

Journalists suffering from grand illusions

"And so we argue and we compromise, and realize that nothing's ever changed. For all our mutual experience, our separate conclusions are the same. Now we are forced to recognize our inhumanity. Our reason co-exists with out insanity. And though we choose between reality and madness . . . It's either sadness or euphoria."

—Billy Joel
If there's one thing that I've learned in the last four years, it's that it's a very self-destructive notion for any of us to think we can change the world. The last thing anyone needs is a chronic case of grand illusions. Each of us has a very small circle of responsibility. If you can't handle your own life and relate to the relatively small number of people around you, you might as well run off to a deserted island and talk to the seagulls all day.

Joyce Tomana



Sometimes I think journalists suffer those grand illusions more than anyone else. Our place, theoretically, is halfway between the newsmakers and the readers. Powerful? Perhaps. Responsible? Definitely. But in the grand scheme of things, not any more earth-shattering than anyone else's way of life.

In my most productive moments, I felt I wrote some significant things that people would not have known about otherwise, and provided just a little insight about this ambiguous world. In my most cynical moments, of which there have been more than I'd like to admit, I think journalists are an advanced form of parasite. We live our lives from other people's actions. We can't write about anything until someone goes out and does something. And we too often find ourselves three paces behind the newsmakers trying to get them to tell us what we want to hear. But that's an attitude saved for the very worst of times. And without the rough spots, there would be no challenges in this business of daily newspapers.

Somewhere after the tragedies of the front page and the frivolities of the comics lie the sports page with tragedies and frivolities all its own.

Between the scores, play-by-play drama, analysis and opinion lies a definitive statement about our culture. Sports reporting has gone far beyond what ABC's Wide World of Sports has so eloquently called "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat — the human drama of athletic competition." That in itself is not news to anyone. The games people play are big business from high school to the pros. The difference between a professional contract and a collegiate scholarship is a thin gray line. It's all a matter of buying and selling. And the product on the market is talent — a purely human balance of ability and dedication.

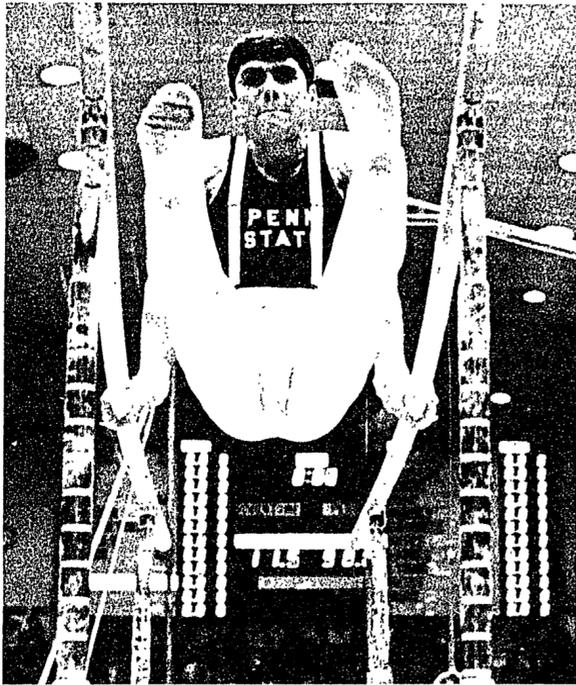
What role does the sports reporter play? I'm constantly amused by the prejudices and misconceptions about us, both in and out of the business. We are not the toy department, the zoo, or the dumping ground for reporters who could not make it anywhere else on the paper. We are not cigar-chewing Oscar Madison types with pizza sauce jamming the typewriter keys. Although a few really are over-the-hill athletes trying to capitalize on their former success, only those with a respectable amount of talent last. And sports staffs are not a menagerie of scrawny, weekend athletes who have a secret passion to be coaches and players.

Although I'm convinced the novelty has worn off, some people still insist on making a fuss about women sportswriters. Obviously, those misconceptions bother me more than the other ones. But if I didn't learn years ago how to laugh them off, I would have given up and gone to the society page to write about who had who over for Tuesday afternoon bridge.

Lady sportswriters, at least this one, are not the end products of deprived childhoods in which no one would let them play catch with the boys. Nor do I expect to meet scores of charming young men by hanging around the lockerroom.

Just to set the record straight, I've never tried to storm Joe Paterno's lockerroom. Although the court may say I have a right to be there, it will be a few years before we can talk to someone who has a tougher time dealing with our presence than our questions.

Being the first lady sports editor of The Daily Collegian may be considered a step forward for feminism, but I never felt the need to be part of the movement and I hope I never have to. We tend to get philosophical at graduation, reminisce about the good times and talk about the great expectations of the future. But that's all sentimental mental exercise to make saying goodbye just a little bit easier.



