

SPO RTS

NBA playoffs full of all-stars and great matchups

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March madness is over...now what? Well fellow basketball fans, brace yourself, it is the start of the 2008 NBA playoffs, exciting right? Well it actually is.

Just yesterday, the final spots in the Western Conference were decided, making the West, arguably, the more dominate side of the league. Every team in the West, that made the playoffs, has 50 plus wins, when the East just posting three 50 win teams. Sounds a little lop sided to me.

On the flip side, the Eastern Conference does have the two best teams in the league - record wise that is - and they are pretty much a potential lock for the Eastern Conference finals. The Boston Celtics and Detroit Pistons have dominated the East

this year and have also looked promising when they have faced Western Conference opponents.

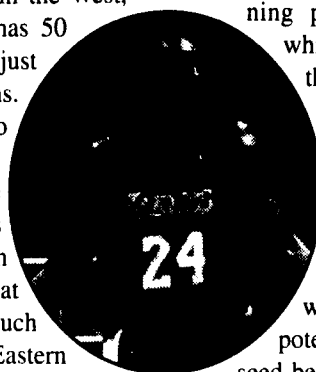
For the rest of the East, there is not much to be said. The Orlando Magic and Cleveland Cavaliers round out the top four spots and the bottom four struggled to maintain a winning percentage of .500. The Sixers and Hawks make up the last two spots and their winning percentages are under .500, which makes fans wonder how strong the East is?

The Western Conference is a different story, with the Los Angeles Lakers sitting at the top spot. Even though they has the best record in the West, does not mean they are safe from elimination. The Lakers will meet the Nuggets, which can potentially be a re-make of an No. 8 seed beating a No.1 seed just like last year, with the Golden State Warriors upsetting the Dallas Mavericks.

Funny enough, the Warriors finished No. 9 in the West, posting 48 wins. The Warriors would be a lock for the third spot in the Eastern Conference, but due to geographic location, they do not play in the East. This is also another example of the lack of competition in the East and the overpowering dominance of the West.

What makes the playoffs most intriguing is the potential remake of classic NBA finals, like a Lakers-Pistons or Laker-Celtic match-up. This should give any avid basketball fan chills; with renewing the old playoff rivalry.

Playoffs start this weekend and the teams will be ready to play. Can Kobe Bryant finally get his ring without Shaquille O'Neal, and can Shaq get one more ring before he hangs it up? Two powerhouses out East have something to prove. Who will come out of the West on-top? We will find out in the coming weeks.



NBA Playoff Picture

- West**
- 1.) LA Lakers (57-25) vs. 8.) Denver (50-32)
 - 2.) New Orleans (56-26) vs. 7.) Dallas (51-31)
 - 3.) San Antonio (56-26) vs. 6.) Phoenix (55-27)
 - 4.) Utah (54-28) vs. 5.) Houston (55-27)
- East**
- 1.) Boston (66-16) vs. 8.) Atlanta (37-45)
 - 2.) Detroit (59-23) vs. 7.) Philadelphia (40-42)
 - 3.) Orlando (52-30) vs. 6.) Toronto (41-41)
 - 4.) Cleveland (45-37) vs. 5.) Washington (43-39)

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Behrend softball preparing for upcoming playoffs

By Jessica Carlson
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The Penn State Behrend softball team improved their record to 19-9 after going one-and-one against Westminster College on Monday, April 14. After losing the first game to the Titans by a score of 7-4, the women decided to put an end to their three game losing streak, defeating them in game two by a score of 3-2.

During the first game, the Lady Lions were in the lead 2-0 until the bottom of the fifth inning when the Titans pulled ahead 3-2. They sealed the deal in the sixth inning when they scored four more runs and went on to defeat Behrend 7-4.

In game two, it was Westminster who let the 2-0 lead slip away. In the top of the seventh inning, the Blue and White drove in three runs off of RBI singles from junior Laura Frishkorn and junior Katie Whitby to tie it up at two. Frishkorn then scored the winning run off of a hit into right field by junior Michelle Zill. Behrend went on to win

game two by a score of 3-2.

