

Cagers drop fourth in a row; Bouie leads Syracuse surge

By RON WENIG

Daily Collegian Sports Writer

Roosevelt Bouie loves to dunk a basketball. Perhaps because it can quiet the most hostile of opposing fans. Perhaps because he enjoys bending rims. Or possibly, because it is the only shot the 6-11 behemoth can make with any consistency.

Whatever the reason, the Bouie stuff shot was on display Saturday night at Rec Hall as Syracuse handed the Lions their fourth straight loss, 67-50.

"Everyone loves them," Bouie said about the dunk shot. "It's like taking a good warm bath."

Unfortunately for Penn State, they stayed in the bath a bit too long. The Lions were able to stay close to Syracuse for most of the game until a combination of cold shooting and a stingy zone defense put the game on ice for the Orangemen.

The first half was a genuine surprise for most followers of Penn State basketball. A crowd of over 6,000 saw the Lions battle Syracuse toe to toe for the first 20 minutes. At halftime, the tenth-ranked Orangemen were clinging to a narrow 30-28 advantage.

"They are a very good defensive team," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said. "They play hard and they play a very physical type of game."

Bouie found Penn State to be a little too physical.

"It was getting out of hand in the first half," he said. "The referees took control over the pushing in the second half. I enjoy physical games, but they were giving everybody a little push just before they jumped."

Carvin Jefferson, the Lions' reserve center, said it was the most physical game the team had played all year.

Penn State coach Dick Harter was happy about the team's aggressive play. He

especially enjoyed one play in particular.

Five minutes into the game, Syracuse guard Marty Headd seemed to have a clear path to an unmolested fast break layup. Jim Solic, the freshman from State College who started his second straight game, raced down court and tackled Headd as if to save him from scoring the winning touchdown. It looked like a potentially dangerous play.

"I thought it was a good tough play," Harter said. "You'll never see a Penn State player taking a cheap shot. If we don't play physical, we'll never be able to beat the good teams."

Boeheim knew at halftime his team would have to do something in order to shift the momentum in the game.

"We wanted to move the ball better in the second half," Boeheim explained. "We felt we weren't moving the ball from side to side well enough. I also wanted the defense to shut off Edelman. He seemed to be the only guy that they were looking for on offense."

Edelman shot four for five in the first half for eight points. Other than him, no player had scored more than four.

Still, even with the adjustments, Syracuse was unable to really put the Lions away. With four minutes left to play in the game, Penn State guard Jud Wood hit a jumper to pull the Lions within seven points.

However, that basket was the last gasp for the Penn State offense. Syracuse reeled off 11 straight points and before the fans at Rec Hall could blink, the game was out of reach.

"What might have been a very interesting finish turned out to be easy for Syracuse in the last two minutes," Harter said.

One of the major reasons for the breakdown in the final minutes was the weakness of a half-court press employed by Penn State. Bouie collected two of his five steals and Dale

Shackleford added an easy layup against that press.

Shackleford once again was the driving force behind the Syracuse offense. He finished the game with 19 points, tied with Bouie for game high honors.

Edelman and Steve Kuhn both finished with 12 points to lead the Penn State scorers, but no player on the squad was able to connect down the stretch when the Lions really needed it.

"You can go just so far playing hard," Boeheim said. "It came down to stages in the game when they just couldn't hit. We were giving them the inside scoring lanes in our zone defense, but I don't think they have many players who can score against Bouie."

Bouie, who finished the game with three blocked shots, forced the Penn State offense to keep the ball on the outside. Most of the Lion players who did manage to get the ball inside decided to pass up their shots instead of challenging the human tree.

"They were a very hard team to run anything against," Harter said. "Some of our youngsters got an introduction to real, real pressure today."

SYRACUSE	FG-M	FT-M	REB	A	TP
Harmon	0-2	0-0	1	0	0
Shackleford	7-11	5-8	5	3	19
Bouie	6-9	7-10	10	0	17
Cohen	2-3	3-4	0	0	7
Headd	2-7	3-5	0	1	7
Orr	2-5	3-5	5	1	7
Ness	4-5	0-1	2	1	6
Cubel	0-0	1-2	0	1	0
Totals	23-42	21-33	27	10	67
PENN STATE	FG-M	FT-M	REB	A	TP
Owens	0-2	0-0	1	1	0
Kuhn	6-9	0-0	1	1	12
Korkowski	1-1	0-0	0	0	2
Edelman	6-9	0-0	2	0	12
Solic	1-3	0-0	0	2	2
Jefferson	3-9	0-0	5	0	6
Young	0-2	0-0	0	0	0
Wilkinson	3-6	0-0	2	4	6
Wolt	0-2	0-0	0	1	2
Buffe	1-3	0-0	0	2	2
Bnckowski	1-1	2-2	1	0	4
Wood	1-4	0-0	0	0	2
Totals	24-47	2-2	18	11	50



Roosevelt Bouie (50) says dunking is as much fun as "taking a warm bath," but Penn State's Carvin Jefferson (55) manages to block this attempt at Rec Hall Saturday night. Bouie and Dale Shackleford led in Orangemen with 19 points each as Syracuse won 67-50.

