

PSU Sports @ a Glance

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The middle of February tends to be a slow month for Penn State sports. Erase basketball from the mind and sports at University Park is almost non-existent. But did anyone ever remember that 29 sports actually exist at Penn State? So in this slow time for any sports news out of "Happy Valley," here is an overview of the five most important "other sports" currently going on.

1. Men's Gymnastics: Hey, it takes a lot of skill and strength to do some of the things these guys do. The defending national champions are once again up to their winning ways. They are ranked fifth in the entire country. Well, at least something in PSU sports is going right. The ir upcoming schedule includes match-ups with Michigan, Ohio State, and William and Mary.

2. Fencing: Yes, Fencing. Talk about good, how about ranked second for men and third for women. A recent meet at the University of Pennsylvania showed just how good these teams are. Both teams went undefeated at the meet with the men improving on their already unblemished record. The two will head to Texas to compete in the Junior Olympics with the NCAA Championships in March. Who knows, maybe a national title is in the works.

3. Lacrosse: Hey, Lacrosse is a tough sport whether for women or for men. The men's team has just kicked off the season with a meeting against Ohio State and hopes to improve on a 6-7 season last year. The women's team is coming off of a 9-8 season and has three pre-season All Americans on the team. Lee Tortorelli, Kristen Burke, and Lori Havrilla will lead the Lady Lions in their first meeting at home February 26 against Vanderbilt.

4. Men's Volleyball: Volleyball has always been a power at University Park. The women were the last to win a National Championship in 2000, but the men have done well too. So far this season, the guys have amassed a 10-2 record including 6-0 at home. They are well on their way to eclipse last year's record of 23-7. They hope to not end it on a sour note like they did last May 6 against Long Beach State in Honolulu.

5. Baseball: Right about this time, pitchers and catchers will be reporting to camps all over Florida and Arizona for Major League Baseball spring training. In that spirit, the Penn State baseball team will begin their season very shortly. Last year, the team went 28-29. They will be led by senior infielder Mike Milliron, who led the team with a .307 batting average. Junior Sean Stiffole returns to anchor the pitching staff. Stiffole ended last season with a 3.89 era and had a team leading three complete games and 87 strikeouts. The team as a whole does not look like a title contender, but anything can happen. The team has already started playing games, but the season really kicks in to full gear starting in mid-March.

So for those of you who like to follow Penn State sports other than football and basketball, these are some alternatives. For the rest of the Penn State community, continue to wait until the pads come back on this fall.

Sports

Football not dead after Superbowl

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So what is coming up now?

Free Agency

As seasons change, so does our sports world. The NBA is in full throttle, March Madness is right around the corner, and the smell of peanuts and crackerjack will soon drown us in hope for spring. Out the door goes football, huh? Wrong! Yes, football fans, get a load of the coming events your favorite sport has coming.

Let us first congratulate the New England Patriots and their fans. While they have broken many hearts here at Penn State Harrisburg, including some on the staff of Capital Times, they showed us what a champion and team really are.

In a few weeks, the free agent signing period will begin in the NFL. There are many free agents that will be available. For the Eagles, players such as Ike Reese, Derrick Burgess and Jeremiah Trotter will hit the market.

On other teams throughout the league, the salary cap will again be the determining factor in free agent movement. For that matter, New England and Philadelphia should be very active.

And let us not forget the Redskins. Year after year, Washington is unofficially crowned off-season champions. It is not because

the Redskins make the smartest moves; it is because the Redskins make the biggest moves. In 2001, Jeremiah Trotter left the Eagles and signed with the Redskins for a big contract. That same year, the short lived Steve Spurrier era began in Washington.

In 2004, Steve Spurrier resigned from the Redskins. Did that stop the team from making more big moves? Please! Former coach Joe Gibbs returned, Mark Brunell signed on to be quarterback, and Champ Bailey was traded to Denver for Clinton Portis. Granted, all of the moves just mentioned did not help Washington get into the post-season, but it created news for sure.

The Draft

In April, the pilgrimage of NFL fans to New York to watch the draft will begin. Some notable college players will be available, including Jason White from Oklahoma and Mike Williams from USC. Probably the most notable player in the draft is someone who made noise last year; Maurice Clarett.

