

Lion booters sharing football limelight

Penn State is a football power with a good soccer team; or is it a soccer power with a good football team?

Parts of both statements are needed for a clear picture of the two fall sports. The Lions have dominated Eastern football the past decade, appearing in five bowls in six years.

The booters, likewise, have been very successful, garnering three consecutive NCAA playoff bids. The only other school to have both its soccer and football teams ranked in the top 20 last year was UCLA.

The Lion booters held down the sixth spot

in the final Intercollegiate Soccer Football Association poll while the gridders found themselves 10th in the Associated Press rankings.

Soccer at Penn State always hasn't been in the limelight. Just ask any of the seniors on the squad. When they arrived as freshmen in 1970, they inherited a team that went 3-6. The year before that it was 0-6-3.

"Every win was a surprise," winger Jimmy Startzell recalled. That season was full of surprises, because Herb Schmidt coached his squad to a 9-3 log and Penn State's first NCAA playoff appearance.

The winning atmosphere generated at Beaver Stadium drifted over to Jeffrey Field, the booters new home named after Bill Jeffrey, a successful coach who guided the Lion teams from 1926-1952.

After two straight NCAA bids, soccer came out of hiding last year. Penn State spotlighted the sport by scheduling five home games at night under the Jeffrey Field lights. Attendance averaged 4,200 with the top crowd of 6,200 witnessing the Lions first win over Army in 14 years.

Now that soccer has attained the label of a winner, anything short of a victory isn't

accepted. Even a tie is no good to some diehard soccer fans.

"Ties are really depressing," Startzell said. "You feel you've wasted your time."

The acceptance of soccer at Penn State is part of a wave that is sweeping the country. The Philadelphia Atoms, champs of the North American Soccer League, had several games this summer where they drew 16,000 fans through the turnstiles.

"I think soccer is here to stay," Startzell predicted.

—Mark Simenson

PSU Ice Hockey Club

First Meeting

Tuesday Sept. 11

7:30 p.m.

HUB Assembly Room

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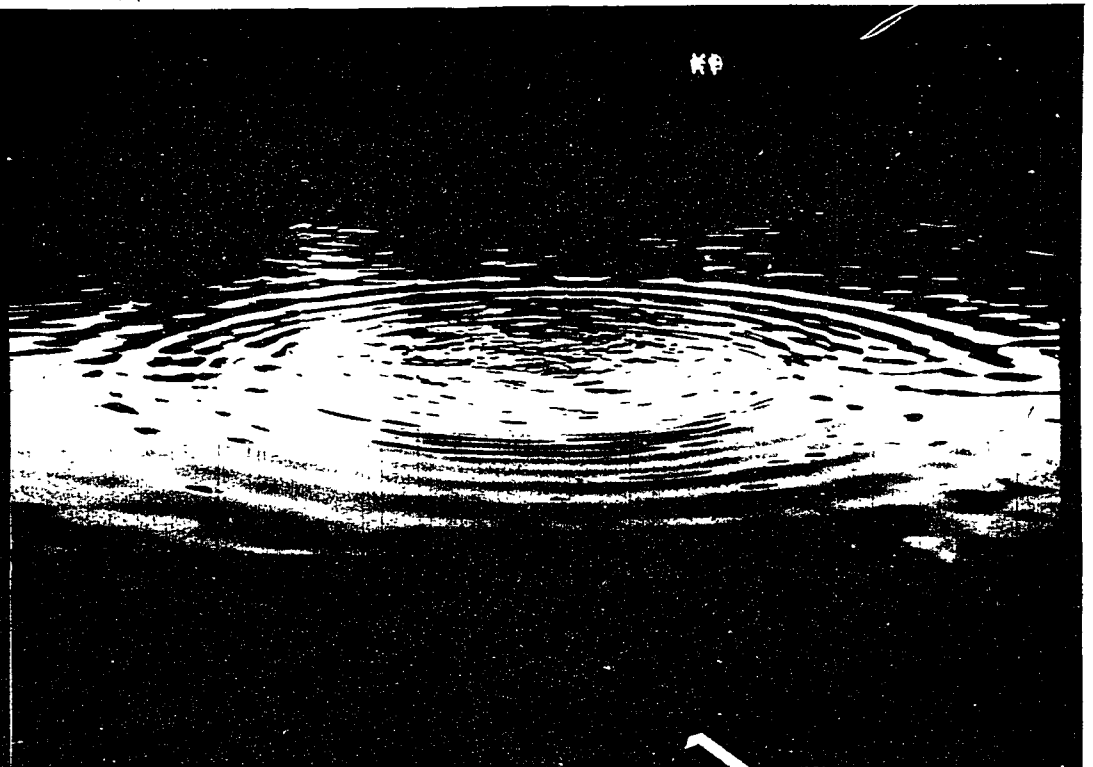
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