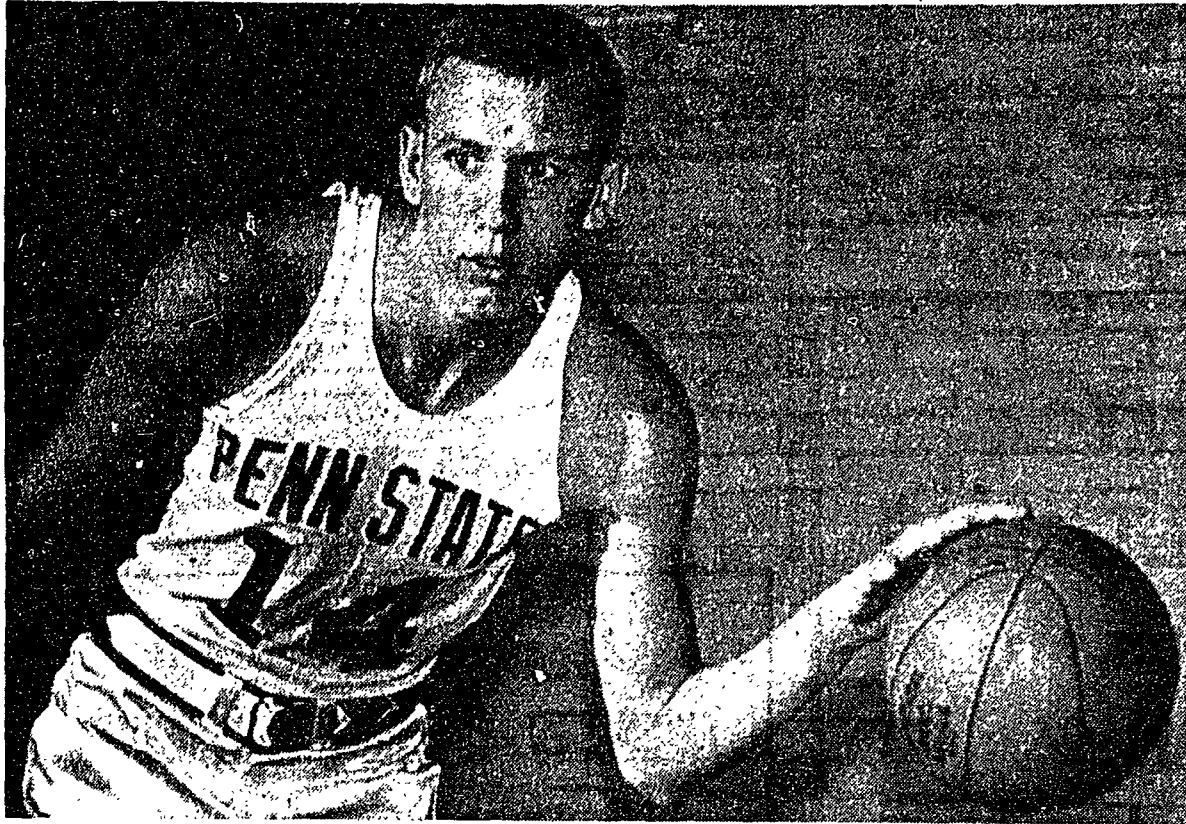


Lion '5' Shoots for 10th



DRIVES CAGERS: Sophomore guard Bob Weiss has been a driving force in Penn State's surprising 9-3 record. The 6-2 Weiss is the second

leading scorer with 169 points for a 14.1 average. State seeks its tenth win at 8 tonight in Rec Hall against Bucknell.

Capacity Crowd Is Expected As Nittanies Eye Tourney Bid

By DEAN BILLICK
Sports Editor

With an eye toward a possible post-season tournament bid, Penn State's young, but scrappy basketballers face a must win tonight in Rec Hall against hot and cold Bucknell.

The Nittanies, winners of four of their last five games and proud owners of a 9-3 chart, will put all their hopes on the court tonight at 8 before an expected capacity crowd.

The Lions need victories in six of their eight games to stay in contention for an NIT or NCAA bid, and the Bisons must figure to be one of the victims.

STATE KNOWS this full well and is expected to "shoot the works" to add to their prestige. Bucknell won't be any pushover, though.

Coach John Egli's quintet topped the Bisons, 88-83, in overtime at Lewistown earlier this month, but it took a 30-point performance by Earl Hoffman and some clutch foul shooting in the overtime period by Bobby Donato to gain the win.

The Bisons are 5-6, but in sophomore Lorry Hathaway have one of the leading rebounders in the country and one of the top scorers in the state. Hathaway, who canned 34 points against State at Bucknell, is averaging 19 points a game and ranks 16th in the nation in rebounding with 163 snags in 11 games.

HIS PERFORMANCES to date are the best for any sophomore in Bucknell history.

State will counter with its own star—Hoffman. The Lion co-cap-

tain and jump shot artist is the No. 2 major college scorer in the state with 240 points. Hoffman has hit on 47.5 per cent of his shots and is the second leading rebounder on the team with 97.

Hoffman and Hathaway both favor the long one-handed jump shot, but both will drive if the occasion presents itself. In the first game Hathaway scored repeated on long shots from the corner and Hoffman hit on 15-footers to the left and right of the key.

Egli isn't saying so, but the Lions are expected to throw a surprise defense at the Bisons in an attempt to stop Hathaway.

"I think we can stop him this time," Egli said during a practice session this week. "We've improved a lot since we played down there and I think we're

going to surprise them."

State will be bolstered by the return of co-captain John Mitchell who has played just seven minutes this season due to a knee injury. Mitchell has worked out all this week and says the knee is strong enough to stand game pressure.

THE SENIOR GUARD is the leading returning scorer from last year, but has netted just two field goals and two foul shots this year.

Egli is expected to stick with the same lineup that dropped a 16-point decision to West Virginia. Teaming with Hoffman at forward will be 6-5 sophomore Ron Avillion, who is State's leading rebounder with 110 grabs.

The Nittanies' second leading scorer, sophomore Bob Weiss (169) and junior Bobby Donato (137) will handle the guard spots. Fast-improving (6-6) Tom Malinchak will be the center.

Coach Gene Evans, in his first year at Bucknell, is expected to start Sam Penrose, Don Hester, Tom Johnson, John Matthews and Hathaway.



Malinchak

a dean's view



NIT, NCAA Cage Bid Possible for Nittanies

By DEAN BILLICK
Sports Editor

It was late May of last Spring and Earl Hoffman and John Mitchell had just been elected to co-captain the 1962-63 Lion basketball team. The occasion was the annual basketball picnic at Whipples and, most of the Nittany cagers were clowning around, enjoying the juicy steaks and other trimmings.

Hoffman and Mitchell filled their plates and then walked over to a nearby tree stump and sat down. They began to talk about the team's chances for next year and the talk wasn't frivolous, it was serious. "We have a lot of potential and it will be up to the boys to develop it," Mitchell said carefully. "If everyone works hard, we have the potential to go a long way."

HOFFMAN NODDED in agreement, but voiced an even stronger opinion.

"Considering our schedule and the boys that we'll have on the team, there isn't any reason why we couldn't make the NIT," the new co-captain said firmly.

They talked of the sophomores and they talked of new plays, ideas and the schedule. But somehow the talk always got back to the possibility of a post-season tournament bid.

At the time, the talk sounded just that — talk. With only two seniors on the squad, how could they expect to do well enough to play in the NCAA or NIT. I wrote it off as wishful thinking and high hopes.

NOW I WOULD like to "write it back in" — if such a thing is possible. State is definitely in the running for a post-season basketball tournament bid. It is no longer fancy talk and wishful thinking.

They've been called everything from the "Cinderella Team of the East" to "surprising" and "upstarts," but nothing speaks any louder than their 9-3 record. Tonight against Bucknell at Rec Hall they'll be rooting for their tenth win and you can be sure the selection committees of the NIT and NCAA will be keeping a wary eye on the outcome.

Even usually reserved coach John Egli is optimistic.

"There has been some talk of post season tournaments and there

should be with our record," Egli said earlier this week. "I told the boys there's only one way to make it though, and that's to go out there and win. We're going to play them one at a time, and by golly we could just make that tournament."

FOR THE LIONS to get a bid, they would have to win at least six of their final eight games, giving them a 15-5 chart. Of these victories, one must be over either West Virginia or Pitt, the two prestige teams left on the cagers' schedule. State lost to the Mountaineers just last week at Morgantown, but the feeling is that the Lions learned enough that a win win at Rec Hall is a definite possibility.

Lion athletic director Ernie McCoy is a member of the NCAA selection committee and he strongly hinted this week that State is being considered.

"It all depends on their record, so it is a possibility," McCoy said. "I might even get on the phone and invite them myself, if we do get the bid."

STATE'S BEST chance for a post-season tournament bid, however, appears to lie in the NIT. Here 12 at-large teams are selected for the tourney in Madison Square Garden. This is the one the Lions would like to receive and the one they would be best equipped to compete in.

The Nittanies last appearance in a tourney was in 1955 when they were in the regionals of the NCAA, losing twice and winning once. In 1954 they reached the NCAA semi-finals and finished third by winning four of five games.

It's been a long time since 1955 and Nittany fans are "aching" for a bid. There's only one way to get it and that is to win. A victory over Bucknell tonight is a must.

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