

## Sporting View

### Erie going big time with pro franchises

by John Musser  
Collegian Sports Editor

Just like that, Erie has become a professional town.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that Erie is some two-bit pop stand town with a name like Sandy Beach that has one traffic light. No, what I'm saying is what people who have lived here for many years already know: Erie is a great city. To people who live outside the city, Erie is just a summer resort town that becomes comatose in the winter. Lately, this attitude has started to change. To people who don't realize it, Erie is turning pro.

A good example of this step up into a major league atmosphere is the recent acquisition of a World Basketball League franchise. The WBL is a summer pro league for players under the height of six-feet five inches. Rosters of WBL squads are filled with quick, high-flying athletes who play an up-tempo brand of basketball that makes the NBA look slow by comparison.

The "little man's" league includes teams from big league cities such as Chicago, Las Vegas, and Calgary, plus a franchise in nearby Youngstown, Ohio (How long do you think it will take for Erie and Youngstown to become big rivals?). Also, the schedule includes touring teams from foreign countries, including the national teams from the Soviet Union, Spain, and Italy. These will not be exhibition games; these games will count in the league standings.

Basketball won't be the only sport in town this summer. Minor league baseball will be back, with Erie fielding an independent team in the familiar New York-Pennsylvania League. After the disheartening announcement made by the Baltimore Orioles that they were moving their single A club to a full-season minor league (the New York-Penn League only plays a 70-game schedule) last September, the outlook for pro baseball in Erie was bleak.

Thanks to the persistence of club owner Bill McKee, baseball in Erie is still alive. Although they have no affiliation with a major league team and must survive on signing free agent players, McKee expects to place a solid product on the field.

And finally, there is Erie's pro hockey team. The Panther's, are playing their second campaign in the East Coast Hockey League and have already established a solid base

of fan support. Part of their fast rise to popularity was last season's first place regular season finish after spending part of the season at the basement. Also, the ECHL's penchant for a freewheeling style of play is popular with local fans.

The Panthers success on and off the ice has continued this year. After their recent victory at Hampton Roads, Virginia, on Sunday night, the Cats had compiled a 23-15-6 record for a total of 52 points, good for third place in the ECHL. They trail the first place Virginia Lancers by seven points and runner-up Winston-Salem by three.

I hear that the new pro football league, the one with teams in Europe and America, is looking for cities to place expansion teams in. While it may be a while till the World League of American Football expands, ya gotta wonder if Erie is on their list.

• Most of the time, the only big guys that you hear anyone talking about or the ones that get all of the print in college hoops are people like Georgetown's Alonzo Mourning, Loyola-Marymount's Hank Gathers, and Syracuse's Derrick Coleman and Billy Owens. Well, for those of you who don't follow the game too closely, here's two more names to add to the list: LSU's Stanley Roberts and Shaquille O'Neal.

Just as an example, take Saturday's game between LSU and Loyola, a scorekeeper's nightmare if you will. O'Neal had a triple-double in points(22), rebounds (24), and blocked shots (12). Nah, its not like this kid is good or anything.

• I'm not really sure which was more exciting: The Super Bowl or the Pro Bowl. The one advantage of the Pro Bowl is that there was no "Bud Pro Bowl." I guess Bud Bowl II must have taken a lot out of the Bud players.

• After losing his arbitration hearing and having to settle for a one million dollar contract instead of the 1.9 million smackers he was wanting from the baseball Kansas City Royals, Bo Jackson has apparently found someone who doesn't think that Bo knows baseball. Well, somebody who thinks Bo only knows about a million bucks worth of baseball.

• Have you seen the commercials for these professional indoor lacrosse games? For those of you that have, could you please tell me this: Are there any rules?



photo by Rick Brooks

Shoot or pass?: Dave Gurska, a senior starting guard, tries to find an open Lion in Saturday night's tilt with Elmira. Gurska, who has been in a slump recently, has scored 38 points in the last two contests. Story begins on page 7.

If you see news happening, call *The Collegian*.  
Call us at 898-6488.

### Lions end losing ways

(continued from page 7)

from the foul line and had 25 points for the Lions, making three treys.

Also in double figures scoring was junior point guard Randy Baughman, the Lions all-time assist leader with 379 dishes, shot 57 percent from the field to add 18 points for Behrend. Six foot-four Cowan made three of six shots from behind the arc and totaled 11 points.

The Houghton game marked the end of Gurska's shooting woes. In the three games prior, the senior gunslinger had managed to make only one shot.

According to Coach Zimmerman the offense has finally gotten back on track. "Gurska finally got out of his shooting slump, and we did a good job on the boards to promote the fast break."

Behrend has five games remaining in the season. The only home game left on the schedule for the Lions is against Keuka College on February 17. Behrend travels to St. John Fisher tomorrow night and Geneva on Saturday.

## Listen for the Explosion.



catch

Weekend Eruption,  
this Saturday at midnight on AM 1450, WPSE

**wpse**  
am 1450