

SPORTS

Men's basketball grabs AMCC division title

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The Behrend men's basketball team kept up their winning ways this past week and will now host the AMCC Tournament Friday, Feb. 29 and Saturday, March 1. The latest victims of the Lions fury were La Roche and Lake Erie.

Last Saturday, the Lions played a tight game against conference foe La Roche. La Roche came into the game ranked No. 4 in the AMCC conference, but left with a loss and serious jeopardy of not making the AMCC Tournament. The Lions had to fight for every basket and, once again, senior center and AMCC player of the week Kevin Buczynski played a dominant game.

Buczynski scored 31 points, had 11 rebounds and three blocks in the Lions win 59 - 51. Buczynski said "we knew La Roche was going to come out and play hard" and that they did. At the end of the first half, the Lions were down by a score of 27 - 24. However, in the second half the Lions came out determined to keep their winning streak going. The men turned up their defense to another level and pounded the ball inside to a red hot Buczynski. Senior forward David Gahan dropped a game high three assists to help his teammate surpass the 30 point mark. The win against La Roche set up a heavy weight match against conference rival Lake Erie.

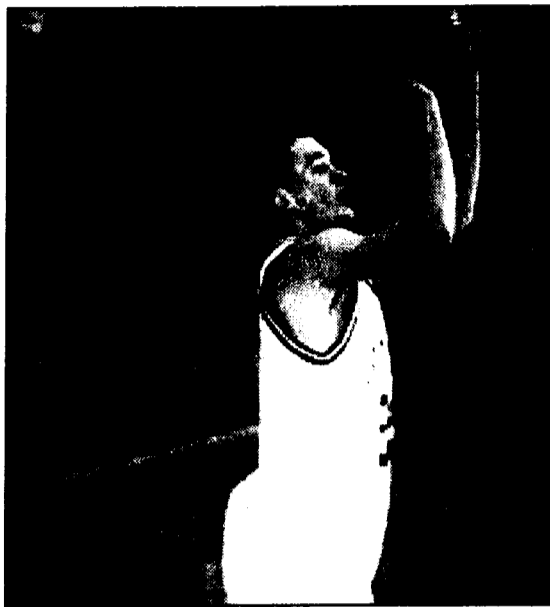
On Wednesday night the Lions took sole possession of the No. 1 spot in the AMCC and received the

bid to host the AMCC Tournament. In front of the largest crowd this year, the Lions came out with energy and enthusiasm. Early on in the game, the Lions were hot from the field; sophomore Adam Kaiser was nailing 3-pointers like they were going out of style. The Lions also got help from senior forward Dan Zeigler and sophomore forward Adam Potter. Potter and Zeigler cleaned the glass throughout the game snatching rebounds when necessary.

Behrend again played with intensity on defense and, at the end of the first half, the Lions were up 32 - 23. But the Lake Erie Storm fought back in the second half and generated turnovers and open 3-point shots. Once again, the Lions had an answer for Lake Erie. Each time the Storm got within a handful of points Behrend fought back and got open looks at the basket. Senior guard Doug Straub stroked home three very important three pointers in the second half. Also senior center Buczynski battled inside the paint to hit some clutch baskets.

The story of the game was the sharp shooting by the guards. Kaiser and company continued to stroke home 3-pointers all night. Kaiser had a game high 16 points shooting an amazing 5-for-6 from the three point line, while Behrend shot 12-for-22 from beyond the arc as a team. Kaiser said "we knew we had to play well and hit our shots to win" and the win was a huge one because the Lions will now host the AMCC Tournament next weekend.

The men play a game on Saturday Feb. 23 against Pitt Bradford in which a win or loss will not affect them in the standings. Next week, the Lions will rest up and prepare for what looks to be another dramatic finish to the AMCC.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Senior Doug Straub was vital against Lake Erie

NBA deals make second half interesting

by Kevin Eugene Forte
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Trades, playoff races and of course, clashing personalities, this is the NBA at mid season. Just a few days past the All-Star break, some teams are muscling up and some teams are doomed to fail. Lets travel across the country and see who is able to make the run to the finals.

