

Nittany Gymnasts To Defend Crown

By RON GATEHOUSE

Penn State's gymnasts went through light workouts at Rec Hall the past two days with one eye peeled on the apparatus and the other sighted on the challenge that awaits them this weekend at the University of Illinois.

The Lions will be looking for their second straight National Collegiate crown, when they face the nation's best Friday and Saturday.

The Nittanians will depart at 7 tonight for the site of the 12th annual gym tournament.

Coach Gene Wettstone's charges will have more than last year's championship crown to back them, when they enter the annual classic.

Wettstone, in his 15th year as State's gym mentor, carries a won-lost record of 48-21-1 during that span. The last 15 of those victories came in consecutive order.

Own Two NCAA Titles

His teams have carried away two national titles during his reign in the Nittany Vale. The first championship was won in 1948, second coming last year. In addition, his gym stalwarts have captured Eastern honors five times—1942, '43, '45, '48, and '53. Three National Amateur Athletic Union crowns have also been won under Wettstone. The Lions did the trick in 1943, '45, and '48.

The present version of Nittany gymnasts rolled up six consecutive intercollegiate wins in their past campaign, and as a result repeated as Eastern champs for the second straight year. They defeated Michigan State, Syracuse, Navy, Army, Temple, and West Virginia en route to the undefeated campaign.

Dominate Meet

In the recent annual Eastern meet, which consists only of individual competition, State completely dominated the action to cop six of the eleven events.

Last year the Lions almost captured the title in the preliminaries, by eliminating the majority of their highly ranked individual opponents.

At the close of the first-night action, the Staters led the field of 23 teams with 22 team points.

The final tabulations showed the Nittanians ahead of runner-up Illinois by 23 counters. They ended up with a total of 91. The Illini, last year's Western Conference champs, were followed by Florida State, Syracuse, UCLA, Minnesota, Michigan State, and Army in respective order. Southern California and Iowa tied for ninth place.

Win Fifth Title

In the Western Conference gym meet held at Ohio State on March 12-13, the Illini easily won its fifth straight Big Ten title. They were followed by Minnesota, Michigan, and the Spartans of Michigan State. As a result, Illinois is rated as one of the four opponents the Lions will have to stop if they are to retain the crown.

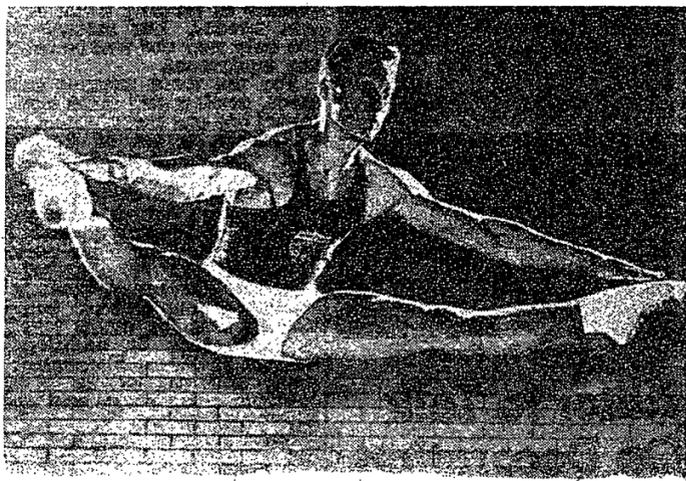
The other three are Florida State, UCLA, and Southern Cal—all top contenders for last year's title.

In the previous tourney, the Nittanians were picked to come in fifth place, while Florida State's Seminoles were top seeded in the meet. But they could only manage the number five position with 23 team points.

Four Eastern Teams

In addition to the Nittany Lions, gymnasts from Temple, Navy, and Syracuse will be the big representatives from the East in the tourney. The Orange were rated right behind the Lions among the Eastern aggregations last year, although they failed to place in the top ten.

The Nittanians will go through a full workout at Huff gym tomorrow afternoon, and then rest until Friday's preliminaries begin.



FINNISH-BORN JAN CRONSTEDT exhibits the ease and grace which has enabled him to spearhead the Penn State gymnasts for the past two seasons. Cronstedt will lead State in quest of its second consecutive National Collegiate title, Friday and Saturday when he and nine Lions travel to the University of Illinois.

Werner Seeks Track Talent

"Round and round it goes and where it stops nobody knows." These are the now famous words of the equally famous Major Bowes and Ted Mack on their respective talent shows.

Nittany Track Coach Chick Werner may be compared to these two great talent scouts, for he too is in search of promising young stars. Werner's annual hunt for candidates for his track and field team has brought fame to his squads year after year.

The Lion mentor is now searching for material for this spring's thinclad team. This season, the call is for both freshmen and upperclassmen. For the first time in many years the freshmen will have a regular schedule.

Last season, the frosh competed in "telegraphic" meets. Under this setup, they competed throughout the week on the Beaver Field track and their performances were recorded by freshmen Coach Norm Gordon. These results were sent to the University, where they were compared to those of the opposing team. The freshman thinclads actually never faced their opponents.

On the basis of the performances by the two teams, the order of finish was determined. Although the frosh did have these meets, they did not get the actual experience of battling the opposition face to face, which they will be doing this season.

