

SPORTS

Behrend female diver earns NCAA bid

by Andrew McLachlan
co-editor-in-chief
asm5006@psu.edu

Becoming a national champion is not a common thing for a student at Penn State Behrend. For one, most of our sports, whether it is a club or varsity sport, compete at a Division-III level and even though we have been successful within our conferences, our showings at the national stage have been nothing to brag about. Behrend freshman Krystal Kovach will look to change this trend within the next month.

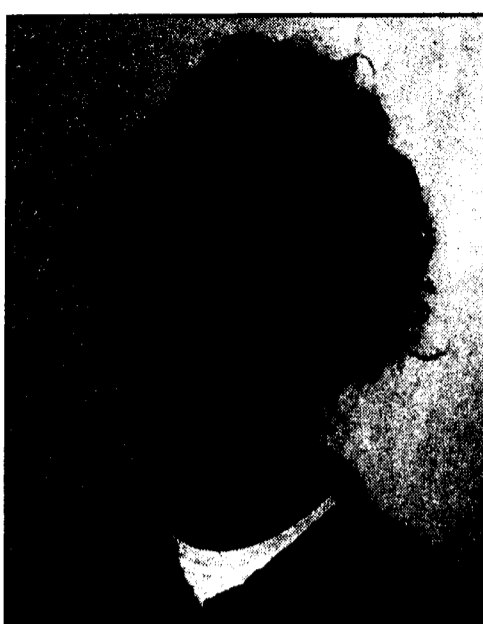
Kovach, who is a diver for the Behrend Swimming and Diving team, has been a standout all year for the defending Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) champions. Recently, at a meet against Penn State Altoona and Frostburg State, Kovach's scores were good enough to qualify for a bid at the Women's NCAA Championship held in Ohio Wesleyan on Mar. 13.

Even though she is extremely motivated, her sights were on other things than nationals. "I was really just trying to qualify for the ECAC (Eastern

College Athletic Conference) championship. When they told me that my scores were good enough for nationals, it was quite a shock," said Kovach.

A graduate from Charters Valley High School, Kovach was never on a diving team until joining Behrend. "I actually started diving this past summer," says Kovach. "I really didn't even know that we had a diving team at Charters Valley until after I graduated." Kovach has been a gymnast since she was little and learned to dive after she was hired to work at a diving event. "I pick up on it pretty quickly and have really enjoyed it," said Kovach.

While looking for col-



Kovach is first Behrend diver to qualify for NCAA title

leges last year, Kovach was searching outside of the state, but ended up at Behrend after falling in love with the campus. "My mom really wanted me to stay local and I could not be any happier being at Behrend," says Kovach. When visiting the campus, Kovach and her mom got a chance to speak with Behrend's Swimming and Diving Head Coach Jen Wallace. While only having about two months of experience, Kovach joined the team, unknowing of what was ahead of her. "I'm a big fan of just being outside and involved in activities, so I saw the team as a

chance to be apart of something great and have something to occupy sometime while I was up here," says Kovach.

While excelling at diving, Kovach admits that she does have some faults. "I am by no means a good swimmer and at times I can be clumsy." With Kovach preparing for ECAC and the NCAA's, she knows that if anything, it will be a great experience. "It was something that I thought that was out of reach and unachievable, but now I am just really excited to compete and hope for the best." Kovach is one of the two divers that is on the Behrend roster and is the only female diver on the team.

Behrend's female swimmers currently are 6-7 on the season, putting them in first place in the AMCC. The men are also in first, with a record of 8-3. The next match up for the swimming and diving team is the AMCC championship, held in Grove City on Feb. 14. Kovach will also travel to the ECAC championship that will be held in Pittsburgh, Pa on Feb. 29.

Behrend ballers win 10 in a row

by Ryan Smosna
contributing writer
rsn5005@psu.edu

The Behrend men's basketball team kept their undefeated home record alive and continued their dominance in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) with wins over Pitt-Greensburg and Hilbert College. Behrend improved to 10-0 at home with the win over Pitt Greensburg and moved the men atop the AMCC standings with a 10-3 conference record and an overall record of 16-4.

