, not dumb mascots," concluded Wachter.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

New Steelers mascot, Steely McBeam, rests on a shaky foundation.

## PSB Volleyball kicks off 2007 season

By Matt Waronker  
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A winning tradition. Perennial AMCC powerhouse. NCAA tournament contender.

What has become synonymous with Penn State Behrend women's volleyball continues to establish itself, and with three consecutive above 500. seasons under their belt, the most recent of which being a school record 29 win season, the Lady Lions of Behrend look to play deep into November this year. Last year the Lady Lions surged through the regular season on their way to an impressive 27-2 record only to fall a mere two sets short of a conference title. Behrend fell in a heartbreaker to conference rival Penn State Altoona and in turn lost their shot at an NCAA tournament bid. The team bounced back, however, earning an ECAC tournament bid in which they recorded the first postseason victories ever for the volleyball program. The Lady Lions reached the ECAC Championship match only to fall short to host and top seed New Jersey City University.

"Losing in the conference championship was a huge disappointment," noted head coach Phil Pisano. "However, we were fortunate to get an ECAC bid and having success there helped end the season on a positive note. There were so many positives throughout the season that we really just try to say that the [AMCC Championship match] was just one bad day in an otherwise positive season."

With the first official tournament of the 2007 season just days away, the Lady Lions are prepared to continue where they left off last season: atop the AMCC conference. Ranked 2 overall entering the season, Behrend faces a tough schedule with seven matches awaiting them in which they face teams who had 20 or more wins last season.

Also potentially working against the Lady Lions this season is lack of experience. With 11 out of the 15 members of the squad entering either their first or second seasons on the team, the Blue and White will look to their lone senior Deanna Ciccarelli or their three returning juniors with game experience in Brittany Hennessy, Jenna Benzenhoefer, and Stephanie Pence to set the pace for the season.

"We'll look to Deanna and our three juniors for leadership and poise, but we feel that each class has a chance to significantly contribute," said Pisano. "Our early tournaments are going to be a chance for our young players to step up and contribute. Our lineup will be much more wide open than in the past. I expect a lot of movement in our line-up and for our younger players to push for time. I hope to get a few on the court pretty quickly."

The Lady Lions will take the court for the first time this season this upcoming weekend when the team travels to Marietta College for the River City tournament. Behrend will face host Marietta and Chatham on Friday, Aug. 31, and then Thiel and Division II opponent Ohio Valley on Saturday Sept. 1.

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## Men's Soccer looks to begin season on the right foot

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The 2007 Penn State Behrend Men's Soccer team is ready to get its season underway. With 15 returning players accompanied by 14 newcomers, totaling 29 players, the roster offers plenty of depth for the team.

Of the 15 returning players, five seniors will be competing in their final season at Behrend. Goalkeeper and team captain Matt Zirnsak will return to the lineup after missing last season due to an injury. Defender Adam Cline, and midfielders Daryl Nowacki, Dave Baleno and Jamie Thomas round off the list of seniors contributing to the team.

Three juniors will be returning to the field. Defender Keith DeNinno, who suffered a broken elbow in preseason, started all 19 games last season for the Lions. Midfielders Marcus Taylor and the teams top-scorer Ahmad Salim will be counted on for offense. Along with three returning juniors is Mike Seth, an All-AMCC midfielder, and a two-year transfer from Pitt-Bradford.

The sophomore class will bring back 10 returning players including three forwards, Jarett Carlson, Jerry Tortella and Marc DelGreco. At midfield will be Eric Murillo and behind him at defense will be Bryan Egan, Phil Knittle and Bryan Margaria. Competing for time in goal will be Dustin Walker. "We should have a very competitive battle for

our keeper position between Zirnsak and Walker. They are both great goalies," said head coach Dan Perritano.

Bringing in the freshman class will be forwards Shane Flowers and Ryan Banks. Pushing for time in the midfield will be Carlton Taylor, Joshua Teti, Brian Bodnar, Nick Spring, and Lance Sabol. Rounding off the roster and competing for time in the back will be defenders Scott Faller, Kenneth Gorman, Zach Herd, Brian Silfee and Jordan Hoffay.

Perritano is in his 15th year as head coach. Accompanying him will be Assistant Coach Bryan Blaszczyk. Blaszczyk, a starter for the men's team from 2002-2006, former team captain, as well as three-time all-conference player says the team is ready to get the season going. "We came off a very competitive preseason and the team is very excited to get the season kicked off," said Blaszczyk.

The 2006 season ended with an overall record of 8-9-2 and a conference record of 5-3-1, making the AMCC playoffs for the tenth consecutive year. The Lions closed off their season with a loss to top-seeded Medaille. The Behrend squad has competed in seven championships, and brought home three victories, in 1997, 1999 and 2003. Perritano hopes to put his team back on top for the 2007 season. "I am very excited about our group, they are very competitive and fit. I feel we can compete to win the league," said Perritano.

The season is set to kick off with the annual Herb Lauffer tournament this weekend, with their first game on Saturday, September 1 at 10 a.m. vs. D'Youville. Following the tournament the men will participate in the Fredonia State tournament where they are set to go

against Fredonia and Mt. Union. Their first conference game is scheduled for Sept. 22 at Mt. Aloysius. For more information on the men's team and Behrend athletics, go to <http://www.behrend.psu.edu/athletics/athletics.htm>.



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Sophomore Joe Romanelli fights for possession of the ball.