

Icers defeat Illinois twice despite lackluster effort

By FRANK FERRIOLA
Collegian Sports Writer

Over the weekend, the Icers (7-0) put out another solid effort as they took two games from a worn down Illinois (4-7-1) team.

The Icers gave the parents who came up for Parents' Weekend a treat on Saturday as they handily skated to a 9-2 victory.

Penn State came out hungry in the first period. Just 2:01 into the game, Icer forward Brent Brower took a pass from defenseman Jurgen Cautreels and slipped a backhand past the Illini goalie from the right side.

Besides scoring three goals per period, the Icers were led by the strong play from freshman goalie John Sixt, who got his first start of the season. Sixt stopped 21 of the 23 shots he faced, including a couple of breakaways by Illini forward Tom Radja and a few two-on-one situations.

Icer Coach Joe Battista said the two goals Sixt let up were not his fault, but the Illini just got some lucky bounces and rebounds. He also said penalties played a big factor in the goals allowed.

The Icers came into the game with an 87.5 percent penalty killing ratio, but three of the four goals allowed this weekend by the Icers were let up in shorthanded situations.

"We did let up a couple power play goals but the puck bounced on us," Sixt said.

"It's always going to be a pinball game in front."

Penalties hurt the Illini over the weekend, as the Icers scored five power play goals on 18 chances. Illinois Coach Bob Turngren said his team took some bad penalties during the series, and it was expected.

"Penn State is a stronger team than us right now," he said.

"When you're a weaker team, you're at risk of taking more penalties."

The Icers were definitely the stronger team in the second game of the weekend.

They forced Turngren to pull goalie Sam Eaton at the 7:34 mark of the second period after he let up the fifth Icer goal. Rob Keegan took Brower's rebound and beat Eaton around his outstretched pad to the left.

The pressure put on the net by players like forwards Keegan and Brower, who each had three goals and four assists for the weekend, and the strong play of the freshmen class proved the team has the depth to possibly win the league.

"I hope our guys recognize what potential we have," Battista said. "And if we keep working hard, we'll keep getting better."

On Friday night, the Icers scored three goals in a span of 1:55 in the first period, on their way to a 6-2 victory.

The Illini started to mount a comeback by scoring two goals late in the period.



Collegian Photo/Betsy Blume

Lion Icer Tom Westfall (18) takes control of the puck during Penn State's match against Illinois Friday night at Penn State's Ice Pavilion. The Lions won 6-2.

They held a flat Penn State team from scoring again until 19:24 of the second period when Icer defenseman P.J. Amodeo put a shot past Illini goaltender Devin Huber on the power play.

The Icers came back out for the third period looking rejuvenated and ready to play again. They started using their size to their advantage, creating scoring opportuni-

ties and netting two more before the final horn.

Battista said Huber played a dominant game and it was much closer than the score showed, especially since the team looked so flat throughout most of the game.

"Certainly it wasn't one of our best performances," he said, "but it's nice to know that we can win without our best effort."

Wrestlers vie for starting positions

By TIM HYLAND
Collegian Sports Writer

Lion Wrestling Coach John Fritz has known all along.

He has been saying all year there were going to be some unknown guys on his 1995-96 squad who had the potential to surprise some people. So this weekend in the annual wrestle-offs, Fritz had no reason to be surprised after some unknowns made themselves known.

"The longer I coach, the more I know you don't get surprised," he said. "Anything can happen."

A big upset occurred at 167 pounds, where NCAA qualifier Glenn Pritzlaff was upended by senior Matt Hardy, who defeated Pritzlaff in two straight matches.

"Those were two big wins for him," Fritz said. "I think he made Glenn wrestle his match."

At 190, freshman Ryan Root swept through his fellow freshman competition Tim Vorhies and Martin O'Connor in three matches. Root, from Cincinnati, showed great athleticism and speed in scoring two early falls over O'Connor to take the weight class, and in the process impressed his coach.

"He is just a great athlete," Fritz said. "He's just so smooth and relaxed."

One of the most intriguing matches of the day came at heavyweight, where freshmen Matt Gaul and Mark Janus met to decide who would be the man to take Kerry McCoy's spot in the lineup. Gaul won two hard fought matches 4-2 and 5-2 but was not totally pleased with his performance.

"Mark is a real tough kid, but I

still don't think that I wrestled too well," Gaul said. "I've got to improve on movement and get more aggressive."

With five wrestlers, all freshman and sophomores, battling for the top spot at 118, John Strittmatter came out on top. The sophomore from Ebsburg knocked off Jason Nagle 8-3. Sophomore Michael Brennan, who seemed on track for the finals and was a favorite heading in, suffered a leg injury against Nagle and could not continue.

Also sustaining an injury was 126 pounder Eddie Jayne. After defeating Jason Betz in the first of their best-of-three series 14-3, the Elyria, Ohio native suffered an eye injury so the match will be completed later this week.

"I thought Eddie was wrestling really well," Fritz said. "That first match went really well."

After redshirting last season, sophomore Biff Walizer looked good at 134 as he defeated junior Erik Smith in two straight. Sophomore Clint Musser, who will most likely redshirt this season, was undefeated at 142. Musser defeated senior Mark Brace 7-3 and 5-2.

As expected, John Hughes was dominant at 150. After pinning Taner Ulke in the first round, Hughes routed Andrew Spencer in two matches by a combined score of 35-14. The defending national champ is still undecided as to what weight he will wrestle at this year.

Sophomore John Lange seized the top spot at 158 by defeating junior Brian Romesburg 8-3.

With four competitors at 177, junior Frank Morici won three straight matches to win the class.

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