

Penn State harriers return

By DAVE BROWN
Collegian Sports Writer

— In what sport do the participants gain All-American honors by head-to-head competition with their peers in an NCAA Championship?

— Which sport ranks No. 3 in fan appeal on Penn State's Fall Sports Schedule?

— In what sport is a 15-50 score the worst possible defeat if your team has the 50?

If you guessed cross country to each question, you win a season ticket to all Blue and White cross country meets which are run on the University Golf Course.

Despite the remarkable success of cross country at Penn State (an all-time record of 163-58), most students and area residents are oblivious to the sport.

Coach Harry Groves' 1974 squad will open one of the Nittany Lions' most difficult

schedules when they entertain powerful Villanova on Sept. 28.

It should be, "a real exciting season with four teams (on their '74 schedule) in the Top 15 for sure," Groves said.

William and Mary (4th in the NCAA last year), Indiana (11th in the NCAA last year), Villanova, and Georgetown are Groves' four big dual meet worries this season.

With a card laden with ranked teams, Penn State must strive to match the total team effort of the 1973 unit which compiled a 5-1 mark and 10th in the NCAA.

Ideally Groves would like to win every meet, but he tries to peak his team for the NCAA Championships at the end of the season.

"We don't go hog wild about the dual meets," he said. "Dual meets are designed to help you prepare for the Championships. The most important thing is the NCAA Championship."

Groves, who has never had a losing season in 20 years of coaching cross country and track and field, has developed two All-Americans in recent years, Greg Fredericks and Charlie Maguire. To gain All-America status in cross country, a runner must finish in the top 25 in the NCAA finals.

In 1974, a contingent of eight lettermen and four newcomers hope to develop the balanced attack that Maguire and Co. achieved last year. Captain Steve Gabriel from Springfield heads a seasoned, yet underclassmen-orientated core of veterans. Senior George Dixon; juniors Ron Secord, Ken Wilson, George Christopher, and Jim Morrison; and sophomores Walt Majak, George Malley (all with strong distance backgrounds) provide the bulk of the Lions' strength in this endurance sport.

Junior College transfers Paul Stemmer, a two-time Junior College All-American from Allegheny Community College in Pittsburgh, and Pat Rexroat, a National Junior College 880 runner-up, should bolster the 12-man lineup.

The upcoming campaign boils down to a typical x-country season at PSU. Coach Groves, with a 30-6 mark in six years at University Park, obviously has a solid program. The faces change from year to year but the caliber of performance remains about the same. The Lions may lose one or two but you can bet your Orange Bowl buttons that when the NCAA finals roll around, Penn State will be ready.



Jim Morrison is one of several junior harriers to return to Harry Groves outfit this year. "We're looking for excitement and change this year," says Groves. Penn State ranked 10th in the nation in cross country last year and took second place in the ICAA Championships.



George Malley does his thing in one of Penn State's home contests. Malley is a sophomore with experience.

Varsity status captured by gal runners

By MAUREEN GRIFFIN
Collegian Sports Writer

The Penn State women's track club will be competing under a new name this year, the women's track team. This name change occurred when the club recently attained varsity status. The women will compete this year on an intercollegiate level.

"We're involved in money and scholarships now," said Christine Brooks, the new coach. "The sport will have more attraction, we'll be able to attract better girls, and the team will have a set schedule to compete in."

Since advancing from an interest club to a varsity sport, the team will operate under a larger budget. According to Brooks, the budget is the basic difference between a club and varsity sport. A club is under a different budget because it doesn't compete with other teams on an intercollegiate level. The money used to fund a club is usually self generated or student sponsored, whereas a varsity sport is supported by the school's athletic program.

Brooks said the new budget will enable the team to attract better athletes through the use of scholarships. "We have 12 scholarships allocated over the next four years," she commented.

In attaining varsity status, the team will also have a set schedule for the first time. As a club, the athletes competed on a day to day basis. The team wasn't committed to compete very far in advance. On the other hand varsity team has a set schedule two or three years ahead of time.

The team also obtained its first full-time coach. As a club, the unit was run mainly by students with a faculty adviser.

