

SPORTS

PSU Sports @ Glance

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This year the Boston Celtics hit a new level of futility setting a franchise record with 17 straight losses. They have a talented young core of players, but are led by one of the worst coaches in the NBA—Doc Rivers. Why hasn't Rivers been fired? He is admittedly one of the nicest guys in the NBA. He is so nice, reporters won't write negative articles about him because they like him so much. However, the fact remains he is a terrible coach, incapable of making game-time decisions. What does this have to do with Penn State? We have the college version of Doc Rivers coaching our men's basketball team—Ed Dechellis—lucky us.

I hinted at it last year, but apparently, Graham Spanier and Tim Curley couldn't figure it out between them. So, I'm just going to come right out and say it: FIRE ED DECHELLIS. I don't care that he is a "Penn State" guy and certainly don't give a damn how "nice" he is. Dechellis cannot coach and until a real coach is brought in, this team will continue to be terrible. This is a more talented team than Penn State has ever had and they had the season they had in spite of Dechellis. Look at this team—Big Ten Freshman of the Year Jamelle Comley, All Big Ten Player Geary Claxton, and a great pure shooter Mike Walker.

Then consider that Penn State has arguably the top point guard in New York, Talor Battle, committed to them for next year (which has nothing to do with the recruiting skills of Dechellis, as Battle has family that graduated from Penn State). This is easily the best talent pool Penn State has ever had and it is being wasted by an incompetent coach in Dechellis. Whenever Dechellis' name is brought up, you always hear the same defense, "He is such a nice guy, give him some more time." That is great and all, but "nice" does not win basketball games and neither does Dechellis. A real argument contains facts, like the one you are about to read (Patriot News and 1460 AM—I suggest you take some notes). Dechellis has amassed a 41-69 record at Penn State. That is a 37% winning percentage. Most coaches would have been fired before they could reach such a level of atrocity, but Dechellis was given a four year contract extension. I know; it is mind-boggling. Why? Here is the problem. Penn State is used to being terrible at basketball, so last year when they made a surprisingly successful season (which by the way was a mediocre 15-15 record); everyone thought Dechellis must be some great coach. That couldn't be further from the truth. The fact is that this talented team was able to win 15 games in spite of the terrible coaching it had to endure.

This was and is a 20-25 win team with NCAA tournament potential (if they had a real coach). The biggest problem with Dechellis is that he cannot properly manage a game in any way. I think the defining statistic is, in games decided by 10 points or less, Dechellis is 18-31. Again, that is a 37% winning percentage. These losses, in my opinion, fall directly back on the coach. It means your team played hard and was in the game, but when it counted, the coach made bad decisions. This is Dechellis. He seems clueless in every situation. His play calling on defense is atrocious. In a league where virtually every team can shoot the three, he insists on running the 2-3 zone—the defense most vulnerable to the three. Until Penn State brings in a big name coach who can make the proper decisions and recruit some more good players, Penn State will continue to set new lows for the basketball program. We are currently in the middle of a nine game losing streak. Hopefully Curley will learn from the Celtics before we match them at 17. Say it with me now, FIRE ED DECHELLIS.

Lady Lions out of Big Ten by 78-61 defeat to Buckeyes

By **RUSTY MILLER**
Associated Press

In a career of highlights, this might have been the peak for Jessica Davenport.

Davenport scored 26 points and Star Allen added 22 to help No. 5 Ohio State beat Penn State 78-61 Thursday night to clinch at least a share of its third consecutive Big Ten title.

The Buckeyes (25-2, 14-1) lead Purdue by a game heading into their regular-season finale at Michigan on Sunday.

"This ranks pretty high," Davenport

the game, she passed Katie Smith for the school record with 827.

"The thing I like about Jess is she lets the game come to her," said Penn State coach Rene Portland, in her 31st year as a head coach. "She doesn't try to dominate the game ... but she dominates the game. And she's a great role model because of her temperament."

