

Sports

Four booters make All-Star team

by Dan Zahniser
The Collegian

Four members of the Penn State-Behrend soccer team were selected as conference All-Stars by the Western Pennsylvania Soccer Conference (WPSC).

The conference includes 12 teams in two divisions. The Lions of Coach Dennis Grace are members of the North Division.

Junior backs Shon Fleming (Peters Township HS, Pittsburgh), Rick Nese (Penn Hills HS, Pittsburgh), senior back Chris Filoon (Plum HS, Pittsburgh) and senior forward Vince Pedraza (Fairfax, VA), were selected to the All-Star team.

The North competed against the South, on Wednesday, Nov. 13 at 2:30 p.m. at Slippery Rock University.

"I can't believe it, it's a great honor to me and the other three to represent Behrend in a good way," stated Fleming.

"I've been here for four years and it's definitely an honor for me," said Pedraza, "it's a nice way to end my soccer career at Behrend."

The players had to adjust this year to first year Head Coach Grace and his system. Once they got underway, though, they learned and developed from his experience and methods.

"Coach Grace helped me and everyone a lot and taught us more about the game," commented Fleming.

"I'd like to thank Coach Grace because his attitude made me work harder during the games, even through injuries," said Filoon.

"I'm here because of how coach helped me to grow as a player," said Nese, "I'm also here because of Chris Filoon and Shon Fleming, we're like clockwork."

With four players on the team that work well together, Behrend should have a lot to offer and add to the (WPSC) All-Star team.

"With Rick Nese, Shon Fleming, and Chris Filoon we

played a sweeper double stopper all year and that gave them an opportunity to learn each other's style and gave them versatility," said Coach Grace. "That will give the all-star team a strong backfield."

Add Behrend's own scoring threat in Pedraza and the Lions are well represented.

"Vinnie is an extremely dangerous frontrunner, he dictates more creativity than the other three and isn't afraid to challenge the opponents for a score," added Coach Grace. "Truthfully, I think they'll be very successful and add a great deal."

All four booters have their own style of play but all combine their skill with hard work and hustle.

"Hard work always pays off," stated Nese.

"Rick is extremely determined and aggressive. He has an excellent attitude and work rate and is very versatile, we moved him around to where we needed him all year. He leads verbally as well as by his actions," commented Coach Grace.

"With Rick and Shon coming back next year, it makes me feel very comfortable to have a strong future," continued Grace.

"Shon reads the game extremely well and it is extremely difficult for someone to knock him off the ball. He has great patience and knowledge of the game. He's very tough defensively as well as physically and mentally," said Grace.

"Chris's work ethic, attitude, athleticism, and knowledge of the game has helped him become the player he is. He's very very hardnosed and unyielding, he has a personality that every great back has. He's done a heck of a job for us and we're going to miss him sorely as well as Vinnie."

"I'm looking forward to seeing Chris and Vinnie play their last time and represent Behrend, I'm very proud of them. I have every confidence that they're all going to play extremely well."

It is a good way to end a fine



Dangerous: Senior Vince Pedraza drives the ball past a defender during a regular season game. Greg Geibel/The Collegian

season where the record was not important but the learning was.

"The fact that four of our players made the All-Star team doesn't reflect our season, the games were close and could have easily gone in our favor," said

Filoon.

"Four of us making it showed that our hard work paid off and proved that we played well as a team," added Fleming, "we're going to keep up the good work and hopefully we'll have a

winning season with our returning players and new recruits."

"I wish I could return next year because we'll certainly be a strong team," said Pedraza.



Just try it: Senior Chris Filoon shows his soccer abilities by dribbling past his opponent and heading toward the goal. Greg Geibel/The Collegian



Better stand back: Junior Shon Fleming prepares to boot the ball down field. Greg Geibel/The Collegian