

# Icers square off for Blue-White game tonight

By JUSTIN PIGZA  
Collegian Sports Writer

For several weeks the Penn State Icers have been put through grueling workouts and drill sessions under the command of Coach Joe Battista. But they have yet to play at full speed and lay it all on the line.

When the puck is dropped tonight, this will all change at the team's annual Blue-White game at the ice pavilion with the opening face-off set for 9:15 p.m. The game will mark the debut of the Icers, who do not officially begin their season until next Friday at home against Duquesne. The team is poised to pick up where it left off last season in which it finished 27-6-1 including a heart-breaking loss in the finals to Ohio in the American Collegiate Hockey Association national championship tournament.

Not only does the Blue-White game give Battista and his staff an excellent chance to evaluate the talent of the team, but it's also a great opportunity to work out the kinks in their bench management.

"There are certain intangibles that only show up in a game situation," Battista said. "It's early but this is a real good chance to evaluate the team."

Unlike a real game, there will be two 25-minute halves instead of three 20-minute periods; however the contest will be played under game situations complete with officials calling all rules and penalties. Battista expects a fast-paced, physical game from the team as they will be trying to make an impression on the coaching staff.

The Icers will be split into two 20-man squads, both consisting of two offensive and two defensively oriented lines in order to make the teams as fair as possible. The game will give the players a chance to strut their stuff in front of their coaches and teammates as well as the fans.

"When I played in juniors, we played in front of maybe only a few hundred fans," freshman defenseman Don Coyne said. "I'm looking forward to the crowd. I hear the place gets packed."

Although the game is a great chance for the Icers to play in a game situation for the first time this year in front of eager Icer fans, there are some important evaluations that will be made by the coaching staff as to who is going to fit in where for this season.

"It's a lot of fun, but there is a serious side to the game," junior



Collegian Photo/Betsy Blume

Penn State's Patrick Bovino closes in for a shot against Michigan State last season. The Icers play their Blue-White game tonight.

forward Rich Martha said. "It is a huge opportunity for us to see what speed we'll be playing at and to get used to our lines."

The game will be even more serious for the new members of the Icers who will be vying for ice time in hopes of making a contribution to the team. Filling out the 20-man rosters will be eight "B" team members.

Assistant Coach Paul Graf will be behind the bench of one squad, while Bill Masullo will hold the

reigns of the other team. Battista and associate head coach Ray Lombra will scout the game from the stands. All coaches will be wearing headsets so Battista and Lombra can communicate to the bench coaches what they want to see, whether it be specific plays or different line combinations.

"Some of the guys are still fighting to get into the line-up," Battista explained. "This game weighs heavily to see who will be getting ice time."

# Ruggers take on undefeated IUP squad tomorrow

By TIM HYLAND  
Collegian Sports Writer

The midseason break is just about over for the Penn State men's rugby club.

The Ruggers take on their last league opponent at home this Saturday as they take on Indiana, Pa. After weeks of playing relatively non-competitive opponents from the Allegheny Rugby Union, the match this week against undefeated IUP will signal the Ruggers that it is time to get serious. The winner of the game will receive an automatic birth in the Midwest Regional playoffs.

"IUP has been the team in our division that has given us the best opposition," Rugger Coach Fraser Grigor said, although he pointed out that Penn State is still a superior team.

Ruggers Coach Terry Ryland believes the

game will be his team's toughest within the division, but if the Lions get back on track, they should win. Despite the Ruggers 43-3 trouncing of Pitt last weekend, Ryland thought the team looked sloppy and out of sync at times.

"The problem is when the opposition starts to fade, players tend to move away from the game plan," said Grigor. "They do more freelancing because the opposition just isn't there defensively."

Penn State forward Mike Feightner is also expecting to win this weekend and said the team's intensity has really picked up after a slight letdown last weekend.

"Practices have seemed to pick up," Feightner said. "The coaches have been giving us some different drills trying to pick us up."

As the Ruggers blew out one opponent after another, many younger B- and C-side players

were getting quality playing time. The result is a rugby team with incredible depth.

"We are in the happy position in which in A-side through C-side; that there are 20 to 25 players who are legitimate contenders for top positions," Grigor said.

Although this game is a big one for the Ruggers, they can't help but to look ahead to Army next week. The focus of the Ruggers entire season, besides reclaiming their Midwest Regional Championship, has been the two matchups with the Cadets. The Ruggers dropped the first meeting 9-5. Penn State hopes to use the game this week to refine its game plan in preparation for the Cadets.

"When we play Army, we just have to stick to our game plan," Feightner said. "I think we can obviously beat them."

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