Eye on Sports

Four year sports rule hits home

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With the advent of the four-year baccalaureate degree at the Commonwealth campuses the Penn State athletic program has begun to change with the times. Starting in the fall semester of 2003, Penn State Delco - along with 13 other Commonwealth campuses - will be eligible to play student who are in their third and fourth years with the team in the Commonwealth's new four-year athletic eligibility program.

"This is an exciting time for all Penn State students at our Commonwealth campuses," said John Fritz, director of the CCAC, in a published release from the Office of University Relations. "This is the natural thing to do, with these campuses offering four-year academic programs. Their involvement in athletics is a big part of their overall educational experience. The student-athletes at the Commonwealth campuses will have an opportunity to play an extended schedule for four years."

The program will only be available in the fall for the women's volleyball and in the winter for the men's basketball. The school's other varsity sports - women's basketball, soccer, baseball, and team tennis - will remain with their current two-year eligibility although plans are going to effect that will also bring four-year eligibility to the rest of the teams

The Penn State athletic department believes that change will better the Penn State experience for student-athletes.

"Athletic competition plays an important part in the educational experience of thousands of Penn State student-athletes," said Tim Curley, Penn State director of athletics. "We look forward to these exciting changes."

Fourteen teams comprise the Commonwealth College Athletic Conference (CCAC). Abington, Berks-Lehigh Valley, Delaware County, Hazleton, Schuykill, Wilkes-Barre, Worthington/Scranton and York make up the eastern bracket while Beaver, DuBois, Fayette, McKeesport, Mont Alto and New Kensington are the west.

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When and where is your final?

If your class meets at:	Then your final is:		If your class meets at:	Then your final is:
MWF at 8:30 a.m.	Mon. Dec. 16, 8:30 - 10:20 a.m.		MWF at 4:30 p.m.	Wed. Dec. 18, 4:30 - 6:20 p.m.
MWF at 9:30 a.m.	Tues. Dec. 17, 8:30 - 10:20 a.m.		W at 2:30 p.m.	Wed. Dec. 18, 4:30 - 6:20 p.m.
MWF at 10:30 a.m.	Tues. Dec. 17, 12:30 - 2:20 p.m.		W at 3:00 p.m.	Wed. Dec. 18, 4:30 - 6:20 p.m.
MWF at 11:30 a.m.	Mon. Dec. 16, 10:30 -12:20 p.m.		W at 3:30 p.m.	Wed. Dec. 18, 4:30 - 6:20 p.m.
MWF at 1:30 p.m.	Wed. Dec. 18, 12:30 - 2:20 p.m.		TR at 8:30 a.m.	Wed. Dec. 18, 8:30 - 10:20 a.m.
MWF at 2:30 p.m.	Thurs. Dec. 19, 2:30 - 4:20 p.m.		TR at 10:00 a.m	Thurs. Dec. 19, 10:30 - 12:20 p.m.
M at 2:30 p.m.	Thurs. Dec. 19, 2:30 - 4:20 p.m.		TR at 1:00 p.m.	Fri. Dec. 20, 10:30 - 12:20 p.m.
M at 3:00 p.m.	Thurs. Dec. 19, 2:30 - 4:20 p.m.		TR at 2:30 p.m.	Mon. Dec. 16, 2:30 - 4:20 p.m.
MWF at 3:30 p.m.	Fri. Dec. 20, 12:20 - 2:20 p.m.		R at 3:00 p.m.	Mon. Dec. 16, 2:30 - 4:20 p.m.
			TR at 4:00 p.m.	Tues. Dec. 17, 2:30 - 4:20 p.m.
			T at 3:00 p.m.	Tues. Dec. 17, 2:30 - 4:20 p.m.

The Computer Guy

Santa uses a PDA: Gift ideas for the techie you love

This issue of my article is dedicated to the holidays. May it bring you happiness and good cheer....and an empty bank account. In the spirit of the holidays, I have decided to give the readers a buying guide for geeks, techies, or people that just like cool gear.

