

Penn State Sports-

ON THE LINE

By ROY WILLIAMS
Sports Editor

After a recent win while on the road, one of Penn State's baseballers said: "Boy, somebody around here must be doing a lot of praying." That plus unexpected performances about sums up the phenomenal success of Coach Joe Bedenk's baseball team this year. Now, it's in contention for a bid to the District Two in Allentown June 3 and 4—the first step to the NCAA Baseball Tourney in Omaha, Neb., June 10.

With only four veterans returning—four-year man Ron Weidenhammer, Captain Chuck Russo, Rex Bradley, and Pat Kennedy—the Lions have posted a 15-4 card. With two more home wins over the weekend the Lions may be in line for the trip to Allentown.

According to Bedenk, Weidenhammer, Russo, and Bradley have been not only inspirational leaders but also valuable men in helping the younger players.

"I wish I had a bushel of Weidenhammer's, Russo's, and Bradley's," Bedenk said. As he spoke, he leaned forward in his swivel chair and said: "And so does every other coach. They've got fire—they can sell insurance or be school teachers in the future and be successful 'cause they've got it—fire."

Bedenk—soft spoken out of the dugout but a veritable fireball of blazing enthusiasm in his coaching uniform—and his assistant and trainer Coach Chuck Medlar, have watched the 80th team to don a Nittany uniform arise from nowhere to district contenders.

Why? Because of Bedenk's big four, his team's hustle and spirit, and the southpaw arm of Ed Drapcho. Why has the young pitcher been so much help? According to the Nittany coach who has been guiding the Lions for 25 years, Drapcho has a fast ball, a curve, and control on both of them.

With Drapcho, his veteran four, plus Bob McMullen, junior outfielder with a .450 batting clip in 13 games; Lynn Harbold, right-hander with a 4-0 record, and his team's all-around ability and spirit, Bedenk has a tough combination to lick.

With at least ten district teams in the running Penn State should be in line to make the play-off grade for the fourth time. It entered in '48, '52, and '53—losing out in the finals in '49 and '53. In 1952 the Lions went on to the finals to place third with a 3-2 card.

Lacrosse Coach Nick Thiel also saw his team bounce from the doldrums and into its best season since 1951 with a 7-5 card.

Assistant coach Ernie Baer answered some of our questions yesterday. Why had the Lions suddenly vaulted? According to Baer: "Our lettermen progressed; they played together better; after their first two losses they relaxed, gained confidence, and went on to win."

The Lions played a tougher card including Navy and Rutgers—first and second in the nation last year—and equally good this year. But the Lions were stronger too.

"Only five of our boys had experience—and that was limited—before they came here," Baer explained. The bulk of Thiel's stickmen were Pennsylvania boys with little experience behind them who learned lacrosse at Penn State.

Bob Hamel, in the midfield, plus Joe Erwin, creaseman, and Don Bell were the work horses for the Lions—Erwin helping the attack, Hamel carrying the play, and Bell defeating the net.

But the stickmen have a tough rode ahead of them next year with only five lettermen returning. With a great emphasis on freshmen coming up to the varsity, Lion fans will be hopeful of seeing the stickmen also come up another notch with another—and better—winning season.

Golf, Tennis Squads End Schedules With Lehigh, Panthers This Weekend

The Penn State golf and tennis squads will wind up spring action this weekend as the linksmen meet Lehigh today and both Nittany teams meet Pitt aggregations tomorrow. All three encounters will be held on the Lion's home grounds.

The golfers will be after their eighth and ninth victories of the season, without a loss while the netters will be gunning for their seventh win this spring, as against five setbacks.

One linksman will be playing his last match for Coach Bob Rutherford's forces while one netman will also make his final appearance under Coach Sherman Fogg. Captain Warren Gittlen, boasting an undefeated log of six wins and one tie, will close out a successful four-year career while net captain Bill Ziegler will bow out of the court squad lineup.

Four Lion golfers will carry ungcathed records into this weekend's action. Gittlen, junior Gus Gerhart, and sophomores Leo Kukkola and John Boyanowski have posted wins in every match so far for the Nittanies. Kukkola and Boyanowski are the two top winners, each winning seven. Following this duo comes Gerhart with six victories and Gittlen.

The scores of the remainder of the squad are nearly as good. Jim Mayes and Jim Ginsberg have each recorded six victories and one setback and sophomore John Branish has a slate of five wins and one defeat. All three defeats came in the Cornell match.

Last year the Lions trimmed the Engineers 8-1 and hope to repeat this performance tomorrow.

The tennis squad will seek to keep its record above the 500 mark as it closes out the season Saturday. The netmen have six wins and five setbacks.

Final exams seem to be the big nemesis for Coach Sherm Fogg, as several of his netmen will be unable to play because of the final schedule.

In spite of this, Fogg will juggle his lineup in an attempt to down the Panthers for the second straight year. Ziegler will again be in the lead off position. He will be followed by Ed Seiling, moving up from the number three spot to fill the vacancy left by John Cleary. Chris Christiansen will be moving up one spot into the third slot.

Dean Mullen will also advance one position by going into the fourth spot. Larry Adler, who has played off-and-on in the sixth position, will appear in the fifth slot and sophomore Al Williams will move into singles competition playing as the number six man.

PIAA Finals

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association will celebrate its biggest weekend at the University today and tomorrow. The annual PIAA golf and tennis finals will begin at 9 a.m. today and the track finals tomorrow afternoon.

Over one thousand high school athletes will participate in the finals.

STATE NOW

Clark Gable Susan Hayward
"Soldier of Fortune"
—Featuretime—
1:49 - 3:44 - 5:39 - 7:34 - 9:41

WARNER

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Feature: 1:00, 3:03, 5:06, 7:09, 9:33

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