

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS

PSU priming for postseason run

By Jim DiMarco
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This time last year, the Penn State women's gymnastics team was scrapping to get one last good score in order to get into the postseason. This year the 11th ranked Nittany Lions can rest easier when they play host to Rutgers, Temple, and William & Mary at 7 tomorrow night at Rec Hall in their final home meet of the season.

Non-conference

vs. Rutgers, William & Mary and Temple
7 p.m. tomorrow
Rec Hall

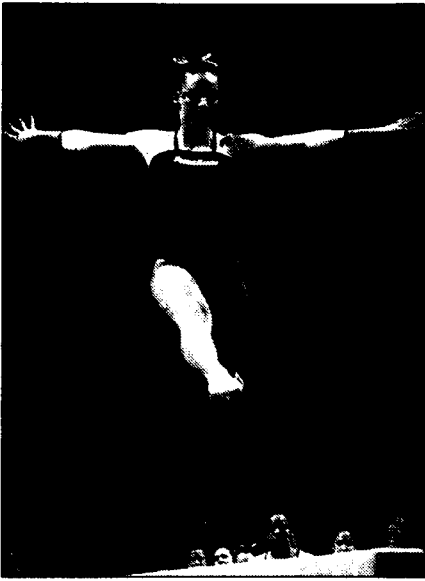
Last season, Penn State needed a strong score in the final competition to qualify for the Northeast Regional Championships. This season, with a regional qualifying average score of 195.495, the Lions have locked up a solid seed for the postseason already and are in a "really good position" coach Steve Shephard said.

"There's really no pressure to do any more than we've been doing," he said. "There is not the added urgency that we had last year going into the Big Ten tournament to increase our qualifying score."

The Lions may have nothing to lose, but they still have room to gain.

"Obviously we'd love to increase our qualifying score," Shephard said. "We just want to hit routines like we've been trying to do all year."

Saturday night will also be senior night for Penn State, marking the last home meet in the careers of Kate Stop-



Kassia Pisklak/Collegian

Senior Kate Stopper and the Lions will tune up their routines this weekend in preparation for the Northeast Regional Championship, for which they qualified with a 195.495 team score.

per and Cecile Allen. The seniors will be honored prior to the competition.

The Lions have been particularly impressive the past two meets in which they scored a 195.550 and 196.025 respectively. What makes these high scores even more spectacular is they did it without Lindsay Borkan, perhaps their most consistent scorer.

"We have some depth," Shephard said. "We're fortunate to have people still now fighting for spots in the lineup. We've had people take up the slack. The

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Penn State women's gymnastics coach

holes that she left in the lineup were filled very well."

Borkan tore her left Achilles in warm-ups before the Lions' competition against Ohio State on Feb. 26. The injury sidelined the freshman star for the season. Penn State will have to put forth a total team effort like it did the past two weeks to compensate for her loss.

The Lions are carrying a seven-game winning streak into this competition and haven't lost since Jan. 21 at Michigan. A big victory tomorrow night will help to keep their momentum strong as they prepare to roll into the Big Ten Championships Friday.

"I think we can score even higher than a 196 this week," Shephard said. "We can score a higher 196 or even a 197, depending on the judges of course."

If history is any indicator of the future, Penn State will be in good shape come tomorrow night.

The Lions are combined 22-0 against Rutgers, Temple, and William & Mary all time.



Chad Woolbert/Collegian

Derek Wake (94) celebrates after a tackle during the Iowa game Saturday.

Pro Day

From Page 11.

looking for a quarterback too, so it will be interesting to see how it falls."

The scout also talked about Jefferson, who in recent weeks has been one of the more talked about Penn State prospects, as he is one of the few true blocking fullbacks who has declared for the draft. While it was hard for the scout to assess Jefferson's blocking abilities yesterday, he noted that one of his strengths is catching the football.

"It's hard to get [a sense] when you're [blocking] on air; you can't really see him blocking," the scout said. "He caught the ball well; he catches the ball away from his body, his hands are natural. Everybody's looking for a fullback; fullbacks are hard to find anymore."

The scout said that NFL teams are

sending representatives to the pro days held by football programs across the country, and would convene in early April to go over the final workouts and discuss which players did well and showed up in shape. He also noted that while these workouts are important, game film from the previous fall reigns supreme.

"Film is the biggest tool for scouting," the scout said. "What they do now helps you split hairs between guys, separate and put in a pecking order. You've got to remember what the guy is as a football player."

That being said, Pro Day is a chance for players who might have flown under the radar to show their status — that is certainly the case for Wake, and for some of his former teammates, too.

"You never know until the day of the draft," the scout said, "but some guys definitely helped themselves out today."

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Letters should include your:

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