

Erie weather: teams play on Mercyhurst field until Behrend fields dry up

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circle of the field. Though the field is not aesthetically pleasing, the real problem is the fields are becoming impossible to play on. With half a season left, the field conditions have left the teams unable to play at home, or even practice some days.

"It's dangerous some days on the field, because it's impossible to gain footing, and we slide a lot in the mud," said sophomore soccer player Meredith Gipson said. "It'd really be nice to play on our own field and have our fans to be able to support us. But it is Erie and the weather never cooperates."

The issue with the field is that it does not have a proper drainage system. The clay base makes it very difficult to let water drain when there is a downpour. Once the field is soaked, the process of driving it is a whole different story. It may take four days of perfectly dry weather to have the slight semblance of hope to play there, but one day of a heavy rain can ruin that.

"Playing on our own fields would give us an advantage over teams who play on turf all the time and would have to move to grass to play us," said freshman soccer player Eric Hackworth. "Since we don't have a turf field we aren't used to the way the ball moves, so other teams who play on turf everyday have a step ahead of us."

Recently when the fields have been too wet to play on, the teams have traveled to Mercyhurst to practice and play. Though it is an inconvenience because the players have to find their own rides to and from the alternative location, but it beats not having anywhere to practice. Behrend's athletic department has worked hard to keep good relations with both Gannon and Mercyhurst, so when facilities are unable to be used, they can aid each other.

"We have a good relationship with both Mercyhurst and Gannon, and because of this we help each other when we can," said athletic director Brian Streeter. Mercyhurst had prob-

lems with their pool so they have been swimming in our pool. So, when our fields have been this bad, they have accommodated us, giving us time to practice and play on their turf."

While other facilities are available if necessary, Behrend's main goal is to be able to play on campus. They have aerated the fields and plan to do so again on Monday. Along with that, leaf blowers are used to blow off water from large puddles, and filling solutions have been used to try and sop up to water. Until the new facilities are present next year, the athletic department is doing everything they can to make the fields as best as usable as they can be for the athletes.

"Our new turf fields will be great for the entire campus," Streeter said. "Not only will it have a track for the track team, but also a soccer field that can also be used for lacrosse if the school expands to having men and women's lacrosse team. Also, intramurals and people just looking to run or use the field for a game of pick up football can use the field."

Until next year, the soccer teams look forward to seeing what will happen with the fields. The best thing that can be done is hope for good weather. If the field is dry, it can be played on and as both teams are still undefeated in the conference, the hopes of hosting the AMCC finals. Right now the best alternatives are hoping to use Mercyhurst or Gannon's field, or going up to Fredonia University, like the women's team did last year.

