

Lady Lions take ECAC championship

by Paul Benim
The Collegian

Last September, the 14 members of the women's basketball team set a goal to make the ECAC tournament.

The Lady Lions achieved that goal, and were the first team to ever participate in post-season play.

In first round action, the squad blasted Wesley College to score the college's first ever playoff win.

With the win, the Lady Lions advanced to the championship game of the Southern Region. In front of a full house in Erie Hall, the Lady Lions defeated a solid Frostburg State (22-6) team by the score of 61-48.

Frostburg State came in to the championship game on a 19-1 stretch since break, but that didn't matter. Frostburg had won 11 straight ball games, but that didn't matter. Frostburg started a front line that ran 6'1", 6'0", and 6'1", but that didn't matter either.

The Lady Lions played 40 minutes of 94 feet of pressure defense, and that is what did matter.

The Lady Lions were all over the court, pressuring the guards, fronting hard in the post, diving on the floor, plaguing the passing lanes, and working extremely hard on the defensive side.

The team defense held the Bobcats to only 37 percent shooting from the floor. The defense also forced 19 Frostburg turnovers, came up with 17 steals, and held Frostburg to a measly seven offensive boards.

As for the height of the Frostburg front line, it didn't matter either. Behrend only permitted one shot on Frostburg's offensive end.

"Defense has been our key all year. Our entire team commits to playing it and simply busts on the defensive end of the court," commented head coach Jenepher Banker.

Behrend began the game hot, as usual. The 10-2 start in favor of the Lady Lions began with a Kimberly Boyd jumper. A Krista Hershner six-footer, and a Karen Strait put back opened the game.

Frostburg State fought back and managed a 14-14 deadlock with 11:53 remaining in the first half.

The final three minutes of the half allowed Behrend to open up a 12 point lead.

A Darcie Bradley pass went to Strait for a lay-up. A Wendy Ebinger steal was converted into another easy two.

The Lady Lions held a 23-13 advantage in the rebound department at the conclusion of the first half. Behrend has received outstanding bench play all season and this night was no different.

Center Anne Bonner came off the bench to hit for ten first half markers and forward Missy Thompson grabbed an authoritative six first half boards.

Frostburg started the first half hitting for the first four points to cut the deficit to single digits. The Lady Lions wouldn't break.

The defense and blocking out was very frustrating for the out-of-towners. The Lady Lions got some timely three-point bombs from what seemed like the parking lot.

Back to back threes by Swartz and Ebinger hit the Bobcats hard. A Hershner steal and pass to a driving Boyd again upped the margin to double-digits.

Behrend was tough on the boards, and the Lady Lions outrebounded the bigger Bobcats by a decisive 40-27.

"Behrend's defense smothered us," said Frostburg State coach Jim Crawley. "We scored just two points in the game's first eight minutes, and two in the last four of the first half. You can't do that and expect to win against a talented team like Behrend."

Behrend hit a solid 21 of 53 from the floor for a respectable 40 percent shooting chart and a nice 79 percent from the charity stripe. For the game, Swartz hit four of five from trey land and finished with game high honors and 17 points.

Tourney MVP Anne Bonner hit four of five from the floor to finish with 12 to go along with her eight boards and five steals from the interior. Boyd issued another solid performance hitting four of six to net 10. Strait snagged seven rebounds, one more than teammate Heather Shearer.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment for Behrend College, my friends and teammates, they all deserve this," commented Ebinger. "They work

extremely hard every day as a group, and going out on top as ECAC Champs is an awesome feeling!" she continued.

As the remaining seconds dissipated, it was thrilling to see the jubilation, the smiles on the faces of the players, friends, and families who have been wonderful supporters of Lady Lion Basketball.

In a year of firsts it couldn't have ended any better. The Lady Lions set records for most wins (23), best winning percentage (.851), fewest losses (4), consecutive wins (8), most steals (343), and most turnovers forced (657). They also snagged championship trophies at the Frostburg State Invitational, the Arby's Integra Invitational, and it was capped, deservingly so, with the school's first ever ECAC Championship.

The Lady Lions made good use of their first appearance in the post-season by destroying Wesley College of Delaware. The Lady Lions outthusted, outmaneuvered, and outsmarted their opponents.

Hershner got the Lady Lions rolling. The three guard hit a layin, followed it up with a rebound put-back, and drained a baseline jumper. In all, she scored Behrend's first ten points. Shearer boarded seven at the half.

The Lady Lions controlled the first twenty and led 32-23 at the intermission.