In the early stages of the game against Pitt-Greensburg, Behrend rallied off of a very animated crowd in the bleachers under their basket. Senior forward and last week's Behrend Lions Athlete of the Week Dave Gahan said, "The crowd had us fired up all game." Behrend quickly got ahead with other contributions from senior center Kevin Buczynski, who moved into second place on Behrend's all-time scoring list, and sophomore Adam Potter. Although Behrend only shot 1-10 from behind the arc in the first half, they held Pitt Greensburg to a feeble 22 points and were up by eight at the end of the half.

In the second half, Behrend came out with precise shooting and aggressive defense. Behrend stroked seven three-pointers with help from sophomore guards Adam Kaiser and Justin Kovac. Kaiser and Kovac nailed three each and finished with a combined 24 points. From inside the arc, Senior Dan Ziegler pounded 12 points home and Behrend's leading scorer Buczynski added 15 points.

Behrend's outstanding defense has held their opponent under 50 points, an incredible, eight times this season. The men are currently ranked first in the country in points against only giving up 54.3 points

per contest, and a slim 662 points in conference play. Senior center Buczynski said "we really like to get after them; playing pressure defense helps us get energy and leads to easy baskets on offense."

After the blowout against Pitt-Greensburg, Behrend traveled to Hilbert and delivered a 61-58 victory in front of a pack house in Hilbert. After being down ten points at halftime, Behrend came alive, outplaying Hilbert in all areas of the court. Leading the way for Behrend was Buczynski with 16 points, Kaiser with 12, and Kovac with 11. Potter and junior Tom Newman chipped in with six assists each.

The undefeated home record combined with ten straight wins has more fans than normal showing up at the Junker Center. According to senior Jacoby Curtis, "last Saturday's crowd was a sign of things to come." The lively student's occupied nearly the entire bleacher area next to the band under Behrend's first half basket. Chants such as "defense", "P.S.B.", "you can't do that", and "start the bus" were just some of the many that could be heard from this rowdy yet respectful gang. One of the members of the student section sophomore Frank Nagy said "we are really trying to get an energetic student section going, and now that we have started we hope others will join."

Behrend has one more road game, followed by a three game home stand, which will end the regular season. The men will head to Penn State Altoona on Saturday Feb. 9 before coming home to the Junker on Wednesday Feb. 13. "Each and every player understands how important these last few games are. We want to host the AMCC tournament this year and, in order to do that, we must continue to play hard and smart," Buczynski said.

Intramurals heating up at Junker Center

by Nick Haller
contributing writer
nph5012@psu.edu

About a quarter into the second semester, probably one of the most important weeks approaches. Intramural basketball playoff week, this is the moment all intramural players dream of, a chance to take that tee shirt home to mom and dad.

With several teams battling in each division, it is safe to say that everyone will put it on the line this upcoming week. The teams that made it from the competitive league are Renegades, Predalien, Windex, Chuckin' Deuces, So Nasty, Swisher Sweet, Your Mom, and Fart Head.

Now these eight teams have worked all semester long to get to this point and it becomes a matter of who wants it more, all is on the line and the reigning champs Fart Head are looking to win another, and it sure looks like nothing will stop them. Robert Wittman was quoted on saying, "That Fart Head was the best intramural team he has seen in a long time, they shoot well and they have great chemistry and it is going to be tough to beat them."

When talking to team captain Ryan Smosna about this he said very humbly, "dominance comes from hard work and our players working out in the gym and junker five to ten hours a day." Ladies and gentleman, that is pure dedication right there, and it all comes from the leadership of Smosna himself.

Wittman also explained how they have a lot of chemistry and that they play very well together. I asked Ryan how that came to be and he said, "took a while we had to feel each other out, but now I just feel that we are playing like the Bulls...of the early

90s of course." This team expects to win the championship this year, and is already on their way with a perfect 5-0 record.

The Fart Head's are not only the unbeaten team this year; teams Chuckin' Deuces and Windex are right there at 5-0. I got a chance to talk to Chuckin' Deuces point guard and soul of the team Mark Ferguson aka "Ferg." Ferg got injured in the last game and is listed doubtful for the playoff run.

When talking to him I asked about the injury and if the Deuces still have a shot at a championship run. He responded, "Total faith, 100 percent believes in his team." And why wouldn't he? The Deuces won a game with just four people when Ferg went down. Yes, this is a very dangerous team who will most likely meet team Windex in the semifinals. Team Windex's spokes person was unavailable for comment, but I have a feeling they will come to play, strictly from there team motto "Work hard, Play harder."

