

Senior Lions close season, look ahead

by Matt Cissne
The Collegian

The Lions received the good news that they have been waiting for. On Monday the Lions were extended an ECAC playoff bid.

No one on the team was happier than seniors Rick Clark and Rich Buzalka.

"We were happy to get a playoff bid. We were disappointed to end the regular season the way we did at Keuka," said Clark. "I'm very happy that we have another game or two games to play."

"If the season would have ended at Keuka, it would have been hard to swallow. Now we have another chance to prove ourselves and hopefully this time we will be able to win them both," added Buzalka.

The Lions start the playoffs Saturday against Frostburg. Both players are optimistic about the team's chances.

"If we play tough defense, I don't think there is a team that can beat us," commented Buzalka.

"The playoffs are a whole new season. The previous 26 games don't mean anything. You can't afford to take anyone lightly," remarked Clark.

"If we execute well, we will be a very tough team. As long as we come in with the frame of mind that we are going to do what we have to do, we will win," he continued.

The Lions had to deal with the roller-coaster effect this season.

"We had games when our shots fell, but our defense and rebounding were weak and we had games where the opposite was true," said Buzalka. "When we

clicked and got our whole game together, we were tough to beat. When we are firing on all pistons, there are not too many teams that can beat us."

Although the playoffs will be tough, they will not be satisfied unless they win the title.

"There is no other way to complete the season but with a win. When I am out on the court, I won't be thinking that this is the last game of my career, I'll only be thinking about winning," added Buzalka.

"We both need to focus on what we have to do for our team to win. The season ending will take care of itself, it will be thrilling for us to end our career with an ECAC tournament win," added Clark.

Although both players agreed that winning is very important to them, they said that being with the team is more important than wins or losses.

"A few years from now if you ask me how many wins we had, I won't be able to remember. But, if you ask how many friends I have made, I'll be able to tell you right away," Buzalka said.

"I'll take the friends that I made here and remember them all my life. Looking back, I will remember how great it was being with all the guys," added Clark.

"The games are great but, the things I will remember is the guys and how much fun we have had together," Clark commented.

Buzalka and Clark are the team captains and it is a job that they cherish.

"The guys on the team call me 'pops' or 'old man'. I joke with them about it, but I really like the nickname. I joke around and tell them what time they have to

be in their rooms and stuff, like a father would," Buzalka said.

"It was fortunate that both Rich and I were captains," said Clark.

"We are good friends and we have been through some of the same things, yet we have such a wide background that we can cover a lot of different things that could happen to people," he added.

Clark and Buzalka have a mutual respect for each other off and on the court.

"Rich has a great attitude and he does what it takes to win. He works hard and tries to get others around him to work hard," Clark said.

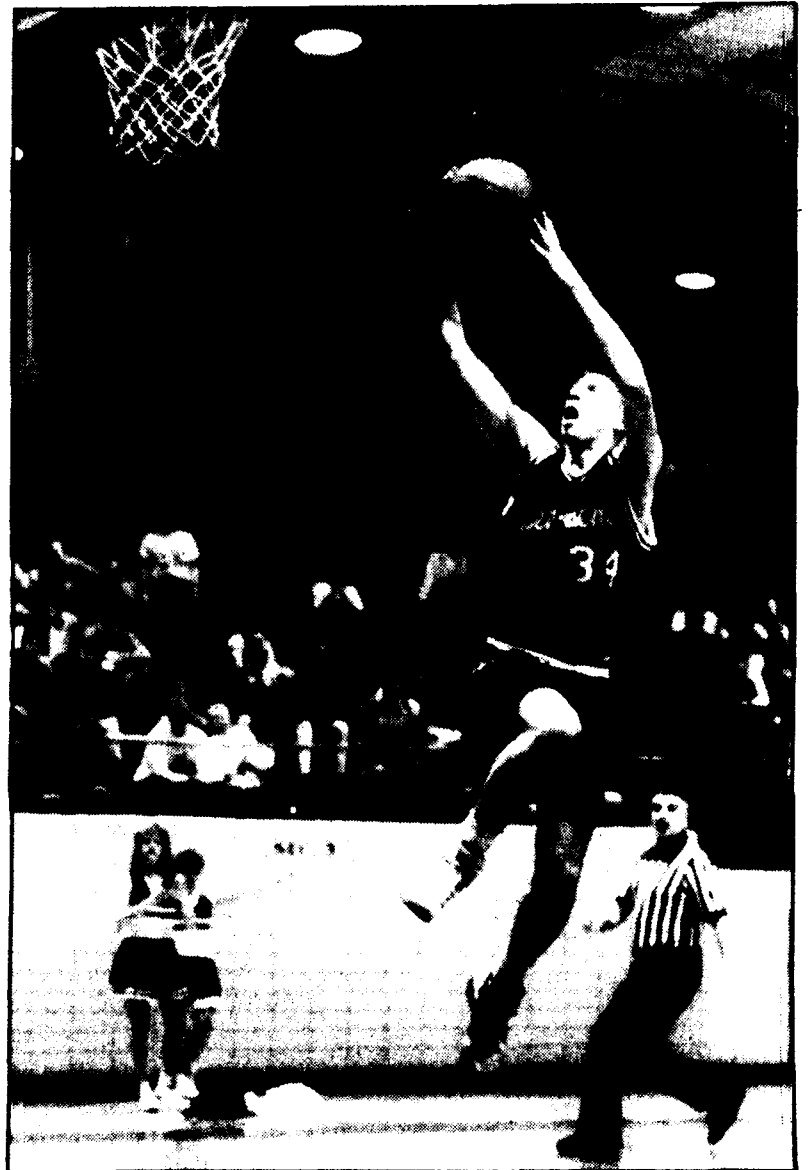
"To watch somebody day in and day out hit the floor, dive for balls is incredible. He is a team leader and has a desire to win. With this attitude, I see him being a success later on in whatever he does in life."

