

SPORTS

Jon Bacon named to the 2008 Division III All-American team

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Sophomore Jon Bacon was named to the 2008 Division III All-American team at the two meter position, which was released by the Men's Association of Collegiate Water Polo Coaches (ACWPC).

"I was surprised when Coach Tristan told me that I had made the All-American Honorable Mention Team. I'll admit it caught me off guard because there are a lot of good players throughout Division III," said Bacon. "Getting the honor makes all the work you put into the sport worth the practices and tournaments we attend every weekend in the fall."

Bacon being named as an All-American was the fourth time in the history of Behrend that a player of head coach Joe Tristan men's water polo team received the

award.

According to the Behrend website, Bacon was named to the Division III Eastern Championships second team after a 12 goal performance in the tournament.

In the 2008 season, Bacon took 83 shots and scored 32 times while contributing nine assists. Bacon also had 26 drawn kickouts and one drawn penalty.

In his career at Behrend, Bacon has played in 46 games and scored 46 times on 146 shots from the two meter position. While playing for Behrend in the past two years, Bacon has a total of 24 steals and 16 assists.

The overall record for the men's water polo team was 5-14 this past season.

"The season went well," said Bacon. "We started a bit slow and

bumpy towards the beginning, but that's because we are such a young team. Once our chemistry clicked towards the middle of the season, we were able to finish the season strong and accomplish our goal of getting third at Easterns."

During the offseason, Bacon and the team will be focusing on staying in shape in order to come back ready and prepared to play.

"The most important thing the team has to work on during the offseason is staying in shape," said Bacon. "With our sport in the fall, there is a long break until we start up again. But by at least getting in the water during the break, the transition back into the season will be smoother."

In hopes of improving his skills, Bacon will continue to play water polo in the offseason in his hometown of Glendale,

California, which is 25 minutes from Los Angeles.

"Individually I'm really going to try and step up my training, specifically playing for my club team back home and getting some swimming training as well," said Bacon.

Bacon has three important team goals for next season along with personal goals in which he is determined to accomplish.

"Our team goals are to increase our wins the next season, as well as place third or better at Easterns," said Bacon. "We'd also like to beat Gannon and Mercyhurst. Personally, I would hope to continue improving my game as a captain and player and specifically improve my shot to goal ratio."



Sophomore Jon Bacon was named to the 2008 All-American team for Division III.

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Athlete Spotlight: Katie Van Epps

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Born and raised in Titusville, Pennsylvania, Behrend sophomore Katie Van Epps has been focusing on one sport, swimming, since the age of ten.

She continued the sport at Pleasantville High School where she earned four varsity letters. During her senior year, she won the J. Martin Award, which was awarded to the senior who had progressed the most throughout the four years.

Van Epps, who went to districts for her second consecutive year, had a strong performance at the 2009 AMCC swimming and diving championships on Feb. 12-14 at Grove City.

She won the 200 yard butterfly with a time of 2:24.02 and placed second in the 200 and 400 IM with times of 2:24.31 and 5:03.81 respectively.

The Behrend Lions women's swimming and diving team won its third AMCC championship in three consecutive years.

"We did awesome this year," said Van Epps. "We did really good and stayed together. We accomplished all the goals we wanted to do."

The events that Van Epps races in are the 200 and 400 IM and 200 yard butterfly along with the 200 and 400 medley relay and the 200 and 400 freestyle relay.

The head coach for the men's

and women's swimming and diving team, Jen Wallace, is in her sixth year at the position.

"Coach has helped me to understand that if I don't do well in a race, there is always the next one," said Van Epps. "She has also helped me with different techniques and different ways to swim the races I do because they are longer races."

Like many athletes, Van Epps has a specific ritual that she must do before she competes.

"Before they say 'Take your mark,' I always have to push my goggles to make sure they are suctioned to my face," said Van Epps. "I need to hear that pop noise for both of my eyes."

Van Epps, a psychology major, has set one main goal for herself along with team goals for next season.

"Personally, I would like to make it to ECAC's in individual events," said Van Epps. "The team goals are the same as this year: to stick together, get along, and make goals."

The men's and women's swim team travel to the ECAC championships held in Boston, Massachusetts on Feb. 28 through March 1. The NCAA tournament follows the ECAC championships which is on March 12-14 for the women and March 19-20 for the men.

NFL offseason preview

SHAWN ANNARELLI TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE BROWNS, BILLS, AND STEELERS

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Bills comeback Jabari Greer intercepts a pass.

