

Eye on Sports

The playoff push

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Penn State Delco men's basketball coach Gary Kasmer keeps his team's mission simple, yet imperative.

"Our main goals as a team are to play aggressively, limit turnovers, and, most importantly, value the ball."

They're just a few things Kasmer told his players during a recent practice.

The lessons sink in, slowly but surely.

"Coach keeps us focused and makes sure we play our hardest every game," said team captain Mike Thornton.

The Lions seem to be grasping Kasmer's philosophy and are in a playoff race with division rival Penn State Abington. In fact, a game canceled by last Thursday's snowstorm against Abington would have determined Delco's playoff fate.

Delco has had a huge turnaround in the second half of its season and really picked up its intensity, in tune with Kasmer's philosophy of aggressive defense.

The Lions hope to keep that same intensity to go deep into the playoffs.

There are only a few faces left on the roster that experienced the disappointing previous season.

"The team has already doubled its wins from last season, so that's an accomplishment all in itself," Kasmer said.

But even though the team is playing well now, the Lions know they must play harder in order to thrive.

Valuing the ball seems to be Kasmer's main focus. Valuing the ball? It means treat every possession like the game is on the line and make smart, efficient decisions with the ball.

The philosophy is easier said than done, but it really goes hand-in-hand with Kasmer's other two goals: When you play aggressive and limit your turnovers valuing the ball comes a lot easier.

Thornton, the Lions' leading scorer, is having the best season on his career, averaging nearly 30

Rested women's basketball team awaits some action in the playoffs

By KATIE NEWS
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Snow covers the grounds at Penn State Delco as the Lady Lions' final game of the season is canceled.

A nonleague game against Cumberland County Community College was scheduled to keep the womens fresh, considering they had an entire week off before a scheduled playoff game yesterday.

The Lions had an extremely busy two weeks of games starting with a tough 68-60 loss to Penn State York Feb. 8.

"Both teams played great games," said Joe DiAntonio, the women's basketball coach. "The girls shot well and played good defense as a team."

The Lady Lions also lost to Northampton Community College in overtime, 68-60. The toughest loss seemed to be to Penn State Mont Alto, 67-66.

On a positive note, the ladies defeated Penn State Abington Feb. 11 at home, 58-39. Along with Abington, Penn State Scranton went down, 81-50. The Lady Lions' record stands at 12-11 entering the postseason.

Men's hoops hoping to extend year into postseason



Courtesy www.de.psu.edu

Under first-year head coach Gary Kasmer, right, the Penn State men's basketball team has made a strong second-half run and is very much in contention for the playoffs.

points a game. Even with the career year Thorton knows he must bring, his A-game in order for the team to flourish.

"I have a lot of responsibility being the team's go-to-guy," he said. "I need to stay focused and play and aggressive but smart game."

But Thornton isn't the only player that has stepped up. Freshman Mark Sabatini and forward Brandon Easley, who missed the beginning of the season, have stepped up their game and really made a huge impact.

With the season nearing end the players are focused on making a name for themselves in the

playoffs. "We have really good team chemistry and have a chance to roll into the playoffs with a lot of momentum," Thornton said.

If the men's team reaches the playoffs, it will be a huge accomplishment, for not only the players but the school.

If the team proves it is a championship-caliber team, hopefully a larger fan base will arise and the students at Penn State Delco will have a new team to root for.

Either way, the team has come a long way from last year and has exceeded most people's expectations.

Hockey club heads to nationals on a high

By JULIA HAGAN
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The Penn State Delco ice hockey team has advanced to the Delaware Valley Collegiate Hockey Conference finals in first-place position, and earned a berth in the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) Nationals.

Feb. 20, Delco defeated Shippensburg, 3-2, in a semifinal game that marked the return of defenseman Dan Baer, who injured his ankle during the team's Florida tournament in January. The third period brought goals from Nick Gallo and John O'Connor. Then, four minutes into an intense overtime, freshman Marty Spellman scored the game winner.

The win advanced the Lions to the DVCHC finals, a best-of-three competition held last weekend against league rival Penn State Berks.

The ACHA nationals, hosted by California University of Pa., will be held March 2-5 in Pittsburgh. Delco placed second in the Atlantic

region (the top three schools from each region advance). The Lions are undefeated in league play and 28-5-2 overall.

"It's great to be a part of a team that actually has a chance of winning nationals," said Mike Tremonte, who re-upped in January after a two-season hiatus.

"We've come so close to winning playoffs and making nationals," said Tom Fischer. "This season means more because it's my last year. It'd be nice to actually do it this time."

The Lions were determined to accept invitations to both events, despite the hectic schedule.

"You're on a hockey team to play hockey," said Tremonte. "Are players going to get hurt? Yeah, but we're still going to play."

"The team is the closest bunch of players that I have ever played with," said Ryan Cell. "Most of us all hang out together outside the rink and that shows on the ice."

Freshmen Brian McCoy and Mike Kelly, both top scorers, will be unable to play in nations due to injuries.