

SPORTS

Lady Lions fall to Medaille in AMCC semifinals

SENIORS HONORED IN LAST REGULAR SEASON GAME

By Christine Newby
sports editor
cen5056@psu.edu

The Lady Lions basketball team ended their 2008-2009 season on Tuesday night when they lost to the Medaille Mavericks 69-60 in the AMCC semifinal game.

"Our team struggled in both halves offensively," said head coach Roz Fomari. "We didn't seem to get comfortable in any offensive set against their zone."

The AMCC started 11 years ago and Behrend has been in the semifinal AMCC game for 11 straight years. Medaille has captured three consecutive AMCC regular season and conference tournament titles.

Behrend was behind for the majority of the first half. With 1:09 remaining in the first half, sophomore guard Rachel Richardson hit a three-pointer, her second of the game, which put the Lady Lions down by four 33-29.

Richardson, named the AMCC Player of the Week, went 75 percent from the field by converting on three-of-four shots and led Behrend with ten points going into the second half.

Rebounding in the first half of play proved to be almost even. Medaille grabbed 19 while Behrend had 18.

Behrend was down by six points after the first half 29-35.

The Behrend Lions did not start the second half well as the Mavericks went on a 10-0 run

which made the game 31-43 with 17:15 to go in the game.

With ten minutes remaining, the Blue and White were down by 17 points. The Lions did not give up as they tried to diminish the Mavericks lead.

"Our shots were not falling but my players never gave up," said Fomari. "They never do."

At the 1:30 mark, sophomore guard Kelly Nowacinski stole the ball and scored a layup which made the game 55-62 in favor of Medaille.

Despite their effort, the Lady Lions came up short as Medaille made five-of-six foul shots.

Senior guard Natalie Engel and Richardson led Behrend with 14 points each. Sophomore guard Amy Oldach led in assists with six, and Nowacinski tallied the most steals for Behrend with five.

"We just didn't play well enough to win," said Fomari. "We would make a good play but follow it up with something that wasn't so good. It was disappointing because it wasn't out of a lack of hustle."

Three days before the loss against Medaille, the Lady Lions played Pitt-Bradford.

The Behrend Lions were victorious over Pitt-Bradford 84-74 on Saturday, Feb. 21. The win earned them a number four seed in the AMCC Tournament.

The two seniors, Natalie Engel and Ellen Kolos, were honored before the game as they played their last regular season home game at the Junker Center.

"They are both great leaders," said head coach Roz Fomari. "Academically they are of the highest caliber student-athletes here. They have impacted our program in ways that others haven't and they both know that. I am proud of both of them."

After playing for the women's basketball team at Behrend for four years, Engel and Kolos hope they left a mark on the program.

"As a fun person to be around and play with and coach," said Engel when asked what mark she wanted to leave. "As one part of a really fun and talented team and program."

Nowacinski started the scoring for the Lady Lions as she stole the basketball and made a layup.

In an out of bounds play, Richardson gave a bounce pass to Nowacinski who converted on a jump shot which tied the game at six.

Pitt-Bradford went on a 17-2 run to create a 15 point advantage after 12 minutes of play. The score was 10-25 in favor of Pitt-Bradford.

The Lions then cut Pitt-Bradford's lead down by going on a 9-0 run.

With 4:35 left in the first half, Kolos drained a three-pointer. Freshman guard Chelsea Pruckner continued the run by hitting a jump shot in the middle of the key and sophomore guard Amy Oldach made a layup. At the 2:12 mark, Nowacinski scored a layup

bringing the Lions within six points 23-29.

With less than 30 seconds to go in the first half, Nowacinski drove to the hoop and made a layup while being fouled on the play. Nowacinski took advantage of the three point play opportunity by making the free throw.

The Behrend Lions were down five points 30-35 going into the locker room. Nowacinski scored nine points in the first half.

"I talked to our team at half time about playing not to lose," said Fomari. "We were not playing with the aggressiveness we talked about needed to win the game. The team responded well and scored 54 points in the last 20 minutes to win."

Behrend made the score 36-37 in the beginning minutes of the second half by adding six points scored off of layups from Engel, Oldach, and Nowacinski.

At the 17:23 mark, Engel hit a shot from behind the arc and Richardson followed with a layup which put the Lady Lions behind 41-43.

Behrend went on a 14-3 run and took the lead at 54-53 by a layup scored by Engel with under 11 minutes to play.

The Panthers regained the lead, but Engel answered with a three-pointer at the 4:55 mark to put

the Lions up 64-63.

With 2:44 remaining in the game, Engel hit another crucial shot from three point territory making the score 74-68. Pitt-Bradford could not catch up the Lady Lions who went on to win 84-74.

"I liked the effort in the second half," said Fomari. "I like the fight and the desire our team showed. This team doesn't give in or give up. They played a very intentional and smart second half. We played some of our best basketball our team has played in the twenty minutes of that game."

Engel also believed that the team's second half performance was better than the first.

"We started out kind of slow the first half and weren't being as aggressive as we would have liked," said Engel. "But the second half we really put some runs together and played more like we were capable of and ended up with a good win."

Four players for the Lady Lions scored in double digits. Engel had a game high of 21 points, Nowacinski scored 19, Richardson contributed 17, while Oldach added 12.

"I was just glad that I could perform for the team and help us to win an important game," said Engel. "We had a lot of fun."



Top: Senior guard Nadie Engel dribbles towards the basket.
Bottom: Sophomore Rachel Richardson passes the ball off to teammate Kelly Nowacinski.

ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR
ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



Doug Stevenson
Men's Track & Field
Junior

Stevenson had a solid week leading the Behrend Lions to a first place finish at the Kenyon Classic on Saturday. The Blue and White finished the meet with 153 points. Stevenson led the Behrend Lions in the 4x200 meter relay team that set the school record with a time of 1:35.82. Stevenson would go on to win both the 200 meter dash and the 55 meter dash in the time of 23.91 and 6.65, respectively.

The Blue and White will be back in action on Feb. 28 at the Marietta Open. The Behrend Lions will then take part in the ECAC championships on March 6-7 and finish the indoor season at the NCAA championships on March 13-14.



Top: Sophomore Kelly Nowacinski dribbles past the Medaille defender.
Bottom: Freshman Kim Pol looks to pass to an open teammate.