

Booters building around 'good nucleus'

By BILL GUTHLEIN

Collegian Senior Reporter

Physiologists remain astounded at the intricacy, the consistency, and the durability of the heart, the body's most important organ.

In almost the same way Penn State soccer fans and foes were continually intrigued by the teamwork and clutch effort displayed between forwards Andy Rymarczuk and Rick Allen.

Just the loss of a high-scoring combination like that should be enough to put a lump in the throat and some mist into the eyes of any soccer coach. Couple that with the loss of four-year starters Gary MacMath and Gary Kline, and most any coach would probably just break down and cry.

But there is little call for crying for the Penn State booters this year, in fact there is room for a little optimism as soccer coach Herb Schmidt prepares his troops for another season.

"It's a different, empty feeling without Ruck and Andy," Schmidt said, "They both had finesse, the ability to score. We'll miss them . . . but we have a good nucleus of young men. They work hard in practice and have the ability to pick up the voids. It's just going to take time to blend."

Schmidt is contemplating major surgery to last season's lineup to fill the giant gap on the front line. He may call on the services of 1972 high-scorer Chris Bahr and injury-plagued Tom Kehan to lead the Lion offense.

Bahr, aptly nicknamed "Thunderfoot" by

his high school teammates at Neshaminy, scorched opponent's nets 10 times last season and passed for seven assists.

Bahr may find himself closer to the front line this year after spending his first two years at halfback. Schmidt has been toying with Bahr and Kehan up front in practice, looking for a new goal-getting pair.

Kehan's soccer history has been a bad joke since he arrived in Nittany Valley. First it was his knee. Then, in the second game last year, he took a shot in the head that landed him in the hospital with a broken jaw. That was the end of his season.

The Philadelphia native has earned a reputation as something of a madman on the field, occasionally placing life and limb in jeopardy when he could relax a bit.

"I've never known him to back down," Schmidt said, "I'd be very, very surprised if he did now. He plays very aggressively, sometimes more aggressively than he has to, but last year, he wasn't out of line in that play. I hope he's more fortunate this year, for his sake."

If Schmidt does go with the Bahr-Kehan idea, the two will be given plenty of assistance from winger John Marsden. He had a phenomenal freshman season popping six goals into the nets and also passing off a pair to finish fourth in the individual scoring.

While the new front is beginning to gel Schmidt must rely on a strong defense to hold up under fire.

GOALIES — Mike Arnold and Tim Dantzig give Penn State a lot of potential for net protection. Arnold saw action in four

games with the Lions last year. He scooped up 11 saves and yielded one, working primarily in games already decided when he entered.

Dantzig, the former Navy net tender, is a strong contender for the starting spot but may not be eligible to play. Navy was slow in delivering his transcript and he may not have sat out the required year. A decision by the ECAC is due soon.

FULLBACKS — Whoever finally nails

down the goalie spot may rest assured that his teammates in front of him know what they're doing. The fullbacks appear far and away the toughest part of the Penn State lineup. Experience abounds with Dave Boles, Bruce Allen, and Bob Viehweger all returning to the Lion backfield.

HALFBACKS — Depending what Schmidt decides about the inside problem, Bahr may be back to lead the halfback corps again. If

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Photo by Randy J. Woodbury

Jimmy Startzell and Dave Boles

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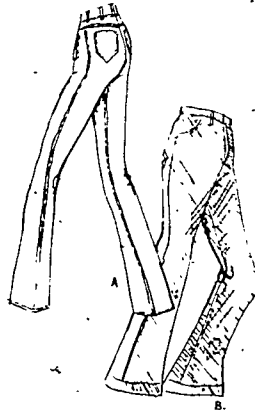
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