

March Madness living up to its name

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senior reporter

As March rolls around, the snow starts to melt and we realize the sun still exists. But if you're a sports fan like myself, March means one thing: March Madness.

March Madness is considered one of the most exciting tournaments in sports, and it gives all of us who don't have the time or patience to watch and follow college basketball to get our fix in a span of three weeks.

The thrill of predicting a champion through the bracket system is much of the fun for a fan. Whether it was for large sum of cash or just for fun, it's a chance for any fan to be a sports analyst for a little bit. The chance for Cinderella stories and the underdogs pulling ahead of the top seeded teams in this one loss tournament allows of some of the biggest upsets in sports.

This year's tournament took upset to a new level. I for one filled out my bracket with a few upsets, but like most of the ESPN anchors and sports journalists, everywhere I had all four top seeds making it to the Final Four.

Within the first round, upsets were seen up and down the brackets. As soon as it was down to 32 teams, Kansas was kicked out of the tournament by the major underdog Northern Iowa. Along with that, Cornell beat Wisconsin. St. Mary's beat Villanova, and Washington beat New Mexico. The Big East, one of the best conferences in all of college basketball, has only two teams left in the Sweet Sixteen.

Let's just say my bracket went down the drain at that point. With having Kansas win it all, I pretty much gave up, but it gave me a chance to focus more and enjoy these upsets. I can now watch Cornell, who plays in the underrated Ivy League Conference, take on no. one ranked Kentucky. As the Elite Eight will be decided within the next two days, all eyes will be watching these under dogs to see if they can do the "impossible" and become National Champs.

This tournament brings out excitement in a dull sport's time, and allows for the competitiveness of both the athletes and fans. While this year most of us are completely out when it comes to our brackets, we get to watch this Madness unfold until the final on Apr. 5.

MEN'S TENNIS

Men's tennis dominates courts in a sweep

The men's team is off to a 9-5 win so far for the season as they came back well-practiced from Florida, and looks to do damage in the AMCC conference in the second half of the season

SEAN NEELY
staff writer

The distractions of bad weather were not enough to keep Behrend from successfully handling Pitt-Greensburg on Tuesday. Behrend blanked Pitt-Greensburg by a final score of 9-0.

Elliot Blackstone would continue his successful first half of the year by beating his singles opponent by a 6-0 score. Freshman Chris Galvin also won his singles match, by score of 6-0.

On the verge of the match, junior John Michalko said "Pitt-Greensburg has not been that strong in the past, but we still need to be ready to take care of business."

Behrend would, in fact, take

"I feel we certainly have the talented players and team depth necessary to get the job done."

Shane Mosier
senior captain

care of their business.

"I expect our depth will be a contributing factor to our success as a team," said head coach Jeff Barger, according to PSBlions.com. "With several matches scheduled in the near future, I will play more guys to give everyone some much

needed rest."

Keep in mind, Behrend has been without captain Shane Mosier, who is out with a foot injury. But, many players, including junior Jason Grosch, believe that their depth as a team has helped them have success even with the loss of a key player.

"It will be good when we get Shane, a senior and captain of this team back into it," Michalko said. "He is a vital part of our singles and doubles line-up."

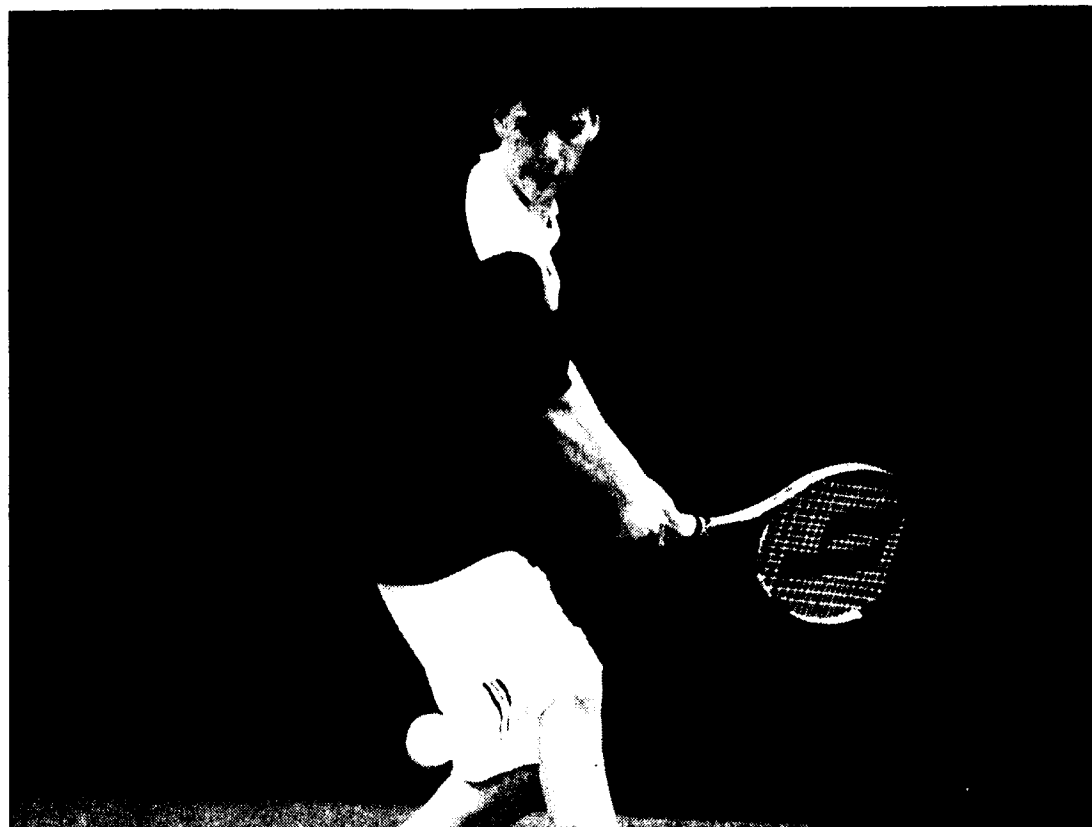
Mosier, even though he has been out of action, has still supported his team heavily. Before the match, Mosier said, "it is very noticeable that our level of play in doubles have improved, and since doubles is such a large part of a match, we feel confident as a team to have a chance to win any match."

