

Lions' long season comes to a close

By SHARON FINK
Collegian Sports Writer

There was an air of futility surrounding the whole event.

Last Tuesday night, the men's basketball team played its last game of the season. There's no need to qualify that as a regular season. With a 15-11 record as that day began and losses in two of their last three games, it was rather obvious the game would be the last of the Lions' season, period.

And people's attention was turning to those teams that would be playing past March 2. Most other teams, particularly those in conferences, had finished their seasons over the weekend, and a major part of the scoreboard section of that Tuesday's Pittsburgh Post-Gazette was devoted to the final standings of every Division I basketball conference.

Also listed was the playoff schedule for every conference. Playoffs started that night in both the Eastern 8 and the Big Eight.

People were also thinking about next year. Speculation found its way into print that said in the next few weeks, Penn State would be asked to rejoin the Eastern 8, this time along with two or three other teams. That would expand membership in the supposedly stabilizing league to 10 teams (Pitt is leaving next year to join the Big East), and it would be renamed the Eastern

Athletic Association.

But on March 2, back in University Park, the Lions had to end it all against Cleveland State. It had been eight days since the Lions' last game, a 60-54 win over Westminster on the Monday before final exams. Now they were faced with playing Cleveland State in Rec Hall, on a deserted campus, and just to insure that the crowd would be small, about a foot of snow had fallen in the area, making the roads hazardous and lowering the temperature to bitterly cold.

Even pregame notes to the press made it seem like that game should be forgotten, canceled or ignored all together. Item No. 1: "Mike Lang needs 12 points tonight (or Mike Edelman 36 or Rich Peter 33) if Penn State is to have a player average 10 points a game this season. Penn State has not played a game with a leading scorer under 10 points in a game in the last 30 years."

Item No. 2: "Unless Mike Lang scores 42 points tonight, Penn State won't have anyone scoring 300 points this season. The last time that happened was in 1981."

And just to confirm the fact that the game was more of an afterthought than anything else, the Lions went out and...

"Just didn't handle the ball well, we didn't shoot it well, and we didn't really play good defense," Penn State coach Dick Harter said. "It looked like

we hadn't played in five months, much less than eight days."

In front of 1,655 people, the Lions gave a performance that should be nominated for worst of the year in losing to Cleveland State, 66-61, to finish 15-12. But it could be said Penn State's whole season was that game — it was the season in a nutshell, literally and figuratively. And it resulted in frustration that had Harter grabbing towels and wringing them in his hands and that kept the players sitting in front of their lockers, silent, heads down and still dressed in their uniforms, 15 minutes after the game.

The Lions never led Cleveland State. Except for the early stages of the game, they were never closer than four points. They would be down by 10, 12 or 13 and come back to within four or five, but then the offense would stall against Cleveland State's 1-3-1, 2-3, 1-2-2 and 2-2-1 floating, trapping conditions of zone defenses.

And then Cleveland State would rebound and run-and-gun the ball down the court and either shove it off the center Dave Youdath, who ended up with 16 points, or to guard Lee Reed, who would pull up and pop 20-to-25-foot jump shots that hit nothing but net. He had a game-high 18 points going nine of 16 from the field.

Penn State could have been in the game, though, if it hadn't turned the ball over 12 times in the first

half, most occurring on its possessions in the first 10 minutes of the game, and shot 38 percent from the floor in that half (seven of 23).

The Lions had their moments, some nice plays that worked, but they were, as the song goes, precious and few. At the end of most of those plays was Tom McCluskey, who hit shots both outside and inside, for a team-high 15 points (seven of 13 from the field). And Mike Lang played his normal consistent game — 14 points (to average 10.1 a game for the year) and 13 rebounds, his fifth double-double game of the year.

In the end, though, everything somehow seemed to focus on Edelman, the senior guard. In the last game of his college career, he fouled out with 2:01 left in the game. He had played 29 minutes and scored eight points (four of 10 from the floor). And with his team down by eight points, he had to leave the game (to a modest-standing ovation) and sit on the bench, with his head in a towel.

"It is tough, you know," Harter said. "It's been a tough, tough, tough battle. It seems like we deserve a little something better. But you get what you deserve, I guess."

"That's basketball. (The Cleveland State game was) one we wanted to get, and we didn't get it. We're happy for the ones we got, and I'm proud of my guys. But tonight wasn't our night."

And this season wasn't the Lions' season.

Birds' Singleton given baseball's annual Roberto Clemente Award

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Outfielder Ken Singleton of the Baltimore Orioles won the 12th annual Roberto Clemente Award yesterday.

The award is presented each year by Major League baseball to the player who best exemplifies the game both on and off the field and honors the memory of the late Hall of Fame outfielder who died on a mercy mission to aid flood victims in Nicaragua.

Singleton was honored for his work with various charities including the Maryland Association of Sickle Cell Services and Special Olympics and Project 29, which benefits the senior citizens of Baltimore.

Previous winners of the Clemente award are Willie Mays, Brooks Robinson, Al Kaline, Willie Stargell, Lou Brock, Pete Rose, Rod Carew, Greg Luzinski, Andre Thornton, Phil Niekro and Steve Garvey.

Spikers volley back with pair of wins

By TONY SMITH
Collegian Sports Writer

Shaking off the after effects of an unspectacular showing at the Golden Dome Classic two weeks ago, the men's volleyball team registered victories at the Meadville Invitational over term break and at East Stroudsburg on Tuesday.

In winning at Meadville, however, the fourth-ranked Lions had to overcome an unusual obstacle — their assistant coach.

Ahmet Ozcam, an All-American on last year's Lion squad, competed against Penn State in the six-team tournament. His team (Ois, a non-collegiate squad from Illinois) lost to Penn State in round-robin competition and went to the finals before losing to the Lions, 15-11, 15-12.