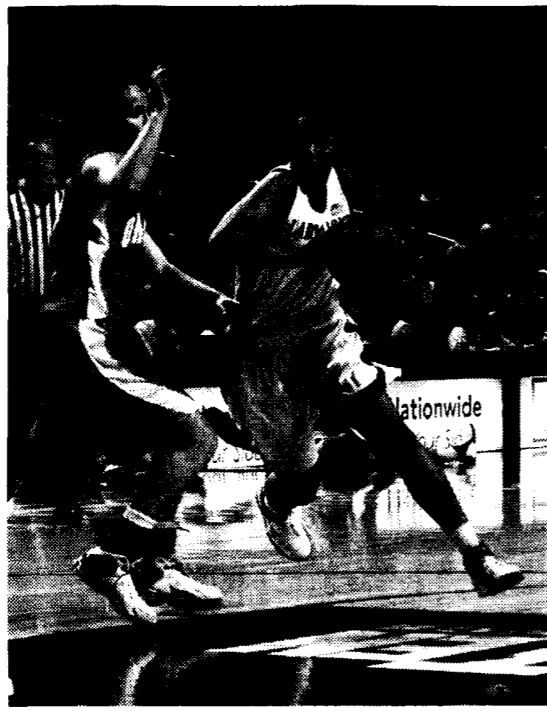
The Buckeyes shot 65 percent from the field.

Asked the secret to winning titles, Ohio

backup center Andrea Walker with 1.3 seconds left, made it close.

Grant scored eight points in a 10-2 surge that drew Penn State to 55-50. The Lions got as close as four points at 57-53 with 7:58 left before Ohio State pulled away.

"We would be three to five



Tyra Grant prepares to shoot as she maneuvers past Ohio State defenders on her way to the lane.



Brianne O'Rourke drives through the Buckeye defenders, headed for the basket.

State coach Jim Foster said it was simple.

"(It's) that we have good players," he said. "You don't win without great

players. It's a basic prerequisite for winning. We have very good players and they are unselfish, they share the ball and they talk most of the time on defense."

Once again Ohio State had trouble putting away a team. Its 30-game Big Ten and 27-game home winning streaks were snapped in a 62-59 loss to No. 2 Michigan State on Sunday.

The Buckeyes began the second half by expanding on their nine-point halftime lead. Trebilcock, in a shooting slump until the last few games, drilled a 3-pointer and Allen scored inside to push the lead to 42-28, the largest of the night to that point.

But the Nittany Lions, who lost the earlier meeting 63-61 on Jan. 11 on two free throws by Buckeyes'

(points) down and it would blossom someplace else," Portland said.

Trebilcock was a seldom-used sub for most of the season until second-leading scorer Brandie Hoskins tore her Achilles' tendon four games ago. She has since thrived in a starting role.

She hit a 12-foot fadeaway after a timeout before Davenport hit four free throws to push the lead to 64-53. The lead never fell below eight points again.

"Before the game, someone said, 'Let's go out and do it for the seniors,'" said Trebilcock, a first-year transfer from UCLA. "That motivated me to play a little bit harder."

The teams combined for 39 turnovers, but the result was beautiful for the Buckeyes.

"It was great to have your family and friends watch you and to have the fans recognize you in your final home game," Davenport said. "And it was our third straight. That is pretty exciting right now."

Miami struggle without Wade in lineup

By **DAVID JIMINEZ**
Associated Press

If Thursday night's game against the Dallas Mavericks is any indicator, it may be a hard road for the Miami Heat without Dwyane Wade.

One night after Wade dislocated his left shoulder, the Mavericks jumped out to a 23-point halftime lead on the way to a 112-100 victory over the defending NBA champs.

Wade is considering season-ending surgery to repair his shoulder after he was hurt in the fourth quarter of Wednesday night's 112-102 loss at Houston. Wade flew home early Thursday in a private plane and was examined at a hospital by team physician Dr. Harlan Selesnick, who conducted a battery of tests.

And without Wade—the NBA's third-leading scorer at nearly 29 points per game—the Heat didn't look like the same team that won Game 6 of the championship series on Dallas' home floor.