Paul Simon and the men's gymnastics team will be out to avenge last year's 216.10-214.00 loss to injury-ridden but always tough Southern Illinois, when the Lions host the Salukis at 7:30 tomorrow night in Rec Hall.

Gymmen, Salukis both plagued with casualties

By CHUCK RUSS
Daily Collegian Sports Writer
Two of the top gym teams in the country, the men's gymnastics team and Southern Illinois, compete at 7:30 tomorrow night in Rec Hall.

Both squads, however, have been plagued with injuries this season. The Lions will be without top all-arounder Bob Desiderio, and floor and vault specialist Tom Gray. Desiderio is out with muscle cramps of the lower back, an injury he suffered while warming up for last week's meet at Ohio State. Gray, also injured during the same warm-ups, is out with an achilles tendon injury.

The Salukis will be without their number three all-arounder, Kevin Muenz, who is out for the entire season with a back injury. Rick Adams, their top all-arounder who finished fifth in the nationals last year, can compete in only the horse and parallel bars because of a knee injury.

The 7-3 Salukis have more of a problem because of their lack of depth. Because of their injuries, they will have only five competitors on three events and only four competitors on the high bar. Still, the 11th-ranked Salukis are something the fifth-ranked Lions must

watch out for. They do have talent. The AA's are led by Muenz's younger brother Dan. Dan Muenz won the AA title with a 54.80 when the two teams met last year, beating Adams by .1 and Paul Simon by .6. This year Muenz has a high AA score of 54.95. He will team with fellow AA's Scott McBroom and Brian Babcock to form a trio that have all surpassed the 53-point mark. Babcock, in fact, may be the best of the bunch, at least according to Southern Illinois' coach Bill Meade.

"He will probably be the best gymnast we have at the end of the year," Meade said. "He has more moves and can do more tricks than any gymnast I've ever had. He's only a freshman, but we're counting on him."

Meade has had a hex over Penn State coach Karl Schwenzfeier throughout their careers. The SIU coach has never lost to a Schwenzfeier coached team and he doesn't intend to start now.

"I'm very competitive and I like to win, especially at my alma mater," Meade said. "We get really psyched up to play Penn State. It should be a fun meet."

"They always give us a dog fight," Schwenzfeier said. "They have an ex-

tremely good program and they are always nationally ranked."

Both coaches are approaching this meet very cautiously because they know that any more serious injuries could ruin their teams' chances of making nationals.

"We want to be very protective of our gymnasts now," Schwenzfeier said. "It's that time of the year where the wear and tear of a season really shows on a team. We have to be very careful."

RINGERS: This will be SIU's second opportunity to visit Penn State this year. The first time, for the Penn State Invitational, the Salukis couldn't come because of a snow storm that kept them at home in Carbondale. Last year Penn State lost to Southern Illinois 216.10-214.00. SIU features one of the top pommel horse specialists in the country in David Schieble. There is a possibility that Lion gymnast Joe Stallone could see his first action of the season Saturday. The Lions score of 221.15 against Indiana State ranks second in the nation to Oklahoma's 223.3. The Salukis have lost to Oklahoma, Northern Illinois and Iowa State, but Meade hopes that his team will still make nationals.

Lady gymnasts cautiously predict a victory over Southern Illinois

By DARLENE HROBAK
Daily Collegian Sports Writer

If indications are correct, the Southern Illinois Salukis should pose a challenge to the women's gymnastics team in tomorrow's 7:30 p.m. Rec Hall meet — but not too much of a challenge.

Penn State, 6-0 and ranked No. 2, is coming off last Saturday's meet against Louisville in which it posted a nation-high score of 142.15. The Salukis, who have scored a 136.2, own the highest score of any team the Lady Lions have met this season.

"I don't think they will beat us, but they're the one team we have met this year that has a chance to beat us," Penn State head coach Judi Avener said. "If they could hit, they might be a 140 team."

But Southern Illinois hasn't been a 140 team. It's been burdened with about as many injury problems as Penn State has. Notably the Salukis top gymnast, All-American Linda Nelson, sustained a pre-season knee injury which ended her career.

"Southern Illinois is traditionally a strong team and traditionally an exciting team because they pull a lot of big tricks and they usually have a lot of talent," Judi Avener said. "If they hit, they'll be a team to reckon with."

Penn State, however, has been a team to reckon with all season. And according to Judi Avener the Lady Lions are "on the mend." Pat Spisak's cast finally came off her wrist, Margie Foster is off her crutches, Lynn Samuels may get the go-ahead to compete this weekend and Ann Carr's sprained ankle is slowly improving.

