

SWIMMING AND DIVING

Graves sets records as Behrend beats Altoona at Junker

AMANDA STETZ
senior reporter

Domination is the only way to describe Behrend's current run.

The Lions Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving teams continued their success streak into the new semester hosting Penn State Altoona.

Both the Men's and Women's team defeated Altoona with scores of 100-81 and 107-82, respectively.

Divers junior Krystal Kovach and senior Stephen Graves astounded the crowd in both the

1m and 3m diving events. Each diver qualified for NCAA competition. Kovach earned a score of 260.85 in the 1m event and a score of 290.4 in the 3m event.

Graves raised excitement in the Junker Center when he broke the pool records for the 1m event, in which he had a score of 292.95

as well as the 3m event, earning a score of 294.90. Kovach has made NCAA qual-

ifying scores before and is excited to return to the same path as last year.

This is the first time in Graves' college diving career that he has earned a NCAA qualifying score. It made this meet an emotional one for Graves.

"Getting a NCAA qualifying score has been one of my goals since freshman year," Graves said. "I got a seven on one of my hardest dives. I will never forget look-

ing at the score board and seeing my final score."

Not to be outdone, the swimmers pulled together in the events and were able to outdo Altoona, one of the few younger teams on average that are competing at this level than the Behrend team. Altoona does not have any competitor older than twenty.

Both the men and women were able to dominate in the freestyle events. Senior Danielle Wilson finished first in the 200m freestyle for the women, while freshmen Brian Mong finished first in the 200m free for the men.

Freshmen John Kelley and junior captain Kaite Van Epps finished first for the men and women in the 1000m freestyle.

"The victory was big because Altoona is in our conference," Van Epps said. "It is just another win for us. I look forward to meeting them in the championships."

Other outstanding performances include freshmen Frank Sullivan's first place finish in the 100m free, sophomore Julie Cook's first place in the 50m freestyle and freshmen Andrew Opalewski's first place in the 50m freestyle.

"I don't pay attention to the

score," Sullivan said. "It is a payoff for our hard work."

Senior swimmer Alyssa Baran finished the best out of her fellow swimmers in the 100m freestyle.

"It was a very exciting match; our team is pretty developed and it was not really an unexpected win," said Baran. "I swam pretty well and I am anxious to swim in the championships."

The Behrend Swimming and Diving team will be on the road for the next three meets.

The team's next meet is against Chatham University on Friday, Jan. 22.

"I look forward to facing Altoona again in the championships."

Kaiti Vann Epps
Junior/Captain

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Lady Lions trounce Franciscan

ALEC ITALIANO
sports editor

The Penn State Behrend Lady Lions bullied the Franciscan Barons en route to a 78-43 victory.

The win evens Behrend's record to 7-7 overall and 5-5 in the conference.

After losing in a tight five-point loss to La Roche College in the Lions' previous game, the ladies put in 40 hard working minutes to take down the Franciscan Barons in a televised game in the Junker Center.

"It is very important to come out and see how your character is after a tough loss," said Behrend's head coach Roz Fornari. "This was a really good test for us."

Freshmen Aly Eagle came off the bench strong for Behrend and put up five quick points and helped the team to an early 15-7 run. Eagle, who recently came off of an ankle injury that has prevented her from playing for most of the season, ended the game leading the Blue and White with sixteen points that included four baskets from beyond the arc in 23 minutes of play.

An aggressive full court press that the Lions kept up all game long coupled this early run.

Behrend's greatest lead of the first half was a 22 point lead, 32-11.

"We always come out and put up a full court press all game long. It is just how we play," Fornari said. "Players love the full court press and when we don't press it is always a lull like the end of the first half. We need to play aggressive."

After succumbing to a late 11-2 run by Franciscan late in the first half, the Lions were able to combine their full-court, aggressive style defense and a physical offense by working the ball in the paint to build the lead back up to 24 with seven minutes to go in the second half.

Behrend guard Amy Oldach led the Lions' defensive charge for an accumulated five steals and six rebounds. Oldach scored 14 points and led the team with five assists.

The Lady Lions struggled early from the charity stripe shooting only 36 percent in the first half. Behrend came back sturdy in the second half and made nine of 13 free throws, as Franciscan slipped into bonus early in the latter 20 minutes.

Behrend's bench players played a significant role and put up 30 of the total 78 points for the team and amassed 64 minutes of playing time. Other top scorers for this game include junior Kelly Nowacinski, who scored 15 and senior Christine Krankota tacked on ten more points.



Jon Klein / The Behrend Beacon

Junior guard Kelley Nowacinski works it inside the paint against Franciscan University's 6'1" freshman forward Sarah Clemente.

When asked about the rest of the season, Coach Fornari said, "With Aly Eagle coming back to play after her ankle injury and the other players really coming along well, I am getting very excited for the rest of the sea-

son."

The Lady Lions go on a road trip for the team's next couple of games.

