

Sporting View

Penguins' old problems continue with new coach

by John Musser
Collegian Sports Editor

I know that this is a busy week for everyone, with professors administering incredibly long midterms and laying mounds of homework on helpless students. But I've decided to do it anyway, and for the second week in a row, I'm going to start with a question.

The question is: Cale Yarborough was the last driver to win the Daytona 500 in consecutive years (1983-'84). Who was the last driver before Yarborough to take the checkered flag back-to-back at Daytona? Answer to follow.

Say, do you think Pete Rose bet on the Super Bowl?

Holy-Bonehead-dept.: Last week I said something about how I thought that Pierre Turgeon should receive the award for best rookie in the National Hockey League. In fact, I said that they could burn the Calder Trophy, the name for the best freshman award. There's one problem: Turgeon, who plays for the Buffalo Sabres, ain't no rookie.

So far, only a friend of our overworked, stressed out editor has caught my dunderhead error. I certainly hope the half dozen or so faithful who read this column whenever it finds its way into the paper are paying attention.

I've been having trouble lately discerning certain things, such as winter from spring, sleep from class, and the NBA from the NHL. Its not like there haven't been quasi-riots in any basketball games lately.

Actually, basketball in general has been increasingly violent lately on both the college and professional levels. I find this somewhat disconcerting because of the rioting that has happened in European soccer games. Not only have games in America been increasingly violent on the players' part, but fans are also starting to take part in the barbarism.

What ever happened to just having a good time at the game?

Wouldn't ya know it. I mentioned Mario Lemieux's scoring streak in these very pages last Wednesday, and the streak ended that evening against the New York Rangers. Am I a jinx or what?

Speaking of Lemieux, he and his fellow Pittsburgh Penguins' teammates have done very little to improve

themselves in the NHL since the firing of Coach Gene Ubriaco.

When management fired Ubriaco, the Pens ranked 18th in the league. Now, under the guidance of General Manager Craig Patrick, who is serving as interim coach, the flightless waterfowl are a mighty 13th.

To the casual observer, it would appear that the Penguins have made an improvement since the Ubriaco firing. Not great improvement, but still an improvement. However, a careful investigation shows that this isn't necessarily so.

At the time of Ubriaco's termination, the Pens had a record of 10-14-2. Heading into last night's tilt with the Philadelphia Flyers, their mark was 27-28-5. They're not a whole heck of a lot better in the win-loss-tie column.

In goals for and goals against, the Penguins had 101 and 110, respectively. Now, the "Boys of Winter" have scored 252 goals and have let in 270. Their goal differential went from nine to 18, which is definitely not an improvement.

So, who do you blame now? Don't ask the players. They will tell you that the guy running the Zamboni is screwing up the ice surface, taking away the Pen's skating advantage.

What's the real problem? A prevailing attitude on the team for a dislike of hitting and a lack of work ethic, which translates to weak defense. Until there is an attitude change, there isn't a coach anywhere who could make this team better than the players want to be.

Why is it fans complain about big salary athletes? Yeah, sure, some of the players deserve the fans' catcalls when they are giving less than 100 percent on the field.

But people like Atlanta Hawks reserve center Jon Koncak, who didn't even ask for his two million dollars and change contract, do not deserve the abuse of fans. If owners offer players fat cat contracts, what are they supposed to do? Say they aren't worth that much and accept a lesser amount? Yeah, right. That's what we would all do.

Quiz Answer: The last driver to repeat as champion of the Daytona 500 prior to Yarborough was performed in 1973-'74 by Richard Petty. Petty has won Daytona seven times in his illustrious career.

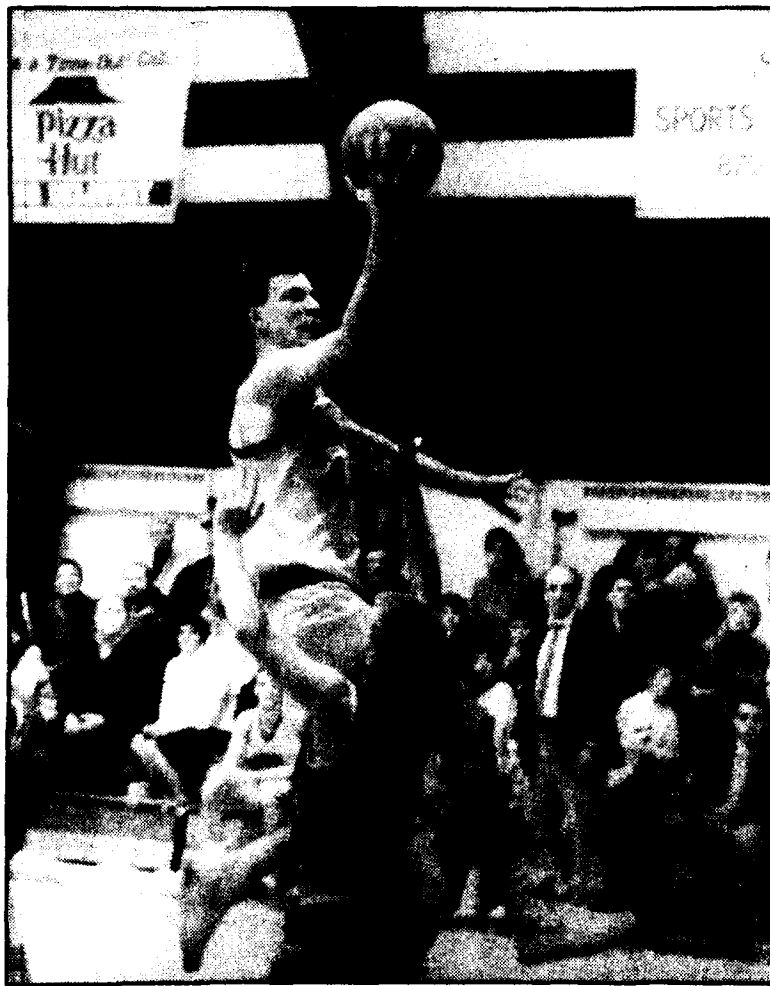


photo by Rick Brooks

Flying in: Rick Demski swoops in for a basket over a Keuka defender during Saturday night's game. Game report starts on page 10.

Sports bits

Men's Club volleyball action. The Behrend Men's Volleyball Club squad recently defeated Allegheny College. The match was held last Friday night at the Allegheny courts. The Men's Club prevailed in three straight matches, winning 15-7, 15-5, and 16-14.

Weightlifters take note: The Eastside YMCA near Buffalo Road is offering special rates for Behrend students from April 1 to May 31, which is during the renovation to Eric Hall.

Do you have some sports news that everyone at Behrend should know about? Then just drop off the information at *The Collegian* office with your name and phone number. Or just call us at 898-6488 between 9 am and 5 pm. Deadline is 5 pm the Friday before the publication that the information should be printed in.

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