

Stemmer stirs memories of Lion cross country past

By TONY SMITH
Daily Collegian Sports Writer

The crowd at the Blue Golf Course Saturday morning was not a large one. (Let's face it, most people would rather attend a tailgate party than watch a men's cross country meet.)

But many of the eyes in the crowd were focused on Alan Scharus, the top American runner at nationals last season (seventh overall). Would coming off a recent hamstring injury affect his performance in the Penn State Open? Would he finish in first place? Would anyone give him a serious test?

As the race unfolded, the questions were answered. Scharus finished in first place, as expected — the top collegiate finisher. However, he was not alone when

he crossed the line. Someone else was there with him, a name from the past, wearing a T-shirt with "Athletics West" on the front.

As both men were running side by side down the last stretch of the course, some of the onlookers may have looked at the guy wearing that T-shirt and asked, "Who is he?"

Of course, those who have followed the Penn State cross country team over the years knew who it was — a Penn State alumnus who answers to the name of Paul Stemmer. Paul Stemmer?

Chances are the name does not ring a bell among first-term freshmen, or even for some 12th-term seniors. But for those who have followed track and cross country for a while, and for those who have

been in Happy Valley a little longer than a tie for first place at the Alumni Invitational in September with another fellow alumnus, Greg Fredericks — (finished 17th at nationals that year. Both Stemmer and Malley are presently members of the Athletics West track club in Eugene, Ore.)

Stemmer was one of the stars of the 1979 men's cross country team which finished first among all "American" teams at nationals (Penn State placed fourth overall). Individually, Stemmer was the third American to cross the finish line (fifth overall).

"The experience was unforgettable," Stemmer said. "I think it was the first time in a while that an American (Craig Virgin) took the individual title. And three out of the first five finishers were Americans, which was excellent."

George Malley was another member of that 1979 squad. Malley — who finished in

first, and ran against Penn State on occasion. After meeting and getting to know some of the Lion runners — such as Fredericks and Charlie Maguire — Stemmer made up his mind that he wanted to transfer to Penn State.

And the rest is history (American sports history, as well as Penn State history).

As for the future, Stemmer said he plans on running in the New York Marathon and other large scale races. He has run a marathon once before, but because of problems with his running shoes, he was unable to complete the race.

"This time around, I plan on going all the way," Stemmer said. Of course, Paul. Going all the way is a Penn State tradition.

Stemmer is now 27 years old. He says he has been running for about 11 years. However, while attending Fenfield High School in Rochester, N.Y., he wasn't content with just running. Other sports, such as wrestling and soccer, interested him just as much, if not more.

"Wrestling was my favorite sport at one time," Stemmer said. "It was fun, but I had to watch my weight all the time; you have to watch what you eat. That's the good thing about running, you can eat what you want and not have to worry about it."

And that, according to Stemmer, was the main reason why he chose running over wrestling when he went to college. He attended Allegheny Community Col-

lege first, and ran against Penn State on occasion. After meeting and getting to know some of the Lion runners — such as Fredericks and Charlie Maguire — Stemmer made up his mind that he wanted to transfer to Penn State.

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Reloaded Pitt defense the best in the country

By GARY MHOSES
Associated Press Writer
PITTSBURGH (AP) — Hugh Green, Ricky Jackson and others have jumped to the pros from the University of Pittsburgh defense that ranked No. 1 in college football last year.

Yet despite having nine new starters, Pitt still leads the nation in total defense so far this season, allowing an average of 161.7 yards per game.

And the Panthers are tops against the run with a starting statistic.

In three wins over Illinois, Cincinnati and South Carolina, Pitt has held opponents to minus 32 net rushing yards — an average of minus 10.7 per game.

"Their defense is playing just like last year's. It doesn't look any different to me," said West Virginia coach Don Nehlen, whose team hosts Pitt Saturday in a matchup of Eastern unbeaten.

"They get a great, great pass rush. Their linebackers are super aggressive. Their secondary gets to the ball. They're just a darn good defensive football team," Nehlen added.

Pitt coach Jackie Sherrill of Pitt smiled at the notion that this year's defense is as good as last year's.

"We're not at that point yet," Sherrill said. "I think we're a year away, I really do."

The defensive ends from last year are both starting as rookie linebackers in the pros, Green with Tampa Bay and Jack-

son with New Orleans.

Bill Neill is starting as a guard for the New York Giants, and Carlton Williamson is a starting defensive back for San Francisco.

Middle guard Jerry Boyarsky is with New Orleans, cornerback Lynn Thomas is with San Francisco and tackle Greg Meisner on Los Angeles' injured reserve list.

"Let's face it," said Sherrill. "The five people we had up front last year are in pro football."

But the successors are using enthusiasm to offset lack of experience.

"I think we have to go out and prove ourselves each week until the season is over," said Sal Sunseri, a returning

starter at linebacker. "We have to prove to people that we can play football."

Green and Jackson have been replaced by Chris Doleman, a 6-6, 220-pound freshman from Philadelphia, and Michael Woods, a 6-1, 205-pounder from Natchez, Miss.

In the middle, Pitt isn't as big as last year. But 240-pound noseguard J.C. Potts, 227-pound Phil Puzos and 258-pound Bill Maas play with zesty determination.

"It's our turn this year, and I think we've started off real well," says Maas. "It's hard to play and get experience behind the players we had last year, but we learned from them and now we want to put it to use."

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