

levine's sports line

Paul Vexler: 'Gymnastics Bore Me'

By PAUL LEVINE
Collegian Sports Editor

It isn't that Paul Vexler is lazy. Nobody would ever accuse the little Lion strongman of avoiding gymnastics practice because he's afraid of a little work. It's just that Vexler has better things to do.

Besides, the junior from Freehold, N.J., really doesn't need that much practice. He moves into an Olympic Cross on the rings with less effort than most of us take to get out of bed in the morning. In two meets this year, Vexler has worked a total of four events, winning them all with scores of 9.25 and 9.55 on the long horse and 9.60 and 9.55 on the rings.

As a sophomore, Vexler finished second in the nation on the long horse with a 9.375 average at the NCAA championships. On the rings, Vexler broke in his routine, but still managed to finish ninth in championships at Southern Illinois University.

This year, he may be the best rings performer in the country. Thoughts of a national title would be enough to keep most gymnasts locked in a practice room, spending every spare minute practicing and polishing, refining and reorganizing routines. Not so with the Lions' mustachioed musclem.



LEVINE

"I try to get maximum performance from a minimum of work," Vexler has often said. "I never practice on a Sunday after a meet. In a normal week, I usually only practice about four days, and not for very long on any day. On the long horse, I never make more than six vaults in any one practice session. In warmups before a meet I don't practice my rings dismount. If you can do the routine, you'll be able to do the dismount. It's just a matter of endurance."

Even with just a little practice, Vexler could win the NCAA rings title that Steve Cohen barely missed last year. If he wants to. But Vexler talks about gymnastics and national championships in the same tone most Penn Staters use to describe State College weather—rather gloomy.

"Gymnastics can be a very frustrating sport if you can't do everything you want to do," Vexler said. "For me it's not so bad because I limit myself to two events and do well in both of them."

But for Vexler, gymnastics is still not much fun.

"The key to the sport is repetition," Vexler said. "You do exactly the same thing in the meet that you've been practicing all week. When I go out there on a Saturday, I know I'm going to do exactly the same thing I did the week before and the week before that. Gymnastics is a very boring sport and I really don't enjoy it."

Vexler's philosophy differs noticeably from that of other Penn State gymnastics greats. Steve Cohen, twice an NCAA all-around champion, began as a pre-teener and rarely took a day off from practice until his graduation from the Uni-

versity last March. When most children were rocking on hobby horses, Cohen learned the moves on the side horse. He'd do handsprings on his way to the breakfast table and back flips on the way to school. Instead of collecting bubble gum cards, Cohen could boast a showcase of medals and trophies.

The Cohen legacy, however, was not passed on to Paul Vexler, who has other things on his mind.

"I'm just not a dedicated gymnast," Vexler said simply. "For me, there are other things in life besides gymnastics."

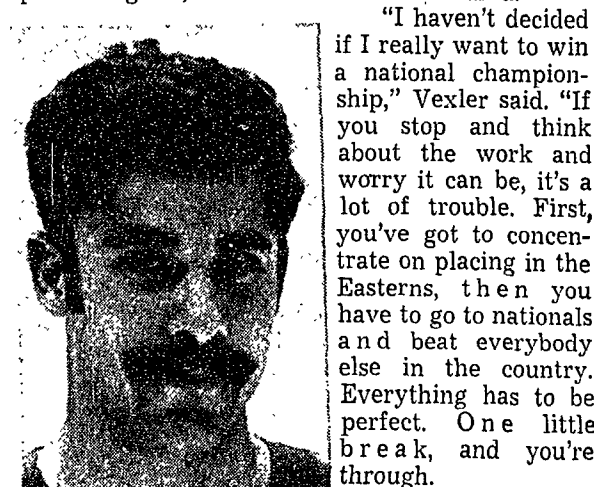
A fine arts major with an option in sculpture, Vexler is engaged and plans to be married in June. Following his graduation in June of next year, he plans to go on to graduate school and finally to teach art at the university level.

But it wasn't always that way for Vexler, who described himself as a "gung-ho gymnast" in high school. He came to Penn State as an all-around performer and seemed destined to carry on the Lion tradition which has led five of Gene Wettstone's athletes to the Olympic Games. When he changed his sense of values about the sport isn't easy to determine, but change he did.

"To be a great all-around gymnast, you have to practice all year around," Vexler said. "Cohen once told me that in gymnastics you don't take vacations when you want to, you take them when you have to, when you're stale from overwork. I don't look at it that way. I like to travel in the summer and not worry if I'm getting out of shape."

And because Vexler doesn't like to worry, he limits himself to two events—the rings and long

horse—where he does routines with perfect confidence. But as for any national championships or personal goals, Vexler remains unenthused.



PAUL VEXLER

... other things to do. "I haven't decided if I really want to win a national championship," Vexler said. "If you stop and think about the work and worry it can be, it's a lot of trouble. First, you've got to concentrate on placing in the Easterns, then you have to go to nationals and beat everybody else in the country. Everything has to be perfect. One little break, and you're through."

"I have to go to nationals anyway since the team will probably qualify. I do want to help the team win if I can, but I don't even want to worry about winning a title for myself."

Vexler won't worry. He'll be the least concerned of all when the team heads for Tucson, Ariz., and the NCAA championships in April. He'll probably yawn a little before starting his final events of the year. And with a bored look on his face, little Paul Vexler will sail over the long horse or muscle through the rings. And come home wearing gold.

Hosterman Will Get New Athletic Position

Penn State soccer coach Ken Hosterman has been named director of the University's faculty-staff recreational and fitness program, effective Sept. 1.

He succeeds Sherman Fogg, who will retire June 30. Hosterman will relinquish his coaching post when he assumes his new duties but will continue to teach in the University's required physical education program.

