

DeChellis

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his decision not to return to his home country of Germany to play professionally. Forward Aaron Johnson said he likes going to his classes since DeChellis took the helm, mostly because he doesn't want to know the consequences of skipping.

A new attitude emanates throughout every player in the roster. Their reception of DeChellis is certainly respectful and filled with excitement.

"Something is changing here," senior Ndu Egekeze said of the atmosphere at practice. "Coach bleeds blue and white. It's contagious."

Every player in the media room of the Bryce Jordan Center reflected Egekeze's enthusiasm. Johnson and junior Kevin Fellows were nodding their heads right along with Jagla as he spoke of how much more intense practice has been but how much more is accomplished in those two hours.

"I'm telling you it's going to be a lot different this year," Johnson said as he sat up in his chair to be clearly heard. "I can guarantee you won't see the same record as last year. That's a promise."

"War" at practice

The team assembled for its first practice under DeChellis on Saturday and it became immediately obvious that things were going to be different this year.

The entire session played out at full speed, with players having to sprint during and in between drills.

"I think the shock kind of hit them on Saturday morning," DeChellis said. "I'm not sure they really knew what to expect with a new coach and a new staff. But I think the players have responded very well."

DeChellis also talked about implementing the infamous "war" drill popularized by Michigan State coach Tom Izzo. The drill is essentially a no-holds-barred rebounding scrum that has players doing whatever they can to get possession of the ball.

The drill may be implemented later this week as DeChellis bluntly admitted, "they're not ready for that."

Still, the changes in practice have certainly caught the attention of the players.

"When [DeChellis] got here, he just talked about things being up-tempo

and how things are going to be different," junior Kevin Fellows said. "In practice, every second you get a chance you have to push it down there, lay it in and get easy scores."

Fresh(man) faces in the backcourt
With the departure of last season's starting guards, Brandon Watkins and Sharif Chambliss, the Nittany Lions are left with only one true guard with experience in Brandon Cameron.

That being the case, freshmen guards Ben Luber and Marlon Smith will be looked to for major roles and significant playing time in the Penn State backcourt.

"They've done extremely well the first few days, both of them," DeChellis said. "They've done exactly what we want them to do. They're probably the top two or three guys in terms of conditioning. They're in great shape and they've run well all fall."

It's easily a possibility that the Lions could start both freshmen in the season opener against Georgetown, alternating with Cameron. With only three true guards expected to play, sophomore DeForrest Riley-Smith also figures to see some time at shooting guard, a position he played some last season.

"It's good that we know we're going to play," Luber said. "We know the coaches are confident in us and we're confident in ourselves. It's just going to be us going out there and playing our game."

Shooting from 7'0"

With a glut of forwards and centers available to play the baseline and a drought of experience in the backcourt, DeChellis is experimenting with Jagla at small forward.

In his first two seasons as a forward, Jagla averaged 8.4 points and 6.3 rebounds per game. This season, DeChellis looks to take advantage of the German's skill by transitioning him to the perimeter, even though his seven-foot stature is the tallest on the team.

"We've got to move somebody from the back line to the front line," DeChellis said. "We feel like we can take advantage of a couple of Jan's skills that he has, especially in some offensive things. We're going to try to post him at the three spot against smaller wings."

Jagla said he feels more comfortable as a forward but is willing to play at any position his team needs him in.

Freshmen of women's basketball looking to put own mark on team

By Jenny Vrentas
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Freshman Lady Lion forward Rochelle Johnson laid it all out on the table when asked about preseason conditioning.

"College basketball [conditioning] is a whole other — forget level — it is a whole other world," she said.

But she could have been talking about college basketball in general, as this fall, she and three other freshmen — center Reicina Russell, forward Amanda Brown, and guard Jennifer Harris — have stepped into a whole new world as the newest members of the Penn State women's basketball team.