Brooks said the team will train regularly and, on a whole, the women's track program will be much more structured.

According to Robert J. Scannell, Dean of the College of Health and Physical Education, the women's track club was initiated two years ago but suffered a light turnout. To combat the problem the college went all out to promote the club and, as a result, over 50 girls turned out last year. The decision was then made to grant the club varsity status.

Brooks was named head coach of the new varsity team. A native of New Zealand, she competed 12 years in Amateur Athletic Union high school meets and on a varsity level. She received a Master of Science degree from Penn State.

Brooks said there are some outstanding prospects from last year's team. Janet Colton emerged as a miler and a half miler and Karen Johnson excelled in the pentathlon. Brooks also expects a couple of 11.5 sprinters.

The team will have a meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 11 for all women interested in trying out. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in 109 White Building.

Brooks said the schedule this year includes cross country meets in the fall and track and field competition next spring. The first meet will be the Penn State Invitational on Sept. 21 in Beaver Stadium.

Viridon hands credit to players

NEW YORK (AP) — Can a man go from being fired in the National League one season to Manager of the Year in the American League the next... via a brief stopover in the Pacific Coast League?

"I don't like to take credit for any of this," Bill Viridon said yesterday as he contemplated a torrid 16-4 record over the last three weeks that has earned the New York Yankees a share of first place in the American League's East Division.

"I don't think a manager can take credit for the way the players play or for things that happen on the field. You might put the guys out there, but they've got to do the job."

After piloting the Pittsburgh Pirates to a first-place finish in the National League East in 1972 — they lost the pennant on a wild pitch in the ninth inning of the final playoff game — Viridon was fired last September with the Pirates in second place. They finished third.

He was hired by the Houston Astros to manage their Denver farm club in the Pacific Coast League but the Yankees beckoned when Joe Cronin, then president of the American League, vetoed their signing of Dick Williams.

Viridon was well aware that Williams had managed the Oakland A's to three division titles and two

world championships in three years.

"I'm sure some people will always compare the job I do with what Williams might have done," he said, "but I can't let that worry me. I can't manage like Williams; I can only manage like I manage."

"I think all the things that happened were a natural reaction," Viridon said. "The players had been friends for so long with the guys we traded and Murcer had been in center field for so long that I don't think the reaction was anything unexpected. I just thought our defense would be better with Maddox in center and Murcer in right."

"But those have been the only two incidents and they weren't big things."

Blass 'uniformed spectator'

PITTSBURGH (AP) — It's like old times, with pitcher Steve Blass in uniform, horsing around in the Pittsburgh Pirate dugout. Whether or not the one-time ace starter ever takes the mound again, he says he's there to root.

"I sit in the dugout and I root. I've always rooted for the Pirates," says No. 28, who just two seasons ago was Pittsburgh's most effective starter.

"I want to help this team by pitching," he added from the same locker stool where he was interviewed during the World Series.

But today he's a non-roster player, laboring with pitching Coach Don Osborn before each game on abysmal control that led to 93 walks in 56 2-3 minor league innings this season.

For a moment before a crucial game with Philadelphia this week, it looked the free-spirited Blass of old.

He and several other pitchers were running football pass patterns in the outfield, catching long-bomb baseballs thrown by Dave Parker.

It was that kind of horseplay and humor that kept the Pirates loose in past seasons, and Blass, the uniformed spectator now, may help the Pirates in their

stretch drive when they meet Montreal here tonight after two days rest.

"It's pretty tough to clown when you're not contributing," he said after the Pirates whipped the Phillies Tuesday night.

Whether he ever again pitches for the Pirates may depend on how he responds to some eye training techniques aimed at restoring his control.

When he was 19-8 with the Pirates in 1972, Blass could knock over a bowling pin with a slider at 60 feet, six inches. Yet he walked 84 batters in

89 innings in 1973 en route to a 3-9 record and a 9.81 earned run average. The control worsened this season with Charleston, W.Va., in the International League and he finished with a 2-8 record and 9.85 ERA.

Blass joined the Pirates last month on the West Coast and began working with an eye specialist at the University of California.

