

Cagewomen small, but have good attitude



Betty McQuire (20) and Mag Strittmatter (5) will return to the women's basketball team this season. They are shown in action in the Lions' important win over Maryland last season.

By DARLENE HROBAK
Daily Collegian Sports Writer

One word springs immediately to mind when reviewing the women's basketball slate for this season — challenge.

Along with the old faces on this year's schedule come the new, and the new have almost awesome countenances. Immaculata, Montclair, and Queens — all teams with winning histories and national reputations — grace Penn State's slate.

According to Lady Lion coach Pat Meiser, her charges are ready and willing to accept the challenge those teams present.

"I feel like we have the personnel and the players who want national recognition," she said. "For instance, when we beat Maryland last year, it was probably the best thing that happened to Penn State basketball."

Defeating 13th-ranked Maryland was the highpoint of the season for the Lady Lions. Afterwards Penn State seemed to

be on its way to a spot in the national rankings until a gutsy Slippery Rock team came along and burst their bubble.

But that's all past history, and Meiser, for one, doesn't think history will repeat itself. The Lady Lions aren't ranked in the top twenty, but that doesn't squelch Meiser's enthusiasm.

"I don't think this team will be the kind of team that will go into slumps. They worked too hard for that," she said. "I feel this team knows what's happening in terms of opponent competition. They know they're good."

The Lady Lions should also be familiar with their teammates' playing styles. This year's tentative starting line-up consists solely of veterans.

Nancy Kuhl, a junior who has successfully recovered from summer knee surgery, will be the point guard. Sophomore Jen Bednarek, last year's scoring leader (14.5 ppg), holds down the other guard position.

Mag Strittmatter, a 6-0 senior who

averaged 10.6 rebounds per game last year, returns at center. She is flanked on one side by 5-7 sophomore Sue Martin, who has shown tremendous improvement.

Either senior Nancy Carlson (5-11) or sophomore Betty McQuire (5-9), who are ranked even, will start at the other forward spot.

"We have a starting five that's relatively small," Meiser said. "But this team has worked harder than any team I have ever had before."

"They have a much more mature outlook. They know that they can play on the same court with any of those teams."

This year the Lady Lions will feature quickness on offense and use a predominately man-to-man defense. Some "exciting new faces" will help put their battle plan into action.

Four freshman, including a combination their coach calls Mutt and Jeff, should see some playing time. Mary Donovan, a 6-4 former high school teammate of Bednarek's, is Mutt. Guard

Karen Micita, who at 5-4 is the shortest member of the team, is Donovan's counterpart Jeff.

Penn State lost only one player to graduation — guard Ginny Johovich. Hallie Bunk, a sometimes starter last season, came to a decision with her coach last spring not to come out for the team. Toni Clarke, a junior plagued with knee injuries, will sit out the season due to another operation.

The Lady Lions will discover soon enough just how good they are. This weekend they'll compete in the Pitt Invitational, followed by a Tuesday night game with an Australian touring team. After that it's bang, bang, bang with Immaculata, Montclair and Queens. Are the Lady Lions ready for all that?

"Timing wise it's just about right," Meiser said. "In terms of injuries (none), attitudes and strength of play, we're moving right along. We're right there."

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