In the second half, the Lady Lions just overmatched the Wolverines. Behrend held Wesley to a pathetic 18 second half points and pushed the ball up the court and ran Wesley right out of the gym.

The Lady Lions racked up 39 second half points to cruise to a 71-41 victory.

Boyd netted 10 points and dished out four assists. Bonner and Strait scored eight each. The team set a season high rebounding total with 57.

Shearer led with 10, Bonner snatched eight, senior Michelle Beisler grabbed seven, and Michelle Grover six.

The Lady Lions also dished out a lofty 30 assists on the evening with point guard Ebinger leading the way with six.

Lady Lions softball returns home

The Lady Lion softball team returned from a spring break trip down the east coast of Florida with a record of 5-1. They are prepared to make a run at yet another successful campaign.

The softball-nine, 61-31 over Coach Brett Banker's first three seasons, return nine letter winners from last year's 19-10 team.

This year's team should pitch better, play defense much better, have more team speed, but need to show their collective muscle at the plate to be considered for post-season play, something they hope to demonstrate.

As many as five freshman could land starting spots in the regular lineup, something Coach Banker is not concerned about.

"Recruiting has given us the opportunity to remain very consistent each season," explained Coach Banker.

"Looking back two years, which is when you organize your recruiting objectives, I realized that the class of '91 would be difficult to replace. You don't snap your fingers and make up three career .300 hitters (Tammy Altsman, Jen Mowris, and Erica Scribner).

"The incoming players are high quality players. They come from solid programs, were taught well, played a lot of ball over the summer months, and love the game. They immediately lift our program up and should help solidify our lineup for years to come."

Returners that saw action in the starting lineup last year are first baseman Melanie Dunn, shortstop Darcie Bradley, centerfielder Kim Boyd, pitchers

Beth Balizet and Lori Wolfe, and catcher Kellie Jordan. Lori Nadolny, Lisa VanderSchaaff, and Sue Dyer are also returners who played key roles in the success of last year's team.

The newcomers include a solid trio from North Allegheny High in Wexford, a program that finished 14-3 last season.

Sue Mazur, Terry Pegher, and Casey Puttemann were all selected Pittsburgh Post Gazette first team all-stars after their senior seasons. Mazur, a high school shortstop, hit .455 for NA, picking up 20 hits in 17 contests.

Megan Musante, Kelly Orga, Cherie Varrassa, Karen Strait, are all first year players expected to contribute solid numbers as well.

Strait, another high school standout shortstop, adds another solid overall game and carries a big bat into the lineup. Strait hit .475 in her final year at Southern Fulton High.

"This team can develop into a group that pushes us into that twenty win season," Banker adds (after putting up 18, 19, and 19 wins the last three years). "Depending on our schedule, weather, and other considerations, this group could mature into a very good team. I expect that from them."

"The pressure they face is from the history of the program, and knowing that excellence is expected. That is a totally different kind of pressure to face. Success on the field and in the classroom (last year's team earned the 6th best gpa in the country for Division III softball). We're young, but we'll grow up fast."

Sport Shorts

Sign up now for intramural swimming and modified pitch softball. Swimming offers men's, women's, and coed team opportunities. You can also enter any one of the nine events on your own.

There will only be men's and women's leagues offered for modified pitch softball. Entry deadline for both is Friday, April 3 at 4:00 p.m.

Hey badminton and street hockey fans! Get your teams ready now! Badminton offers men's and women's singles and men's, women's, and coed doubles.

There will only be men's and women's leagues for street hockey. Entry deadline for both is Friday, April 10 at 4:00 p.m.

Sign up in the intramural office!

Attention all Tour de France hopefuls! The Cycling Club will be holding its first race on April 29. Sponsored by Carnegie Mellon University, the race will be held at Slippery Rock University.

Men's tennis team nets first victory; defeat Mt. Union

by Greg Geibel
The Collegian

The men's tennis team scored their first victory of the season Saturday against Mt. Union, by a score of 9-0.

"I think that it was just a question of being more prepared than they were," said team

captain Chuck Keenan.

Last year, Mt. Union defeated Behrend by a score of 6-3.

"I think that our recent victory against them is a pretty good indication of our potential," continued Keenan.

The men's tennis team has been preparing for the season by playing in many tournaments and

against Division II schools, such as Edinboro.

"Coach Gallegos keeps informing us that a 'hungry lion hunts best,' and with our recent victories and practice games, that certainly seems to be the case," said Keenan.