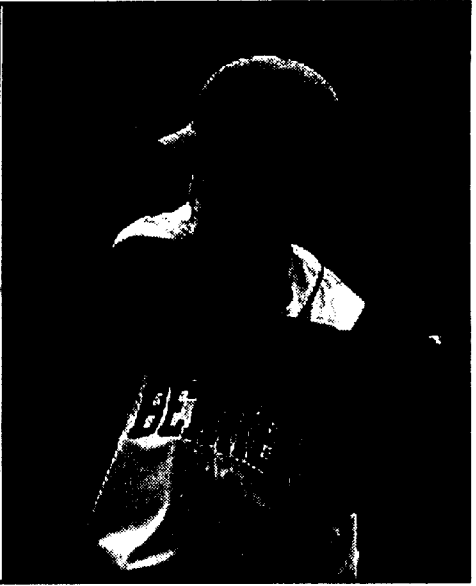
On Saturday, April 12, the Lady Lions fell in both games against Pitt-Greensburg. In the first game, the Pitt-Greensburg Bobcats took the lead 2-0 after a few Behrend errors. Not much action would occur for the rest of the game and the Lady Lions would lose to the Bobcats by a score of 2-0. Junior Julie Koman pitched all seven innings giving up five hits while striking out five others.

In game two, junior Allison Babish smacked a grand slam over the center field fence to give the Behrend Lions a 6-3 lead after just two innings of play. The rest of the game would be all about the Bobcats as they went on a scoring rally to give them the victory 10-6.

The next game for Behrend softball will be a conference game against La Roche College on Saturday, April 19. La Roche currently poses an AMCC record of 6-8 with an overall record of 11-19. On Monday, April 21, Behrend will take on Medaille College who currently sits at No. 2 in the AMCC with a record of 9-1. Lake Erie holds the No. 1 spot

at 13-3.

The women have five more doubleheaders lined up for the rest of the season, all of which are conference games, before heading into the playoffs. Their game against La Roche on the 19th is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. at La Roche College.



Pittsburgh Steelers owner endorses Obama

By Andrew McLachlan
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Pittsburgh Steelers chairman Dan Rooney is preparing for the upcoming NFL Draft, which will be held April 26-27, but had time during his busy schedule to announce publicly who he will be backing in the upcoming election.

Rooney will be supporting Barack Obama over Hillary Clinton in this year's primary. The 75-year old Rooney said in a statement that he does not usually publicly endorse politics. "As a grandfather and a citizen of this community, I think Barack Obama's thoughtful, strategic approach is important to America," Rooney said.

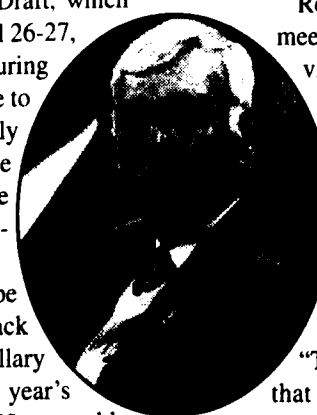
"When I hear how excited young people seem to be when they talk about this man, I believe he will do what is best for them, which is to inspire them to be great Americans."

Rooney had a chance to meet Obama during his visit in the "Steel City."

Even though the polls show that Obama is down to his competitor, Hillary Rodham Clinton, in Pennsylvania, Rooney is not concerned about Obama.

"True sports fans know that you support your team when they are the underdogs," Rooney said. "Barack Obama is the underdog here, but it is with great pride that I join his team."

Other Steelers personal that are supporting Obama are former running backs Franco Harris and Jerome Bettis.



Athletes who support presidential candidates

- Barack Obama**
NBA
~Grant Hill
~Stephon Marbury
~Josh Childress
~Abe Pollin
~Mike James
~Marvin Williams
NFL
~Will James
~Ray Williams (Dal)
~Dana Jones
~Rise Wallace
~Jerome Bettis
~Franco Harris
~Dan Rooney
~Dan Rooney
NCAA
~Chris Bowers
~Sydney Johnson
MLB
~Dwight Howard
~Seoy Jackson
MLB
~Frank Lee
NFL
~Ted Leland

- Hillary Clinton**
NBA
~Daniel Stern
~Alonzo Morning
~Jarron Collins
NFL
~Joe Banner
WNBA
~Donna Orender
NCAA
~Darryl Gross
NHL
~Ted Leonsis
MLB
~Larry Lucchino

- John McCain**
NFL
~Jerry Jones
NHL
~Ted Leonsis
ESPN
~G.W. Bodenheimer
MLB
~Curt Schilling
~Joe Garagiola Jr.