The first stop the Lions will take is Mt. Aloysius for a conference showdown Saturday.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Steve Graves

diving head first

RACHELLE THOMPSON
news editor

During his junior year in high school, Steve Graves began diving, and he was terrible at it. At his senior year in college, he is breaking records.

Graves is a senior diver for the Behrend Lions Swimming and Diving Team. This week he was awarded the Enterprise Rent-A-Car Athlete of the Week Award.

Not only has he earned this title, he broke two school records in the 1m and 3m dives within the same week, but he also posted NCAA qualifying scores, all in his senior year.

When Graves was nine years old he beginning his swimming career. Several years later in high school he took on the sport of diving.

"That year we didn't have any guy divers, so I decided to try it out. At first I was absolutely terrible," Graves said. "I could barely fall in the pool backwards let alone even dream of doing any sort of back flip."

He continued both sports for several months until realizing he could not continue with the demanding schedule. With a hard decision to make Graves went with his heart and continued the sport he developed a passion for.

"I had to make an extremely hard decision. I took a risk and chose diving. It was something I loved doing and I have yet to regret it."

When asked what he considers to be his strengths and weaknesses in the pool are, he said, "I have the physical ability, but it wasn't until very recently that I have been able to truly overcome my fear of diving off of the 3 meter."

Before most athletes get ready for events, he or she typically has their own pregame "ritual." Graves makes the competition all about him. Playing



Jon Klein / The Behrend Beacon
Steve Graves holds the men's 1m and 3m diving records.

the song "Lose Yourself" by Eminem, he tunes out everything, thinks about nothing, and basically clears his mind. "I let my body take over."

At the beginning of this year, Graves came across another hard obstacle. He had to decide between school, finding a job or sticking with the sport he loves most.

Feeling that diving had nothing left to offer as a student-athlete, Graves felt that spending his time focusing on school and finding a job would be best.

"I talked to one of my professors, and she made the point that diving won't get me a job. But this is my last chance to ever compete," Graves said. "I took her advice and decided not to quit. Within the first few meets I found myself performing better than I ever have."

The Lions' swimming and diving teams will be on the road for their next three contests.

They will travel first to Chatham University in Pittsburgh on Friday. And the following night the team will be against the Washington and Jefferson Presidents.

The team ends the road trip on Jan. 29 at Grove City against the Wolverines. The swimming and diving team finally comes back home against Mt. Union in the Junker Center.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Behrend men stunned at home

ELESE MERKOVSKI
staff writer

Behrend's six-game undefeated home streak was shattered in a 67-64 nail-biter against the Franciscan Barons.

The Lions (10-4, 7-3) started off hot, quickly gaining an 8-0 lead in the first two minutes. A fast-paced passing game helped Behrend put a solid lead on the Barons (3-11, 2-8). With Adam Potter and Nick Colella both shooting well, the team took a comfortable 29-19 lead at half time.

It was not until the second half that the Barons put real pressure on the Lions. Franciscan scored on seven out of the team's first eight possessions to cut Behrend's lead to one point.

Behrend and the Barons teetered back and forth with hot streaks through the second half. At one point Behrend held an 11-point lead over Franciscan, but the Barons scrapped together ten three pointers to be at a one-point deficit with 44 seconds to go.

After junior guard Justin Kovac hit one of his two free throws, 27 seconds remained on the clock when Franciscan's Josh Ducoulombier sank one outside the paint to give the Barons a 65-64 lead. Kovac

appeared to regain a one-point Behrend lead on a lay-up, but the basket was waived off for goal tending. The Lions made a desperate three-point shot in the closing seconds, but missed to record the team's first home loss of the season.

Individual performances of Behrend players Adam Kaiser, Potter and Colella showed the strength this team possesses. Potter had an impressive 24 points and 12 rebounds. Kaiser scored ten points. Colella brought a real spark to the game and put up 15 points while playing aggressively on both sides of the floor.

"I really just want to continue to give a spark off the bench and help my team win games," Colella said.


Though the loss was hard for Behrend, the team is looking ahead to upcoming games and is continuing to use their practices to improve. This relatively young team holds a close bond and continues to be competitive in the conference.

"We have to put the loss behind us, because we know that each game is very important," Colella said. "Although young, we have very close in friendships and believe in each other."

Behrend plays its next games on the road against Mt. Aloysius on Jan. 23.

Men's Basketball Game Leaders

Points	Adam Potter (PSB) - 24 Matt Leidel (Franciscan) - 16
Rebounds	Chris Saltzman (PSB) - 10 Adam Potter (PSB) - 8
Assists	Mike Feuz (Franciscan) - 5 Josh Ducoulombier (Franciscan) - 4
3 Pointers	Matt Leidel (Franciscan) - 4 Mike Fuez (Franciscan) - 3
Minutes	Mike Fuez (Franciscan) - 36 Sam Titus (Franciscan) - 34
Steals	Matt Leidel (Franciscan) - 2 Justin Kovac (PSB) - 1
Turnovers	Adam Potter (PSB) - 4 Connor Flanagan (Franciscan) - 3



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