

Korman, UConn host gymmen

By GARY SILVERS
Collegian Sports Writer

Remember the Summer Olympics? Remember the gymnastics competition? Remember Peter Korman? Well you can stop remembering now, for the all-arounder is back. Back to haunt the NCAA and back to avenge a 211.95-211.55 defeat his team suffered last season. His base — Southern Connecticut. And his target — Penn State.

Yes, the Lions will have their paws full tomorrow night, especially competing up north, where they've been victorious only once.

"This is Southern Connecticut's biggest meet of the year," Lions' coach Karl Schwenzfeier said, "and their gym should be packed to the roof. The crowd there is very enthusiastic, but unlike here, doesn't support or applaud the opposition."

But they do support Korman, who Schwenzfeier rates as one of the top NCAA gymnasts in the country.

"He's typical of all the Olympians," Schwenzfeier (Olympic coach) said, "because he drives himself very, very hard. When you get into a sport like gymnastics, you must be organized and must be

able to put out. Korman does."

Just like the rest of the SConn gymnasts. They're young, but even more important, they're proven champions. All-arounders McCutcheon and Miller bested Lion gymnast Joe Stallone (10th) in the AA competition at the National High School Invitational championships last year, while teammates Rich Ellis (Massachusetts champion) and Stu Goldstein (Connecticut champion) dominated the schools in New England.

"On paper, they have a tremendous amount of talent," Schwenzfeier said, "and we're going to need at least that 214 (final score against Temple last weekend) to beat them."

But why fret? If the Lions did it once, there's no reason why they can't do it again. Right?

"Well in most of the events last weekend," Schwenzfeier said, "we just hit on our top four routines (only four of a possible six scores appear in each event total). In other words, we were lucky that's all we needed."

And they better hold their lucky charms tightly, for without senior Bob Desiderio (broken ankle),

the Lions can use all the help they can get.

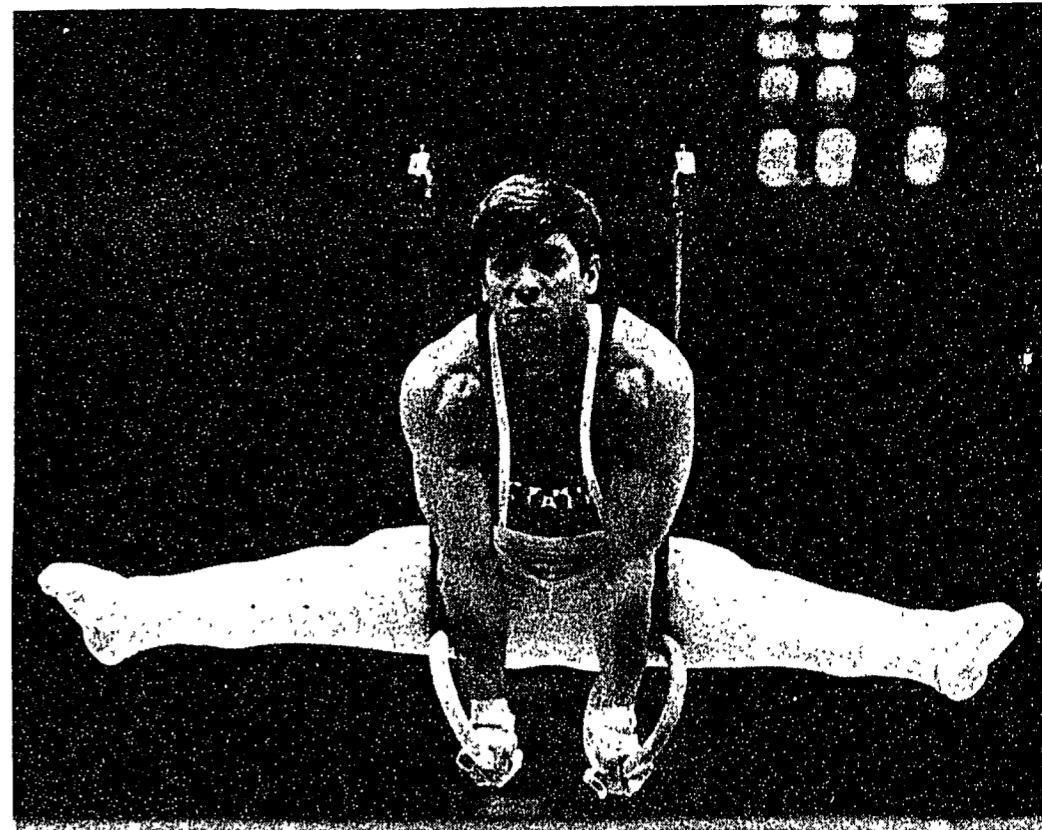
"Yes, but with the exception of Desiderio," Schwenzfeier said, "we're progressing very, very well. He's quite a talent though and will probably be red-shirted."

