

Second baseman Bill Benner has played a key role in the baseball team's 9-2 season, leading the Lions in batting average (.438), hits (14) and sacrifices (4). Photo by John Bruckmeyer

Benner integral part of Lions

By MATT SLOVICK
Daily Collegian Sports Writer

Although he is only 5-foot-9, senior Bill Benner is a big part of the baseball team.

After 11 games, the Lions' second baseman is the team leader in batting average (.438), hits (14), and sacrifices (4), and has scored eight runs while batting in six. He also has been the mainstay of the infield where he has committed only one error in 50 chances for a fine fielding average of .980.

"I like to think that I'm a better defensive player than I am a hitter," Benner said. "I'm just a slay hitter."

However, impressive statistics don't really matter to Benner. He is a team player; his goals are team goals. He is happy as long as he is getting his job done.

"My job and Bob's (shortstop Orwig) is to get on base for the middle of the lineup," Benner said. "Any way we can get on will be beneficial for the team. Numbers are nice, but they can be deceiving. My importance to the team is to play defense and get on base."

"I'd like to score a lot of runs this year. I'd like to see the team get into the playoffs and do well there. We've never been there since I've been here. That's what we're striving for."

Benner was recruited from Penns Valley High School in Rebersburg, Pa. He was primarily a pitcher before he switched to shortstop and finally second base. Although Benner said he never did that well in high school, he believes his years in Lion country have helped him improve.

"Turning the double play is where

most of my improvement has been," Benner said. "Fielding is repetition. The more you do it the better you get. It's a lot of work. The more ground balls you field the easier they get."

Even though Benner is a team-oriented player and believes that making a big play is part of his job, he does recall a few personally thrilling moments.

"This year at Bucknell was a thrill for me because I finally hit a home run," Benner said. "Also, the first game I ever played here I was tense and I turned a double play in a key situation. It was a thrill to me."

But because of his experience the last four years, Benner is not tense anymore and he is able to concentrate on his game.

Binney finishes 18th at AAU Nationals

By MATT SLOVICK
Daily Collegian Sports Writer

Diver Becky Binney missed making the semifinals in the 1-meter board by .33 points and placed 18th in last week's Amateur Athletic Association National Championships in Milwaukee, Wis.

The competition was so close that Binney's total of 191.22 was only a few points shy of ninth place (193.5), but failed to get her in the required top 16 (191.55) in order to continue.

Both Binney and Penn State coach Bob Goldberg were happy with the performance and impressed by the quality of all the other performances.

"It was one of the best women's meets ever," Goldberg said. "It was phenomenal. Usually a 191 would have been high up. Everyone was on. It was super diving. It came down to one judge giving a little better score."

"She (Binney) missed her back twister and got three," Goldberg said. "She was hitting everything for sevens and seven-and-a-halfes. Even fives and sixes would have moved her much higher because the competition was so close."

and I got sixes and it made the difference. It was amazing. "But it's exciting to think I was able to do well. It was the best nationals I've ever seen and a lot of other people seemed to think so too."

Binney didn't do nearly as well, however, on the 3-meter the next day as she was unable to make the top 25.

"It seemed like a whole other competition," Binney said. "I don't know what happened to me. It was so tight in the 1-meter. I really thought I had made it and it was a little bit of a blow when I just missed. I didn't feel relaxed. I wasn't as sharp."

On the final day, Binney competed in the 10-meter platform competition along with Colette Bizal, the women's assistant swim coach. Although Penn State does not have a platform to practice on, Binney finished a respectable 20th and Bizal 30th.

"She (Binney) missed her back twister and got three," Goldberg said. "She was hitting everything for sevens and seven-and-a-halfes. Even fives and sixes would have moved her much higher because the competition was so close."

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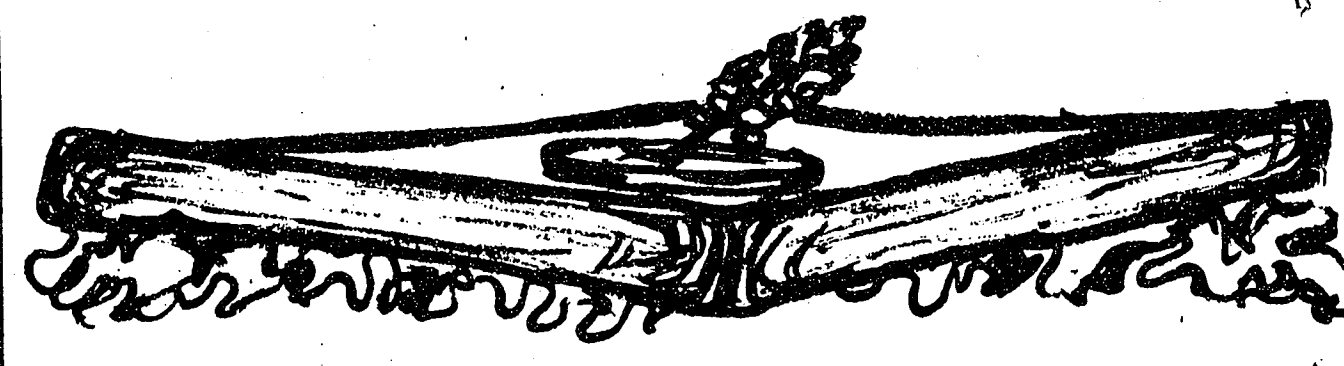
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