For both players, they have learned a great deal about life from playing basketball.

"It teaches you how to work and be with others. It teaches you how to be a winner and how to go after something and put that extra effort into everything you do. Basketball is so positive. It is why I am who I am today," Buzalka commented.

"You make so many friends and you learn how to work with them. It teaches you work ethic and how to deal with criticism. There are no negative aspects. You use the work ethic every day in life at home, on the job, at school. I'll take the lessons with me wherever I go," added Clark.

"There is so much respect for each other among the players on



Greg Geibel/The Collegian

Easy two: Senior forward Rick Clark turns his hard work into an easy two points after stealing the ball.

this team. They are a bunch of great guys and I have enjoyed playing with them," Buzalka added.

Clark and Buzalka are eager to play Frostburg and hopefully finish their stay at Behrend with an ECAC title.

Beisler looks to justify the struggle



Greg Geibel/The Collegian

Five up high: Senior forward Michele Beisler receives the congratulations from the team after finishing her final regular season game.

by Matt Cissne
The Collegian

Imagine being a star athlete going into your senior season with a team stocked with talent and a winning attitude.

Now imagine tearing your anterior cruciate ligament during the preseason. For Lady Lions' senior Michele Beisler, this is more than just imagination.

Beisler overcame arthroscopic knee surgery and rehabilitation

was during my sophomore year. I made two clutch free throws late in the game to win a tight game," she said.

"The best moment overall was when I played my last game at Erie Hall. My friends and family came up to see me play," she added.

Beisler almost quit the team during her freshman year.

"My worst basketball moment was during my freshman year. I almost quit the team because of a

season with an ECAC title.

"I would love to finish with a tournament win. It will be tough though. If we lose, we will just have to go on, but I don't plan on losing," she added.

Beisler feels that her role on the team is to get rebounds.

"I love to get rebounds, especially offensive rebounds. I feel that is my job. I don't worry about scoring, if I score, well, that is great," commented Beisler.

"I would love to finish with a tournament win. It will be tough though. If we lose, we will just have to go on, but I don't plan on losing."

-Michele Beisler
Senior Forward

this season and is now ready to provide the Lady Lions with the experience and leadership they will need to win an ECAC title.

Beisler has donned the Lady Lions' uniform for four years. Her collegiate career is coming to an end and she has a lot of memories.

"The best moment I can remember on a basketball court

breathing problem. Coach Banker talked me into staying and I've been happy since."

For Beisler, this season has been tough.

"Ironically this season has been the best one because we are winning but, it also has been the worst because of my injury," she mentioned.

Beisler would love to finish the

"She (Beisler) is someone we can all look up to in both athletics and academics. We all admire her for her strength and courage in coming back from her injury. The title would be justification for her struggle," remarked sophomore forward Missy Thompson.