Ozcam is considered by many to be the finest volleyball player ever to attend Penn State, and his presence was welcomed by the Ois team, one of four non-collegiate teams in the tournament. As anticipated, the final match was quite competitive.

"It was a really good match," Penn State head coach Tom Tait said. "The strength of our blocking accounted for a large part of our success, and our power side hitters (Mike Guyon and Jeff Johnson) carried a lot of the load for us. Harpo (Guyon) and J.J. (Johnson) both did an excellent job."

Along with an amazing 15 kills in the second game of the match, the Lions were also impressive in their semifinal match against Baco, another talented non-collegiate squad. Despite a 15-8, 10-15 split in round-robin competition, Penn State managed to embarrass Baco in the semifinals, 15-4, 15-2.

On Tuesday, the Lions had a conference match with East Stroudsburg and had less trouble than in the Meadville Invitational, winning in a best three-out-of-five match, 15-2, 15-5, 15-3. Needless to say, East Stroudsburg was never in the match.

"We really put our serving game together," Tait said. "They couldn't handle our serves or our blocking, and we forced them into a lot of errors. Offensively we were too big for them; we had too much ball control."

Lion gymmen maintain perfect record

By MARIA MARTINO
Collegian Sports Writer

It was the kind of weekend that exemplified the way things have been going for the men's gymnastics team lately.

Just when the Lions had run into adversity in every possible guise, they overcame it and emerged from their road trip with three more wins to bolster their record to 10-0.

"These away meets have been kind of hard on us," junior Bobby Panton said. "There hasn't been much going for us."

Penn State unscrambled an injury-laden lineup and competed in an overworked practices gym before a scant crowd Friday night in Terre Haute but still beat Indiana State, 266.75-263.75.

"That was our nightmare meet of the season," Lion coach Karl Schwenzfeier said. "We blew an opportunity on the road to get a high score. We had to increase an appreciable amount to get a proper score for the NCAAs."

A team's five highest scores — three of which must be on the road — are averaged to determine which teams get invited to the national championships.

Then the Lions did an abrupt about-face and started marching to a different drummer.

They racked up 273.45 points to annihilate Southern Illinois (267.95) and Louisiana State (264.65) Sunday afternoon in a triangular meet in Carbondale, Ill.

"We had a team meeting before that meet," Schwenzfeier said. "Our backs were up against the wall. We

didn't want to suffer the embarrassment of losing to either of them."

"I was extremely nervous. There was considerable talk from LSU that they could beat us, to put it nicely."

LSU coach Armando Vega was Schwenzfeier's Penn State and 1986 Olympic teammate and fraternity brother.

Despite the animosity between LSU and Penn State, the Lions had their most difficult time at Indiana State.

"It was a madhouse," Penn State's Jim Thompson said. "Their women's team was having a tri-meet while they had a dual meet with us. There were five teams on the floor and the gym was crappy."

The judges left the meet without signing the scoresheet (to make the scores official), and Colonel (Schwenzfeier) even had to figure out the scorecard.

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(ranked seventh) missed the Indiana State meet with a sprained elbow.

Mickey Gonzalez competed in their place and fell off the horse several times and got a 5.15.

"That was a major contributing factor," Thompson said. "We had to eat a five and a couple of eights on rings that we shouldn't have had. I've been hitting 9.6 pretty consistently. If I wasn't injured, that could have raised the score to 270."

But as the Lions gassed on their 266, they decided their next meet was do-or-die.

"We had to lay it on the line," Panton said. "Either we went into SIU fighting or we didn't have a chance."

"We had to be prepared mentally more than physically for the injuries. Thompson was the most injured. He really shouldn't have been on that elbow. But he said, 'I'm going against SIU no matter what.' Even if he broke or fell off, he could still push us up to 274."

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Zeolla leads Lion lifters in Pa. championships

Defending state and national powerlifting champion Gary Zeolla led the Penn State barbell club Feb. 20-21 at the Pennsylvania Collegiate Powerlifting Championships at Lafayette College.

Zeolla, who had already clinched a spot at nationals before the meet, was named Outstanding Lifter of the lightweight classes (165 pounds and under), setting the process 425 pound records in the squat, 240 in the bench-press, and 420 in the deadlift, for a 1,095 total.

Other members of the barbell club did not fare as well as Zeolla, who took first place in his weight class. In the 132-pound class, Lisa Miller took sixth place with 295 pounds in the squat, 105 in the bench-press, and 315 in the deadlift (670 total).

Ralph Vanderbeek was fourth in the 146-pound division (415 squat, 255 bench, 485 dead, 1,155 total), while in the 165-pound class, Dave Dwyer (470 squat, 290 bench, 435 dead, 1,195 total) Mark Lesney (420, 285, 465, 1,190 total) and Matt Brzycki (405, 280, 430, 1,095 total) finished sixth, seventh, and tenth respectively.

Penn State's Bill Schmidt finished second in the 188-pound class with a 560 squat, 355 bench press and 575 deadlift for a 1,490 total.

First-place finishers in the lightweight classes included John Padova and Dan Capece of Villanova (114 and 132 pounds, respectively), Joe Braca of Montgomery County Community College (148 pounds) and Brian Thompson of Temple (165).

Mike Mecchella of Temple won the 181-

pound class while Gerry Hill from Franklin and Marshall took 198. Bill White of Temple won at 220, Tony Green of Lafayette took 242, Tom Gumburge of Temple won at 275 and Dave DeLillo, also of Temple, took the super-heavyweight class.

Temple won the team trophy while Penn State finished in a tie for fourth with East Stroudsburg.

— Tony Smith

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