

Cagers set high goals for upcoming season

By MARK WOGENRICH
Collegian Sports Writer

The 1987-88 season will find the men's basketball team entering the NCAA's elite-64 come March.

At least that's what forward Tom Hovasse thinks.

"We're setting our goals high," the junior said. "We're trying to win the Atlantic 10 and I think we can win it."

"We are also setting our sights for the NCAA tournament," he continued. "I don't think we can look for anything less."

Pretty lofty claims, especially since it's just October.

However, a team that is returning 11 lettermen from a 15-12 squad — Penn State's first winning record in four years — that placed fourth in the Atlantic 10 can be afforded a little room for cockiness.

But not too much.

"We want to move into the upper division of the Atlantic 10, and that's going to take a lot of work," Head Coach Bruce Parkhill said. "But to do that we will have to compete with some very good teams. It will be a definite challenge."

Parkhill should be used to challenges, though. He has had the unenviable task of rebuilding the Penn State basketball program, which peaked last season with the first Atlantic 10 tournament game Rec Hall has ever hosted. The Lions lost a down-to-the-wire contest to St. Joseph's, 81-78, but it was still a step in the right direction. He also led the squad to its first in-season tournament victory since 1974, taking the AMI Classic in Miami over the Thanksgiving break.

Now the coach, who holds a 40-70 record in his tenure at Penn State, finds himself on the verge of challenging the best of the A-10 and possibly seeking a little post-season glory. And the pressure's on.

"I always feel pressure and this year I don't feel any different," said Parkhill, who's in his fifth year as head coach. "I'd feel funny if I didn't feel pressure."

What should alleviate some of the nerves, however, is what has been happening the past two weeks of practice.

"We've had a couple of really good weeks of practice and we are feeling really good about the season," Parkhill said. "The team's attitude is very high."

"Our practices have been really strong," Hovasse added. "Coach has a master plan and he thinks we're progressing well according to that plan."

Parkhill's master plan charts the progress of the Lions through the preseason, and right now, things are being covered quite nicely.

"We're ahead of our master schedule, which is encouraging," Parkhill said. "It means we're working harder than we had planned."

One of the leading items on the plan is defense, something that plagued Penn State last year.

"Usually we concentrate about 70 percent of our time on defense and 30 percent on offense," Parkhill said. "It has to be the emphasis of practice if you're going to have a good defensive team."

"We're going to have to be a good



Bruce Parkhill



Mike Peapos



Brian Allen



Ed Fogell



Wes Jones



Tom Hovasse



Darrell Ricks



Mike Iuzzolino



Bruce Blake



Christian Appleman



Rodney Henderson



James Barnes

defensive unit," forward/center Mike Peapos said. "We're going to have to win with the defense. Last year we had some mental breakdowns and lapses in communication that cost us some games."

"We're working hard to keep those kinds of things down," the tri-captain added. "The defense will be a big part of our win-loss column."

As for the offense, Parkhill pointed out that the front court needs to get more involved in the game for the Lions to be successful.

"Our inside game was a big problem last year," he said. "We got virtually nothing out of the front line. We hope that is different this year."

We need to get better productivity from the front line so the guards aren't put on the line all the time."

Even though the squad has been running some basic passing and shooting drills, Peapos said, the offense hasn't gotten much work.

"We've been placing so much emphasis on defense that we haven't had time to worry about the offense that much yet," he said.

Another thing that hasn't been emphasized too much in pre-season practice is confirming a lineup. Parkhill explained that it's just too early to start assigning guys spots on the court.

"We really want to stay away from

that so the new guys can get into the flow of things and not feel left out," Parkhill said. "We want them to feel they have a legitimate chance."

However, with Hovasse, Peapos, guards Tony Ward and Brian Allen and center/forward Ed Fogell returning, the lineup is at least forming, if not solidified.

In the backcourt, the Ward-Allen tandem should combine once again as Penn State's biggest offensive weapon. Ward, a 6-2 point guard, was a major factor in the Lions' success last year.

He was the squad's co-leader in scoring average (13 points per game) with Hovasse and led the team in six

other departments, including three-point shots (45), three-point field goal average (49.5), free throws (76), free throws attempted (102), assists (82) and minutes played (764). He was also third on the team in assists per game (4.2) and scored in double figures 15 times, four of which were 20-point games.

"For us to be successful, Tony Ward has to step forward for us and take charge," Parkhill said of the senior tri-captain.

