

Eye on Sports

Always Lots of Hype Over NCAA Picks; 2006 Is No Different

By JOHN MILLER
jmm833@psu.edu

For years now, the month of March has been synonymous with March Madness and the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament.

And this year the great City of Brotherly Love hosted the first and second round games. Add to that two Big Five teams represent Philadelphia in the tournament. They are the Ivy League champ Penn Quakers and Big East co-champion Villanova Wildcats.

Villanova will play Monmouth after their victory over Hampton in the annual "play in" game which is held two nights before the actual tournament begins.

After the selection show on Sunday March 12, some controversy erupted. The NCAA Selection Committee picked the Air Force Academy for an at-large spot when clearly some teams such as Cincinnati and Creighton had better records.

Another surprise was the small Mississippi Valley Conference receiving four at large bids. That is four out of the eight slots left after the "power" conferences like the Big Ten, Big East, with the ACC taking the other 26.

According to the committee's chairman Craig Littlepage, he and the NCAA picked the right teams: "The field is really solid and diverse."

What's not surprising is that CBS's Jim Nantz and Billy Packer had a "problem" with the whole selection process. And why is that? It's because the NCAA is now using computer profiles to figure out which teams deserve to go or not.

However, the four Number One seeds have also sparked a lot of talk among experts. They claim that our teams - Duke, Connecticut, Villanova, and Memphis could potentially become the first four number one seeds to make up the Final Four in Indianapolis April 1.

But as always some experts also feel that a handful of teams could be sleepers just waiting to upset one of those number ones.

USA Today believes these four teams to be a threat as the tournament progresses.

The first is Pittsburgh, due to Jamie Dixon and his knack for enthusiasm and leadership on and off the court. The second is Michigan State. With veteran coach Tom Izzo holding the reins, anything's possible.

The third is Syracuse whose record breaking four wins in four nights at the Big East Tournament led by their senior guard Gerry McNamara have sparked the dreams of a national championship back into the minds of the Orange.

Finally, there's the Arizona Wildcats who will have to depend on Lute Olson, a man who knows what it is like to play in the one and done scenario.

As for our hometown favorites, the Penn Quakers will have to surpass the Texas Longhorns before even thinking about their national title hopes. Villanova on the other hand, will feel practically at home for their first and second round games because they will be played at the Wachovia Center in South Philadelphia, the site of their exciting victory over Connecticut last month.



So Close!

The Penn-State Delaware County Ice Hockey team lost to Penn State Berks in a three-game series at the Warwick Arena. The players dropped the first game 5-2, came roaring back in the second to take it 5-3, and had to take a heart-breaking loss in the third game, 2-1.

PSU-Delco Icemen Deem Hockey Season a 'Success'

By JULIA HAGAN
Special to the Lion's Eye

The Penn State Delaware County ice hockey team concluded another winning season on Feb. 26, but did not clench the championship title of the Delaware Valley Collegiate Hockey Conference (DVCHC).

The team lost to Penn State Berks in the nail-biting three game series. On Friday, Delco could not sustain its first period momentum and Berks won 5-2. Delco responded strong Saturday with a 5-3 win, and the tense game Sunday ended with another league title for Berks and a painfully close 2-1 final score. The dedication and energy exhibited by both Penn State teams established their entitlement to another tense championship showdown.

"All in all, I think the season was a success," said head manager and team president Thomas Fischer. Delco's final record was 18-5-2 overall and 14-3-2 in the

DVCHC.

"The core group will be gone next year," said Fischer. "It will be very different with a younger team."

Coach Paul Gilligan has already begun the off season recruitment process.

Fischer said that hockey at Penn State Delaware County is important to more than just the players and fans.

"The ice hockey club is the only club at Delco that brings in such a considerable percentage, nearly two percent, of incoming students to the campus," he said.

The DVCHC championship series marked the final college hockey games for some of Delco's finest veteran players including Ryan Cell, Nick Gallo, Myles Peterson, and goalie Jeff Wild.

"I'll miss it," said Cell. "But I'm sure all of these guys will continue to play hockey in one way or another. I won't miss the late practices, but I've matured a lot through playing hockey here."

Coach's Corner

What a Great Time for Sports Fans!

By JOE DIANTONIO
Special to the Lion's Eye

The beginning of March kicks off an awesome time in the world of sports.

The NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments are just starting to kick off. Last second shots, bracket busters, and upsets are what make these events so exciting. Outside of the college basketball scene, the Philadelphia Flyers and Seventy-Sixers will be jockeying for position in their respective playoffs. A run for the Stanley Cup or a chance to make the NBA finals begins

in March with key home stand or an overtime win.

Technically speaking, the Phillies are still tied for first place with every other team in the National League East. If you need more to get your competitive juices flowing, come out to see Penn State Delaware County's Baseball team compete for a PSUAC championship. Dominant pitching from Karl Jastzebski and John Brady will be the driving force behind their title run.

Keep an eye out for the game updates!