Lets begin in the so called "Junior Varsity League," the Eastern Conference. The "mean green" Boston Celtics (41-11) and "the Big Three", including Ray Allen, Kevin Garnett and Paul Pierce own the best record in the league and have been at the top since the beginning of the season. They seem to be a shoe in for the conference's representative in the NBA finals, but as Lee Corso would say, "not so fast." Can these three aging stars stay healthy and keep it together the second half of the season? This is one question that will haunt those Celtics.

A drive northwest to Motown we will see the veteran and talented Detroit Pistons. The boys from the Motor City are ranked at the top of the power rankings and geared toward another run at a championship. Down the Ohio Turnpike to the Quicken Loans Arena, the defending Eastern Conference champion Cleveland Cavaliers have been turning the heat up and playing like a championship-caliber team. With the recent acquisition of Ben Wallace and with his highness King James playing like he wants to be back in the Finals, the Cavs look to be in good shape for the second half of the season. Don't forget the kid Dwight Howard and the Magic, who only trail the conference leading Celtics by six games and hold the No. 3 spot in the playoffs.

Within the conference, trades have been changing the make up teams. Teams such as the Miami Heat, Chicago Bulls and New Jersey Nets have wheeled and dealed, same with the emerging Atlanta Hawks. The lonely Heat pick up Shawn Marion, a defensive maniac and an all-around scorer. While they lose Shaquille O'Neil to the Suns, Marion seems to be a great fit and, not to mention, they do not have the aging Shaq on their hands anymore. Now the Atlanta Hawks, you are probably asking yourself who are they? Here is who they are, a team that has been the bottom feeder of the league for years.

Take a look at the new Hawks who are not equipped to snatch a playoff spot in the East. With the acquiring of Mike Bibby, now Joe Johnson and Al Horford have another weapon to help them. This Hawks team could be a surprise once May comes around.

So lets cross the Midwest to meet and greet the so-called elite teams. After the top two spots in the rankings taken by Eastern Conference teams, it is filled with West teams, that are at each others necks to claim a playoff spot. The Utah Jazz, New Orleans Hornets, Los Angeles Lakers, Phoenix Suns, San Antonio Spurs, Dallas Mavericks, Golden State Warriors, Denver Nuggets and Houston Rockets are all within four games of each other. There could be some major movement in the playoff races because of the trades and deals that have went down.

The Lakers got Pau Gasol, which made all-star Kobe Bryant happy and gave the Lakers a chance to be the greats they used to be. Again, not so fast my friends. Bryant, with the bad finger on his shooting hand, could keep the Lakers reeling once the post season rolls around. Mr. "J-Kidd", Jason Kidd

has made his way back to the big country, where he will try to bring the Mavericks over that hump and win them a championship. Can you see the trend here? Shaq adds another dimension to an already quick and fast paced Suns team. Along with guard Steve Nash, could this duo be the one-two punch the Suns need to have their time in the spotlight? One more trade deal that is in the mix is the talented Nuggets getting some defensive help from Sacramento Kings forward Ron Artest. This could end up being a great deal for Denver or a disaster, with too many egos and trouble in one locker room. Can they come together and make it happen? Don't forget about the upstart Hornets and "CP3", Chris Paul. This is a very talented and well rounded team, which could make others fearful once the post season rolls around.

Of course "Timmy, Tony, Manu" and the NBA champion Spurs are still the team in the crosshairs and still the team to beat. This race in the west should be interesting and enough to make you want to tune in to see what happens. Can the aging star be revived and take their new team over the top? Only they can tell us.

