

# Lions let title slip away

By Ben Skalina  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Penn State men's soccer team was presented with a task Friday that wound up being simple in name only.

The No. 25 Nittany Lions needed only to beat Indiana on the road to clinch the Big Ten regular season crown and the first seed in the upcoming Big Ten tournament.

Despite getting an early goal from Matheus Braga, Penn State fell to the Hoosiers 2-1 and finished tied for second in the conference.

Indiana is the Big Ten's most consistent program, with 33 NCAA tournament appearances since 1973, but a tough schedule and some close losses conspired to push the Hoosiers (9-8-1, 3-3-0 Big Ten) down the Big Ten standings and out of the national spotlight. However, they found their game in time to mount a comeback against Penn State (10-6-2, 3-2-1) Friday.

"We came out playing well," Jason Yeisley said. "Corey [Hertzog] made a great play on Matheus' goal ... He made a very

smart decision not to shoot the ball.

"Instead of shooting it he passed it to Matheus and he slotted it in, near post."

Indiana tied the game in the late stages of the first half, as Will Bruin touched Andy Adlard's free kick to the back post and found Lee Hagedorn, who put the ball past goalkeeper Warren Gross.

The Hoosiers went ahead just after the second half started. Danny Kelly got behind the Penn State defense, navigated around Gross' challenge and scored 40 seconds after kickoff.

Yeisley and Frank Costigliola both said the second goal happened because of a communication mistake.

Even though Indiana defender Tommy Meyer was ejected in the 66th minute because of his second yellow card of the game, Penn State was unable to crack the Hoosiers' organized defensive effort.

It appeared as though Mark Fetrow had evened proceedings in the 81st minute, but a handball was called on the Lions and the goal didn't count.

The loss, combined with Ohio State's 1-0 win over Michigan, means the Buckeyes finish the regular season atop the Big Ten and earn the accompanying bye



Ben Skalina breaks down the Big Ten bracket on Blogging, Kicking and Screaming: [psucollegian.com](http://psucollegian.com)

into the semifinals of the conference tournament upcoming this weekend.

"I think it was a combination of people being a little tired and little sick," Costigliola said.

"We were a little sluggish, and we weren't as organized as we usually are."

Penn State claimed the second seed and will face Michigan Thursday in the first round of the tournament. If coach Barry Gorman's team wins, a match-up with the winner of the Northwestern-Michigan State game will be set for Friday.

Though not as favorable as the bye Ohio State will enjoy, the Nittany Lions have a favorable road to a rematch with the Buckeyes in the finals. They beat Michigan and Michigan State and tied Northwestern during the regular season.

"I think our side of the bracket is very good," Costigliola said. "We're happy playing [Michigan] ... We know we can beat them."

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Lynn McGowan/Collegian

Penn State Frank Costigliola (10) heads the ball away from a Wisconsin defender during Nittany Lions' 2-1 win Oct. 31.

## Rock

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boards. While he battled a stomach virus, Battle outscored the Rock by himself in the game's opening 14 minutes, owning a 12-11 advantage over the opposition.

Sophomore Chris Babb, starting for the first time as a Lion, scored 12 points and collected nine rebounds. Babb took passes from junior forward Andrew Jones on back-to-back possessions, draining two 3-pointers in two identical plays.

Aside from that 45-second span, though, Babb and Battle failed to make a 3-pointer, combining to go 2-for-14. The Lions finished 21 percent from 3-point range, 5-for-24, and still managed to put up a point total only amassed five times in the entire 2008-09 season.

"We didn't shoot the ball well at all," coach Ed DeChellis said. "We couldn't make a three. But we'll make perimeter shots. Chris Babb is a good shooter. Talor is a good shooter. Cam Woodyard is a good shooter. Those three guys will make shots for us."

DeChellis said he was pleased with all other aspects of the game.

He complimented the way the Lions passed the ball and defended. Slippery Rock, which only lost to Pitt by nine points last week, shot the ball early and often but only made 26 percent of their long balls.

Slippery Rock senior forward Bryen Spriggs said he noticed differences between Pitt and Penn State — Penn State had experienced players and a level of tenacity those players brought from the beginning.

The Lions utilized a man-to-man defense on the Rock and closed out on three-pointers. They owned a 60-37 rebounding advantage over an undersized Slippery Rock frontline and junior Andrew Ott grabbed seven boards off the bench for the Lions.

