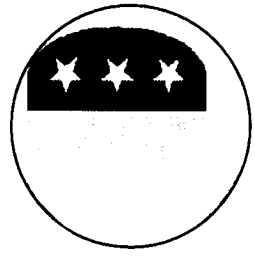


STUDENT LIFE

Primary Progress

Behrend Bandits are ready for playoffs



• Barack Obama has won primaries in 22 states and is currently in first place in the Democratic delegate count with 1,319. This week Obama won the Wisconsin primary, which was his 9th straight victory over Hillary Clinton.

• Hillary Clinton is just behind Barack Obama this week in delegate count at 1,250 but has only won 13 states thus far in the primaries. Clinton is hedging her campaign on the upcoming primaries in Ohio and Texas on March 4. If Clinton wins one or both of these states, the race for the Democratic ticket could go until the convention in August.

If Clinton is successful in the two upcoming primaries, the Democratic Pennsylvania primary on April 22 could become very significant.

• John McCain is dodging claims from *The New York Times* that he engaged in a romantic affair with a 40-year-old lobbyist, Vicki Iseman during his first run at the white house in 2000.

Both McCain and Iseman deny the allegations.

McCain is the runaway favorite for the Republican nomination, with only Mike Huckabee still opposing him in the race. Two weeks ago, McCain's advisors released a memo stating that it would be mathematically impossible for Huckabee to make a comeback and win the race.

McCain currently has 918 delegates while Huckabee has only 217.

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Last Saturday, the newly formed Behrend Bandits fan group was kicked out of the mens basketball game because of a dispute over inappropriate jeers made towards the opposing team's bench.

Fortunately for the school's athletic programs and the entire Behrend community, they haven't been dissuaded.

"I guess we did some questionable things during that game that some people would find inappropriate, and we realize that now," said Mark Ferguson, one of the catalysts that formed the Bandits. "We've been told about the limitations and rules that we have to go by, but it won't make us quit cheering."

"We'll be even crazier than ever when next weekend rolls around, and we hope that a lot more people decide to get involved, because this isn't all about the basketball team or anything like that, it's about being proud of where you go to school and getting involved with other kids."

When Ferguson mentions next weekend, he's talking about the mens AMCC conference tournament next Thursday and Friday. The Lions will be hosting the event at the Junker Center as a reward for their first place finish in regular season conference action.

"I'm not going to say we finished first in the conference because of the Bandits," said Lions guard Adam Kaiser. "But it's really fun to play in front of so many people, especially as loud and excited as they get. It's nice to get that kind of support."

The Bandits began to grow in popularity last month when Ferguson and some of his friends began sending out invitations to games on Facebook.com. They decided that having humorous themes for each game would encourage more people to come out and support the team, and have since had themes that encouraged students to wear blue and white, suitcoats, all white in support of Penn State, and all pink for breast cancer awareness.

"We did all those themes, which was pretty cool," said Michael Buesink, one of the Bandits that can always be found in the front row. "But the one constant we've always had has been the bandanna thing. That's our trademark, and where we got the whole Behrend Bandits name from."

Buesink was impressed with the turnout for Wednesday's game against Lake Erie that the Lions

won 70-65 to clinch the regular season championship. The theme was a "white-out," and students were supposed to wear as much white as possible.

"That was crazy," Buesink said. "I couldn't believe all of the kids that came out for that. It was a great game for it, because Lake Erie is one of those teams that has a big fan following, and they travel with them. I think our fans surprised them."

The Bandits hope to keep the large turnout from Wednesday going for this weekend's tournament, when the Lions will be playing games on back-to-back nights.

"Obviously we're not going to feel as much fatigue as the basketball team," said Bandit Evan Shaffer. "But cheering can be hard. We're going to make sure we rest our vocal chords and drink plenty of liquids after Friday night's game, because I assume that we'll be playing Lake Erie in the championship on Saturday, and everyone knows it's hard to beat a team three times in on year."

In an exclusive Beacon interview with the Bandits, they said that they weren't ready to declare a definite theme for next weekend's games, but were confident that they could come up with two that would satisfy most of Behrend's students.

"We want it to be something that everyone wants to and can actually do," said Frank Nagy, the Bandit that helped engineer a discussion between the group and the SAC to plan Wednesday's white-out. "The SAC had that white-out idea, which is something they kind of borrowed from the football fans at University Park, and it wasn't our most original idea, but it definitely got the biggest turnout, which is ultimately our goal. Just because we're comfortable enough to draw ties on our chests with body paint and wear plaid suit coats doesn't mean that everyone's going to come and do that."

The Bandits say they will begin sending out invitations on Facebook.com as soon as they decide on their themes, and that they will be published in next week's *Beacon*, so everyone will know prior to the games.

"If you don't get an invitation on Facebook.com, we apologize in advance," said Nagy. "We only have so many friends, and if you saw our antics you might understand why. Don't think we don't want you to be there. Just check out the paper and come ready to cheer."

"Oh, and make sure you wear a bandanna," he added.

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