

# Naeher, Nairn headed to U.S. National camp

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Penn State women's soccer freshman midfielder Christine Nairn and senior goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher will attend a 10-day U.S. Senior National Team training camp Dec. 5-15 in Carson, Calif.

## WOMEN'S SOCCER

"Both of them are ready for that level," Nittany Lions coach Erica Walsh said. "Obviously Christine's been there. Alyssa missed an opportunity with her injury, but I'm thrilled that they're getting a chance to go in."

Walsh will also travel to the camp to serve as an assistant coach on team, focusing her efforts on defensive play. Naeher missed last summer's training period while recovering from a

posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) injury and is excited for the camp.

The senior will share keeper duties with Hope Solo and Nicole Barnhart, and said she wants to have a strong week in training and hopefully prove herself. Playing with two players with as much international experience as Solo and Barnhart is something Naeher is looking forward to.

"They've been in with this team for a long time and Hope is one of the best in the world, if not the best in the world," Naeher said. "I'm definitely looking forward to the opportunity to be able to train with them for those 10 days in a very individual environment. I'm going to try and learn from them

as much as I can and take different things from training."

Nairn played with the senior team this summer and said the age of the players on the team factors into socializing. The freshman said having Naeher in camp gives her someone to talk with and turn to for advice.

With the camp a few weeks away, Naeher said she would do some training at home over break and when she gets back to Penn State.

The senior had been wearing a knee brace all season that broke during the season-ending loss to Virginia, but Naeher said she is having a new one made.

Travelling out to California will give both players the chance to

play soccer and start to put the Virginia game behind them.

"Any time you end the season, or any time you lose a game for that matter, all you want to do is play another one to kind of erase the previous one from your head," Naeher said. "It will definitely be nice to get another game and kind of be able to put the Virginia game behind me."

Both players and Walsh said they were looking forward to spending 10 days in California and missing out on the beginning of December in State College.

Walsh commended both players on working with their professors to work out assignments and finals.

Last spring, Nairn had to leave for the U-20 FIFA World Cup less than a week after enrolling, but now having a semester under her, the freshman said she isn't stressed and can focus on soccer and class.

Nairn said both college and the national level have helped her game grow, and taking the physical nature of the Big Ten into camp will give her experience she didn't have in July. Having adjusted to college soccer after coming from the national team, Nairn said it may take "a few practices" to get re-acquainted with the more technical pace of the national level.

"Being more technical, the U.S. has been able to call itself one of the best countries in the world because we pay so much attention to our technical game," Nairn said.

"Fitness wise its going to be another factor and just playing soccer because of how everybody plays around the world, Brazil and Germany are always slinging passes around and it takes time to get used to the speed."

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# PSU to take on NCAA teams

By Tom Copain  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Only one letter separates the ACHA from NCAA.

But in the case of the Penn State Icers, all the ACHA championship banners that line the wall of the Greenberg Ice Pavilion multiply that one letter.

The debate has gone on for years about whether Penn State could be a Division I NCAA team, whether its in newspaper clippings or message boards. Next weekend, Penn State will get a chance to compete with NCAA teams at the PAL/Stovepipe Tournament at Hooksett, N.H.

And while it will be against two Division III schools — the Icers play Southern New Hampshire next Saturday and either Massachusetts-Boston or Stonehill next Sunday — it will be

a chance for Penn State to represent the ACHA as a whole.

"A lot of people look to us as one of the elite teams in the ACHA," sophomore forward Nick Seravalli said. "So, absolutely, I feel like we're representing the ACHA at this tournament. But I feel that these D-III teams don't take us very lightly because in the past, we've beaten Division I and Division III opponents."

This is the second-straight year the ACHA No. 6 Icers will compete in a tournament with NCAA schools. Last year, Penn State played in the Salem State Holiday Tournament after Christmas and lost 2-1 to host Salem State — picked to finish first in its conference this year — and won 8-0 against Salve Regina.

