

Butler Eagle

BC3 home to talented athletes

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Butler County Community College only offers six sports to its students.

But the Pioneers are getting the most out of them.

When it came to athletics, BC3 was primarily known for its men's basketball program for years. Many of its players moved on to four-year schools after helping the Pioneers either win or contend for conference championships.

Eventually, that success dried up. And while the Pioneer men's basketball team appears to be making positive strides again, other athletic programs at the school have more than picked up the slack.

BC3's women's basketball team is coming off back-to-back Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference championships. Julia Baxter averaged 16.3 points and 17.6 rebounds per game a year ago and became a NJCAA All-American.

Baxter is now at Slippery Rock University and hopes to make an imprint on the women's basketball program there.

The Pioneers' women's softball team had the best season in program history last spring. BC3 finished 20-5 and reached the final 16 in NJCAA Div. III before being knocked out in the postseason.

This weekend, the Pioneer golf team is competing in the Pennsylvania State Invitational after winning its fifth consecutive WPCC championship. Coach Bill Miller, incidentally, was named WPCC Coach of the Year for the fourth time in five years.

Butler graduate Anthony Lewis shot his collegiate career-best score of 77-74-151 to win medalist honors at the WPCC Tournament. A-C Valley graduate Noah Morgan averaged 78.5 to lead the team during the regular season.

Seven of the 11 players on the team's roster are freshmen, including Lewis and Morgan.

The women's volleyball team has been dominating the WPCC for years and is a regional contender every season. Coach Rob Snyder has a 352-119 record in 19 seasons as head coach.

The bulk of Snyder's roster always comes from Butler County. Five of his current players — Kelly Kabay, Emilee Beck, Haley Caldwell, Autumn Rodgers and Alexis Schneider — are from Butler. Sophomore setter Brittney Bianco will leave the program ranked No. 2 on its career list in assists. She is from Freeport.

Mackenzie Craig is another setter on the squad and is from Karns City.

BC3 has become — and has been for a while — a viable athletic option for county high school seniors who may want to play NCAA Division II or III in their respective sport, but aren't quite ready yet, or haven't gotten the scholarship offer they're chasing.

Butler basketball standouts Joel and Jace Stutz are buying extra time that way by playing basketball at BC3 this season.

College decisions can be difficult. Often times, it's the first major decision a kid makes in life.

BC3 has proven to be a pretty good buffer in that regard.