

Lady Laxers

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Things started getting hairy for the Lady Lions at the 6:33 mark when Cummings notched her second goal of the day on a feed from Mande Moore to make it 7-5. And just nine seconds later Deb Minzola scored her second of the afternoon to make it a one-goal game.

That's when Penn State Head Coach Sue Scheetz ordered her troops to spread the field on offense to draw Temple out of its suffocating packed-in defense. While spreading the field and working for an inside shot, the Lady Lions whittled off most of the remaining time, giving the Lady Owls little chance of tying the game.

"When Temple got three goals, I thought it would be just like them to come back," said Scheetz after her second trip to the finals in as many years. "They never say die. They just had a great season."

As for chewing up the clock, Vitale said that maintaining possession was key.

"In those last couple minutes, I was just thinking 'let's just keep the ball in our possession,'" the senior said after her final game as a Lady Lion. "It feels so good to win it this year. We all worked so hard for this."

"This is an unbelievable feeling," Foley gushed after the win. "This is the best feeling in the world."

"After they scored (those two quick goals), I knew we just had to get things together, get possession

and hold the ball," Worley said. After a scoreless opening 15 minutes, Temple got on the board first on a Cummings unassisted effort with 8:51 left before intermission. Anna Marie Vesco evened things up for the Lady Lions just 1:17 later when she blew a shot past Muller high to the stick side.

The game remained tied until Stokes scored on a free position with 2:45 left.

With just 15 seconds to play in the first half, lightning struck twice for the Lady Lions, as Worley punched in a deflected shot, then Stokes blasted one between Muller's pad and the post as the horn sounded to give Penn State a 4-1 halftime lead.

Temple's Kim Lambdin and Worley traded goals to start the second half, then Minzola made it a 5-3 game just 22 seconds after Worley's goal.

Stokes completed her seventh hat trick of the year with 19:01 left when she ripped a high shot over Muller's stick just inside the crossbar on a free position to make it 6-3. The junior attacker was clipped by a high stick and suffered a cut over her left eye with just under 11 minutes left, but the forward refused to leave the game.

"I didn't know it was bleeding until the trainer came out," Stokes said. "I told the trainer it was fine and that a Band Aid would be fine."

As for winning the title, Stokes said she had her doubts.

"At the beginning of the season, I

didn't think we could win it all," she confessed. "I knew we had the talent, but I didn't think it would happen."

But don't tell that to Temple Head Coach Tina Sloan Green, who was impressed with Penn State's play down the stretch.

"Part of our game plan was not to let them (Penn State) get too far ahead because they run a fantastic stall — as we found out at the end," Sloan Green said. "Give Penn State credit on defense. Chris Vitale did a good job and they crowded the goal area."

"Championship play is much different from the regular season," the 13-year coach added. "We can tell the kids it's just another game, but they know every play could be a do or die situation. Still, I'm proud of my team for not giving up and I thought we could pull it out. I guess we just did not capitalize on our opportunities and Penn State did."

One of the keys to Penn State's success all season long was the performance of Sommers — who had never played goal before this season when Scheetz plucked her off softball Head Coach Sue Rankin's roster.

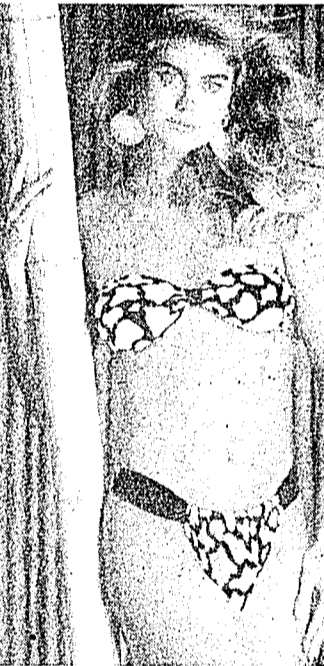
The former Penn State outfielder made 11 saves in the championship game.

"Sue Sommers was brilliant," Scheetz said. "She did an unbelievable job. She was better today than any top collegiate goalie I've seen in a long time."



Penn State's Amanda Veal maneuvers around the Pennsylvania goal in the Lady Lions' 20-4 win over the Quakers earlier this season.

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