

Trackmen's season winding down

By DARLENE HROBAK
Daily Collegian Sports Writer

The school season is rapidly coming to a close for most Penn Staters, but for another group of students — the men's track team — the most important part of their season hasn't even begun.

The Nittany Lions have two more regular season meets remaining, including today and tomorrow's Pitt Invitational. Those who qualify for the NCAA championships in Urbana, Ill., the National AAU championships in Walnut, Cal. or the National Junior AAU meet in Bloomington, Ind. will see their seasons stretch well into June.

"The main meets you could get into are in June," said Penn State track coach Harry Groves. "If you're any good, that's when it's going to happen. Track isn't just a school sport."

But June isn't here yet, and two more meets remain in May. This weekend the entire team will be competing at Pitt against approximately 20 teams, including Ohio State, Purdue, West Virginia, Syracuse, Cleveland State and Pitt.

Competition today, which consists mostly of trials and long distance events, begins at 5:30 p.m. Tomorrow morning are the field events, and the track events begin at 1:00 p.m.

"There's a lot of quality events, but you don't have a lot of really good teams," Groves said. "We're going to move some people around and try to qualify them in different things. But the most important thing in this meet is what you win. If you can't win meets like this, you don't belong at NCAA's."

Next Monday, the last day of finals period, the Lions will compete in the Penn State Open which begins at 3:00 p.m. at the new Nittany Lion Track. Groves said there will probably

be six to 10 athletes in each event, including former Penn Staters Mike Sands, Mike Shine, Greg Fredericks and Charlie McGuire.

Considering how hot it has been in State College recently, it might be safe to assume the weather is better for running now than it was at the cold and windy Nittany Lion Invitational at the beginning of the season.

"It's going to take a while to get used to the weather," senior distanceman Mike Wyatt said. "But I'm glad we're getting it now. It's usually like this at nationals, so we should be used to it by the time nationals roll around."

One meet Penn State is scratching, due to the weather and the fact that it's only one week prior to NCAA's, is Indiana's Central Collegiate Championships. Groves said: "You don't want to work one meet against the other."

Up to this date, four Lions have qualified for nationals: John Ziegler in the 10,000-meter run; Bob Snyder and Alan Scharsu at 5,000-meters, and Bruce Baden in the 3,000-meter steeplechase. But before June, that number should increase.

"Overall, we are probably a little bit stronger than last year," Wyatt said. "A lot of people came through who didn't do much of anything last year. That, our depth, is what's been strongest about Penn State teams in the past. And this team is no different."

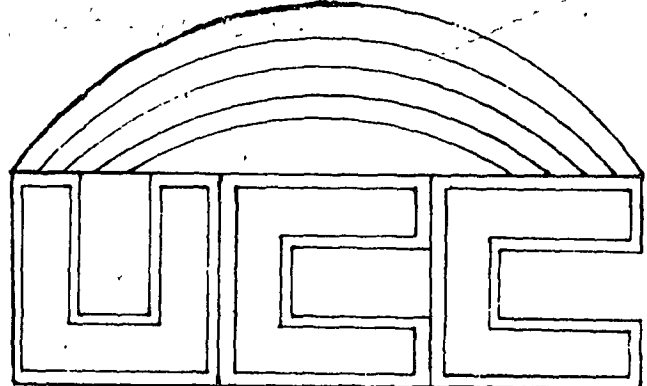
"If we got into a big scoring meet right about now, with everybody coming around to where they should be, I think we'd do well and have solid performances all the way down."

ACROSS THE TAPE: The Nittany Lions graduating are Snyder, Baden, Wyatt, Bill Austin, Tim Backenstose, Tim Bowers, Glenn Chumley, Jim Close and Campbell Lovett.

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