

Eye on Sports

Skating off of thin ice

Hockey club has come a long way

By AMY MCGREGOR and JULIA HAGAN
Special to the *Lion's Eye*

Most student-athletes would laugh at the idea of an 11 p.m. practice at an off-campus facility.

But for the Penn State Delaware County ice hockey team, late practices at IceWorks in Aston are the norm. The club team plays in Division III of the Delaware Valley Collegiate Hockey Conference (DVCHC). Its season, the longest of any school athletic team, runs from August to March, and this year's season has included its share of setbacks and successes.

The squad consists of a number of returning players and freshmen, but the team was often forced to play with only 10 players available.

The reliable goaltending skills of goalie Jeff Wild, offensive skills of leading scorers Ryan Cell and Nick Gallo and the arrival of experienced hockey coach Paul Gilligan after the winter break were all factors influencing the team's achievements.

After the entrance of their new coach, the team went undefeated for the rest of the regular season.

But perhaps the greatest explanation of the Lions' success has been strong cooperation and spirit.

"We are a family on and off the ice," said Gallo, a captain.

Co-captain Tom Fischer added, "We have the most heart of any team."

The club, ranked fourth nationally, is just two votes away from a trip to Nationals. The Lions completed the regular season with a 16-6-2 record, competing well against schools including Rutgers, Johns Hopkins and La Salle.

Heading into the playoffs Feb. 20, the team felt it had a "good shot," and hoped for another game against rival Penn State Berks.

The quarterfinal matchup against Rowan resulted in a 5-4 overtime victory. The semifinal game against Bryn Athyn brought another win, 6-1, and advanced

Men's team wraps it up



Frank Farnese meets during a timeout with his Penn State Delco men's basketball team, which finished up its season this weekend on the road. A season recap will appear in the April edition of the *Lion's Eye*.

Lion's Eye staff photo

the team to the league championship, a best-of-three series against Penn State Berks, to be held at the Lehigh Valley Ice Arena.

The team is upbeat about next season, already

recruiting new freshmen, and is still offering tickets for a dirt-bike raffle to be held March 19.

For more information on the club, including results of the playoff finals, contact DXR192@psu.edu.

Reinforcements on the way for women's hoops

By The *Lion's Eye* staff

Long before the Penn State Delco women's basketball team ended its 2003-04 season in Hazleton Feb. 16, the 2004-05 season had already begun for its coach, Joe D'Antonio.

"From the day we got the job we've been out recruiting," said D'Antonio. "From going to AAU shootouts to visiting high schools, we've been making connections with coaches and athletes."

The goal for D'Antonio and assistant Larry Johnson, of course, is to corral some reinforcements for the seven women who held together for a long but not unrewarding 1-17 campaign that just ended.

Four or five of those stalwarts are due back for next season, including

leading scorer Dana Johnson, and D'Antonio says he's gotten commitments from "at least six" local high school players to give him a head start on next season.

Already, Megan Peterkin from Delco Christian School, Angela Clupp of Interboro and Katie McBrearty of Upper Darby have completed the necessary paperwork and are on the Penn State Delco rolls for next semester.

"And all six of the girls coming in have played high school basketball and had success doing it," said D'Antonio. "We're going to be improved drastically, skill-wise."

From a morale standpoint, though, D'Antonio acknowledges that it will be hard for any future team to top what the seven members of his first team gave him.

And that, despite the fact that 17 times out of 18, their effort on the court came up short.

"We battled it," said D'Antonio, "we got an all-out effort, every night."

The mettle of the Lions was tested to the end. In their game Feb. 12 against Delaware County Community College, Amy McGregor took a finger in the eye, causing her to miss the rest of that game as well as the final two games of the season.

"We played the final seven minutes of (the DCCC) game with four players, because of the injury and fouls," said D'Antonio. "And we went the last 2½ games with six players, not seven."

"But the girls kept on coming, right to the end. It was a big accomplishment. They never missed, anyone. They enjoyed being there. I enjoyed

being there."

Joining Johnson as returnees will be Brooke Edwards, Florence Akuffo and Molly Hoffman. McGregor is eligible for another season, but is considering transferring to West Chester University for academic reasons.

Jillian Reilly and Stacie Mann have used their two years of eligibility.

"We didn't go into the season worrying about wins and losses," D'Antonio said. "We're not under pressure to win to be a successful program. Our gauge of success is whether the girls become better athletes and students."

"And you could see that. You could see the difference in the girls by the end of the season."

And by next season, help will be on the way.