

## Overcoming Big Obstacles, Costa Hits Cage Heights

By RAY KOEHLER

They chuckled while the angular, curly-headed kid held the ball gingerly on the pivot. They laughed to see him tower over the opposition, and they came darn near bursting their sides when he salaamed at the foul line.

But this bewildered rookie took the crowd's good-humored jockeying in stride, just as he had taken a painful wound as a matter of course while fighting for Uncle Sam during 26 months as an infantryman.

Despite physical barriers, the 6-foot 6-inch, ever-smiling, Commerce and Finance student had to overcome a technical difficulty—he had never played with an organized basketball outfit in his life. It is the Nittany Valley's own Cinderella story of a boy who just wouldn't quit, a boy who made the grade with a big-name college varsity without the benefit of high school or freshman training.

### DIDN'T DUCK

In the thick of fierce fighting around Casino, the big guy didn't duck fast enough one day and was shot through the right side of his chest. He was taken prisoner but wasn't held long. "I guess I just sort of wandered off," he explains.

Returning to action some months later, Costa again ran afoul of Lady Luck when a burst of shrapnel halted his military career with startling suddenness. Back to the familiar surroundings of gauze and white blankets he went. This time his convalescence lasted about a year. All told, he spent 13 out of 26 service months in a hospital bed.

### ENOUGH EXCITEMENT

After spending so much time flat on his back, Marty decided that he had had all the excitement he would ever want and was content to settle back to the comparatively quiet life of a student.

But he reckoned without the important part John Lawther would play in his life. A hard, strict-principled court mentor of the old school, there was only one thing that Lawther liked more than winning a ball game, and that was determination.

### WILLING WORKER

As Lawther once put it, "I hate to see someone dog it when they're on the court but I never have to worry about Marty. He's the hardest working man on the floor."

And as slowly as the form of a beautiful woman forms under the mallet of a master sculptor, Lawther's hunch began paying off. Months of constant practice exerted itself. The kid with the patched-up insides had come into his own.

Last year, his first full-time season as a regular, Marty came through in grand style. Ranking second in the Lion's scoring race to Milt Simon, now a professional with Williamsport, he dunked 45 field goals and 39 of his "Costa Specials" from the foul circle for a grand total of 129 points.

Not bad for a guy who, in addition to having his insides scrambled, had such outstanding centers as Ernie Vandeweghe, Colgate, Red Wilson, Navy, Royce Newell, Syracuse, and Fred Schaus, of West Virginia, climbing all over his back.

"I was so darned nervous the first time I got into a game that I didn't know what I was doing. You should hear Milt tell about it," he chuckles. "I felt better in the shower room after the game, but everytime you play the butterflies hop around. It's a feeling that never leaves you."

### LIKES LAWATHER

Although Lawther was a severe taskmaster, Costa bears a great deal of affection for the grizzled veteran. "I think he's one terrific guy." He treated me swell and I only hope I can justify his faith in me.

Graduating from high school Marty went right into the army where he quickly rose to the rank of sergeant. His first year on leaving the service was spent at California State Teachers College as a Penn State farm-out.

Already the possessor of an excellent team, the California basketball coach tried to discourage Costa's interest in the sport. "I wouldn't advise you to try out; you just haven't got the knack for it." That same mentor is probably eating those words right now.

And so it was in September of 1947 that a bewildered sophomore first set foot on the spacious Nittany campus, but as the tale goes, basketball, this time, did an about-face and sought him out.