Shackleford the pulp of Orange attack

By JON SARACENO

Daily Collegian Sports Writer

The sun set on Penn State Saturday night in the form of an orange blur named Dale Shackleford.

The 6-6 blast of orange energy turned the Lions inside out with his twisting, twirling drives that resulted in a game-high 19 points.

The slippery Shackleford also opened a few eyes at Rec Hall with his relentless baseline-to-baseline hustle, as he grabbed five rebounds, dished off three assists, made two steals and blocked one shot.

Not a bad night's work, considering the senior captain from Utica, N.Y. just recovered from a bout with the flu. Curious onlookers noted the gray t-shirt that Shackleford wore underneath his orange jersey, which he said protected him from getting chilled.

Shackleford, who is averaging 22 points a game for the undefeated Orangemen, is back playing his natural forward spot after spending last year at guard.

"I've been working on my outside shooting a lot, and I am back at forward where I'm more effective," Shackleford said, explaining his eight-point game increase in scoring from last year. By the end of the season Shackleford will rank second on the all-time Syracuse scoring list, only behind former NBA great Dave Bing.

Yet, oddly enough, Shackleford doesn't score the majority of his points by shooting from the outside. Instead, he relies on his great quickness and explosive moves to the basket, in addition to scoring off of loose balls and offensive rebounds with uncanny regularity.

"Those are the things I've always been doing," he said. "I just happen to be in the right place at the right time. My role is to keep everything flowing on the court, and the rest of the guys happy."

One player Shackleford did not keep happy was Penn State's Steve Kuhn, who had the unenviable chore of trying to subdue the elusive forward.

"I think he's probably the best forward we'll see this year," Kuhn said. "He does everything so well. I knew from the scouting reports that he was quick and liked to drive." Although Kuhn tried his hardest to corral Shackleford, especially in the second half, he fouled out with 9:42 left in the game.

Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim praised his prize forward as the Orangemen's catalyst.

"Whatever he has to do, he does it," Boeheim said.

Polls, politics won't be factors this time

"We know what's in our hands. If we win this game, we're national champs. If we lose, we're not. It's a great feeling to know we can definitely have the national title. Before, it was left up to so much speculation. Now, it's in our hands, exactly like we wanted it. We can win it on the field."

—Paul Suhey

Penn State is in a unique position right now. Never before in college football history have the Lions had the opportunity to stake an undisputed claim to the national title. This isn't 1969, when Richard Nixon suddenly became a football expert and named Texas over Penn State as the No. 1 team in the nation. This isn't 1973, when the Lions went 12-0 with a victory in the Orange Bowl, but never rose higher than fifth in the polls. This isn't even 1977, when Penn State got politicked out of the Orange Bowl and a chance at the No. 1 spot.



Rick Weber

No way. Presidential decrees, polls, and politics don't have a chance to interfere this year. After all, it's pretty difficult to ignore the only undefeated team in the country. The polls have awarded Penn State the top spot — somewhat grudgingly, I think. But if they ranked a once-beaten team ahead of one that had gone unscathed, they'd have a very difficult time justifying it. And every major bowl would have loved to land Penn State, so politics have been eliminated.

The Lions' current position would not be possible if some things hadn't occurred during the course of the season. Penn State knew it had to win all of its games during the season to even be in the running for the top spot. And the Lions went out and did that. But more importantly, every team ahead of Penn State had to lose at least once. First, Alabama lost to USC, then Michigan bowed to Michigan State, then USC got swamped by Arizona State and finally, Oklahoma lost to Nebraska.

In the past, Penn State's national title puzzle had a few pieces missing. This year, they're all there and they fit perfectly. It seems almost too incredible to believe. Almost like a wild fantasy.

"This is almost like a dream," Suhey says. "It's my senior year, we're undefeated... it's all come true. But we still have one more game left. That's gonna be the ultimate dream if we can win it."

For Suhey and other seniors like Chuck Fusina, Bob Bassett, Keith Dorney, Scott Fitzkee, Eric Cunningham, Chuck Correal and Joe Lally,

this is their "last hurrah" — their last chance to accomplish a goal they thought they could achieve when they came to Penn State as freshmen nearly four years ago.