In an NFL offseason that has already seen a record 11 new head coaches hired, Brett Favre retire again, and Steelers kicker Jeff Reed attack a towel dispenser, I promise you more twists, turns, and truths than you can handle.

Storylines galore have already surfaced to keep us on our toes as the offseason progresses.

Will Brett Favre unretire, again? Will Roger Goodell reinstate Mike Vick into the NFL once he is a free man? Will Giants' wide receiver Plaxico Burress be sentenced to wear an orange jumpsuit for three and a half to 15 years? No, it's not what you're thinking. He's most likely going to jail, not to the Browns or Bengals. But, seriously, you tell me, which is more punishment? And, finally, the most important question of all, is it really as sweet as you think it is to be a fan of the 6-time Super Bowl Champion Pittsburgh Steelers? No, it's sweeter.

All joking aside, it is only right, due to our region, that we discuss the three NFL franchises nearest to us: the Browns, Bills, and Steelers.

The Browns enter the offseason with new head coach Eric Mangini and a bounty of issues to address in the offseason. Only a meager \$8 million under the NFL salary cap, the Browns are not likely to be big players in this year's free agent market unless they cut or trade current players on their roster. The players they may cut are ones who have under-produced for what they are being paid. They include WR Joe Jerevicious, running back Jamal Lewis, and defensive end Robaire Smith.

Cleveland also has to analyze their actions in regards to their 11 unrestricted free agents. Of the three starters in that group, the Browns are most likely to resign safety Sean Jones, even it means franchise tagging him. The other two starters, outside linebacker Willie McGinest and inside linebacker Andra Davis, may not be resigned as they are not prototypical 3-4 defensive players. McGinest is slowing with age and cannot pass rush off the edge effectively, while Davis would be better fit to play as a weak OLB in a 4-3 defense.

Coach Mangini's biggest decision will revolve around quarterback Derek Anderson, who played poorly last season and was replaced by the promising Brady Quinn. Anderson may be traded for draft picks or kept to compete with Quinn to start at QB. The next concern for the Browns brass will be to revamp the weakest 3-4 LB core in the NFL. Mangini has remained silent about what the Browns' plans are.

According to Yahoo.com Mangini stated, "I don't really have it defined in terms of which way it has to go. I think I'm open to all different possibilities, and not just at that

position. [quarterback]."

In Buffalo, the Bills are already making noise. Two starters, free safety Ko Simpson and RB Marshawn Lynch, have had serious run-ins with the law that will likely result in multiple game suspensions handed down from Commissioner Goodell.

The Bills have 13 free agents to address, including four starters. Buffalo's highest priority will be to resign cornerback Jabari Greer to a multi-year deal, and then to resign their other young core players OLB Keith Ellison, center Duke Preston, and RB Fred Jackson. The Bills may also look to the future by extending the contracts of right guard Brad Butler and CB Terrence McGee, as each has only a year remaining on their current deals.

In Pittsburgh, the Steelers appear to be comfortable with only two truly significant players, CB Bryant McFadden and offensive tackle Max Starks, up for free agency. Three other Steelers starters, OT Willie Colon, offensive guard Chris Kemoatu, and OT Marvel Smith, are also up for free agency. Though, of those three, none of them fit well into the Steelers now two-year-old zone-blocking offense. Colon and Kemoatu will likely be resigned to compete for starting roles in 2009.

The Steelers major concerns are bringing in young OL and extending the contracts of several prominent players due to hit free agency in 2010. NFL Defensive MVP James Harrison, WR Hines Ward, RB Willie Parker, nose tackle Casey Hampton, tight end Heath Miller, and free safety Ryan Clark are among those players. The Steelers immediately began negotiations with James Harrison, making him their first priority.

According to ESPN.com Harrison's agent confirmed the negotiations saying, "Certainly the Steelers didn't win six Super Bowls by not knowing what they're doing. I'm sure they understand exactly where they're going with James' situation."

In other news, around the NFL, several teams have used their right to franchise tag a player, including kicker Shayne Graham of the Bengals and punter Michael Koenen of the Falcons. It is the first time a punter and a kicker have been tagged during the same offseason. Other tagged players are the Ravens' B Terrell Suggs, the Patriots' QB Matt Cassell, the Buccaneers Antonio Bryant, the Chargers RB Dan Sproles, the Cardinals OLB Karlos Dansby, and the Giants RB Brandon Jacobs.

Feb. 27 marks the start of the NFL's free agency period, as well as the day that the landscape of the NFL begins its annual shift. There will be winners and losers before the 2009 NFL season even kicks off.



ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR
ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Katie Van Epps
Women's Swimming
Sophomore