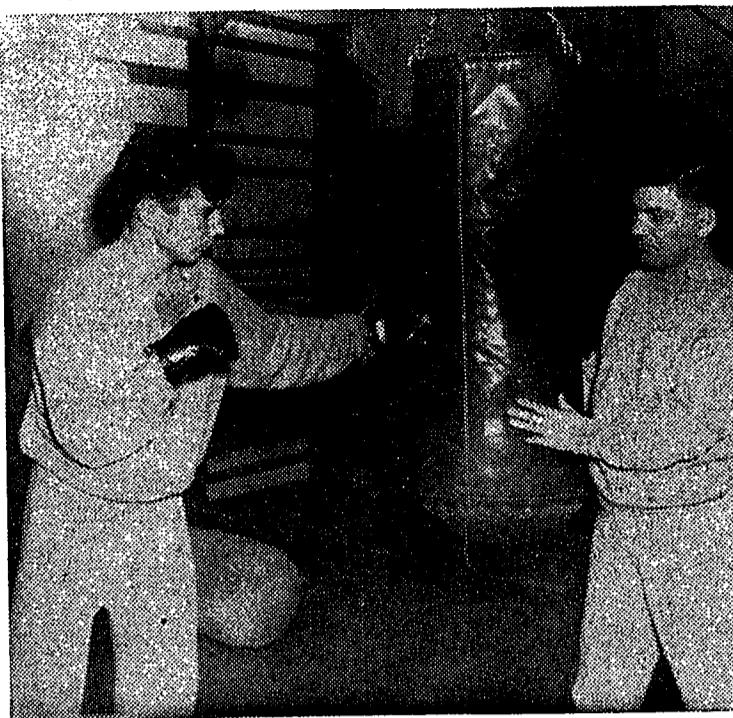
### TALL TALE

It is jokingly told among the college populace that one day as Lawther was walking down a State College street he saw a hulking beanpole of a student striding before him. Impressed with the fellow's height he is supposed to have asked Costa to try out for the team.

Marty laughs off this story but, nevertheless, his sophomore year saw him in varsity spangles. The real story is that Lawther picked him out while he was tossing a basketball around in State's Recreation Hall one afternoon. "I guess he liked my size. In fact he almost had to, I certainly didn't have any form to impress him with."



## Boxing Tips . . .



—Photo by Leonard Friedman

Acting Coach Ed Sulkowski is giving Lou Guthrie a few pointers on how to hit the punching bag. Guthrie, 135-pound entrant on last year's Lion boxing team, has dropped to the 130-pound class, which was left vacant by the graduation of Captain Johnny Benglian.

## Only 3 Lion Regulars Return; Prospects of Mitt Squad Dim

If previous records and past showings are a criterion for determining a future outlook, the Penn State boxing outlook is mighty dim.

In the fold are but three regular performers of last year's unit, a team which turned in a mediocre 2-3-1 record.

About the only bright stars in an otherwise team of unknown quantity are two-time Eastern heavyweight Chuck Drazenovich, the veteran 165-pound Paul, better known as PQ Smith and light-heavy Jack Bolger.

The Draz, after dropping his first intercollegiate duel against Western Maryland's Joe Corleto as a sophomore, went undefeated the rest of the way, scored impressive wins at the EIBA tourney at Virginia.

### LAST YEAR

But last year his showing was far from good and at the end of the regular season showed a poor 1-3-2 tally sheet. Then in the Eastern Intercollegiate, held at Rec Hall, he decided Bill Kellum of Army, and Marty Crandell, of Syracuse, to regain his heavyweight crown.

Earlier, in dual meet competition, he was held to a draw by Kellum, while Crandell decided him at Syracuse. The Orange heavy went on the NCAA tournament and copped the National unlimited title.

At 165 pounds, Paul Smith seems to have the situation well in hand, although '48 letterwinner Bob Keller is pushing him. The odd-gestured PQ, a lanky battler with a lightning-like left amassed four wins in seven bouts last year.

### BOLGER

Back also is light-heavy Jack Bolger. After a season with the jayvees, Bolger moved to the varsity last year and was one of the Lions' most consistent point-getters. Until the Easterns he had won four fights, dropping but one decision, to Army's Pete Monfore.

In the Eastern tournament he again met Monfore and was decided. Traveling to the Nationals it was the same Monfore, who, for the third straight time handed Bolger a setback.

And although Bolger seems to

hold the upperhand in his division so far, Coach Ed Sulkowski is throwing some sharp glances at a stylish boxer who is currently the rave of the Intramural tournament, dynamite-punching Chan Johnson.

