

Between



The Lions

With Elliot Krane
Sports Editor

Basketball Opener

Although the Susquehanna team the Lion basketballers will face tomorrow evening has little in the way of "big" name athletes, the visitors will bring along a coach with one of the "biggest" names in organized sports. He's Amos Alonzo Stagg, Jr., son of the former coach of the College of the Pacific.

Alonzo Stagg, Sr., is still active in football and coaches at the Selinsgrove college. His son assists him in the grid sport and takes charge of the indoor season while Alonzo, Sr., makes plans for his 60th season on the gridiron.

High Scorers

The Susquehanna "Crusaders" are not to be regarded lightly. Even though the little college won only seven out of seventeen contests last year, they never failed to score at least 40 points per game. And against Wesley College the Orange and Maroon team hit an even 100 mark.

The man responsible for most of last year's prolific point-making, Evan Zlock, graduated last season, but his brother Charles, will try to keep up the fraternal tradition tomorrow night.

Last season, Susquehanna averaged 50 points per game, twice hitting the 70 bracket and three times the 60 mark. This game should be an excellent proving ground for Coach Gross' defensive patterns which have been patterned after his predecessor's famous sliding zone.

Like Old Times

The Washington and Jefferson basketball team has inaugurated practice sessions, and from the imposing list of returnees, Coach Gross will have a lot to think about before the team travels to Washington, Pa., in January.

Although high-scoring Tom Osso has left via the graduation route, names like Alcorn, Devic, Knoche and Mestrovic still remain on the President's roster.

Carlson at Corn

Not to be outdone by its "up-state country cousins" Pittsburgh has signed for a bowl tournament during the Christmas vacation. While the Penn State basketball team is playing in the Raleigh bowl, the Pitt squad will go west to compete in the Corn Bowl at Des Moines.

Opposition for the panthers will be provided by Utah State, Tennessee, and Drake.

Unlike W. and J., Pittsburgh has been hit and hit hard by graduation. Only George McCrossin, a guard, and Lou Cecconi, forward, have been left from Carlson's 1948 traveling circus.

On Wrestling

Far, far above Cayuga's waters a little over 50 miles to be exact, the Syracuse wrestling team is dusting off a spot on the mantle for the 1950 Eastern Intercollegiate championship. Eight varsity

Lion Cagers Open Slate Tomorrow

New Players, Coach Face Susquehanna

Come 8 o'clock tomorrow night in Rec Hall, Penn State's basketball mentor Elmer Gross will be sweating out his debut as head Lion coach against Susquehanna University.

Although it will also mark the first appearance in State spangles for some nine other anxious athletes, odds can be laid that none will be as nervous as Gross.

Several things lie in the balance of tomorrow's game. For one, a victory for Gross will mean starting the season on the right foot before a critical home audience. Attendance in the Lions' spacious arena has slacked off noticeably the past few seasons and an opening day triumph will go far in boosting the Nittany fans' morale.

PLATOON?

He will also be gnawing his nails in anticipation of how his experimental two-platoon system will stand up under actual collegiate fire. After two months of molding, Gross will unveil his new departure in attack which employs two separate units replacing each other quarterly.

An assistant coach since 1946, the 31-year-old Penn State alumnus was handed the Lion reins last spring following the surprise retirement of John Lawther.

FAST BREAK

State shouldn't have too much trouble with the little-known Eastern Pennsylvania outfit, a little more time to look over his fast break. Joe Tocci and factor which will provide Gross Marty Costa will co-captain the Penn State quintet, each taking personal charge of one of the platoons.

Coach Amos Alonzo Stagg, Jr. has lost practically every cager from his 1948-'49 varsity but will miss Evan Zlock the most. Last year Zlock smashed practically every existing Susquehanna scoring record.

Letterwinners including E.I.W.A. champs Pascal Perri, Kenny Hunte and George Gebhardt give support to the Orange claim for a repeat of last year's championship.

Hunt, 155 pound champ, hasn't lost a decision in the last 13 dual meets, while Perri has "only" twelve straight to his credit. Gebhardt was undefeated at 175 for the last three years, but he has lost a few bouts when wrestling in the heavyweight slot.

