

SPORTS

Lady Lions basketball victorious against La Roche

By Christine Newby

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With three of Behrend's players scoring in double figures, the Lions defeated the La Roche Redhawks by a score of 65-50 on Thursday night at the Junker Center.

La Roche took a commanding lead during the beginning minutes of the first half as they went on an 8-0 run. Behrend's head coach Roz Fomari took a timeout when the score was 2-10 in favor

of La Roche in hopes to settle the team down and turn the game around.

Behrend freshman Christine Spear and freshman Kim Pol provided a much needed spark to the Lions after the timeout when they knocked down back to back three pointers, making the score 8-10 in favor of La Roche.

At 10:49 in the first half, sophomore Kelly Nowacinski tied the game up at ten apiece when she made both foul shots after getting fouled as she drove to the hoop.

Trying to catch the Redhawks off guard, the Blue and White switched up defenses into a zone press where they trapped their opponent right before the half court line. Creating pressure to La Roche's guards, the Behrend Lions caused 30 total turnovers throughout the game.

"The zone press was very effective," said Fomari. "It is a change up from man. We don't let teams know we are going to do it."

With 8:30 to go in the first half, the Lady Lions took the lead, 16-14, when sophomore Rachel Richardson stole the ball and added two points with a lay up. From that point on, Behrend remained ahead of La Roche throughout the rest of the game.

As both teams went into the locker room for halftime, Behrend had a seven point lead over La Roche, 35-28. Richardson and Pol led the team at the half with ten points each.

The Redhawks seemed to be creeping slowly up to Behrend as they scored five points to start the half to make the game 37-33.

The Behrend Lions quickly stopped any hope the Redhawks had by adding six points. Richardson's three pointer and

junior Christine Krankota's lay up followed by a foul shot created a more comfortable ten point lead.

At 3:51 in the second half, senior Natalie Engel faked a shot, drove to the basket, and scored on the play as she was fouled. Engel completed the three point play with a foul shot which put Behrend up 55-46.

The Lions went on to victory with a final score of 65-55, which improves their overall record to 7-8 and AMCC record above the .500 mark at 5-4.

"We played like a team," said Pol. "It was a team effort."

Richardson and Pol finished the game with a game-high 17 points and Engel was also in double figures with 13 points. Nowacinski and Krankota contributed to Behrend's success as they each grabbed ten rebounds.



Behrend Lions
THE BEHREND BEACON

Freshman Chelsea Pruckner



Keegan McGregor/THE BEHREND BEACON

Three Behrend Lions players surround a La Roche opponent.



Keegan McGregor/THE BEHREND BEACON

Sophomore Amy Oldsch dribbles down the court.

"Kim, Rachel, Nat, Kelly, and Christine all had an impact on the game," said Fomari. "If you look at the numbers, they were most significant. A lot of people made an impact as far as team wise."

On Saturday Jan. 24, the Behrend Lions face Frostburg State in another AMCC game in the Junker Center at 1 p.m.

In the first matchup against Frostburg State, Behrend lost by a score of 72-81.

The Blue and White hope to turn the outcome of the game

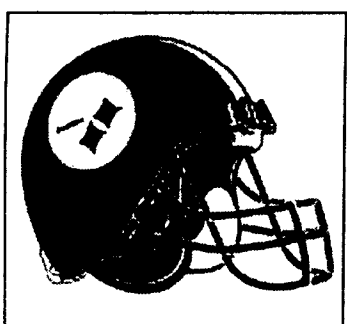
around and split the series 1-1.

"I will watch the game film tonight [Thursday], tweak what I see, and put it into practice tomorrow," said Fomari.

Teamwork will be a key factor and focus in Saturday's game.

"We got the win today [Thursday] and we need to focus on Saturday's game," said Pol.

"We should focus on teamwork, like we did today [Thursday], and boxing out."



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The stage is finally set for one of the most watched sporting events in the world. The Pittsburgh Steelers will battle the Arizona Cardinals for the NFL's ultimate prize, the Vince Lombardi trophy.

On Feb. 1, Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida will host Super Bowl XLIII. It was a long journey for both the Steelers and Cardinals, and now they are preparing for one last game, that will leave them etched in history forever.

The Arizona Cardinals (12-7) will be appearing in the franchise's first Super Bowl ever. The Cardinals may have been the most unlikely team from the NFC bracket to make it to the big show.

The Cardinals had a less than spectacular (9-7) record in the regular season. But due to a very, very weak division, the Cardinals were able to clinch the NFC West and secure their place in the playoffs.

The Cards were able to push past the Atlanta Falcons in the

wild card round, and absolutely thrashed the Carolina Panthers in the divisional round. The only team that stood between them and a trip to Tampa was the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFC Championship game.

Although the Cardinals were able to get past both the Falcons and the Panthers, the Eagles, who were a six seed and just barely made the playoffs, were still picked to get to the Super Bowl. The Cardinals had other thoughts about that.

Arizona dominated the first half of the game. Their offense ran up and down the field against the third ranked Eagles' defense. Wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald had two touchdowns and over one hundred yards receiving in the first half, giving the Cards a 24-6 lead at halftime.

Although it seemed like their wings were clipped, the Eagles weren't unable to fly yet. Donovan McNabb led his offense to an amazing second half comeback.

