

SWIMMING AND DIVING



Jon Klein/The Behrend Beacon
Junior Ben Strunk from Cogan Station, Pa. (Williamsport) competed in the men's 400-yard event during the last meet in the Junker Center.

Seniors shine in last home meet

AMANDA STETZ
senior reporter

In the last home meet of the season, the Lions swim team finished with a split win against Mount Union College.

The swimming and diving team competed against the Mount Union Purple Raiders Saturday. The Behrend men came out on top (122-108) while the Behrend women fell to Mount Union (84-136).

After coming off the road with a few losses on both sides, though the men did win the meet at Pitt-Bradford, the Lions returned home for their last home meet of the season. Though the women lost, few would call it a disappointing meet.

"I think they did very well," said senior Danielle Wilson. "Mount Union is a tough team,

and our lack of depth on the women's side makes it hard."

Though the women fell to Mount Union, it did not go without impressive swims. Wilson made an impression on Senior Day with a first place finish in the 500 freestyle (5:45.25). Also coming together on the women's side, junior Katie Van Epps, Danielle Wilson, freshman Maryellen Spooner and sophomore Lawrence secured the 400 freestyle relays with a first place finish (4:00.93).

Saying the crowd at the Junker Center pool went crazy during the last event of the meet is an understatement.

The men's 800 freestyle relay was one of the most exciting events in this meet for both the fans and the swimmers. The Lions relay team consisting of Hunter Backtose, Brian

Mong, Dane Dombrosky, and Josh Weaver, were fought throughout the entire race with Mount Union for first, with only a second between.

The leads changed throughout the race, but in the end, the Behrend men came out on top with a record-breaking time of 7:16.52, beating Mount Union by about a second.

"It was the greatest race I had here at college," Weaver said.

Divers Krystal Kovach and Stephen Graves also had success at the meet. Kovach set a NCAA qualifying score in the 3-m diving with a score of 263.85 while also placing first in the 1-m diving event with a score of 248.40.

Repeating success from the last home meet, Stephen Graves also set a NCAA qualifying score of 287.15 in the 3m diving event, which he has been

working toward his entire college diving career.

As it was the last home meet of the season, seven seniors were recognized: Alyssa Baran, Jenny LaFuria, Danielle Wilson, Hamillee Cousin, Stephen Graves, Josh Reish, and Robert Westhelle.

While this meet was without a doubt memorable to those who were there, the seniors will miss the swimmers they will leave behind, the meets, and the practices.

On Saturday, the Lions will travel to Grove City for the last meet before the AMCC Championships. Now, with a great season under their belts, the focus lies in the post-season tournaments.

"The most important thing right now is to come together and shoot for our best personal times," said Van Epps.

BEHREND ATHLETICS

Junker spotlight

A myriad of events from basketball games to award ceremonies took place Saturday

ALEC ITALIANO
sports editor

The Junker Center was bustling with activity last Saturday as both the men's and women's basketball teams squared off against Frostburg State. Also, the golf team was honored for winning the AMCC tournament, the soccer team was honored for winning the ECAC tournament, a swim meet against Mt. Union and it was the 2nd annual Military Appreciation Day.

Cotton candy and snow cones were plentiful during the daylong celebration, as the Behrend athletes battled hard in key sectional games.

The women started the day battling the Frostburg St. Bobcats in a pivotal AMCC match-up. Behrend came out hot, going on a 9-4 run, but the Bobcats battled it back and eventually took the lead at the half 33-31.

Junior guard Amy Oldach stole the show for the Lions in the first half, accumulating 14 points and eight rebounds. She was well on her way to a double-double for the night.

The Bobcats pulled away in the second half and made free throw after free throw coming down the stretch to take the eventual 75-61 win. Oldach finished the game with 18 points and 11 rebounds to earn the double-double for the night.

Not soon after the women left the court, the men took over and came out overwhelming the visiting 11-6 Bobcats. Soon the scoreboard read 22-5 in favor of the Lions and built up the largest lead of the night at the 7:18 mark with a 29-9 lead.

Frostburg St. responded heavily, going on a 12-2 run to close the half. Behrend players were shooting well, amassing 12

points from beyond the arc compared to Frostburg's zero points.

The Bobcats brought it to within seven at one point, but the Lions held them off to take the overall win 77-58.

Chris Saltzman was the story during this game with a double-double in an 18 point, 14 rebound effort and coasted the Lions to a key AMCC win over Frostburg.

During halftime of the men's game, after the dance team and the cheerleaders did their respective performances, the golf and soccer team were honored for their accomplishments.

The golf team, captained by senior Joe Nelson, will travel to Hershey, Pa. to participate in the local NCAA tournament in May. This is the second time the golf team won the AMCC tournament and is the first time they will play in the NCAA tournament.

"We are going there with no high expectations," said golf coach James Bowen in light of his team's success.

"I am not going there expecting to win the national title. My goal is for us to make the cut to compete on Thursday and Friday though. It is our first trip to the national tournament, and we are glad to have this opportunity."

The soccer team, led by head coach Dan Perritano, and his team finished the soccer season with a 18-5-2 overall record and won the ECAC championships. The team came in second in the AMCC tournament that was held in late November.

Goalkeeper Dustin Walker was named most valuable player for the season and walks away from Behrend with the all-time goals against average and total shutouts records both in his pocket.

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