On Boxing

Not to be outdone by their mat brothers, the Syracuse boxing team is prepared to take its ninth Eastern Intercollegiate Boxing Association title. And the Orangemen also have a good claim to the trophy with three Eastern champs on their squad list.

National heavyweight champ Marty Crandell tops the list of returnees to the fold. Tim Curley and Chuck Rigoglioso, 145 and 155-pound Eastern champs plus two-time champion Jim Rollier fill out the star-studded card of the Piety Hill team.

Penn State meets the Orange wrestling and boxing teams on February 17 here. Both Charlie Speidel and Eddie Sulkowski are working for those Eastern trophies, and the Syracuse battles should be a good indication of just where the honors will go when the dust of the battles settle.

Sparkplug



JOE TOCCI

Weekend Results

Only one of Penn State's current court opponents lost on the hardwood last week. Carnegie Tech and Washington and Jefferson each won two, while American, Colgate, Temple and West Virginia tallied single victories. Gettysburg alone failed to register a win, losing to Cornell's Big Red basketeers.

American 62; Brooklyn Poly 41; Carnegie Tech 79; Steubenville 44; Car. Tech 66; Lawrence Tech 53; Colgate 78; Toronto 35; Cornell 72; Gettysburg 54; Temple 55; Vanderbilt 35; Wash. and Jeff. 64; Buffalo 40; Wash. and Jeff. 80; St. Vincent 32; West Virginia 59; Davis-Elkins 44

Joe Lane, 26-year-old Baltimore, Md., standout, was the College's most prolific scorer during its unbeaten, untied soccer season. Lane scored one-third of Penn State's 33 goals. Eight opponents were restricted to a total of eight goals.

Gross Faces Tough Task Filling Lawther's Shoes

When Elmer Gross stepped into the job of head basketball coach at Penn State, following the resignation of John Lawther last spring he realized it would be a big step.

Only 31 years of age when he was given the surprise appointment by Dean Carl Schott, head of the Physical Education department, Gross was catapulted from comparative obscurity into the role of a big-time collegiate mentor.

Although in an envied position as viewed by coaches standing on the outside, Gross realizes his job has its headaches as well as its additional remunerative value. As is the usual procedure following the step-down of a well-known and highly respected predecessor—such as Lawther—the eyes of both students and alumni will be focused on the new prexie more intensely than is usual at the start of a new court season.

TRICKY PLAYERS

As a player Elmer Gross ranked as one of the trickiest guards ever to hood-wink an opponent for Penn State. He captained his mates to one of the greatest seasons a State team has known, in 1941-'42.

That was the "Golden Year" of Lion basketball. A season which saw the Blue and White cop 18 out of 21 games, including their two "Sugar Bowl" appearances against the East's top-ranking collegiate powers.

Sporting a 17 and 2 record upon entry to the NCAA tourney in New Orleans, the State cagers went down to a 44 to 39 licking by Dartmouth (who eventually won the series) but returned a 41-34 triumph over Illinois in a consolation round.

LIKES ZONE

As a mentor Gross has undoubtedly benefited by inhaling the experiences of one of the craftiest strategists the game has known. He is thoroughly convinced as to the merit of the zone defense, but differs with his old master in the theory of attack.

Whereas Lawther employed the the cautious, off-critized, set-play offense, Gross feels that the time has come to exploit the fast

break.

Gross graduated from State in the spring of '42 and went directly into the Army as an infantryman. Following his discharge in January, '46, he was enrolled by the College as graduate assistant physical education instructor, and was assigned as Lawther's right-hand man.

Now an Assistant Professor of Physical Education, Gross is working for his doctorate at Pitt during the Summer. He is married to the former Jane Candy, of Tyrone, and is the father of two little girls, Jennifer, 5, and Barbe, 3. When asked about her husband's hobbies, Mrs. Gross replied, "Basketball, naturally."

Penn State set a new all-time home attendance record during the 1949 football season. Figures released today by H. R. Gilbert, graduate manager of athletics, show 82,835 attended four home games as compared with 73,371 in 1948.

Anniversary

A year hence, Bill Jeffrey will field his 25th anniversary soccer team at the College.

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