Many teams in the NFL could use a good running back, and Clarett will be someone to watch. Even though he is projected to be a late rounds pick, he could probably make a big impact for a team. He has good size and good speed, but his playing shape could be in question at this point.

But there are plenty of other top-quality backs available. Cedric Benson and Ronnie Brown appear likely to go early to a team that will need their talent the most.

Missing from the top of the draft this year are quarterbacks. Last season, the crop of quarterbacks available was deep. Philip Rivers, Eli Manning and Ben Roethlisberger all went early. It will be unlikely that a class this deep will come out this year.



Photo courtesy of www.cnsi.com

Maurice Clarett is quite possibly the most notable player in the NFL draft.

The draft this time will be deep in running back and other positions, so teams not looking for quarterbacks, this is your year.

NFL Network

For the junkies, NFL Network is required. Even though they gave a lot of the same programming over and over, it still is pretty good.

Where else will you be able to see stories of old players, famous players, and players probably never even heard of? Not to mention the highlight shows of the past season.

NFL Network is a must-have if you are addicted to football.

NFL Training Camp

July is a month when vacations are in full throttle and the baseball pennant race starts heating up. For football fans, it is the month when training camp begins and

the long road to the Superbowl starts.

Last summer, thousands flocked to Lehigh University to see the Eagles practice and watch T.O. put on that 81 jersey. Imagine, over 20,000 people going to see practice. Yes, practice.

Eagles camp may not be that exciting this year, but there will be a lot of people there. And it is not only Eagles camp. Expect a lot of excitement at Steelers when Big Ben and the Steelers start practicing for 2005.

Down south, the Ravens may have to make room for thousands especially if Randy Moss ends up there. Imagine that, Randy Moss and Ray Lewis on the same practice field. Priceless!!

So there you have it football fans, the right formula to cure the football fix. Now just get NFL Network and sit back and enjoy. Training camps open in five months.



Photo courtesy of www.onlinecsa.com

In 2001, Jeremiah Trotter left the Eagles and signed with the Redskins for a big contract.

Herb counts down the best college b-ball coaches

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- 5) Roy Williams (Kansas/UNC)
- 4) Jim Boeheim (Syracuse)
- 3) John Cheney (Temple)
- 2) Bob Knight (Indiana/Texas Tech)
- 1) Mike Krzyzewski (Duke)

There are several reasons why Coach K is number one on this list of college basketball coaches. First of all, his record speaks for itself. For more than 20 seasons as Duke's Head Coach, Coach K has 529 career victories, 236 weeks in the top 25, 128 weeks in the top 10, 53 weeks at number one, and eight Final Four appearances in the last 15 years, including five straight from 1988-92. In the past 17 years, Duke has 15 twenty-win seasons. In that same span, Duke has made the NCAA tournament 16 times.

The back-to-back NCAA championships in the early 90s made Coach K the first coach since the legendary John Wooden

to win consecutive titles. Add to that five 30-win seasons, eight regular season ACC crowns and five ACC titles, and it becomes quite obvious why Coach K is at the top.

Besides being a great coach, Coach K is a mentor and a leader to the players on his team. That leadership is what draws the top high school players in the country to his program. In a time when it is hard to keep athletes in school for all four years, or even get them to attend college at all, Coach K routinely has one of the highest graduation rates in the country. What makes this accomplishment even more impressive is that Duke has a reputation for a very tough academic program, yet Coach K draws the top players to his program, makes them winners and he gets them to graduate.

Professional teams win for a long time because they are able to keep the same core of players together. The only constant factor in Duke's long run of success has been Coach K. The players have come and gone, but the



Photo courtesy of jsonline.com

Mike Krzyzewski - fondly referred to as 'Coach K' - has been Duke's Head Coach for more than 20 seasons. Coach K helped Duke make it to the NCAA tournament 16 times.

program continues to thrive. That success has to be credited to the coach. Every year, Duke

is a legitimate contender for the National Championship. No other program, over this long of a span,

can claim that, and it's all thanks to Coach K.