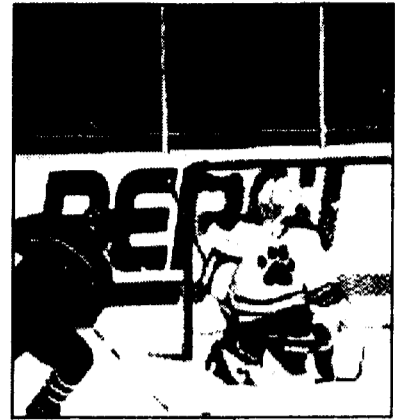


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Shaq and Kidd will now match up in the West

This Weekend's Schedule

Friday, Feb. 22

Behrend Hockey: vs. St. Vincent University, 8 p.m. Valley Sports Complex



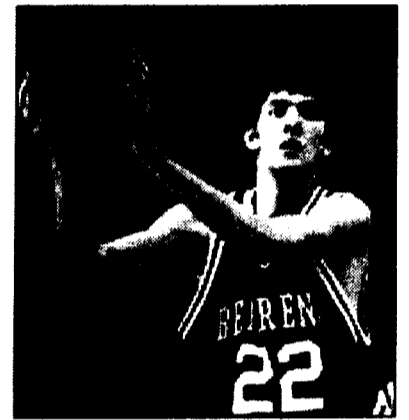
Saturday, Feb. 23

Behrend Track: @ Kent State Invitational, 10 a.m.



Behrend W. Basketball: @ Pitt-Bradford, 2 p.m.

Behrend M. Basketball: @Pitt-Bradford, 4 p.m.



Sunday, Feb. 24



Behrend Hockey: winner of Behrend/St. Vincent game @ Penn State Altoona, 1:30 p.m. Valley Sports Complex

Behrend misses nationals, CHE playoff bound

by Jess Carlson
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The Penn State Behrend Ice Hockey Team failed to qualify for the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) National Championship, after going 1-1 in the ACHA Atlantic Regional that was held in Warwick, Pa. Behrend needed to go 2-0 to gain a spot in the championship series, but were eliminated from contention after a 7-3 loss to Farmingdale State on Saturday, Feb. 16.

After a 2-1 lead late in the first period, Behrend let their guard down by giving up the next five goals to Farmingdale State. Behrend would counter with a third-period goal by sophomore Chris Simanic, but it would be too little too late for Behrend. Simanic finished with two goals and one assist in the losing effort. Freshman Nick Winarski grabbed a goal and two assists and senior DJ Craven added three assists. Sophomore netminder Eric Thiessen was peppered throughout the game, finishing with 43 saves.

The loss left a bitter taste in the mouths of the players, but they believe that advancing that far into regionals is something to build off of. "For a program that has only been around for six years and to be one game away from going to nationals is awe-

some. I am just glad I could have been apart of it and I'm looking forward to this weekend," says senior Dan Thiessen.

In their first matchup at regionals, Behrend played division rival Robert Morris in a grudge match from the week before. On Feb. 10, Behrend was upset by Robert Morris 5-1, setting up an interesting first round matchup with the two at regionals. Trailing 3-1 after one period, Behrend came back, scoring six unanswered goals to a 7-3 victory.

Leading the way for Behrend was Craven, who finished with four goals and two assist. Freshman Josh Horvath chipped in with two goals and two assist and Simanic added four assists for Behrend. Junior Justin Duchini scored the other goal for Behrend. E. Thiessen finished with 25 saves in the win.

This weekend, Behrend will travel to New Kensington, Pa to participate in the 37th Annual College Hockey East Playoffs. Behrend, who is the No. 3 seed in the playoffs, will face sixth seed St. Vincent on Friday, Feb. 22 at 8 p.m. If the favored Behrend squad is victorious on Friday, they will play Sunday, Feb. 24 at 1:30 p.m. against second seed Penn State Altoona. The CHE Championship will be held the following week at the Airport Ice Arena in Moon, Pa.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Behrend Hockey looks for first CHE title