PDA / PIM (Personal Digital Assistant / Personal Information Manager)

The Palm Pilot was the father of the modern PDA, and may be on the top of your techie's wish list. Even "normal" people are starting to carry around these electronic schedulers. Here at Penn State, some staff members are using Palm IIIc's, and even faculty are looking into teaching classes with integrated Palm m515's. They have become somewhat of a phenomenon over the last few years, and continue to grow in numbers and functionality. But, Palm isn't the only game in town. The higher end competition is Windows CE devices. The Palm OS runs on PDA's such as Palm Inc's m515, Zire, or m305, and Handspring's Treo and Edge. Windows CE runs on PDA's such as Compaq's I-paq. The only difference between the two is style. You can liken it to using a PC or a Mac....both get the job done, just in different ways. The device itself (the hardware, or the solid thing you hold) is a different story. Handspring PDA's have a Springboard slot for expansion hardware such as digital cameras, MP3 players, and GPS devices. Palm Inc. PDA's have expansion slots that can handle extra memory, wireless cards, and eBooks. On the other hand, you have the option of buying a Microsoft CE based PDA such as the Ipaq. The Ipaq has support for Microdrives (very small hard drives), plays MP3's, and even supports PCMCIA devices (those that also work in a laptop) through an adapter sleeve. All models come with or without color, but just keep in mind that functionality has a direct relationship to price, and an inverse relationship to bank account. Look to spend about $99 for the low-end Palm Zire, or $299 for the decent color screen m515. The low model I-Paq model h1910 has a color screen, and decent memory for about $299.

MP3 Players

Now that MP3's are REALLY popular, buying a MP3 player for that someone special may not be such a bad idea. There are two types: Solid State and CD. Solid state means that there are no moving parts. There are many manufacturers of solid state MP3 players (Rio, Nike, etc.) and they range in price and amount of music they can store. Keep in mind that 32 MB of memory can store about 1 hour of music, and most players can be upgraded with the addition of Flash Memory. The typical standard is now 64MB, up from the standard 32 last year. Most connect to your PC through USB, so make sure your PC has a USB port (small almost flat rectangle plug with NO little pins). The Apple MP3 player is an exception to the rule. Apple's product is actually a small hard drive that interfaces with the PC through firewire. The plus to that is you can store files and other stuff on the drive instead of just MP3's. The alternative is a MP3 CD player. This device uses regular CD-R's and has the advantage of storing up to 720MB of music (many hours), but the disadvantage of having moving parts. For those of you who don't need a high-impact device, the MP3 CD player may be the best choice, especially if your car stereo has a line-in plug in the front. Even for light bumps, most have a 30-60 second memory for the occasional pot-hole or speed bump. You can even find car stereos (head units) that support CD-R media in MP3 and WMA formats. I own a solid state MP3 player because I can run and exercise without my music skipping. Look to spend less than $100 on either kind of MP3 player.

Wireless Networks

Wireless networks have become all the rage this year, and they are starting to pop up in homes and businesses. If you haven't heard already, our campus has one available to students with the correct hardware. There are two types of wireless available: 802.11a and 802.11b. The major manufacturer of wireless gear for the home market is Linksys, so we'll explain some of their product line. Linksys has just released a duel-band wireless access point/switch/router (Model WRT51AB). What this means is that is will support both types of wireless networks (A+B), has 4 plugs for a wired local area network, and will split your cable or DSL connection for multiple computers, so you can share the internet. This is probably the best choice for someone building a home network because the device does everything but bake a cake. But, the price tag is a little hefty: $250. The only other thing you need is a wireless device for your computer. These come in many types: USB, PCI Card, or PCMCIA card. Generally, the PCI card will go in a desktop or Tower PC, and the PCMCIA card will go in a laptop. The USB type can plug into any PC with a USB port. In my opinion, they all work well, but currently the Linksys line will not work on Penn State's wireless network. Look to spend about $50 for the USB wireless, PCI wireless, or PCMCIA wireless card. Please, remember to read your users manual and enable WEP encryption.

Well, whatever you choose for your techie, make it a good one...and have a happy holiday! See you on January 13th...