A definite line-up has not yet been decided for tomorrow's meet except for Debbie Alston, Jan Anthony and Marcy Levine in the all-around. If Samuels competes she'll do floor exercise, if she doesn't, Lisa Ingebreitsen will go all-around. Joanne Beck is questionable for the vault and floor exercise because her back has been troubling her. Carr decides today whether she'll compete.

"Without our big tricksters — Foster, Spisak and Carr — they have probably got more difficulty than we have in some events," Avener said. "In the floor ex and vaulting, they'll probably pull bigger tricks than we do."

However Southern Illinois coach Herb Vogel, who was one of the pioneers of women's gymnastics, said the Salukis won't beat Penn State. Besides the injury factor, he said the meet against the Lady Lions will be Southern Illinois' third in five days. It faces Ohio State today.

"What I think we can do, if we come in healthy, is not embarrass them," he said. "Right now if we had our team at full strength, we would probably place third or fourth in nationals. We just don't have the depth of a Penn State."

The Salukis, due to internal problems, may also not have their top gymnast, All American Cindy Moran. Vogel said with Moran, Southern Illinois should score from 137-139, but without her that scoring range isn't possible.

Avener, however, said her squad is a "consistent 140 team." The Lady Lions have only scored under 140 once in its last five meets.

"We have moved into the phase of the season where we try to perfect what we are doing," she added. "We're concerned with all the little details of our routines now."

BACK FLIPS — If Carr doesn't go all-around tomorrow she won't meet the requirement that states she must compete in four all-around to be eligible for national all-around competition. If Carr doesn't compete, her national scores could still count toward the final team total. If she won the all-around, however, she would not be able to accept the individual medal. The Aveners have submitted a special petition asking to exempt Carr from that requirement rule. Marshall Avener said an "outstanding" performance tomorrow would be one in which Penn State had three breaks. It had three breaks last week. Cal State-Fullerton scored a 138.00 last week, performing without some of its top gymnasts.

Wrestlers break drought with win

By TOM VERDUCCI
and WILL PAKUTKA
Daily Collegian Sports Writers

For the first time this year, Lion wrestling coach Rich Lorenzo sat on the South side of the team's bench. And for the first time this year, the Lions won a dual match.

"I figured that I had sat in the same place for too long," Lorenzo said. "About 11 matches too long."

It was the outstanding efforts in the first three matches that paved the way for the 29-11 victory over Lock Haven.

Jack Chidester picked up his first fall of the season as he pinned Lock Haven's Keith Dixon with only 1:25 gone in the bout. Bob Bury then followed with a 19-11 superior decision in the 126-pound match.

After Bury's win, the scoreboards went out, and after a ten minute delay, it seemed that the early momentum that the Lions had gained was lost. Jim Earl then took over and took a 9-2 decision over Vince Testa in a 134-pound bout giving the Lions' a 13-0 lead.

The Lions had the victory locked up by the time the heavyweight match came along but not too many people left before the end of that bout.

The Lions' Jim Sleeper, who had compiled a less than impressive record of 1-16 was the heavy underdog against Lock Haven's 11-3 Gregg Koontz. But after 11 depressing dual meet losses, Sleeper woke up to stun Koontz and everyone in attendance with a 5-2 victory.

"Sleeper did an excellent job," Lorenzo said. "That was one of the better heavyweights he's wrestled this year. I hope it takes some of the pressure off him."

Last night's crowd of less than 600 was the smallest for any Lion match this season but don't tell that to Sleeper. When he rolled Koontz on his back in the third period, Rec Hall was filled by a thunderous roar and the sounds of clapping hands and kicked bleachers lasted until the final seconds were counted down.

"I think my major problem this year has been dumb mistakes. Tonight I just concentrated on not making them," Sleeper said. "I hope tonight was a start in the right direction."

But with the ice finally broken for the Lions, and tournament competition just around the corner, Sleeper isn't the only one with that on his mind.

Playoff system could be the answer to No. 1

By RICK WEBER
Daily Collegian Sports Writer

When the wire service polls disagreed in their choice of college football's national champion last month, it became more apparent than ever that a championship playoff system might be the answer to the yearly controversy.

At least that's how the National Collegiate Athletic Association feels. The NCAA's seven-man Extra Events Committee has proposed a four-team championship playoff and recommended that it be adopted at next January's NCAA convention by the 139 major football colleges that constitute Division I-A. To reach the 1980 convention floor, the plan must either be approved by the 18-man NCAA council in April or be placed before the convention by a union of six major football colleges. According to Frank Broyles, a member of the Extra Events Committee, it is certain to reach the floor since "all seven members of the committee who approved this plan will join to advance it if the council rejects it."

