

Wildcats will give Lions their first test

By KATE BLASCHAK
Collegian Sports Writer

Last week, senior Lion captain Chip Berry described the men's swimming and diving meet with Villanova tomorrow as a low pressure contest and a good way to start the season. Maybe he was being a little too nice.

In contrast, the Wildcats coach Ed Bartsch took a more realistic approach in characterizing the upcoming competition.

"There's not a snowball's chance in hell that we're going to win this meet," he joked.

But regardless of who wins or loses, the Wildcats will give the Lions a chance to do what they've been itching to do — compete with someone other than themselves.

The only competition the Lion swimmers have yet encountered was in their intrasquad meet last Friday. The Blue-White scrimmage is used to measure what the team needs to improve before the season commences.

And after reviewing the tape of the meet, Lion Coach Peter Brown said the team has realized what some of those problems are.

"Our speed needs some work," Brown said. "At times the speed was forced, and some guys were having a hard time getting their races in."

Brown said the swimmers have also concentrated this week on relay exchanges and turns.

"It's a matter of making certain things better technically," Brown said.

In terms of the lineup for tomorrow's meet, which is being held in Wildcat waters, Brown said much of it will mirror last year's slate. Berry will be sticking with the distance freestyle events, and sophomore Greg Stacey will swim the sprints. Some placements remain up in the air due to injuries and academics.

As for the underdogs, Villanova is trying to adjust to the loss of seven seniors and the gain of six freshmen. This large freshman contin-



Collegian File Photo

Lion swimmer Greg Stacey practices last year in McCoy Natatorium. He and his teammates will face their first competition on Saturday when they travel to Villanova.

gent has left the Wildcats with a young and relatively inexperienced squad. But Bartsch said he believes some of his swimmers will be forces to reckon with in certain events.

"We will swim and be competitive in a lot of events," he said. "But in terms of depth or strength we are significantly overmatched."

The competition tomorrow also marks the first season performance for the Penn State diving team. The Lion divers enter the waters minus Chris Devine, who was the 1994 National one-meter champion and who placed seventh at nationals this year. Devine ended his career here at the end of last season and is presently training for the 1996 Summer Olympics.

Also absent for the Lions will be junior Seth Kane, who has decided to redshirt this season. Kane finished 20th in the 1995 nationals.

In lieu of Kane and Devine, the Lions will have three young divers taking their place. And

at the forefront is sophomore Drew Jackson who, as a superstar freshman, was a Big Ten finalist last season. Diving coach Craig Brown said Jackson has improved.

"Drew looks real, real solid," Brown said. "His strength is much better than last year."

Also contributing to the Lions will be redshirt freshman Joel Chandler.

Brown said Chandler has made huge progress in summer training.

"He still has a lot to learn," Brown added. "He's talented, but green, and needs to work on some fundamentals."

And rounding out the Lion divers is freshman Danny Hernandez who has been performing better than Brown said he anticipated.

"He's surprising the devil out of me," Brown said. "He used to play football and is physically a really tough kid. He does a lot of things way better than I expected."

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