Wittman believes that sometime people take this game too seriously and its just to get in shape and have fun. I for one am totally for it but others have different views Ferg believes that, "No matter what we do say its playing checkers or tiddlywinks, winning to us is the most important thing, because for us winning is fun."

Intramural basketball is a sport, and it brings blood, sweat, tears to life. I believe in the fact that it's for fun and to get a good run in, but if you want to get a head and get that sweet t-shirt, you just got to put a little more into it, and that is exactly what these eight competitive league teams have done. I wish much luck to all teams and players. Next week is a big week gentlemen, lets all go to work.

Behrend drops two, prepares for playoffs

by Jess Carlson
sports editor
jlc5018@psu.edu

Penn State Behrend's Ice Hockey Team faced two of the top teams in the Atlantic Region of the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) and walked away with two tough losses.

Behrend was upended by top-ranked California University of Pennsylvania, 11-5 at Bladerunners in Bethel Park, PA. Behrend started off to a respectable 3-2 first period deficit to a Cal team, who has been ranked No.1 all year in the ACHA. Cal turned it up in the second period, grabbing five consecutive goals in the second and did not look back. Behrend put together a quick rally in the third period, but it was too little too late for the Lions.

Leading the way in the losing effort was freshman Josh Horvath, who walked away with a hat trick. Also picking up goals for Behrend was sophomore Eric Fry and freshman Nick Winarski. Sophomore Chris Simanic snatched two assists and sophomore Brian Hammel and senior DJ Craven had an assist each. Sophomore goaltender Eric Thiessen was peppered with shots, picking up 30 saves in the loss. Thiessen, who is 8-4 on the season, got a learning experience from the loss against Cal. "We need to be more sound in all areas of the ice. With tough teams like Cal, you have to be flawless and we still have some areas we need to work on," says Thiessen.

With the win, Cal clinched the North Division title in the College Hockey East (CHE) and will receive the Kaliena Cup, which is awarded to the team with the best record in the CHE. Behrend has also qualified for the CHE playoffs as one of the top wild-card teams. If Behrend can get through the first two rounds of the playoffs, they could very well see Cal in the CHE title series.

After the loss to Cal, Behrend came home for senior night to face another top team in Fredonia State. After getting out to a 3-1 second period lead, Behrend let Fredonia State get back into the game and let them walk away with a 5-4 victory.

Fredonia State, who is currently ranked No.3 in the Atlantic Region of the ACHA, is now 3-0 against Behrend this season.

Behrend junior Justin Miller had two goals in a losing effort. Also picking up goals for Behrend was sophomores Aaron Marks and Simanic. Craven finished a solid weekend, with two assists against Fredonia State. Senior goaltender Pat Laskey played solid in his final home game, stopping 23 shots.

Behrend will look to get back on track with two tough road games this weekend. On Saturday, Feb. 9, Behrend will face University of Pittsburgh D-III, 8:50 p.m. at Bladerunners in Harnarville,

PA. Then on Sunday, Feb. 10, Behrend will continue their road trip with a division clash with Robert Morris University D-III at 2:30 p.m. at the Island Sport Center at Neville Island, PA. Behrend will be also the center of attention on Sunday's evening sportscenter on WSEE, Erie's CBS affiliate. The evening news begins at 6 p.m.

This Weekend's Schedule

Saturday, Feb. 9

Behrend W. Basketball: @ Penn State Altoona, 2 p.m.

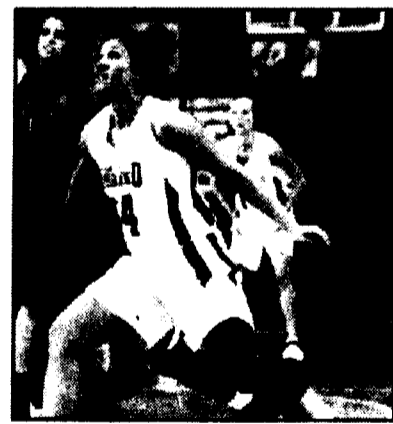


Behrend Hockey: @ University of Pittsburgh D-III, 8:50 p.m

Sunday, Jan. 10



Behrend M. Basketball: @ Penn State Altoona, 4 p.m.



Behrend Hockey: @ Robert Morris University D-III, 2:30 p.m.