This Week in Sports

MLB

~Houston Astros shortstop Miguel Tejada has admitted to his team that he is really 33 and not 31-years old.

Considered to be a burden to him, Tejada decided to end his secret, that he has kept for 14 years.

"I was a poor kid," said Tejada, who approached the media about his deception on Thursday, April 17. "It's something that happened the first time I signed my contract. I had no intention of doing anything wrong."

~The official charity of the Red Sox, the Jimmy Fund, began an auction for the David Ortiz's jersey that was buried under the New York Yankees' new stadium by a Boston fan hoping to create a hex.

The auction lasts for one week. The starting bid was \$500 for the No. 34 jersey, a brand new jersey and two seats to a Red Sox game.

NCAA

~The rape trial of former Penn State running-back Austin Scott was delayed Wednesday April 17 as the state Superior Court wrangled over last-minute appeals.

Scott, 23, of Allentown, PA, is awaiting trial on felony rape and sexual-assault charges, along with three misdemeanor charges.

Scott was suspended by Penn State coach Joe Paterno on Oct. 5, citing a violation of team rules. Police charged Scott a week later.

NFL

~Quarterback Steve McNair is retiring from the NFL after a 13-year career, in which he was named co-MVP and led the Tennessee Titans to the Super Bowl.

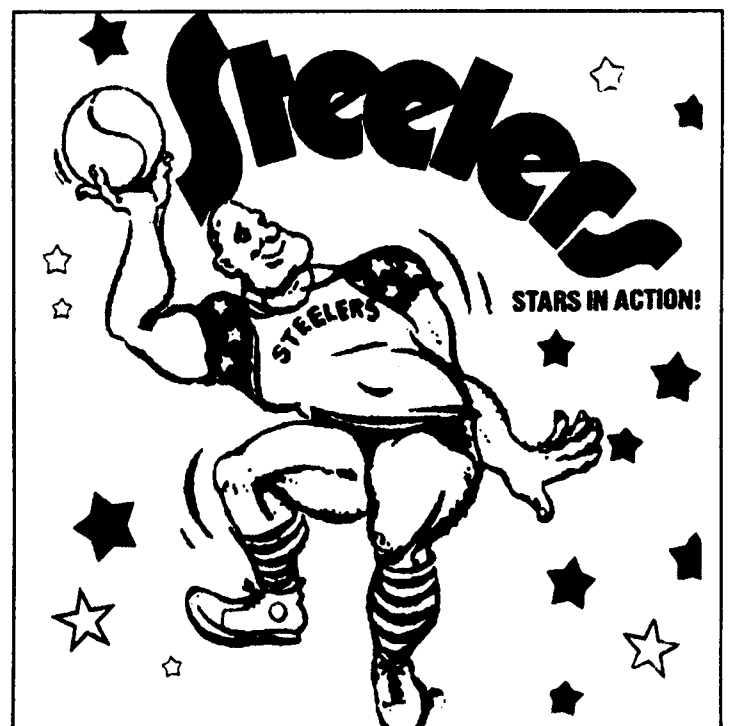
McNair, who began his career with the Houston Oilers, led the Baltimore Ravens to a 13-3 record in 2006, but lost most of his 2007 season due to injuries.

NBA

~The New York Daily News reported that New York Knicks head coach Isiah Thomas will not return as coach next season, after the Knicks missed out on the playoffs for a fourth year in a row.

New team president Donnie Walsh could announce the decision as early as Thursday. It is unknown if Thomas will remain with the Knicks in some lower capacity.

Steelers vs. Behrend



Pittsburgh Steelers Footballers Basketball Team vs. The Behrend Community All-Stars
Tickets are \$7 Sunday, April 20, 3 p.m.