The Eagles scored 19 unan-

swered points, taking a 25-24 lead with just over ten minutes to play in the fourth quarter.

"I thought, in the second half, we just adjusted, came back and began to get into the rhythm that we need to be in, scoring points," McNabb said on his second half performance.

The Cards were able to hold off the Eagles rally, however. They took over on their own 28-yard line and began their game winning drive. Quarterback Kurt Warner methodically led his offense down the field, eating up clock in the process.

After converting a fourth-and-one, the Cards were able to punch the ball into the end zone with 2:53 to play in the game. After a successful two point conversion, Arizona led 32-25.

The Eagles tried to put together a game winning drive, but it was to no avail. The Cardinals were able to hold them off and advance to the Super Bowl.

Fitzgerald turned in an unbelievable performance with nine catches for 152 yards and 3 touchdowns.

"I just knew that I have to do my job and stay grounded," Fitzgerald said. "Make sure I don't get too emotional. ... Those kinds of things are going through my mind, to make sure I do the fundamental things."

The Pittsburgh Steelers (14-4) were the AFC North division champions going a perfect 6-0 within their division. The Steelers were able to get through

one of the toughest regular season schedules with a record of (12-4).

The Steelers' defense carries the team and may be one of the best the franchise has ever seen, led by NFL Defensive MVP, linebacker James Harrison and safety Troy Polamalu.

The Pittsburgh Steelers also had a tough road ahead of them to get to the Super Bowl. Although the Steelers drew the number two seed, and had a first round bye, it wouldn't be an easy task.

The Steelers first had to take on the red, hot San Diego Chargers. The Chargers were without star running back LaDarian Tomlinson, but back up Darren Sproles turned in a great performance against the Indianapolis Colts a week before.

It turned out that the Chargers were nearly no match for the Steelers as the Black and Gold advanced to the AFC Championship game.

The AFC Championship game would surely be one to remember, because the Steelers would take on their division rival Baltimore Ravens.

The Ravens and the Steelers met twice in the regular season and the Steelers won both contests. They were both very hard hitting and defensive battles. There was no doubt that the third and final game would be the same way.

The Steelers appeared to be the dominant team jumping out to a 13-0 lead in the first half. The famous Steelers defense was

relentless bringing intense pressure to rookie quarterback Joe Flacco.

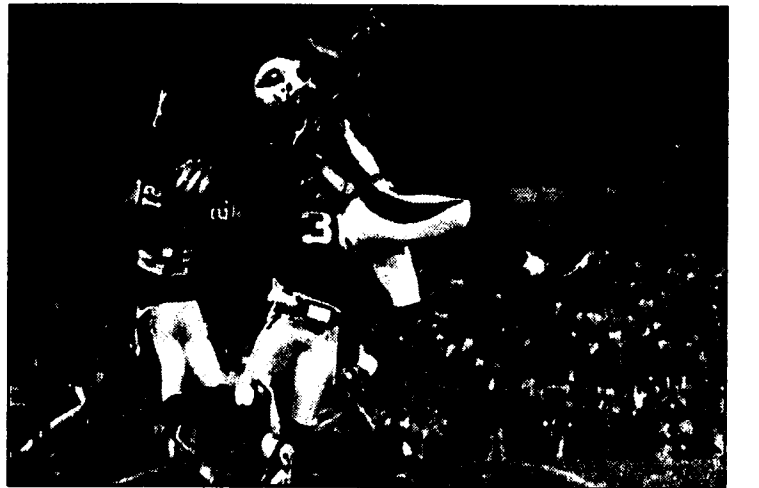
It seemed as if the Ravens were going to fail to put up any points in the first half, until a pass interference call on Pittsburgh cornerback Ike Taylor led to a touchdown for Baltimore. The score at halftime was 13-7 in favor of Pittsburgh.

The Ravens got the ball to start

game, but those hopes would quickly fade when Flacco was picked off by Pittsburgh safety Troy Polamalu, who took the interception all the way to the end zone, putting the game on ice.

The Steelers forced a fumble on Baltimore's final drive and were able to run out the clock and end the game, giving them a 23-14 victory.

"Without a doubt this is the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cardinals wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald catches a pass.

the second half and the Pittsburgh's defense continued their outstanding play. It didn't take long for the Steelers to get the ball back, and once it was in the offense's hands, they moved into field goal range for kicker Jeff Reed to make the lead, 16-7.

The Ravens would strike again, however, when Taylor got called for pass interference once again in the end zone. Baltimore running-back Willis McGahee would find pay dirt from one yard out making the score 16-14.

The Ravens would get the ball back towards the end of the fourth quarter with a chance to win the

best defense that I've ever played on," Polamalu said after the game. "But we'll see what happens in the next game. I think that's going to solidify how good we are."

So with the Arizona Cardinals looking for their first Super Bowl in franchise history, and the Pittsburgh Steelers looking for their sixth, it will be a Super Bowl to remember.

Fitzgerald and the Arizona offense have been dominating their opponents. Polamalu and the Pittsburgh defense have been dominating theirs. This may be the most exciting Super Bowl that fans have ever witnessed.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Steelers safety Troy Polamalu sacks Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco.