

Saponaro Alters Outlook

Lion Gymnast Now Regards Judge as foe

By ED CARPENTER

The crowd of more than 6800 people, who only seconds before had been as quiet as an average classroom when an average professor cracks an average joke, burst out with applause.

The sound reached an almost deafening pitch when the judges flashed their scores - 9.6, 9.7, 9.7 and 9.9.

The record crowd that was watching the Penn State-Temple gym meet had seen almost perfection in an event where it is difficult to achieve that point - the long horse vault.

To Pete Saponaro it meant more than just a six-point first place. Out for Judges

"Last year, I was just trying to win," the Lion senior explained the other day. "I think I proved it, so now I'm trying to beat the judge."

"This has been the latest development in a gymnastics career that started at a Miami Beach Boys Club. I was born in New York City, but moved to a nice area of Miami Beach when I was 12."

Although not mentioning any names, the Nittany captain was quick to point out that he was not the victim of any gangland activities such as those that involved a current teammate from Los Angeles.

Saponaro's first run-in with gymnastics apparatus came when he was 12 when he started on the trampoline at the boys club. He waited, however, until he reached North Miami High School to start competing.

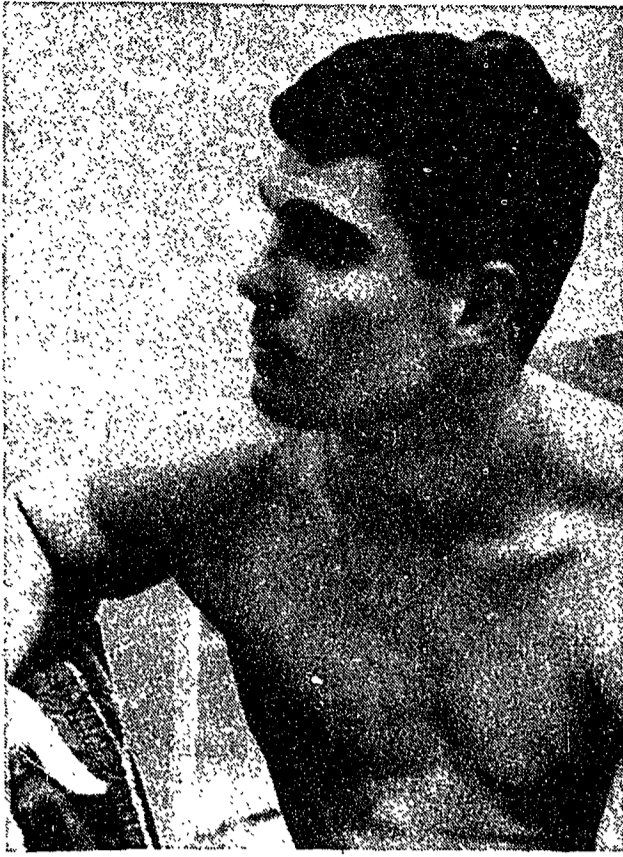
His first piece of equipment, the trampoline, almost spelled the end of Pete's gymnastics career while a junior in high school.

Landed Head-First "I was doing a trick when I fell through the springs head-first," Saponaro said. "Fortunately, I split the springs with my shoulder and bounced back up. The only injury was to my forehead which I hit on one of the clips."

The accident plus the emergence of an outstanding sophomore trampolinist at North Miami eliminated Saponaro from trampoline competition until his sophomore year at State when he entered the event at the national YMCA's.

Pete turned to the all-around as a senior and helped his high school capture the Florida State championship. He, himself, took top honors in the long horse vault and tumbling events. Also on that team was Brent Williams, now a performer for Southern Illinois, the defending national champion.

Saponaro's plans for college originally involved Dade Junior, a small school within a stone's throw of home. A three-way correspondence among Saponaro, Lion coach Gene Wettstone and North Miami gym coach Chic Cicio got Pete to the Nittany Valley in September 1961.



PETE SAPONARO

-Photo by Ken Franklin

Saponaro had one major problem standing in his way of becoming a top gymnast-footbal.

A halfback in high school, football occupied most of Pete's time. With gymnastics forced to take a back seat. His major problem when he started to compete for the Lion G-Men, was to learn to run like a gymnast and not a football player.

Remedied Problem "I used to run like a half-back on the long horse approach, Saponaro said. "I'd try to run through it instead of over it."

Any gym fan who viewed his vault against Temple will tell you that this problem has been remedied. Tomorrow starts a big two-day tournament for Saponaro - the 38th annual EIGL's.

The Lion senior will be entered in three events, free exercise, trampoline and long horse vault, the latter being the event in which he and Syracuse's Sid Ogleby share the Eastern title.

The competitors in these three events aren't the only ones that will have to watch out for him. Pete Saponaro would like nothing better than to beat the judges.

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SALES SERVICE BIKE ACCESSORIES 437-441 W. COLLEGE

Western Auto 112 A. FRAZIER ST.

Hydrology Engineering and Science advertisement

Dix Auto Rental Co. advertisement

Collegian Classifieds section with various ads for rent, sale, and services

Weiss: All-Around Skill

Haunts Opponents with Deft Passing, Shooting

By JOHN LOTT Collegian Sports Editor

Bob Weiss might well have achieved first or second-team All-America stature had he enrolled at North Carolina State four years ago.

He was seriously thinking of doing just that. NC State is a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference, where sports fans yawn through the football season, impatiently awaiting the opening of the basketball campaign.

At Penn State, getting basketball publicity is about as easy as getting the Obelisk to crumble. Or so it seems. But Weiss picked Penn State, and everyone concerned is elated with his choice.