The doubles squad has been strong so far as Kelly Manning and John Michalko easily won their doubles match by a final score of 8-1.

Lastly, Brad Nagel teamed with Jacob Fling, and Jason Grosch paired with Juan Santiago. Both pairings would win their matches by a final score of 8-0.

It was key for Behrend to bounce back, as it has recently came off of its first conference loss, which came to Penn State Altoona on March 20 in a tight 5-4 match in Erie.

Shane Mosier, again reflected on his team's season by saying, "with our goal of an AMCC Conference Championship in mind, I feel we certainly have



Daniel Smith/The Behrend Beacon

Sophomore Travis Parke lines up a backhand in his match against Pitt-Greensburg.

the talented players and team depth necessary to get the job done."

Behrend continues to find success at the right time. Furthermore, confidence continues to circle in the men's locker room, as it's evident by their 4-1 record in conference and overall 8-5 records.

Other key wins include a recent win over Franciscan on home courts in a cruising 8-1 win.

Also, they fought off D'Youville on the Westwood Racquet

Club courts Mar. 21 in another sweeping 9-0 shut-out performance.

The men will turn their attention next to Alfred College on March 26, and another conference match against Frostburg State on March 27.

"I expect the team to bounce back strong and continue winning conference matches in the future," Moiser said. "With our goal of an AMCC championship in mind, I feel we certainly have the talented players and team depth necessary to

get the job done."

As for the championships at the end of the spring season, Coach Barger looks to take down the remainder of the competition in the AMCC conference.

"If we play solid doubles, we should be in good shape come championship time," Barger said. "We have solid singles right now, and playing nine matches already, as opposed to other teams only having played one or two, gives us a head start."



Daniel Smith/The Behrend Beacon

Senior Chris Galvin squares off in his singles match. Galvin is on the No. 1 doubles team, and plays No. 2 singles for Behrend.

SOFTBALL

Q & A: Pondo hopes to win third straight AMCC title



PSBlions.com

Head coach Stacy Pondo looks forward to her team's season.

KAELA BISHOP
staff writer

Q: What has the team focused on during the offseason?

A: "We've got a young but talented team, so they're trying to learn the Penn State Behrend system. We try to get everyone to communicate and talk with one another. From there, we just get into learning the plays, the coaches learning about the players, especially the new ones because we do have a lot of new faces on the team this year, and work on the fundamentals. That is the key to the success of our team."

Q: What are some of the biggest differences you have seen in this year's team compared to previous seasons?

A: "There are a lot of similarities. The team has good team chemistry, they get along well with one another, they have the competitive drive, and the team really wants to win. That's more or less the similarities. We lack one thing and that is, we are young. It's not a bad thing, it's a good thing."

Q: How has the lack of senior leadership affected this year's team? Who has proved to be a leader thus far?

A: "We have no seniors on the team. However, we've got Maddie Wieser, Beth Papalia, and Ashley Gruber. Ashley is actually a junior school-wise but softball-wise she's a sophomore. The three of them have really stepped up. I don't call them captains, we call them leaders. They have really become the leaders of the team. They're the ones who keep the team together. They're the ones who get them together if something goes wrong. They keep the atmosphere fun. They keep a good open communication between the team and the coaches and themselves. They're the backbone of our team."

Q: Were there any surprises during the games played in Florida?

A: "I was actually very pleased about our pitching. They did a tremendous job down there. Really, we've got Emma Hahn as our returning pitcher and we've got three freshmen pitchers who've never played collegiate ball and they stepped it up. All four of them did an excellent job. We were able to move people around and see who can play different positions. In that aspect, it was good to see that people were flexible with moving to other positions. The freshmen stepped it up and same with the upperclassmen. Maddie came through big in the last game. She hit a homerun, and she hit just about all the runs in that game, so she has provided some good qualities."

Q: Which freshmen have the potential to start?

A: "Mary DeMino will start at shortstop for us. Beth Chidester has been on the injured reserved, she didn't even make the trip down to Florida, she could possibly start as a freshman in the outfield. Brooke Tarasovich is a pitcher, she'll start for us. Laura Spiridon will be starting a lot for us in the outfield. Morgan Griffin, who is actually a sophomore, has transferred in and she'll play. Everyone is going to play; it just depends on how much they'll play. There is going to be freshmen who will step up and play. There is definitely a couple who will start."

Q: Your team has been selected to win the AMCC title for the third straight year. What aspects have and will give this young team the edge over their opponents?

A: "The edge is the competitiveness. We've won the AMCC championship in the past two years, three out of the last four years. The competitiveness is there. I'm very confident we'll do well and I'm hoping we have the run for the AMCC championship once again. The team has the potential to do a lot of damage in the conference. They're young but they have a lot of potential."

Q: What factors would you like to be known about your team?

A: "Overall, things are going well. We're looking forward for the season to start. We start on Saturday against Altoona. I'm hoping that things turn out well, and they should. They're having a lot of fun right now, that's the biggest thing that counts for the team. If you're having fun, you're going to win some games. If you're not having fun you're not going to do as well. The key component right now is that they're having fun, they have great attitudes, and they want to win. Bring on Altoona!"

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Stacy Pondo
softball head coach