

Softballers looking to stop hitting woes

Penn State softball coach Pat McTarsney is looking for an improved hitting effort this afternoon when her Lady Lions host Brockport at 2:30 p.m.

McTarsney attributes her team's hitting woes in the opener last Saturday to opening day jitters. "We were tense in the batters box and a

little overanxious," she said, "but we're going to be a better hitting team."

The Lady Lion's coach has juggled her lineup in an effort to beef up the team's offense. Rocky Fuller moves from right to center field, replacing Diane Dixon, and Sue Legutko will take over Fuller's spot in right.

McTarsney has moved Fuller into the second spot in the batting order between Pam Hoyes and Janet Scinto, in an effort to get some baserunners on for her power hitters. Cathy Cronin drops from the third spot in the order to fifth.

The Lady Lions are not too sure just what to expect this afternoon, since today is Brockport's opening game. Brockport's new coach, Shirley Carmichael, has not announced her starting nine for the game.

McTarsney has not yet named her pitcher, since she

is awaiting word on the condition of Janice Presel. Presel's knee injury has improved, but the doctor has not yet given the go-ahead for her to pitch. If Presel can't start, the assignment will go to Debbie Malone, who lost the opener against Temple.

McTarsney said she was "really pleased" with the defense in the opener, giving special praise to freshmen Jan Carlson and Dee Dee Berard, the third baseman and shortstop. Now the coach is hoping that her hitters will relax and improve on their performances.

Lion nine host Bucknell

By GARY SILVERS
Collegian Sports Writer

After pounding out 26 hits and sweeping a doubleheader at Rutgers last weekend, the Penn State baseball team (3-0) returns to Beaver Field today, hosting Bucknell at 3 p.m.

As the Lions enter their third week of the 1977 campaign, they still have one major problem — they've probably had less work than the '77 football team. Thank you, Mother Nature.

"We definitely looked a bit rusty against Rutgers," State catcher George Weigel said referring to Saturday's performance, "especially in the opener. But I think that's customary for this point in the season."

One thing that's not customary at this point in the season however, is a proficient pitching staff. But Penn State's hurlers have proved this theory wrong.

"That's the reason this year's team should do better than last year's," Weigel said, "The pitching has been

outstanding. It's hard to believe how well (Jim) Farr and (Steve) Nelson are throwing already."

Two other Lions who've jumped out to good starts are freshmen Bob Orwig and Bill Benner, the shortstop-second base combination.

"The infield's looked real good," Weigel added. "Benner started hitting last weekend and Orwig showed us some strong defense. He seemed real tough under pressure, which is very unusual for a freshman."

Another State infielder under a tremendous amount of pressure is Weigel himself. Last season he was the team's starting right fielder and hit a respectable .271. This year, however, the southpaw was moved behind the plate to make room for Andy Onkontz and due to the presence of backstop Tim Searer (right hander), the junior will be forced to play short.

"So far our opponents have thrown all lefties against us," Weigel said, "so I've been starting every game. I don't know

what's gonna happen when we start facing righties. All I know for sure is that we have more talent than positions."

"I've caught all my life," he added, "so the position isn't strange to me. Last year I took Kevin Burke's place in right because apparently they wanted my hitting."

Hitting is something Weigel has yet to show the Lions this year.

"I was hitting real well in practice," he said. "Then we hit all the rain and snow. During that time, however, I also pulled a hamstring muscle, which put me out a couple of days. I just haven't been able to get it back yet."

And the Lions haven't gotten Bucknell back yet for the humiliation they suffered last season — a 7-2 loss, snapping their five-game win streak.

"We should never have lost to them last season," Weigel admitted. "And they couldn't be much better this year if they were beaten by Rutgers (10-1). We'll be out to get 'em this time around."

Lacrossers face improved F&M

By JERRY LUCCI
Assistant Sports Editor

Ordinarily, it wouldn't be advisable to put down as a wager on a 0-2 ball club one's house mortgage or four years tuition money at Penn State (whichever's higher) — the percentages just aren't there.

The Penn State lacrosse team will try to forget about the percentages today when they travel to Lancaster for a match with a vastly-improved Franklin and Marshall squad. Instead the Lions will be thinking about the intangibles — the little things that make minners out of "What ifs" and rich men out of those that wager on the underdog.

That's not to say the Lions are underdogs or favorites. Although they were shellacked, 18-6, by the Lions last year, F&M is currently 3-1, their only loss a 19-9 advantage by top ranked Penn.

The Lions, on the other hand, dropped their first two encounters to Drexel and North Carolina. The latter was an especially bitter one to Coach Dick Pencek since the Lions held tough, rebounding from several deficits but still falling

short by a 19-14 score.

"The intangibles plaguing the Lions include at the top of the list, last year second team All-American Rich Mauti's inability to score.

"When he and Jack Barry break loose, we're gonna get going," Pencek said. "Maybe I'll tell them a dirty joke before the game to loosen them up."

"But I remember back when I played; you start missing a few shots and then you start thinking about it and the openings that were there go by."

"The younger kids on the team don't think about shooting, they just see an opening and go. But Jack and Richie are more experienced and they've been stuffed a few times so they start to think about it."

Another intangible is injuries and team defections. Dave Moylan, last year's top defenseman, was hurt in a preseason automobile crash and is out for the year. Another defenseman, Richie Keegan, decided not to come out this year. Steve Ezraty, an experienced middle, quit the team last week. Fellow middle Bob Cooper contracted mono and will be sidelined for three weeks.

But Pencek filled these holes with freshmen and his new lines are starting to mold. Encouraging intangibles like experience and team spirit now seem to outweigh the bad memories of the earlier losses. Victory is Pencek's ultimate goal, however, and no one expects F&M to roll over and play dead like last year.

"Tomorrow (today) we'll know for sure just how far we've come," Pencek said. "It's a crucial game."

Denver given edge to notch NBA title

By The AP

Who's going to win the National Basketball Association title? The 902-game regular season is over, finally, and the survivors begin playoff competition tonight.

It's San Antonio at Boston, Detroit at Golden State and Chicago at Portland in the opening game of the best-of-three first-round series tonight. The other first-round opener tomorrow night with Cleveland at

Washington.

Meanwhile, the four division winners — Philadelphia, Houston, Los Angeles and Denver — wait on the sidelines, having received byes through the first round.

A Reno, Nev., oddsmaker lists Denver as a 12-5 favorite to go all the way, followed by Philadelphia, 14-5, Portland, 3-1, and Los Angeles, 16-5. That despite Los Angeles' 53-29 regular season record, best in the league.

Netwomen face Pitt; Maryland next

The Lady Lion tennis squad begins an extensive week of competition this afternoon when it hosts the University of Pittsburgh Pantherettes.

There will be a rearrangement in Penn State's lineup in hopes of having the squad at full strength for Thursday's showdown with Maryland and the Middle States Tournament over the weekend.

Today's match is the second outing this spring for Pitt, following its 3-4 loss to the University of Pennsylvania.

Penn State has already taken commanding 8-1 victories over Madison and Westchester.

Joy McManus holds down the number one singles for the Lady Lions and will be up

against Pitt's Maria Paris. McManus gave Paris her only loss last season when the Lady Lions beat Pitt 9-0.

Pitt sophomore Janet DeCostro will challenge Wendy Gavett. DeCostro transferred from Edinboro this year and was ranked third in the Western Pennsylvania 18 years old and under division.

— Joyce Tomana

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(answers to page 4 puzzle)

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