"I wasn't worried about publicity," Weiss said last night. "My high school principal had played here and he influenced me toward State. It has been a lot of fun working under a building program, one that wasn't already established."

After scoring 27 points per game in his senior year at Athens (Pa.) High, Weiss broke into the starting five in his first year of varsity ball in college. His keen shooting eye, alert defensive play and take-charge attitude have kept him there ever since.

There never has been any doubt about Weiss' shooting ability. He'll wind up his collegiate career as the third highest scorer in State annals. Only Jesse Arnette and Mark Dumars have topped Weiss' 1048 points, a total that's due to rise even higher.

Just ask Jim Reed, whose scoring average has been fattened considerably by "feeds" from Weiss this year. Weiss generally leads the break, looks one way then passes the other to Reed, who cuts at just the right time and lays it in.

When Weiss isn't scoring (he's No. 2 on the team with a 16-point average), he's setting up countless other baskets with his alert passing. In fact, his passing may detract from his scoring mark.

"Weiss could be much higher in scoring if he weren't so unselfish," says State coach John Egli. "He always has looked for the pass first, the shot second."

Bob Duffy of Colgate just shook his head after Weiss' 28-point binge two weeks ago at Hamilton, N.Y. paced a Lion victory.

"Weiss just killed us today," he said. "He's a really great shooter and a 'heady' ball player. He runs the team and keeps his head out there."

One night later in the Syracuse dressing room, Fred Lewis of the Orangemen was bitter after watching his team drop a 70-62 verdict. But he still had accolades for Weiss.

"Weiss is a great basketball player," Lewis said. "You never see his name on the All-America check lists and I don't see why. He certainly should make somebody's All-America. He's as good a player as we've faced. He moves the club and is an excellent shooter."

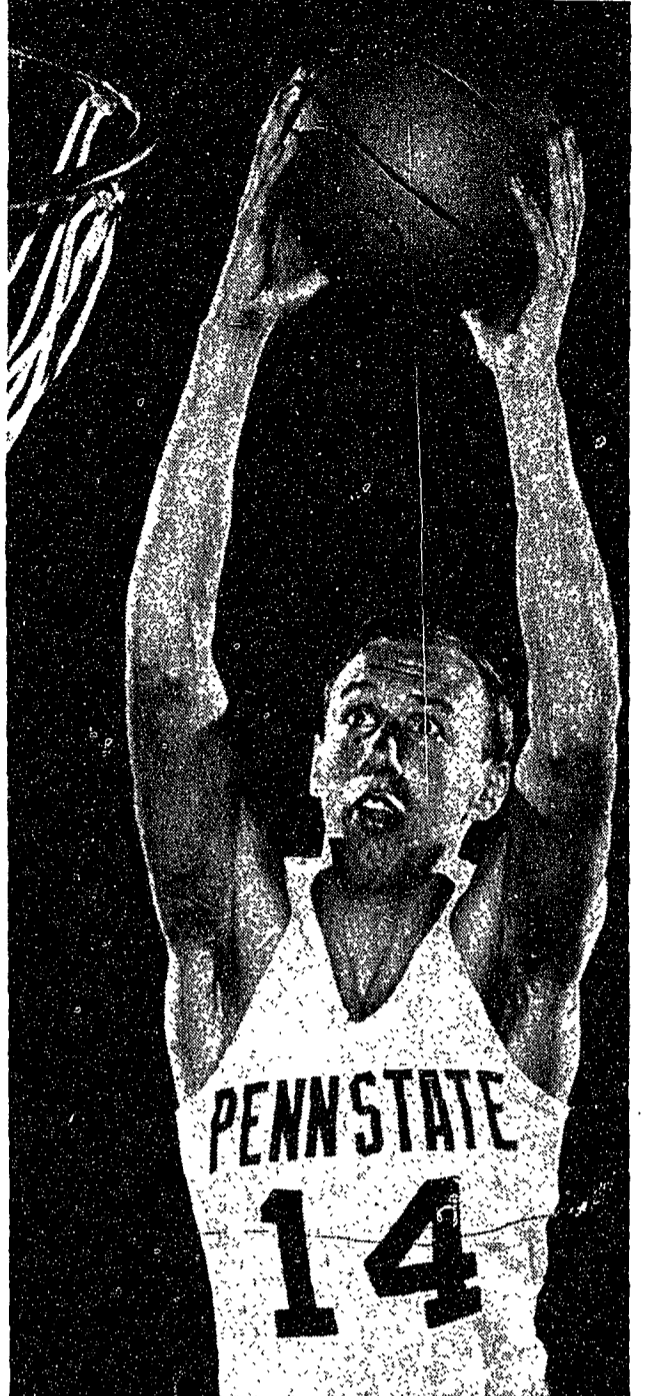
Weiss did make somebody's All-America, even if he was listed next-to-last in the Associated Press honorable mention choices. But that's typical of the credit State basketball receives in general.

State publicist Jim Tarman has nominated Weiss all but two weeks this season for the weekly All-East team. He made it once. His latest snub came last week, when he was nominated for recording 10 assists in two games.

But Monday night in Philadelphia, Weiss and the Lions will get their publicity, even if it's only publicity by association. They'll be facing college basketball's best player, Bill Bradley, a factor Weiss believes will help get the team sky-high for State's first tournament game in a decade.

"I think playing against Bradley will help us," Weiss said. "We're really looking forward to it. It's great to get into a tournament, but that in itself doesn't mean that much. We'll have to cash in on it to make it count."

State College Football Team photo



BOB WEISS

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