Complementing Ward at the shooting guard spot will be the 6-3 Allen. Despite tendinitis in his knees, he managed 11 points per game, getting into double figures 12 times and top-

ping 20 points in five games. He also picked off 27 steals, best on the team for the second straight year, and improved his field goal percentage to 48.6.

"He's a great guy every minute of every day," Parkhill said of the third tri-captain. "His knees are healthy and he's a tough kid. We expect him to have a really good year."

Up front, experience should improve the offensive play, although Jim Newcomer, last season's starting center, decided to forego his senior year. Picking up the front spot will be either Peapos or Fogell, who saw time at center as well as power forward last year after redshirting his freshman season because of a disc injury in his back.

Fogell, a 6-9 sophomore, played in all 27 games last season, starting five of the first seven games at power forward and finishing with three starts at center. He averaged 18 minutes per game along with 6.9 points and 3.5 rebounds.

"Ed Fogell is healthy and frisky," Parkhill said. "We expect him to emerge as a leader on the court and have a great year."

The small forward position belongs to Hovasse, who was an offensive powerhouse last year. Along with sharing the scoring lead with Ward, the 6-8 junior paced the squad in eight other offensive categories, including total points, rebounds and field goals attempted.

Peapos, at 6-8, 210-pounds, is the big man for the Lions and is probably the leading candidate for the center spot, pushing Fogell to power forward. He missed eight games last year with knee and neck injuries but managed an average of 7.5 points and 3.8 rebounds in 19 games.

His biggest contribution in pre-season, however, has been his influence on the freshmen.

"He has done a great job," Parkhill said. "He has taken a lot of time with the freshmen and has worked hard in getting them into the transition of playing here."

Ready to step onto the court at any time are six other players, giving the Lions a deep bench. In the backcourt, guards Christian Appleman, Mike Iuzzolino and Darrell Ricks will relieve Ward and Allen, while Wes Jones and Rodney Henderson will get court time at the forward spots.

The three incoming freshmen, Jimmy Barnes (a 6-7, 235-pound forward), Curtis Johnson (a 6-8 center) and Tony Soskich (a 6-3 guard) all garnered high praise from Parkhill.

Barnes, a Washington D.C. native whom Parkhill called "one of the best players in the ... East Coast," is a power player who adds agility and a soft touch to his game. His 19-point, 13-rebound average at Maret High School earned him all-Metro Conference honors and a spot in the McDonald's Classic.

Johnson, a Dale City, Va. native, averaged 18 points and 10 rebounds per game at center, taking his Garfield High School to a 15-7 record and a second-place finish. Soskich, out of Elgin, Ill., copped an all-state honorable mention and two all-conference nods at Larkin High School, averaging 24 points and five rebounds in his senior season.

Ward's strong play aids improving squad

By THERESA DeFRANZO
Collegian Sports Writer

In the four seasons Bruce Parkhill has coached the men's basketball team it has gotten progressively better, and this year should prove to be no different.

And one asset that added to last year's 15-12 record, the team's first winning season in four years, was guard Tony Ward.

Ward led the team in six individual categories: free throws, free throws attempted, three-point field goals, three-point field goal percentage, minutes and assists. Also, Ward, along with forward Tom Hovasse, led the team in scoring average at 13 points. And now he is fifth on the all-time career assists chart.

But Ward would rather forget his individual achievements and channel his efforts toward team goals. One of those team goals right now is winning at least 20 games in the upcoming season.

"I never really thought about it (individual honors)," Ward explained. "I just try to play the game. Things just seem to fall into place. If you think about individual goals it's just added pressure. If you go out and play hard, good things will happen."

"I'm looking forward to this year's season," the senior tri-captain said. "I feel we'll turn the corner. Maybe now we'll get the national recognition and hopefully go to the NCAAs or the NIT."

Not only have his efforts at Penn State been successful, but according to Ward, his career here has gone just as he'd planned.

Although Penn State basketball may not be the most dominant team in the East, one reason Ward chose to play here was the recruiting efforts and program development outlined by Parkhill.

When Parkhill recruited Ward, he explained how the program was in

the development stages. First of all, the team had a new coach. But Parkhill explained to Ward that by his senior year things would turn around.

"I knew it would be rough at the beginning," Ward said, "but things are happening just like he (Parkhill) said."

"Tony has had a fine career here at Penn State and we're looking forward to him having a really good season," Parkhill said. "As a point guard he has been put into a role where he has had to assume some sort of leadership role and he has handled it really well in the past."

"It takes time to build a good program," Ward continued. "But we're definitely headed in the right direction."