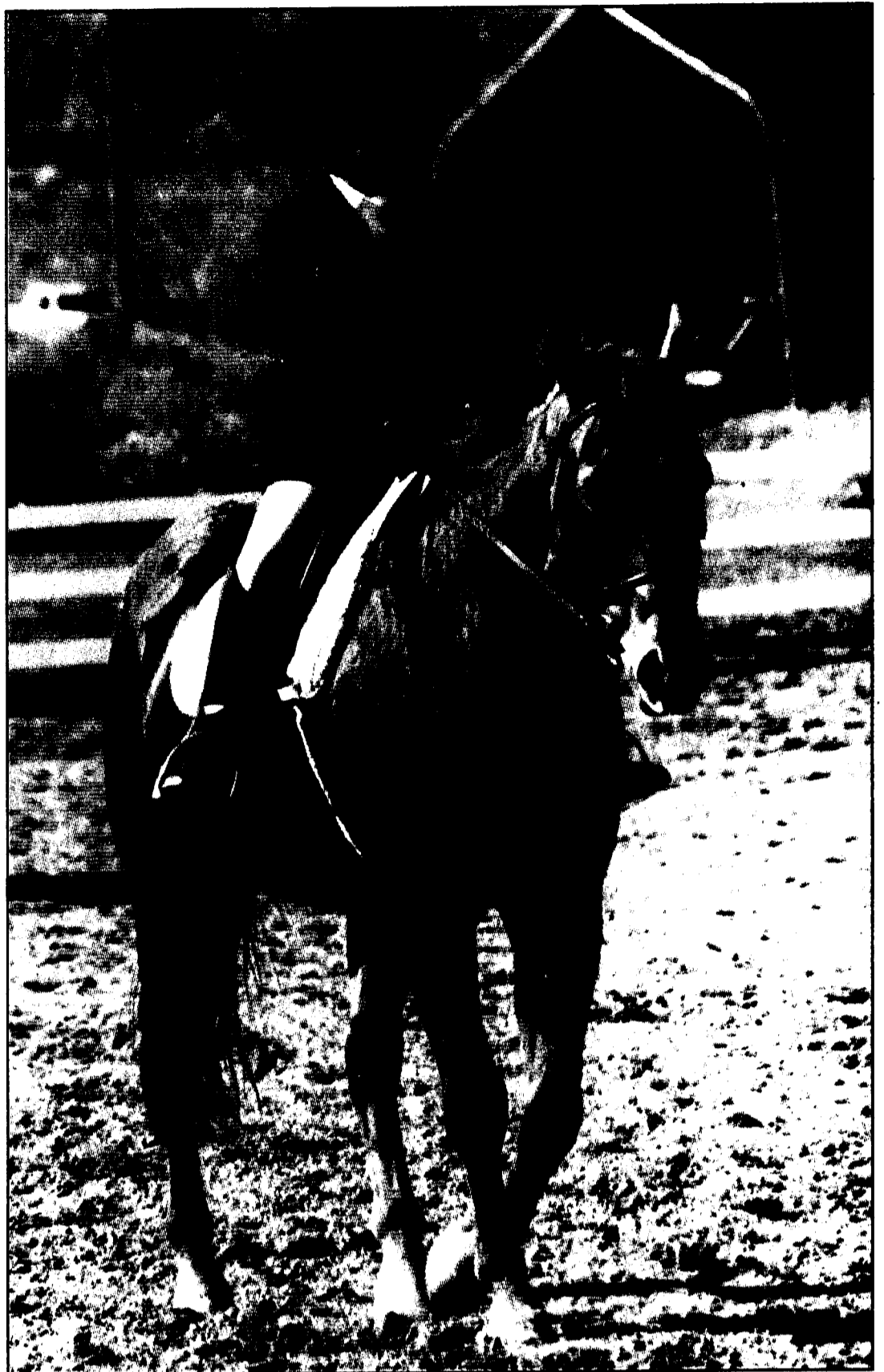
"When it comes to the new field, we want to make sure it is done right," Streeter said. "We don't want to cut corners. We want to make sure it is the best we can do for the student body."

The men and women both take on Penn State Altoona at home (tentatively) on the Behrend fields at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturday Oct. 16.

Both teams are having their senior night, so it is really hoped the game will take place at the home fields.

"It'd really be nice to play on our own field and have our fans able to support us."

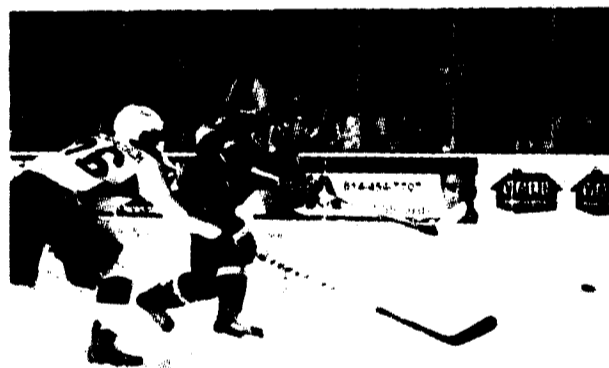
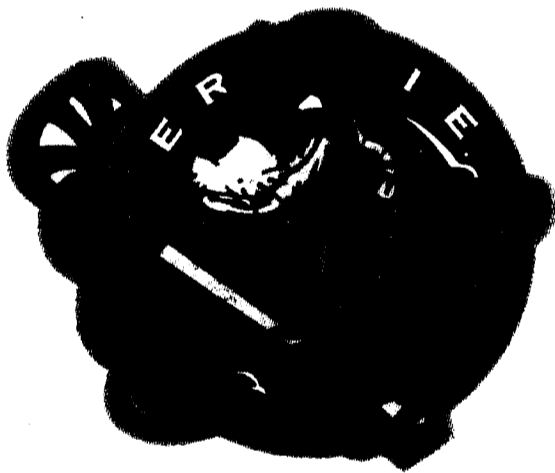
Meredith Gibson
Sophomore forward



Eric Dye / The Behrend Beacon

RIDE...JUMP...GALLOP: After traveling to Slippery Rock to participate in the IHSA show, Behrend has not participated in an IHSA show event in the last decade. Sophomore Megan Sipos (above) placed fifth in the event.

Sipos, a humanities major, rides English style and has been riding with Behrend for the last two years. The next showing for the Penn State Behrend Equestrian Club is Oct. 30 at a place to be determined.



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