Johnson, a defensive wingback of Coach Joe Bedenk's football eleven, is as yet hesitant about reporting to the varsity, but it is hoped in Nittany ring circles, that he will.

### COMPETITION

There's a mad scramble for positions in the lower weights with the competition being hot and torrid. John Albarino, considered tough in the ring, and aggressive Frank Gross, seem to be the outstanding new prospects who'll most likely represent the

## Three-Way Tie In Independent IM League C

League C of the independent half of the intramural basketball tournament went into a three-way tie Tuesday night as Dorm 5 and Dorm 14 won their second consecutive victories without a defeat to tie Dorm 35 for the lead.

Dorm 5 continued its undefeated pace with a 37-5 walloping of Dorm 33 Dick Hench was the big gun for the winners as he tossed in 13 points to take scoring honors for the evening. Dorm 14 also stayed on the right side of the ledger by sinking Dorm 32, 22-7. In another League C contest, Dorm 26 eked out a 17-14 win over Dorm 1.

The Bombers and the Tripods of League D each notched their second victories in as many starts to deadlock the number one position in that league. The Bombers came through with a low scoring, 13-5, win over Atherton Hall while the Tripods downed Dorm 37, 10-4, in another tight defensive tilt.

### EXTRA PERIOD

In the other League D game, the Miner floormen had to come through in an overtime to down a persistent Q-Quintet squad, 21-18. The Miners had a one point lead at halftime but the Q boys came back and tied the count at 18-18 before the final whistle.

ring Lions when they open fist-cuffing against Minnesota's Badgers in Rec Hall on January 14.

Lou Guthrie at 130-pounds and Pat Heims, at 155, are two of last year's lettermen, although neither was a regular all year long.

Guthrie, a hot-one-night-cold the-next-fighter battled in the 135 division and won but one bout in four ring appearances.

Heims, a lanky slugger has yet to win one for the Blue and White. In three appearances inside the squared circle, he drew once and was decided twice.

As for the Coach's opinion on the outlook, "it's too early to tell about our potentialities, but one thing I'm sure about," says Sulkowski, "is that we'll be tough in the upper weight classes."



**Do Your Xmas Shopping in State College.**

**Only 4 Shopping Days Till Christmas Vacation!**

## Soccerite--

(Continued from page four) or side of your foot." However he was persuaded to wear shoes, or else he would have suffered broken bones in his feet had he gone against American boys wearing cleats.

Recently he was asked by his coach to pose in his multi-colored costume on the soccer turf for a publicity picture, one where he would be lifting his skirt and kicking the ball.

He plays other games and pursues other hobbies. He's star trackman—broadjumps 20' feet; he's an above average welter weight, and also does a trick or two on the tennis courts. He thinks nothing of hiking 15 miles. Quite a guy this Olufunmi Adekunle Osibogun, son of a Nigerian noble family and soccer player deluxe.

BILL COLEMAN'S

# LION STUDIO

WISHES EVERYONE

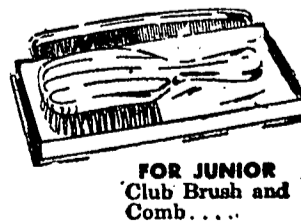
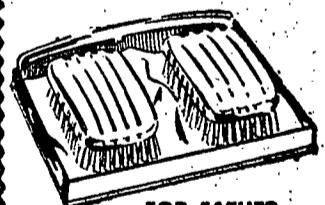
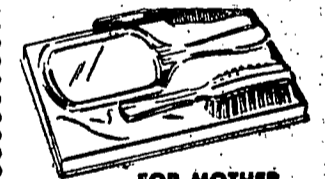
MERRY CHRISTMAS

and

HAPPY NEW YEAR

## Jewelite BY PRO-PHY-LAC-TIC

For the whole Family



Ladies' styles in ruby, sapphire or crystal. Men's styles in crystal or garnet.

## GRIGGS and KREAMER

PRESCRIPTION SPECIALISTS

ACROSS FROM OLD MAIN  
E. College Ave., State College