

# Lady spikers battle A-10 foes in Philly

By TODD A. MOUNTFORD  
Collegian Sports Writer

This weekend the women's volleyball team closes out its Atlantic 10 regular season when it battles conference foes Temple and St. Bonaventure in Philadelphia.

The Lady Lions, currently No. 1 in the A-10 and 6-0 in the conference, have not lost a conference match in the past four years. Penn State plays the Lady Owls (7-18, 2-4 in the A-10) tonight, and the Lady Bonnies (7-9, 0-6), who are the A-10 cellar-dwellers, tomorrow morning.

Penn State Head Coach Russ Rose said his team will use this weekend as a gauge to determine how it will fare in the conference championships, Nov. 20-22 in Rhode Island, and possible post-season play. He added that if the Lady Lions play up to their capabilities, they should be victorious.

"I think if we play well we should win this weekend," he said. "I don't think Temple or St. Bonaventure should prevent us from going undefeated again this year."

"Temple is not having a great year, but I think they've got one of the top outside hitters in the conference," Rose said in reference to Adria Peters. "If the game is close, and she gets hot, they can win. Hopefully the game will not be close."

That may be wishful thinking since the Lady Lions have played on an inconsistent level for most of the season. However, Rose said his squad is now heading in the right direction after three-game sweeps of both Massachusetts and Rhode Island last weekend.

Another bright spot for the team is the recent play of 5-9 setter Michelle Jaworski. In the last three matches, Jaworski totaled 34 assists, 31 digs, 11 blocks and four service aces. She was named Freshman of the Week by the A-10 on Monday.

"I was happy," Jaworski said. "It shows I'm improving. I really hadn't thought about getting it though... it really doesn't matter how well I do but how the team does."

"Michelle's a good kid and she is working hard and doing the best she can," Rose said. "I never doubted that Michelle had the potential to be successful at the collegiate level."

The only setback, however, is that Jaworski sprained her back during practice this week and will probably not play this weekend. She said the injury occurred over a long period of time and that she will have to take it easy over the next couple of days to get her strength back. Mary Rose Sava, a 5-5 senior, will most likely replace Jaworski.

Rose said that one of his goals right now is to get Penn State back into the Top 20, a spot the Lady Lions gave up after a three-loss weekend at the Wildcat Classic Sept. 25-26. Since then, the team has won 12 of its last 13 matches, losing only to Pittsburgh.

"I want these people to leave the program where they found it," Rose said. "We've been a Top 20 team for the last seven years and we are capable of advancing further than we ever had before. But when I say capable, I'm talking potential, not reality. We have the caliber of players, it just boils down to commitment."

# Icers open season in Canada

By DAVE SOTTILE  
Collegian Sports Writer

In the United States, the national anthem is "The Star-Spangled Banner." Up north, "O Canada" is the maple leaf country's creed.

When the ice hockey team opens its 1987-88 season with games tonight at 7:30 at Conestoga College in Kitchener, Ontario and tomorrow night at Niagara-Welland (at 8), the squad will be looking to halt Penn State's long-running Canadian theme song, "O-for-Canada."

Since joining the International Collegiate Hockey League two years ago, the Icers have yet to win a league game north of the border. The last visit was in March when N-W pounded Penn State, 10-4, to eliminate the visitors from the first round of the ICHL playoffs.

Seven months and a coaching change later, the Icers are back on the road to Ontario and rookie Head Coach Joe Battista says his team is approaching this weekend's opener with a positive, yet realistic outlook.

"We haven't won a league game in Canada in three years," Battista said. "I want to stop that. It's time we beat somebody there."

Although it's the first game on Penn State's 36-game slate, tonight's contest will be the seventh of the young season for Conestoga, something that Battista says will give the hosts a bit of an advantage.

"They've played six games already," he lamented. "Their opener was on Oct. 12th. (The day Penn State opened on-ice practice).



Collegian Photo / Neil Kohl

Rob Smith

They've already had their first hard test (against Division I Kent State).

"To win in Canada," Battista said, "we'll have to play as near-perfect on defense as we can, stay out of the (penalty) box and get our share of breaks. If we don't do that, we're setting ourselves up for a fall."

Battista — a former Penn State player and captain — said the weekend set will serve as a barometer to determine his team's progress.

"To win the first game of the season is important," he explained, "but only as a measuring stick to see where we are at this stage of the season."

Winger Rob Smith says the coaches and players have discussed the streak of futility in Canada.

"He's mentioned it to us," Smith

said of Battista. "With a lot of new guys on the team and a new attitude surrounding everyone, we're looking forward to this weekend's games. It's not really a jinx up there, rather we've gotten the short end of the stick."

Smith said the Canadian university teams play a different style than most American squads, causing problems for visiting teams.

"It's a different style, especially with different officials," he explained yesterday. "It's a rougher, chipper style with flying sticks and elbows. When you're playing there, you've got to keep your head up or you will get it taken off."

Co-captain John D'Aloisio says Penn State's streak is a result of bad breaks rather than a jinx.

"The losses are mainly a result of some bad luck," he said yesterday. "We've had some key injuries to some defensemen in previous years. We've had a couple of really intense practices in preparation for this trip, so we're ready."

Although tonight's game marks Battista's official debut behind the Penn State bench, he says the butterflies are non-existent.

"I'd say I'm anxious and excited rather than nervous," he said earlier in the week. "I love a challenge and I love players who love challenges. All we hear is 'how are we going to replace (all-time Penn State leading scorer Lynn) Sipe and others who are gone. I can't worry about them. They're gone."

"I have to concentrate on this team," he said. "I think the big thing is for me to be patient and make sure we see progress."

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