"Basically everything goes through (Wade) offensively," Miami forward Udonis Haslem said. "We've got to find a way to make adjustments. We've got a lot to prove with him out."

Heat coach Pat Riley said he expects Wade to make a decision on whether to have the surgery in the next two days.

"We need to regroup offensively," Riley said. "We have to get our heads back into it. The next week is going to be big for us."

In other games, it was, Chicago 84, Cleveland 78 and Washington 109, Sacramento 106.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 31 points and grabbed 11 rebounds as the Mavericks won their 10th straight and 31st in 33 games. Dallas became just the fourth team in NBA history to post three winning streaks of 10 or more in the same season.

Jason Terry scored 16 points in the second quarter as the Mavericks led 65-42 at halftime. Dallas led by as much as 32 in the fourth quarter.

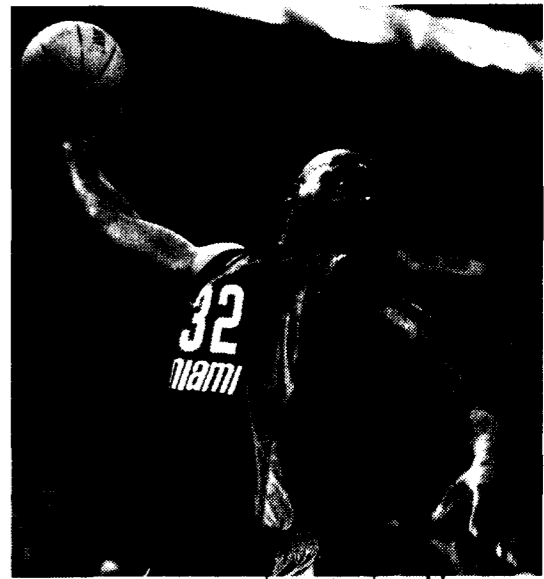
"We haven't won anything yet," Nowitzki said. "We want to be the best team in June, not in February. It's so

early. We've got a lot of games left."

Since Miami won its first NBA championship last June, things have not gone smoothly.

Riley returned this week after being sidelined since Jan. 3 for operations to replace his left hip and repair cartilage in his right knee.

Point guard Jason Williams returned Wednesday night after missing 20 games with a torn abdominal muscle.



Fans are concerned it may take more than Shaq to keep the Heat in contention.

Star center Shaquille O'Neal is still rounding into form after missing 39 games with a knee injury. He had 17 points and eight rebounds Thursday night in his 10th game back.

"I'll probably be taking the bulk of the shots now," O'Neal said. "And when I'm doubled, guys have to be ready to shoot."

Regardless of Wade's choice of treatment, his injury further weakens the Heat's bid to repeat. They may be hard-pressed merely to make the playoffs.

The Heat had won seven of eight games to reach .500, their best record since they were 3-3, and appeared ready to surge into the playoffs.

But Miami has now lost two consecutive games and its hold on the eighth and final playoff spot could be slipping away.

Miami is 1 1/2 games ahead of the New York Knicks. The Washington Wizards have a six-game cushion over the Heat in the Southeast Division.

"That's all it's about for us," Riley said. "Let's find a way to get into the playoffs and see what we can do."

PSH Basketball holds championship potential

By **MEGAN RESSER**
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Both the men and women's PSH basketball teams are close to being able to enter post-season playoffs. As athletic director Rahsaan Carlton said, "It's going to come down to the wire for both teams." Since the beginning of the Spring semester, both teams have enjoyed remarkable success.

The men's team has worked incredibly hard and turned what began as a frustrating season into a more successful one, earning themselves a 7-2 record in 2007.

The women's team has continued to produce solid performances, earning a 6-1 record in the 2007 portion of their season.

With an overall record of 11-7 and a PSUAC record of 8-2, the women's team is currently in second place in the Southern Division. If they can maintain this standing through the end of the regular season, they will be host to the third place team on Monday, March 5 for the first round of PSUAC playoffs.

If the women win this game, they will proceed to the Final Four at the Bryce Jordan Center in University Park on Friday, March 9. The winners of the Final Four games will play for the Championship on Saturday, March 10. The PSH women are especially determined to make it to

this game and win because they lost the Championship game last year by an incredibly close score.