"It was typical Penn State, us on the glass, something that we do day in and day out every day in practice," said Jones, who finished with five points and five boards. "The effort was there."

Freshman forward Sasa Borovnjak epitomized that effort, drawing three fouls as he went up strong to the glass on three occasions. He finished the game with 10 points, third best on the team, and drew the loudest cheer from the crowd on a spin move around a defender on the baseline.

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## V. Ball

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and junior Blair Brown posted 11 in Penn State's 2-1 sweep in 26 matches this year.

Brown agreed with Hertzog's assessment of the match, saying the Lions' success at the end of the second set and throughout the third was a product of not changing their mentality.

"I think we controlled the ball well," Brown said. "That's one of the main points we need to focus on."

The Hawkeyes' 11-11 tie in the early second set, when Brown said, put the Lions in a hole they spent most of the set trying to crawl out of.

When they finally did, Brown said, they played more relaxed

and that keyed the run.

"In the second game, we came out more flat than in the first and third games," Brown said.

"We let them get out to a lead early, and that kind of set us back."

Junior middle hitter Arielle Wilson said with the score tied late in the second set, the Lions were finally able to break out into their typical dominant style of play.

It carried over in the third as the Lions got out to an 18-8 lead, and won it easily, 25-13.

"I think we had just enough of being in Iowa," Wilson said. "We wanted to come out strong and close out the match the way we play."

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## Frazier

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junior guard Talor Battle in an offense with multiple point guards.

Battle said he was impressed with Frazier's ability to run the floor and said the rest of the team will have to adjust to his quickness.

"For the first time out there, I think he did well," Battle said. "He missed some shots, but everybody missed shots today. He found some guys, and sometimes guys weren't ready."

Battle said that DeChellis' offensive scheme with both on the floor didn't make him specifically the No. 2 guard, but that it did spread the floor so that he isn't constantly playing the point guard role.

Playing off the ball, Battle said, is something he still has to get accustomed to after playing most of his first two seasons as the team's lone point guard.

"We run it like a spread offense, so I'm really not even playing the two," Battle said. But on the ball up the court I don't have it, so it's different playing without the ball."

The biggest difference, Battle said, will be in transition.

With the two point guards on the floor, Battle expects the Lions to get down the floor quicker than they have in the past.

The Lions outscored Slippery Rock in fast-break points, 18-10, but Battle said it could have been more.

"We just gotta get the other three to run with us even if they're tired

because there is no point to try and run the break by ourselves," Battle said. "He's gonna help us get some easy baskets one on one in transition, and find guys spotting up or trailing."

Junior center Andrew Jones said the exhibition was really about getting newcomers like Frazier a chance to get involved in the offense and for the veterans to get adjusted to a new squad.

"We had to put in a lot of things, and we have a lot of young guys," Jones said.

"To see them go out and execute a lot some of the things we're doing in practice — I think that's what this game is for."

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## Wright

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wrestler's ambitions by being around them every day.

Wright's original goal may not have been to redshirt, but the sophomore contemplated how he would respond if Sanderson approached him with the redshirting idea. So when the time came, Wright was prepared.

"Whenever he said it, I was like, 'OK now let's make a game plan to win nationals next year,'" Wright said.

He is ready to sacrifice this year for the future — a future he is excited about.

"Whatever the coaches need me to

do, I'm going to do it," Wright said. "But my goal is going to stay the same — to become the national champion, work as hard as I can every day in practice, and if the coaches feel redshirting is going to be good, I'm going to do it."

This mentality has Wright in the weight room and lifting to his maximum potential. Wright has also increased his meal sizes and his eating frequency — five to six times each day. He said his goal is to add calories in order to bulk up for next year.

In the intrasquad scrimmage, Wright planned on wrestling in the 197-pound weight class but needed to drop to 184 pounds. Wright still didn't miss a beat. The sophomore defeated

David Crowell, a Pittsburgh transfer who isn't eligible until the spring semester, 8-2 after taking a 5-0 lead after the second period.

On a team where Sanderson is looking for wrestlers who lead by example, Wright stands at the forefront. He looks to coach other grapplers this year even though he won't compete.

This approach seems to be contagious.

"The attitude has been great," assistant coach Cody Sanderson said. "They know what they want to do. They know we have high expectations for them, and they're working hard to get there."

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