Previous experience is not required by Werner. Many of Penn State's finest track and field stars took to the sport for the first time, when they came to the University. Werner, regarded as one of the finest track coaches in the nation, has moulded many un-

experienced performers into stars. The only thing Werner requires of his trackmen is the "will and love to participate in the sport."

Horace Ashenfelter and Curt Stone are two top runners who gained national and international fame even though they had never competed before coming to Penn State. "Ash" jumped from an unheralded freshman to an Olympic Gold Medal winner under Werner's tutelage. Stone is one of the top distance runners in the nation and has also competed in the Olympic Games.

Those interested in track should report to Werner or Gordon in Rec Hall. The Lion mentor has spun the "Wheel of Fortune" once again, and when it stops he hopes it will rest on another outstanding track and Penn State field squad.

Cockell Beats LaStarza; Boosts Title Chances

LONDON, March 30 (AP)—Pudgy Don Cockell, British Empire heavyweight champion, tonight scored an upset 10 round decision over New York's Roland LaStarza, boosting his chances for a shot at the world title.

A capacity crowd of 18,000 in Earls Court arena saw the 25-year-old former blacksmith come from behind.

State Pitching Pleases Bedenk

By HERM WEISKOPF

Nittany Baseball Coach Joe Bedenk had good reason to smile yesterday. He was evaluating his pitching staff for the coming season and noted that Keith Vesling and Garland Gingerich, his two aces from last year, are back again.

These two moundsmen got credit for 13 of the 14 wins the Lions racked up last season. The two pace-setters were almost equally effective during the 1953 campaign.

Vesling won nine of eleven decisions and Gingerich was victorious in four of seven games. However, statistics must be thoroughly investigated before they are of any real significance.

Vesling's Percentage .819

Although Vesling's won and lost percentage was much higher than Gingerich's—.819 to .572—the latter's earned run average was the lower of the two—1.49 to 1.83. In 98½ innings Vesling gave up 60 hits and 33 bases on balls and struck out 83. Gingerich permitted 34 hits and 14 walks and struck out 42 in 54½ innings on the mound.

Breaking these statistics down, it can be seen that Vesling was tagged for 5.5 hits and 3.0 walks a game and averaged 7.5 strikeouts each nine innings. Gingerich's figures break down this way: hits and walks per game, 5.7 and 2.3, and strikeouts for each nine innings, 7.0. These statistics are amazing no matter how you look at them and they give evidence of the true effectiveness of this ace duo.

6.2 in 1952

In 1952 Vesling posted a record of six wins and two losses. He toiled 65 innings, struck out 52 batters, and had a 2.22 earned run average that season. He was one of the big reasons why the Lions captured the District Two title and placed third in the college "World Series."

Besides Vesling and Gingerich, Bedenk can call on seniors Sam Curtis and Dave Lucas and sophomores Allan Leonard, Wendell Larimer, and Lynn Harbold for mound duty.

The Lion pitching staff will have a hard time duplicating the 2.28 earned run average it posted last season, but with twirlers like Vesling and Gingerich back, there is a good chance the opposition will have a tough time getting runs.

Vesling and Gingerich are both seniors and both pitch right-handed. Vesling is one of the two men on the team who have picked up two letters in baseball. The other is third baseman Hubie Kline. Gingerich is the third of the eight returning lettermen.

Barbell Club to Meet

The Penn State Barbell Club will meet at 7 tonight in 102 Willard. Movies of the Mr. and Mrs. USA contests will be shown.

14 Matmen Advance to IM Finals

Delta Upsilon increased its lead in the intramural wrestling tournament last night, as six fraternity and eight independent grapplers entered the final round. Semi-final action will take place at 7:30 tonight and the finals will be held at 8 p.m. tomorrow.

DU leads the team scoring with 70 points, while Chi Phi is next with 62. Third place is held by Delta Chi with 60 points, and Pi Kappa Phi is fourth with 54. Sigma Phi Epsilon is fifth with 52.

Although failing to cop any team points last night, Chi Phi has a golden opportunity to accumulate points tonight. It will send three men into combat, while Delta Upsilon has only Robert Brubaker competing tonight.

Enters Finals

Art Marks, Delta Upsilon 128-pounder, entered the finals by winning a 4-0 decision from Tom Webb, Chi Phi. Marks was in control throughout the match as Webb failed to escape Marks' holds.

Beta Theta Pi hurt DU's chances of adding to their total, when Ralph Cryder pinned Ted Smith, Delta Upsilon 135-pounder, in 5:14 with a crotch and body press.

Last year's 175-pound champ, Andy Krassowski, Pi Kappa Phi, found his semi-final match with heavyweight Frank Reich, Theta Kappa Phi, too difficult. Reich pinned him in 1:42 with a crotch and body press. In another heavyweight match, Bob DiJoseph, Sigma Phi Epsilon, won a close 3-2 decision over George Weaver, Delta Chi. Both men recorded a reversal while DiJoseph was credited with time advantage.

Referee's Decision

Bob Wylie, Pi Kappa Phi, won a referee's decision over 128-pound Murray Horewitz, Phi Sigma Delta. The match ended 3-3. Wylie had three escapes, while Horewitz was credited with a take down and time advantage.

John Milsom, Alpha Zeta 165-pounder, reached the finals by (Continued on page seven)

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