Joining a squad that returns five starters from last season's Sweet 16 team, the freshmen have entered a program that not only requires them to take a step up from high school ball, but that has sky-high expectations for the coming season. And the freshmen are expected to find their niche on the team and be a part of those goals.

"This freshman class really has the potential, and they have the credentials to fight," Penn State women's basketball coach Rene Portland said. "And that's what they need to do — they need to fight to allow our team to be better."

When Portland says the freshmen have the credentials to fight, she means it. Harris was named a McDonald's All-American. Brown was a three time Nike All-American. Johnson was ranked as one of the top 50 centers in the nation by All-Star Girls Report.



Portland

Russell was selected as the 19th best senior in the class of 2003 by Full Court Press. And that is just the beginning.

This winter, the freshmen will look to springboard off their successful high school careers and find their place among a skilled and proven group of upperclassmen. Though cracking into the starting lineup would be a difficult task, fight from the four will likely result in playing time.

Portland has already said that Harris will see the court early. And of the newcomers, she has been most impressed with Brown, who, along with Russell and Johnson, could help bring a more dominant post presence to the floor.

"We brought in three new post players and we'll definitely try our best to help out the rebounding," Brown said. "I think it'll step up this year."

And any fight from the freshmen is

welcomed by the upperclassmen, who recognize the ability of the new class and have been working to bring the first year players along with the rest of the team.

"The biggest thing about the freshmen is that they're good," junior forward Hazel Joseph said. "We just let them know that it's a process, and that they're doing really well."

As for fitting into the chemistry of the team, the freshmen are also excelling.

"They're adapting to us really well," Joseph said. "They fit in perfectly."

The freshmen could not agree more. "We just stepped right into the circle and were totally accepted," Russell said, with a huge grin across her face. "If I have a problem, I can go to any one of these girls and be like, 'I feel like this and this is going on,' and no one will ever look at me like 'Why are you talking to me?' It has been the best transition ever; I would say, in switching to a team and being accepted."

Part of meshing with the upperclassmen includes adopting their lofty goals for the season. But for the newcomers, high expectations are simply another part of wearing the blue and white.

"I know [our team is] expected to do great things," Russell said. "But I also know it's just a part of being a Lady Lion to just out there, play hard, work hard and win."

Soccer

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behavior, upset at the display, later confronted Omekanda during a break in action.

According to captain Gabe Bernstein, Penn State needs a higher level of intensity in order to remedy the current slump.

"Sunday's loss was disappointing, and with four games left, we need to win out," Bernstein said. "We need all of our players to have a fighting mentality."

After an intense and concentrated beginning to practice, the conclusion of yesterday's training was marked by a physical short-field game during which the Lions remained in good spirits.

Sitting on a soccer ball and resting his chin on his hand, Gorman viewed practice in a pose similar to that of "The Thinker" sculpture.

With a team that was slated to vie for the conference title, even Gorman has to wonder what it is that will break Penn State from its current decline.

BCS

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try that's what we want. We want to be as good a football team as we can be and as good a league as we can be and where you end up is where you end up."

The current projections give the Big Ten more than double the number of teams of any other conference in the BCS top 15. The SEC, Big East, Pac-10 and Big 12 all have two member schools ranked in the first poll.

Those rankings don't necessarily equate to being the top football conference, however. Big East representatives Miami and Virginia Tech are ranked second and third, respectively, giving the dissipating conference the only league with two teams in the top five.

Early standings often have little relevance to the final results, a point emphatically emphasized by several coaches yesterday. Michigan football coach Lloyd Carr said that while it's too early to draw any broad conclusions, having four teams in the top 15 of the BCS standings speaks to a quality that makes the conference unique.

"The strength of this conference, in my judgement, is one of the things that makes Big Ten football so special because it's extremely competitive week-in and week-out," Carr said. "I don't look at it as any kind of negative.



DeForrest Riley-Smith dribbles past a Purdue player. Riley-Smith will see sometime this season at shooting guard.

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