"We knew as freshmen when we came here that it was either last year or this year that we were gonna do it," Bassett says. "At the beginning of the season, I really thought we could be No. 1 and I think just about everyone on the team thought that way, too. Everyone is thinking about our one goal that we've had in mind the whole year. We seem to be right on target. I don't think we'll mess it up now."

The Lions are in a somewhat difficult situation right now. The Sugar Bowl battle with Alabama is still two full weeks away — add three weeks onto that for the period of time between the PP game and now, and you have a five-week layoff. Yet the Lions have to be concerned about maintaining sharpness, timing and intensity in daily practices.

"The game is so far away that it's kind of hard to get into it," Bassett says. "But the significance of the game really makes you work a lot harder than if it was a nothing game. Basically, we're working to get back into shape and get some timing back. Then once we get down there, we'll develop our game plan."

"These practices are important because I really think you will play as you practice. I didn't believe that when I came here, but I've learned to believe that now. We're trying to be sharp. I don't think we are yet, but I'm sure we'll be by the time we go down there."

Penn State is going to need plenty of sharpness to beat Alabama. No one knows that better than Joe Paterno.

"I would think Alabama would have to be the best team we've played," Paterno says. "They've beaten some awfully good teams throughout the year. Based on everything, they're probably the best team we could possibly play. They will be the toughest for us to lick because they have such great balance between the run and the pass. They're also quick on defense."

So what will the Lions have to do to beat the Tide? They'll probably have to play their best game of the year. And they'll have to cut down on the number of infractions they commit, especially offside penalties, which are often mental mistakes resulting from tenseness.

"It's a big game for us, but for us to play our game, we'll have to be loose and not really worry about the outcome," Bassett says. "We don't want to play tight. We just have to concentrate on what we're doing and get the job done."

"We're excited about it," Paterno says. "We're anxious to prove to people that we're either good enough or we're not good enough."

So the stage is set. The Lions finally have a chance to attain something they've never attained. Polls and politicking can't intercede. It's all in the Lions' hands now.

Levine takes top honors in lady gymnasts' big win

By DARLENE HROBAK

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It was like the St. Valentine's Day Massacre at Christmas time.

Or at least it seemed like it when the Lady Lion gymnasts out-scored, out-performed and just plain out-classed the hosting East Stroudsburg Warriors, 139.85 to 109.5, Saturday afternoon.

Penn State not only defeated the Warriors, but it took the top three places in each and every event.

"In a sense," Penn State coach Judi Avener said, "we went there not to compete against East Stroudsburg, but to compete against ourselves and to sharpen ourselves further for the

competition after Christmas. In that sense, it was a great meet."

And in any sense it had to be a great meet for newcomer Marci Levine, who had just shrugged off an ankle injury. Because for the second meet running a freshman would grab all-around honors.

Margie Foster, who is out with an injured back, did it in last weekend's Penn State Invitational. This week it was Levine's turn as she scored a 35.4 to edge by teammates Lisa Ingebretsen (34.7) and Jan Anthony (33.3).

"Since it was away and there weren't as many people, I really wasn't that nervous," Levine said. "I was glad that I did well because I wanted to make a

good impression on Judi and Marshall (Avener)."

It would be surprising if they weren't impressed. Levine took top honors in the vault and placed second in the other three events. Her high score of the afternoon was a 9.1 on the floor exercise, where she tied for second place with Ingebretsen.

"She is not at full strength because she missed two weeks of practice," Judi Avener said of her freshman gymnast. "But when we recruited Marci we knew she had the capabilities of getting high scores. I guess we were right."

Another score that seemed high for the first dual meet of the season was the

total team score of 139.85. Last year, the Lady Lions posted a score of 134 in their first meet. But there are things, besides Levine, that weren't here last year — for instance, the new scoring system.

"One thing about this new scoring system is that nobody knows what to expect," Judi Avener said. "I think it's a very good score for this time of year. But it's really difficult to make a proper assessment of the scores right now."

SCORES: (All gymnasts from Penn State) Vaulting: 1) Levine 8.5 2) Lynne Samuels 8.5 3) Anthony 8.45 Bars: 1) Joanne Beck 9.05 2) Levine 8.75 3) Anthony 8.35 Beam: 1) Ingebretsen 9.4 2) Levine 9.0 Pat Spisak 8.7 Floor Ex: 1) Samuels 9.15 2) Levine and Ingebretsen 9.10 All-around: 1) Levine 35.4 2) Ingebretsen 34.7 3) Anthony 33.3

Nucleus of a No. 1 team



Illustration by Tom Mosser