The Lions proved that last season, surprising many fans with a fourth-place finish in the Atlantic 10 Conference. And now Ward said the Lion followers will be expecting more from this year's squad.

Ward said this isn't adding any extra pressure to the team because the players are expecting a lot more out of themselves this year. He pointed out an important difference between this year's team and teams in the recent past.

"We're expecting to win instead of hoping to win," he said. "It wasn't frustrating (the past few years) because we knew it would eventually happen. Things could only get better."

"Last year we got to the point where we were winning. It was kind of surprising in a sense," he continued. "It's kind of hard to explain. You're winning, but you don't really know how to accept it. We're definitely ready for it this year."

In some of this year's preseason polls Penn State has been picked fourth behind Temple, West Virginia and Rhode Island. But Ward said the team isn't paying much attention to the ratings. He said although it's nice to finally get respect and recognition,



Tony Ward, a 1987-88 tri-captain, drives to the basket last year against St. Joe's.

he thinks the team will do better than fourth place.

"Preseason polls are basically just someone's opinion. They really can't say for sure," he said.

One thing Ward is concerned about is those three teams picked above the Lions. More specifically the number of returning players these teams have. As he explained, Penn State is not the only team with a majority of players returning.

"The conference isn't going to get any easier so we're just going to have to get better as a team in order to be more competitive to hopefully finish first or second in the league," he said.

Ward said the experience of team should be its major strength.

"We have a lot of depth in every position. Some of us have been playing together for three years now, so we really work well together," the junior forward said.

1987-88 schedule

Nov 11 7:30 p.m.	Marathon Oil	Jan 30 9:00 p.m.	St. Joseph's at the Palisitra
Nov 28 7:30 p.m.	Junata	Feb 6 7:30 p.m.	St. Bonaventure
Dec 1 9:00 p.m.	Oklahoma (TV/USA)	Feb 11 7:30 p.m.	West Virginia
Dec 5 2:00 p.m.	at Florida State	Feb 13 1:00 p.m.	Massachusetts
Dec 7 8:00 p.m.	at Lehigh	Feb 16 7:30 p.m.	at Temple
Dec 11 8:10 p.m.	Vermont	Feb 18 7:30 p.m.	at Rutgers
Dec 22 7:30 p.m.	St. Mary's (MD)	Feb 21 4:00 p.m.	St. Joseph's
Dec 29 7:00 p.m.	Coca-Cola Classic at Chattanooga Tenn.	Feb 25 7:30 p.m.	Rhode Island
Tennessee-Chattanooga vs. Yale		Feb 27 7:30 p.m.	Duquesne
Penn State vs. Southwestern Louisiana		Mar 2 7:30 p.m.	at Geo. Washington
Dec 30 7 & 9 p.m. Third Place & Championship Games		Mar 5 9 p.m.	Atlantic 10 Tournament at West Virginia
Jan 2 4:00 p.m.	at West Virginia		
Jan 5 7:30 p.m.	at Massachusetts		
Jan 7 8:00 p.m.	at Rhode Island		
Jan 10 4:00 p.m.	Rutgers (TV-A-10)		
Jan 16 8:10 p.m.	George Washington		
Jan 18 7:30 p.m.	Temple		
Jan 23 7:35 p.m.	at St. Bonaventure		
Jan 26 7:30 p.m.	at Duquesne		

Cagers ticket info

Season tickets on sale

Season tickets for the 1987-88 men's basketball season are now on sale at the Beaver Stadium Ticket Office.

Season tickets for the 13 games in 7,200-seat Rec Hall are \$45.50 for adults and \$19.50 for senior citizens 60 years and older and youths 18 and younger. Students with valid Penn State identification cards are admitted to home games free of charge. For more information call 865-7567.

Single-game tickets go on sale Nov. 17 for all home games, except the Dec. 1 contest against Oklahoma. Public single-game tickets for Oklahoma, if available, will go on sale Nov. 23.

The Beaver Stadium Ticket Office is open weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Students need pass for Oklahoma game

A change in the student admittance procedure has been made for the game against Oklahoma.

Due to anticipated high ticket demand for the game with the Sooners, students will be required to present a University ID card to pick up a free student pass for this game. Times and dates for this November distribution at the Beaver Stadium Ticket Office will be published at a later date in the Daily Collegian.

Students will be required to show their ID card with the special pass at the gate for entrance the night of the game. The 9 p.m. contest will be televised on national cable by USA. It is one of three scheduled television appearances for the team this year.