If a majority of the members of Division I-A approve the plan next year, the NCAA will stage the first championship playoff during the two weeks after the Jan. 1 bowl games in 1981. Even if the plan is not approved, this represents the most progress that has ever been made toward a playoff system. In the past, a formal recommendation was never placed before the membership to be voted on because a feasibility committee felt there were too many problems to be resolved. Now, the Extra Events Committee feels it has come up with a reasonable plan.

Under the proposed plan, all 28 teams that participate in the 14 major college bowls would be eligible for the playoff. A special NCAA committee would choose four of them after the last of the 14 bowls

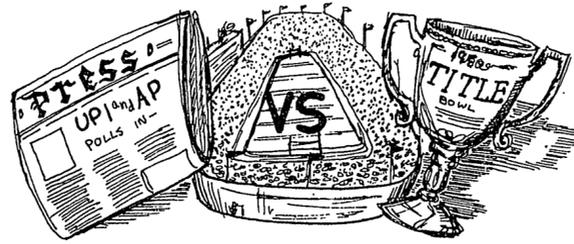


Illustration by Della Hoke

had been played. A semifinal round would be played at two neutral sites, which would also be determined by this committee. The title game would be played on a neutral field the weekend before the Super Bowl.

Broyles feels this plan will work because it won't disrupt the bowls. Teams would be selected by the respective bowl committees just like they are now. The contracts that bind certain conference champions to a bowl (for example, the Southeastern Conference champ to the Sugar Bowl) would not be changed.

The reactions to the playoff proposal are as mixed and varied as might be expected on a controversial issue like this.

The strongest reaction was voiced by the bowl people, who fear that the importance of their games would be diminished. Although the bowl officials aren't involved in the decision-making process — they can only lobby against the playoff — the NCAA plans to listen to their objections. The bowls gave college football a lot of exposure when it wasn't the spectacle it is today, and the NCAA respects that.

"We will be meeting with the

would become preliminary games, not the college football showcases they are today. In essence, they would become stepping stones to a national title game.

"The big bowl games would lose their prestige. Under this proposal, you're talking about reaching out and saying all the bowls are equal because you don't know where the playoff teams will come from. The big bowls wouldn't be that much more important than the others."

Brock isn't sure that the playoff would achieve its purpose — to determine an undisputed national champion.

"I can see why people would want a plan to determine a true champion," he says. "But will it settle all the arguments? I don't think so. I'm sitting here in the heart of Dallas Cowboys' territory and the people here still aren't convinced that the Steelers are World Champs."

Probably the main objection the bowl officials have to the proposal is that the bowl matchups could conceivably become less attractive, and the result, they fear, would be reduced payoffs from the networks that telecast them.

"The top teams would be jockeying for a position in the bowls rather than facing each other head on," Brock says. "They would want to face a team that they felt they could beat. They certainly wouldn't be chosen for a playoff if they lost their bowl game. You simply would not have a national championship matchup like we had this year."

"Our main consideration then is the impact a playoff would have on TV revenue. There could be problems in negotiating new contracts. They might take the position that the New Year's Day bowls aren't quite as lucrative as they would be. I don't know, but why gamble?"

CBS, which televises the Cotton Bowl, has just signed a new three-year con-

tract with the Cotton Bowl so the playoffs will be stable regardless of a playoff. CBS sports executive Beano Cook says the playoffs wouldn't be lowered as long as the Nielsen ratings were good. And Cook feels the bowl games may take on even greater significance for viewers if a playoff was instituted.

"I think the playoff system would enhance the importance of the bowl games for the viewers," Cook says. "They would realize that the winners could go on to a championship game."

"The college ratings have gone down two straight years now. I think we have to offer something new to get them back up. A playoff could do that."

Rex Lardner, associate producer of NBC Sports, doesn't agree with Cook. "Even if the No. 1 and No. 2 teams played, it would be comparable to Pittsburgh and Dallas meeting in a pre-season game," Lardner says. "I don't think the bowl games would be as meaningful. Right now, they're the end-all. They're the final games of the year."

Lardner thinks the viewers might think of the holiday season, and Jan. 1 in particular, as a chance to spend more time with each other, rather than in front of the tube.

"If people have other things to do, they might be inclined to do them rather than watch the games," he says. "They would know they could catch the playoffs and the title game later."

ABC would love to see a playoff system enacted. It would have the telecast rights because it carries the weekly college games. Cook estimates that three playoff games would be worth \$43 million in TV money. Part of that money would go to the teams involved in the playoff. Joe Paterno, a longtime advocate of a playoff, suggests that the remaining "millions of dollars from Continued on page 12.