Penn State athletic director Ernest B. McCoy said that a successor to Hosterman as varsity soccer coach will be named in the near future.

Had Championship Team
In 15 seasons, Hosterman's soccer teams posted an overall record of 72 victories, 60 defeats and five ties. In 1954, his second year at the helm, Hosterman guided Penn State to a national championship with an 8-0 record. His 1955 team was unbeaten in nine games and shared the NCAA title with Brockport State Teachers College. He produced four first-team All-America players—Dick Packer in 1954 and 1955, Jack Pinezick in 1954 and Pete Torgerson in 1957.

A native of State College and a 1950 graduate of Penn State where he played baseball and soccer, Hosterman taught health and physical education and coached basketball at the University's Harrisburg center in 1950-51. He joined the Penn State staff in 1951 and was named to succeed Bill Jeffrey as soccer coach a year later. He has a master's degree in education from Penn State.



KEN HOSTERMAN
... new fitness head

Both Lion Linemen Second Round Choices

Buzin, Lenkaitis Grabbed In Pro Draft

Rich Buzin and Bill Lenkaitis were friendly competitors back home in Youngstown, O. Playing for rival high schools they faced each other on the football field and in shot put circles.

Four years ago they came to Penn State together, and yesterday they both were picked in the second round of the professional football's draft. Buzin, a 6-4, 243-pound offensive tackle was nabbed by the National Football League's New York Giants. The San Diego Chargers of the American Football League picked Lenkaitis, a 6-2, 245-pound center.

Buzin was actually the first pick of the Giants, who had traded away their first round pick last year in the trade which brought Fran Tarkenton to New York. Both Buzin and Lenkaitis were first team All-East selections this year, and Buzin was also named to the first team Academic All-American team. Buzin's other post-season honors included a second team All-American selection by The Sporting News and an honorable mention from United Press International.

More Penn State players are expected to go in today's session as the NFL and AFL hold their first combined draft.

Gary Beban, honored as Heis-



BILL LENKAITIS
... picked by Chargers

RICH BUZIN
... goes to Giants

man Trophy winner and outstanding collegian of the year, was bypassed until the 30th pick in yesterday's session.

The honor of being No. 1 in the pro selections went to Ron Yary,

the 6-foot-5, 261-pound offensive tackle of Southern California's national champions. Five Trojans were taken among the 27 picked in the first round.

Beban, the running quarterback

who directed UCLA to 23 victories against five defeats and two ties in three years, finally was taken by the Los Angeles Rams high in the second round. The hometown Rams had no choice in the first round, having yielded it to Detroit last fall in the deal for defensive tackle Roger Brown.

Roman Gabriel is the Rams' well-established quarterback. It had been expected that Beban would be a top first-round selection, but apparently most of the pros thought otherwise.

Before the second combined draft is completed, probably sometime tonight, the pros will have picked 462 players in 17 rounds. The clubs were given 15 minutes each to make up their minds in the first two rounds, but a five-minute deadline was in effect for later rounds. Clubs drafted by telephone through representatives at the meeting in a New York hotel.

To get Yary the Vikings used the special bonus pick they got from the New York Giants, along with two first-round picks in 1967, in the deal for Tarkenton last year.

Cincinnati, with special privileges calling for first and last picks in each round after the first, plus specials, grabbed Bob Johnson, Tennessee's 235-pound All-America center in the first round.

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Willie Mays Signs Again for \$125,000

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Willie Mays signed again for \$125,000 with the San Francisco Giants who announced yesterday that six big-game players had agreed to terms in what amounts to a \$300,000 salary package.

Mike McCormick, Willie McCovey, Tom Haller, Jim Davenport and Jim Hart were the others in the fold.

Giants Vice President Charles "Chub" Feeney said the players were signed individually even though the six were included in one announcement. All were one-year contracts.

Mays, 36, retained the same salary he has received the past two seasons despite a slump in 1967 in which he was hampered first by a pulled muscle and then by influenza.

Mays and pitcher Juan Marichal were the highest paid on the Giants club a year ago. Feeney said Marichal has not been signed yet. "But we are optimistic he will be back."

McCormick, after a brilliant 22-10 season in which he won the Cy Young and Comeback Player of the Year Awards, possibly doubled his own salary from perhaps \$30,000 to an estimated \$55,000 to \$60,000.

McCovey was believed signed for \$60,000, perhaps a slight increase from the salary received in 1967 when he hit 31 home runs and knocked in 91 while hitting .270.

Haller, mainstay of the catching staff; Davenport, who capably fills the infield positions as a utilityman, and Hart, expected to be in left field this season, probably each received about \$25,000.

Mays, appearing eager as usual, exclaimed to teammates as he entered the press room at Candlestick Park. "Retire? I feel like I could play another 15 years."



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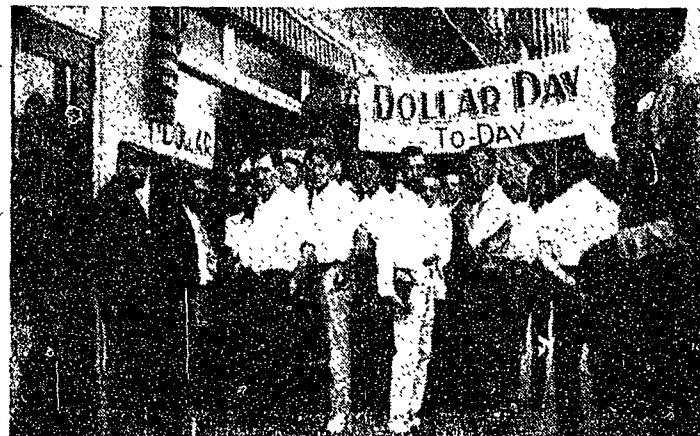
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