The Lehman College women’s softball team season came to an end last week, as the Lightning were defeated by Baruch College 7-1 in the CUNY conference tournament.

Baruch freshman Melinda Dolan keyed a five-run, second inning, with a bases-clearing double to help give the Bearcats a lead they would not relinquish. Kathy Maher went the distance on a two-hitter and notched six strikeouts, while sophomore Olga Torres took the loss for Lehman. The Lightning were led by senior second baseman Stephanie Cepeda who finished with a double and Lehman’s lone run.

Lehman (5-21 overall) showed improvement throughout the season, even though the win total did not exceed what Lightning fans had hoped for. Sophomore Shirley Arrieta ranks amongst the top players in the nation in triples, while junior third baseman Maria Adorno also was in the upper echelon of CUNY conference statistics with a .334 batting average, while freshman slugger Shondell Washington followed with a .328 average.

"This was a real learning experience for the team," said head coach Kim Santoiemma. "There were many games that we could have won, but our inexperience played a big part in many of the losses, hopefully we can regroup in learn for next season." Lehman will lose just two seniors from this year’s squad, Cepeda, and rightfielder Stacian Doyley.

For Lehman College baseball coach John Mehling, the opportunity coach a new team was certainly a challenge. Taking over a team which had struggled over the past season was a task that the Queens native was prepared to do.

The Lehman College baseball team showed vast improvement this season, as the Lightning finished with a 9-11 overall record, and was just one game shy of making the CUNY conference tournament in Binghamton, New York. In a rebuilding season, Lehman shocked conference powers, College of Staten Island with an impressive 8-7 victory, and also knocked off New Jersey City University 5-4 to highlight this past season.

"We had some great wins against some quality opponents, but we lost to some of the teams that we should have defeated this season," said Mehling. "We have a young team that when the realize how good they can be, they will be a force to reckon with."

Junior Lenny Gonzalez led the Lightning with a .376 batting average, while classmate David Malave followed with a .368 average. Lehman also received outstanding pitching performances from freshman Xavier Colon, and junior Steven Bochicchio. Colon ranked amongst the top performers in the conference with a 4.93 earned run average. Bochicchio, a transfer from Ramapo College, and a former player at Salesian High School, finished the season with a 4-0 record, before being sidelined at the end of the season with an injury.

"We have a good nucleus to build around for next season," Mehling added. "If we can add a few more players to the fold, we will surprise a lot of teams next season."

Lehman will lose just three seniors this season. First baseman Reggie Rivera, third baseman Ferdi German, and pitcher Steve Ortiz.