

Looking at track from the inside out

Don't blame Harry. That is, when you pick up your newspaper over the weekend and see Penn State's name is not on top of the stack of finishers in this weekend's IC4A track meet, don't blame Harry.

Why not? Well, figure it for a minute or two. The Lion baseball team is in the district playoffs, the football team is anticipating another southern trip just about New Year's Day, the gymnastics team finished a lowly second in the nation a month or so ago and the wrestlers bowed out in the nationals after easily capturing the Easterns. The linksmen didn't exactly take the pipe when they took their Eastern crown, so why shouldn't we blame track coach Harry Groves.

Penn State won't be the favorite this afternoon when the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America get together. How come the other teams can when his can't? To understand why, you have to get inside the sport a little way. That isn't so easy.

But how hard could it be? Six guys on an oval track, the gun sounds, the guys go. Run your tail off and if you've got the guts and ability, and if you've had the coaching, and preparation, and luck, and strategy, maybe you can last in the stretch and maybe you win.

But for a minute, put on Groves' whistle and tan. You go out and get the talent so you're at least competitive. Maybe some schools have more scholarships, maybe you're competing with a few small schools who only exist to run track and once in a while you're up against schools that have lower entrance requirements and are not at all shy about exploiting a runner or a field man for a few years, and then letting him flunk and

fade away.

But don't let all that get you down. After all, you're a coach on a big football school. However, that doesn't quite make it all the time when you try talking a Philadelphia sprinter out of a track school like Villanova or Penn.

Going beyond that for a moment, assume you've put together your team. You've got a Charlie McGuire to go with



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your Scott Chatham and twice or thrice in your career a Greg Fredricks happens around the track.

You put the guys on a bus and move off to Beaver Stadium. This year you figure you really have a shot, for the first time, at coming close.

So your sprinter takes the 100-yard crown, your superstar runs six miles in the fastest time in IC4A history, you get a good share of seconds and thirds and you lose. One of the track schools just had too many people and too much talent.

But next year, even though your superstar is gone, you have the sprinter and another kid looks like he might have the stuff to take up the baton in the six-mile. Get your people back on that bus and bus on down to New Brunswick, N.J. You're fielding the best team Penn State's money can buy and you've invested a lot of sweat and a lot of your work and patience into it. When some guy asks you how the team will do, you'll say "flip damn coins."

And this is not to mention the problems, psychological and physical, you'll meet up with when you start working one-on-one with 80 athletes. Each one has to be evaluated individually and trained properly so that he will be at the peak of his potential when the IC4As roll by or the NCAAs appear.

Don't worry about the trials of winter track and a different track every different week—you have your hands full right now.

Finally, the season is over. Before you start replanting, you'll take a moment to reflect on your harvest. 3-2 in dual meets, high in the IC4As, buried in the Nationals.

That means you've fielded a team that can beat all but, say, five teams in the East. You took your people into the IC4As and put them up against the best in this half of the country in each of the 16 events. One of your guys is in just about every final but he just can't catch that one guy who goes on to score the only points his team will receive.

The papers will tell the facts but no one will really understand what happened. You'll ask yourself if they know, if it was worth what you thought it was.

Then you'll flip a damn coin.

Thinclads in record field

By DAVE DUNLOP

Collegian Sports Writer
Defending champ Penn will be the favorite when a record entry of 76 teams converge in New Brunswick, N.J., this weekend for the 97th Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America track and field championships.

The country's oldest track meet actually opened Wednesday at Mt. St. Mary's, Emmitsburg, Md., with the decathlon. Connecticut's Ron Evans won with a total of 7,438 points with Fred Samara of Penn second at 7,068.

Though Penn coach Jim Tuppeny agreed that his team is the one to beat, Lion mentor Harry Groves said, "If you're trying to pick 'em (winners and places), you may as well flip damn coins."

Groves said to put a team in the top five shows you have "a helluva team" and an individual placing in the top five is "fantastic."

Tuppeny listed the Lions among the teams he fears most. "Penn State has excellent distance men in Charles Maguire, Gary Gittings, Dan Supulski and Matt Chadwick, plus sprinters Jim Scott and Fred

Singleton and the fastest 440 relay in this league," the Quaker coach said.

Also mentioning Navy, Villanova, Manhattan, Maryland and William & Mary as teams which could threaten Penn, Tuppeny added, "In a meet like the IC4A, with established stars from 76 colleges, a handful of blue-chip athletes can take it all. Manhattan proved it by winning the indoor NCAA title two months ago.

"Similarly, Villanova counts on such top class as Ken Schappert and Brain McElroy. And we know Navy has field power."

Winners in 13 events return from last year's IC4As. Two are double defenders, Penn's Bruce Collins in the 440 intermediate hurdles and 220, and Bill Rea, the only 26-foot leaper in IC4A history, seeking repeats in the triple jump and long jump.

The other defenders are: Scott in the 100; Mike Black of St. Joseph's in the 440; Fordham's Marcel Phillippe in the 880; Mike Keogh of Manhattan in the mile; Villanova's classy Irishman John Hartnett in the three-mile; Colgate's Chris Dunn in the high jump; Doug Greenwood of Princeton in

the hammer, and Fred DePalma, javelin, and Bob Childs, steeplechase, from Penn.

Penn State finished second in the IC4A last year but Groves downplays his club this season. "We would have to have a fantastic day to be in it," he claimed.

The decathlon kicked off the 21-event program at Rutgers Stadium. Five finals will be run today plus trials in all the races, and 15 finals will be contested tomorrow.

In winning the decathlon, Evans won the 110 high hurdles in 15 seconds flat, hurled the discus 149' 5 1/2" to win there and pole vaulted 13' 2" to triumph.

Penn State's Bill Whittaker finished ninth with 5,870 points. He ran the 1,500 meters in 4:41 to take second. A total of 1,365 athletes will compete in what Groves called "a regional meet." He said the IC4A represents the class of the East.

The IC4A, part of the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference, is comprised of 97 member universities, all of which can send qualifying athletes to the championships.

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