

a dean's view



Change In Attitude Helps Stickmen

By DEAN BILLICK
Sports Co-Editor

Before the season began Lion lacrosse coach Dick Pencek predicted his team would have to win its first four games if it expected to chalk up a good record.

The first four games are now history and neatly tucked away in the Lion win column.

For State, the fun is now over and the work is about to begin. Wednesday the Lions take on national powerhouse Maryland on Beaver Field in the first of three back-breaking games that could wipe out Lion hopes for the best record in State history.

After Maryland, the stickmen host Rutgers and a week later square off against rugged Syracuse.

"We could play exceptionally good games and still lose all three of them," Pencek said this week. "If we expect to win, we'll have to play great games. I've been checking the records and the closest we've come to beating Maryland in the past seven or eight years is about 15 goals."

THIS YEAR, however, things could be different. The Lions opened with a come-from-behind win over Loyola, 8-7, and the next day thrashed Washington & Lee, 10-3. A good Penn team was the next victim, 8-7, and then it was Lafayette's turn. All Pencek's crew did to the Leopards was set a new scoring record with a 20-10 rout.

Part of the difference between this year's team and Lion squads of the past few years is that intangible quality desire.

"That was a different State team from any I've ever seen," a disappointed Penn coach said after his Quakers lost. "They had spirit and really hustled."

Perhaps one Penn player summed it up best when he said simply, "They wanted to win more than we did."

This year the Lions have been going after ground balls, they've been knocking opponents on their back with jarring blocks and in general playing like they want to win.

"CHANGING THEIR attitude was one of the hardest tasks had when I started this year," the new Nittany coach said. "When

you lose game after game it's hard to get the kids thinking positively.

Pencek had a pretty good point. Only once since 1957 has a State team finished the season on the winning side. That year was 1959 and it was by a slim 5-4-1 margin.

During the past two years the Lions have won only five games while losing 15.

But things are different this season and the stickmen have their sights set on recording the best won-lost record ever over a 10-game schedule. To do this Pencek's scrappers will have to better a 7-3 chart set by the 1946 team.

Leading this year's stickmen are two candidates for All-America honors—defenseman Andy Lockhart and midfielder Tom Hayes.

LOCKHART HAS drawn raves from opposing coaches for his hustle and all-around rugged play. He, perhaps more than anyone else, exemplifies pure hustle and desire.

Last year Lockhart was a second team Penn Del selection and this season Pencek (and many opposing coaches) thinks the 6'1" senior has a good chance to make the All-America team.

"He never gives up and besides hustle he has ability," Pencek said, speaking of his co-captain. "Some of the players we've faced this year told me after the game they can't understand why he wasn't an All-American last year. I guess you just have to be with a winning club."

While Lockhart takes care of the Lion defense, Hayes has been doing a pretty good job on the offense. He led the Lions in scoring last year with 26 goals and his play won him honorable mention All-America honors and a first team Penn Del midfield spot. He was the second highest scoring midfielder in the country.

This year Hayes is again at the



All-America Candidates Lead Nittany LaX Team

TOM HAYES

... spearheads attack



ANDY LOCKHART

... defensive rock

top of the State scorers with nine goals, but even more important than this is his change in attitude.

"I'VE SEEN TOMMY go after ground balls that he never went after last year and he has set up a lot of our scores with excellent passes," Pencek said after the Lafayette game.

Hayes has that uncanny ability to be in the right place at the right time and his darting, quick moves leave opposition defense-men flatfooted. His shot is just as quick as his moves which doesn't help opposing goalies either.

Hayes and Lockhart are good ones, but as sports fans are well

aware, it takes more than two of his "Chinese Bandits" (the third unit) just itching to be there and knock someone over.

One only has to look at the scoring distribution to realize this. Junior Dick Seelig is tied with Hayes in the scoring race with nine goals and right behind are Howie Spencer and Bill Channon with six and John Meisel and Ken Staub with four.

PENCEK HAS such depth that the Lions have been using three midfielders alternately and last week even used a fourth. The rivalry between the units is so fierce that the Lion coach sits back with a contented smile when he thinks

The defense, too, has its Date Flinchbaughs, Dick Swensens and Jim Stoups, not to mention sophomore standout Vinnie Fedesco.

All in all, the situation has been bright over the first four games. BUT, remember I said over the first four games. The tough ones are to come and as someone once said, "When the going gets rough, the rough get going."

We have a feeling the Lions are going to be "rough" this year. The next three games, will tell the tale.



DICK PENCEK

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