

Gymwomen find bright side in loss

By RICK STOUCHE
Collegian Sports Writer

The women's gymnastics team (9-4) lost to No. 2 Arizona State 179-175.25 Friday night in Rec Hall, but not without securing a small victory in the process.

For Head Coach Judi Avenier, the defeat was not as important as the margin. She did not expect her squad to win, but in losing by less than four points, the Lady Lions reached Avenier's goal.

"We thought that we would be really pleased if we could hold it to under four points," Avenier said, "because four points, when you spread it out over all of the scores, is only two-tenths per girl on the average that they would beat us by. And that means they're just a little bit better than us."

"On paper the teams are supposed to be 10 points apart, so I feel great that we did it to under four points. We found out tonight that we're not necessarily in their league yet, but we're not that far away. I feel terrific about that."

"It wasn't a case of them having a bad night and us having a great night," she added. "I think both teams had a subpar night, so I think the relationship is a true one."

Arizona State Coach John Spini said some of his squad's routines were watered down and Kim Neal, one of the Lady Sun Devil's best all-

arounders, did not compete in two events because she is recovering from the flu.

But the Lady Lions also had several factors working against them. Part of Penn State's problem was fatigue after a three-match, four-day Midwestern swing that ended Tuesday night.

"When they were on, they were fine," Avenier said, "but when they were off, they just didn't have the energy left to give. And they've been giving so much all week long on the road, I think they're pretty exhausted. I'm really pleased with how long they've lasted up to this point."

In addition, the Lady Lions coming off of several road wins, could not practice much on the trip and that cost them on uneven parallel bars.

Penn State held a slim 45-44.9 lead after vaulting, but a number of falls on bars led to a deficit of 89.9-87.1.

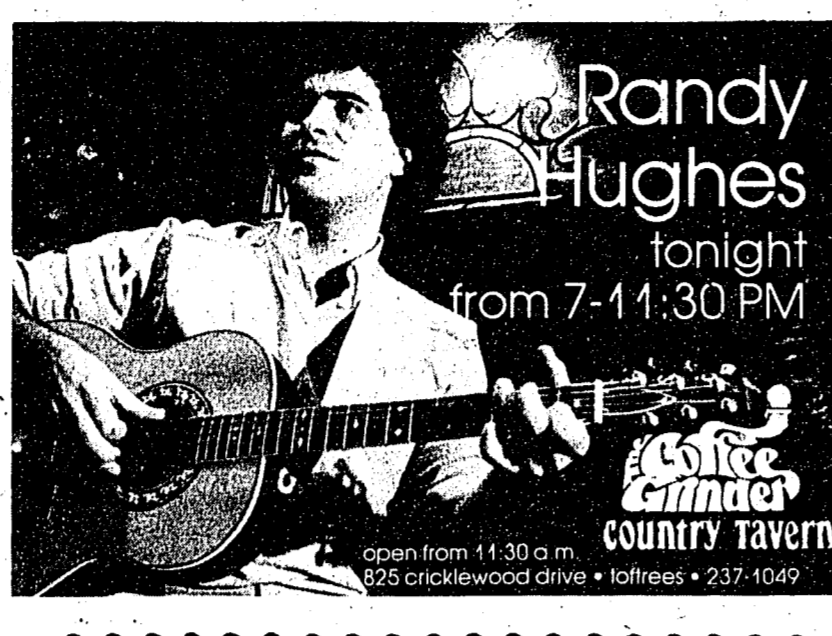
Sophomore all-arounder Pam Loree said the squad's perspective on the meet changed after the bar competition.



Photo by Gregory P. Bullock
Holly Haupt of the women's gymnastics team performs on the beam during Saturday night's meet with Arizona State at Rec Hall.



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