

'ON THE BALL'



By RAY KOEHLER
Sports Editor

Tocci Inspiration To Striving Athlete

One early winter evening over two years ago after a typical grueling John Lawther practice session, a discouraged basketball player had an important decision to make as he flung open the door of his Nittany dorm room and threw himself wearily into a chair.

For several weeks he had tried to impress his coaches with his abilities—but no sale. While other candidates—taller than he—were getting in a second look—no one had yet noticed the quiet, stocky, but undersized New York transfer student.

"I've just about decided to turn in my suit," he told his roommate that night, "but I'll stick it out a while longer."

The decision made that night today stands out as a gilt-edged venture for Joe Tocci, Penn State's freshman cage tutor, who is now regarded as one of the most promising young coaches working his way up the Nittany scale.

By dint of hard work and determination Tocci in those two short years became an inspiration to any who might seek the easy way out and fall off by the side of the road. He has had many honors heaped on him and is even mentioned in the same breath as Penn State's all-time basketball greats such as John Barr, Herk Baltimore, Elmer Gross, and John Egli.

Joe had the natural talent all along; all he needed was confidence and a chance to show what he could do under fire. Last year varsity Coach Gross rated him as one of the finest dribblers in the nation. At the conclusion of the 1949-50 season, Tocci was asked to try out with the professional, NBA Minneapolis Lakers. He turned down the offer when he found a job coaching basketball at State waiting for him.

Presently Tocci, the Mutt of the Tocci-Marty Costa Mutt and Jeff act of last year, is a full-time instructor in physical education. A major part of his work lies in the field of corrective physical education. A guy who likes to keep busy, Joe is also working on his Masters degree in education.

Then Now



ing to see the kids do what you've taught them.

"One thing that's hard for a new coach to figure out is how his team can look so good one night and then not be able to do a thing the next. You just have to learn to relax and remember that they're playing the game—not you. The way the kids responded this year made it easy for me."

Are you free to use your own system?

"Well," answered the Bronxite with the black crew-cut, "the purpose of the freshman team was to prepare our boys for varsity competition. On defense we use the old Lawther three-back system—if we've got the height to do it. On offense we vary a single and double post in addition to our set patterns which are often effective."

Tocci looked down the list of freshmen and singled out a few of the more outstanding performers based on their play during the past season. "These are the fellows we expect to help us most on the varsity next year."

John Sherry—Attending Penn State on a football scholarship. Only here since February but already seen as a potential star. Has everything. Is fast both on offense and defense. A team player. Can either pass off or score in double figures. Exceptionally good one-hand jump shot from the foul line.

Ted Jackson—Six-foot-five, 190-pound red-head. Aggressive and mean under the boards. Owns a good one-hand shot but could develop more of a variety of shots. Gets up in the air on rebounds.

John Miller—Lauded as a good shot with either hand. A Greensburg boy.

Bob Seigel—A good all-around ball player. Has a clever jump shot and is better than fair on his sets. A fine pair of basketball hands. Six-foot-three inches, 195-pounds from the Bronx. A double-post man.

Howard Lenz—Scores mostly while driving in. Good spark-plug. Has speed, energy, but must improve shooting eye. Six-foot-even. From Latrobe.

Frank Ross—List him as a probable. He can be a dangerous scorer but is still awkward. Has necessary height, 6-foot-6.

"What's it like to step from the role of an active player into the responsibility of an instructor?" we wondered.

"For a while I felt out of place," Tocci said, "but you soon get used to it. There's a lot of headaches in this game but it's a great feel-

Wrestlers Prep

(Continued from page six)
senior on the varsity, will not compete.

No real lineup of teams entering the tournament can yet be made due to the fact that many of the squads will sign up after the results of their various district tournaments have been determined.

A few teams can be counted on to enter the event without waiting for the results. Iowa State Teacher's college, last year's NCAA champ, will enter, as well as Oklahoma, Oklahoma A&M, and Cornell college of Iowa.

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LOST IN Sparks one coat with sorority hat in pocket. I have yours. Phone 4444.

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ATTENTION LUTHERAN students. Communion Service 7:45 a.m. Palm Sunday. Grace Lutheran Church.

Campus Interviews on Cigarette Tests

Number 14...THE BEAVER



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For once in his life, our fervent friend admits that eagerness can be over-done! He's alluding, of course, to all these quick-trick cigarette tests—the ones that ask you to decide on cigarette mildness after just one puff, one sniff, one inhale or one exhale! When the chips are down, he realizes cigarette mildness can't be judged in a hurry. That's why he made . . .

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Theta Chi In 3rd YMCA Victory

Theta Chi won the championship of the Clearfield YMCA basketball tournament Wednesday night by defeating Sigma Nu, 65-39, in the finals.

It marks the third year in a row that Theta Chi has won the tournament.

The winners' Herm Sledzik was named to the all-tourney first team while Ted Panoplos received the best sportsman award.

Panoplos, Bill Gibson, Lou Lamie, and Dick Phillips were named to the all-tourney second team.

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