The PSUAC men's playoffs are slightly more complicated because there are three divisions sending teams to the Final Four. Divisional playoffs consist of the top two teams in each division and two "wild card" teams.

These "wild card" teams are the next two teams with the best records regardless of their division. The PSH men's team is in a slightly more precarious position than the women's team, being that they are currently in contention for one of these "wild card" playoff births as the third place team in the South division. Their overall record stands at 8-14 and their PSUAC record is 8-7.

If the men continue to play well they will most likely play an away playoff game hosted by one of the divisional champions on Monday, March 5.

Winners of these games will be re-seeded based on the first round seedings. The #1 team will play the #4 team and the #2 team will face off against the #3 team in the Final Four games on Friday, March 9 at the Bryce Jordan Center. The men's Championship game will be held on Saturday, March 10.

An update including the results of the last few regular-season games and the most current playoff situation for each team will appear in the next issue of the Capital Times.

Penguins beat Panthers, 2-1

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pittsburgh goalie Jocelyn Thibault made his coach's decision look good.

Making only his fourth start since Dec. 21, Thibault outdueled veteran Ed Belfour to help the Penguins slip past Florida for a 2-1 victory.

Colby Armstrong beat Belfour at 2:39 of overtime to win it with a wrist shot to the short side when he skated in on a 2-on-1 after taking a pass from Maxime Talbot.

"He (Belfour) started cheating over when he thought I was going to pass it, Armstrong said. "I just decided to shoot it when he came off (the post) a little bit. He just went down, so I put it up high."

Therrien decided to go with Thibault instead of regular goalie Marc-Andre Fleury after Fleury gave up six goals in a 6-5 loss to the Islanders on Monday that snapped the Penguins' 14-0-2 streak.

Thibault stopped 32 of 33 shots, including 18 of 19 in the second period.

"That's a performance you need from your goaltender this time of year," Pittsburgh coach Michel Therrien said. "The guy between the pipes has to make key saves, and that's what Jocelyn did."

"I've been working real hard all year, just waiting in the shadows, waiting for my chance, said Thibault, who improved to 4-5-2 this season. "When I get a chance to play I want

to make the best of it."

"It's a great feeling to be able to chip in towards the end of the season. All year I've felt like my game was coming back."

For Belfour, it was another strong performance.

Belfour made 39 saves, including several key stops in the third period to keep the score tied at 1.



Penguins' Sydney Crosby faces off against Panthers' Gregory Campbell.

"He's been pretty outstanding in that last little stretch; tonight was no different, Florida defenseman Jay Bouwmeester said. "He kept us in the game for a while. It's pretty amazing what he's doing for a guy who's over 40 years old."

Jordan Staal also scored for Pittsburgh, which won at Florida for only the second time in 10 games.

Juraj Kolnik scored for Florida, which dropped to 1-13 in overtime and shootout games this season.

"I think we're all pretty disappointed right now even though we got a point, defenseman Mike Van Ryn said. "We're pretty much in desperation time, we need every point we can get."

Staal scored in the first period on a 5-on-3 power play when he tipped in Evgeni Malkin's slap shot while standing in front of the net with 3:35 left.

Florida tied it with 2:19 left in the second period after a nice effort by Chris Gratton, who dumped the puck into the Pittsburgh end, got to the loose puck and backhanded a pass that Kolnik tipped in from the front of the net.

The Panthers had other scoring chances in the second period, but Thibault made the stops on several occasions.

"Both goalies were battling the whole game, said Penguins center Sidney Crosby. "(Thibault) stuck in there the whole way and made some huge saves to keep us in the game and that was a real big difference in the game."

"It was a battle between those two guys all night. It wasn't a tight-checking game, it was wide open. Both guys were really good."

In the end, though, Thibault was just a little bit better.

"It was a pretty good goaltending duel tonight," Armstrong said. "Thibault played awesome. He made some huge saves. This was a good game to win against a good team that came at us hard."