However, where there are injuries, there must be replacements. And thanks to Desiderio and other ailing veterans, the freshmen are getting an opportunity to gain something extremely valuable — experience.

"The injuries have opened doors for many of the freshmen," Schwenzfeier said, "and they've been putting in some excellent routines. That's very important for the future."

But the present is what's bothering the Lions now and more specifically, how to beat Southern Connecticut.

"Would you believe (Yony) Muffoletto (rings specialist) is the only healthy body we've got," Schwenzfeier asked. "We're really pressing hard. But the guys are in very high spirits now and that's what it takes to win. We're going in as underdogs, but plan to make it very interesting."



Paul Simon, Penn State's top all-arounder, will challenge Peter Korman at Southern Connecticut tomorrow night.

Gymgals' rise to fame parallels Carter's

By BARB SHELLY
Collegian Sports Writer

In the world of collegiate gymnastics, Penn State's women's team has done what Jimmy Carter has done in the world of politics. Both have risen from near obscurity to the limelight in four years.

Four years ago, the women's team held its home meets in the practice gym at White Building, "which may or may not have been cleaned the night before," said Ellen Coccagna, one of two seniors on the team who has witnessed the change firsthand.

Penn State's record back then was similarly unexciting.

This year the Lady Lions are ranked third in the nation and compete before capacity crowds in Rec Hall.

"What happened, at Penn State is an example of what's happened all over the country," senior captain Karen Shuckman said. "The caliber at nationals is 300 per cent better."

Coccagna agreed. "The difficulty of gymnastics has increased greatly," she said. "Penn State has risen in relationship to the national level."

Shuckman described Penn State's team in 1974. "It was pretty much an extracurricular thing," she said. "The girls participated in high school. They went to the gym a couple hours a day, because they liked to go. None of them considered gymnastics a driving force in their life."

Yet, that was the year Shuckman was the national all-around champion. "I got back and everybody said 'wow, how'd you do that?'" Shuckman said.

The next year, Judi Avener's first season as head coach, Penn State went to nationals as a team and wound up fifth.

"You couldn't just walk on the team now if you felt like doing gymnastics," Shuckman said. "It has to be worth a little bit more to you."

"In 1975 we got through nationals by being consistent," Coccagna said, adding that little difficulty was involved in the routines.

"Last year we were all taking it pretty seriously," Shuckman said about gymnastics. "It was a year to learn how to be serious about it." She called 1976 a "transition year."

Penn State took another fifth place at nationals last year. "We didn't have a super meet at nationals," Coccagna said. "We had peaked too soon."

As for the present season, Penn State is undefeated in six meets so far and figures to return unscathed from tomorrow's meet at Southern Connecticut.

Volleyballers back in action

It will be something old and something new for Penn State's undefeated volleyball team as it resumes action tomorrow in what promises to be a highly-competitive quadrangular meet.

The Lion spikers, 5-0 in collegiate match play, will invade West Point, N.Y., to do battle with Army and East Stroudsburg State College, teams they have seen before this season, and a tough Delaware squad, a group they have yet to play.

The Lions crushed Army to begin their 1977 campaign and should do the same tomorrow. Penn State, however, just did get by ESSC two weeks ago at Princeton. Although the Lions took two of the three games played, the scores of 15-13, 10-15, and 15-12 indicate just how close these teams are.

This match is not an Eastern Collegiate Volleyball League tilt, although ESSC is an ECVL divisional foe.

Delaware is a typical eastern volleyball team in that it has become a power to be reckoned with in just the past few years. Lion Coach Tom Tait reports that Delaware has everybody back from last year's squad, plus a 6-5 player from California everybody is talking about.

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