"You have no idea what a thin line there is between my pitching then and now," he said, "and that's why I think we can get this thing straightened out."

"I wasn't throwing to any hitters, but I just felt better throwing than I have been," said the 32-year-old right-hander, who is also experimenting with contact lenses.

Dr. Bill Harrison, the California physician who espouses the eye training techniques, explains: "It involves learning how to concentrate, how to cope with the negative effect of extra noise and movement... the ability to readily obtain visual pictures, the ability to relax and maintain rhythm and timing."

"This visual program is supposed to help me so I know as I throw the ball where each pitch is going," Blass added.

Blass is withholding comment on what kind of results he's getting at the suggestion of Pirate General Manager Joe Brown.

Blass said earlier this month, however, that he was "very optimistic" about a comeback.

In the meantime, Brown and the Pirates are patient. "We're more concerned about the future than an immediate resurrection," said Brown.

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Southeastern Conference Academies
College Football Previews by Tim Panaccio

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

Although there are 10 teams in the SEC, only two have the necessities to win a conference title. That means Alabama and Louisiana State University.

The Crimson Tide under Bear Bryant went 11-0 and took the No. 2 spot in the country last year while LSU (9-2) slipped behind Penn State. Cholly McClendon still remembers that 21-7 defeat to the Tide and he wants revenge. That may come on Nov. 9 when the Bengals stalk into Birmingham.

And there lies the key to the SEC. Whoever wins the Pre-Turkey showdown will be tops in the deep South. From a surface looksee, Alabama lost 26 lettermen and LSU only 17. The Tide returns 40 and LSU 41, with both clubs having six returnees defensively. LSU has eight on offense and the Tide six. That means the nod should go to LSU right? Maybe not.

The answer to who is best down south may be found in the linebacking and deep secondary areas. LSU lost graduated All-Americans Warren Capone and fellow mate Gary Champagne. Senior Bo Harris had some surgery in the off-season and is a question mark this fall.

Alabama, on the other hand, returns All-America linebacker Woody Lowe, a junior, and Greg Montgomery—also a junior. Then there's three returning starters back deep with Wayne Rhodes, Tyrone King, and seniors Mike Washington and Ricky Davis.

Offensively, LSU looks better. Senior quarterback Mike Miley and his back-up Bill Broussard still have Brad Davis (920 yds.), Steve Rogers, Terry Robiskie, Ken Addy and Brian Zeringue to handle the ground game.

Miley who completed 60 of 107 aeriels for 216 yards last year can throw the pigskin to senior Brad Boyd who led with 16

catches at tight end in '73. There is also senior Ben Jones and junior Rich Romain.

Alabama can contend with its best gun, senior Gary Rutledge. His backup Richard Todd was 'Bama's second best rusher with 560 yards last year. Overall, of the 12 Tide players who rushed over 100 yards in '73, nine will return this fall.

Included is senior halfback Randy Billingsley and junior Willie Shelby. Also Calvin Culliver, a sophomore, and junior tight end George Pugh.

ACADEMIES

Three straight 6-4-0 seasons for Air Force. And now Rich Haynie is gone. The Falcons do have 15 starters back which isn't bad, since it is split over both the offense and defense. Junior Mike Worden or soph Bob Shaw will throw in Haynie's absence. Leading groundgainer Chris Milodragovich (583 yds.) and Mike Mark (351 yds.) return also.

Homer Smith takes off with a Cadet squad that went 0-10-0 last year. Guess what? Quarterback Kingsley Fink graduated. More heartache. Fullbacks Willie Thigpen, Dan Spangler and Brad Dorrill conjured up a meager 599 yards between them last season and will try for more. Things look bleak at West Point.

Navy coach George Welsh must rebuild the offense which returns two starters. All-America tailback Cleveland Cooper tacked up 898 yards last year. He holds five Middle records and is the All-time rushing leader at Navy.

Mike Yeager, a junior, will probably quarterback. He has Bob Jackson, Ed Gilmore and speedster Ike Owens all good runners. The offensive line is new but it has an all letterman cast. Defensively, the Middies return six starters.

Navy was 4-7-0 last year. Maybe worse this year with its schedule.

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