

Fencers rebound to down St. Peter's

By MATT MICHAEL
Collegian Sports Writer

The way men's fencing team captain Chris Balestracci looks at it, it's highly possible for a squad to lose one match and still be in the race for national prominence.

His team rebounded from a 14-15 upset loss to Rutgers last month, by routing St. Peter's College 25-2 Saturday in the White Building.

"The football team lost to Alabama and still won the national championship," said Balestracci. "So we can lose to Rutgers and still finish on top."

Penn State (2-1) used a combination of youth and experience to down St. Peter's (2-3), as freshmen Matthew Glick and Alfred Clarke, sophomores Peter Barnett and Mike Murphy, and juniors Vance Fowles,

Bruce Capin and Scott Hollenbeck all went 3-0 in their respective weapon divisions.

Since St. Peter's traditionally does not have a strong fencing team (Penn State defeated them last year 24-3), the Lions' head coach Emmanuel Kaidanov decided to fence a few of his less experienced players, particularly foilists Glick and Clarke.

Kaidanov said he wanted to place the freshmen in a pressure situation where "they must take all the responsibility for the result."

Glick and Clarke both responded superbly to the challenge, yielding a combined total of only seven touches against them in their six matches.

"Coach (Kaidanov) told us that when you're fencing for the team, you have to do what you do best to win," said Glick after his first meet for the Lions.

In addition to Glick and Clarke, foilist Barnett also won all three of his matches to give Penn State a 9-0 sweep in the foil division. In epee, veterans Hollenbeck, Murphy, and Jeff Lucas (2-1) combined to give the Lions an 8-1 edge over St. Peter's.

Upperclassmen Fowles, Capin, George Vandemark (1-0) and Jon Ellis (1-1) teamed up to provide the Lions with a convincing 8-1 margin in the sabre division.

The victory was a big one for Penn State, since it will give the squad some much needed momentum as they head into the bulk of their schedule.

Next weekend, the Lions travel to North Carolina to fence in a five-team tournament which includes the host Tar Heels who are rated as one of the strongest teams in the country.

Blackledge honored as top Ohio athlete

Penn State quarterback Todd Blackledge has been named co-winner of the Northern Ohio Amateur Athlete of the Year award.

Blackledge, a junior from North Canton, Ohio, was selected to receive the honor along with West Virginia linebacker Darryl Talley, who played high school ball at East Cleveland Shaw High School, by the Sports Media Association of Cleveland, said the Penn State Athletics Department.

Blackledge and Talley will receive their awards at a banquet Jan. 31 in Cleveland.

Icers stunned twice by Geneseo State

Penn State unable to overcome Knights' attack, lose both by one-goal margin

By JOSEPH BARRETT
Collegian Sports Writer

The ice hockey club took a major blow on the chin from Geneseo State this weekend at the Indoor Sports Complex, losing Friday night 4-3 and Saturday night 5-4. The Ice Knights' punch wasn't, however, thrown quite hard enough to knock the Lions out — at least not in spirit.

"We're unhappy with the losses of course," Assistant Coach Larry Rocha said, "but I think overall the team feels somewhat satisfied because it did put two good games together back to back and played hard for two full games. In that sense I think it was a good weekend for us."

The two losses evened Penn State's record at 7-7-1, marking the team's third and fourth non-winning games in a row. But even though it seems a dark cloud has recently been following the Lions around, winger Clark Dexter, who scored two goals Friday, saw his silver lining on Saturday.

"We played a lot better (this weekend) than we had been playing," Dexter said. "We're starting to hit now, and we think that if we can continue doing that, we can start winning again."

And hitting could be an understatement, as the ice rink turned into a boxing ring Saturday night.

When a Geneseo State player high-sticked Lion Glenn DeStefano in the face near the end of the second period, the umpires gave four players the boot, including Penn State's Mike Blackwell and Stormin' Norman Jacoby.

Ironically, coming into the weekend DeStefano was by far the Lions most penalized player, having spent

39 minutes in the penalty box.

Lion center Toby Ritner, Penn State's leading scorer this year, took this weekend's double loss in stride. Ritner said he was glad the Lions played hard, and added that the team realizes it has to continue to play aggressively if it wants to avoid a losing season.

"Penn State hockey isn't a losing club, and we just want to play as well as we can," Ritner said. "I think we got some confidence this weekend, if nothing else."

Dexter said Penn State's problem against Geneseo State was that the players tried too hard to make the great plays, and as a result, didn't execute the easy ones.

"We're looking too much for an extra pass," Dexter said. "We're looking to make an extra play. Usually, if you can get a shot at the top of the circle you want to take it. But we're trying to make an extra pass and get tip-in goals and all this stuff, instead of just banging away."

The Lions did anything but bang away in the power play on Friday, and consequently, they saw a flock of scoring opportunities fly out the window. Eleven times the Penn State unit had more men on the ice than the Knights', but the Lions managed only one power play goal.

"They took us by surprise in the way they killed the penalty," Penn State Coach Jon Shellingham said. "They came right at us, and we haven't faced anybody yet this year that has done that."

The Lions adjusted to Geneseo State's penalty kill Saturday night, and scored three of their four goals when the Knights were short-handed.



Photo by David Gerardi
Penn State's Toby Ritner (14) manages to keep the puck away from an attacking Geneseo State player in hockey action this weekend. Despite an improvement in Penn State's play for the season, the Ice Knights defeated the Lions twice.

ICER NOTES: The Penn State squad will take its act on the road on Friday for a weekend pair at Michigan-Dearborn... the Lions haven't been away from home since a Nov. 14 contest at Erie Community College. Tri-captain Joe Grainda is the Lions top goal-getter with nine, followed by Dexter with eight... Ritner has the most assists (18). Winger Matt Glass is second in that column with 13.

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