So far, Southern New Hampshire is 2-1-2 through five games this season. As for who Penn State will play that Sunday, Stonehill is 2-3-1 through its first six games while UMass-Boston



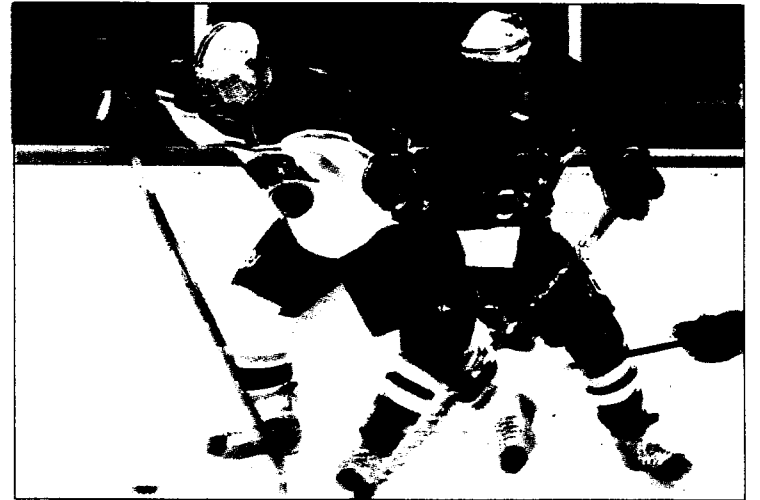
The Icers prepare for a physical Navy team and improve their penalty kill: [psu.collegian.com](http://psu.collegian.com)

has yet to play a game this year.

Still, the experience from last season and almost sweeping both games provided a strong experience for this year's Icers to build from.

"It was kind of a different style, a little bit quicker with everything that was done on the ice," sophomore forward Paul Daley said. "I think it will teach us a lot about ourselves and how to get to that next level as well. Not saying that we're not on the same level as them, but just to do the little things quicker."

Penn State still has two games with Navy this weekend at home before the trip to New Hampshire. The focus this weekend for the Icers will be to keep the momentum going from the Rhode Island



Abby Drey/Collegian

Marek Polldor (left) fights for the puck with West Virginia's Ken Bickel during the Icers 8-2 win over the Mountaineers earlier this year. Polldor and the ACHA Icers will face two NCAA Division III teams next weekend.

games and build on their current eight-game win streak.

But for at least one Icer, this weekend is more than just showing ACHA teams can hang with NCAA teams.

"It shows guys that we can com-

pete with the NCAA teams and not just because we're in the ACHA doesn't mean we can't play or be a part of a league like that," junior forward Tim O'Brien said.

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Peter Tesoriero/Collegian

Justin Lee passes the ball in practice earlier this year. Lee has an identical twin who plays soccer for Maryland but was injured when he was struck by a car in October.

## Lee

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from Maryland's College Park campus. Alex was hit by a car in the street.

"It was pretty shocking when they told me I was hit by a car," Alex said of waking up in the hospital.

He doesn't remember the accident. He was rushed to the hospital with bleeding in his brain and a fractured skull. Justin found out an hour later.

"I didn't really get the details," Justin said.

"I didn't really know what was going on, but it was kind of nerve-racking to hear that he got hit by a car and I didn't really know what was happening. I was kind of anxious to find out what was going on with him."

Then Justin woke up Sunday and had to wipe his mind clear, because the Nittany Lions had a home date with the highly-ranked Northwestern Wildcats.

He started, as usual, and took one shot as Penn State played the visitors to a 1-1 tie. An observer wouldn't have known that his twin brother, his best friend, was lying in a hospital bed some 200 miles away.

After the game, Justin went to see Alex. His coach excused him from the team to see his twin.

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It's Thursday now. Justin cruises on his bike to practice in the November rain. You wouldn't know what his twin went through just six weeks ago from watching.

The Nittany Lions are loose yet focused, ready for whichever Maryland-based team emerges Thursday to challenge their Jeffrey Field supremacy.

Even though Alex is still out recovering from his injuries, the twins can reunite.

For the first time since their undefeated 2007 state championship team, the Lee brothers are back together, with a soccer field in the middle.

However, the game is slightly bittersweet for both.

"I know a lot of the guys there, because I'm from Maryland," Justin said.

"I'm pretty good friends with them. So I'm excited to play against them, but it would have been a lot better — it would have just been really cool to have a chance to play against him in a competitive situation."

Alex echoed his brother's feelings.

"I'm pretty mad about that," Alex said. "It's just unfortunate. We've always been talking about it, and we finally get to play each other and I'm not going to be able to play."

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## Loss

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DeChellis said. "[Babb] just couldn't make a basket, and our other guys didn't make a shot either."

In the second half, the Lions battled their way back, getting as close as 64-62 when Frazier found forward Jeff Brooks for an alley-oop dunk, but the following three plays doomed the team. Two key defensive lapses sandwiched around a missed Babb three allowed the Seahawks to stretch the lead to six.

On the two plays, Seahawks guard Johnny Wolf drove into the lane, drawing double coverage, allowing Wolf to make a pass to an easy basket. DeChellis said the poor defensive effort started on the perimeter.

"If you aren't making shots, you've got to defend people," DeChellis said.

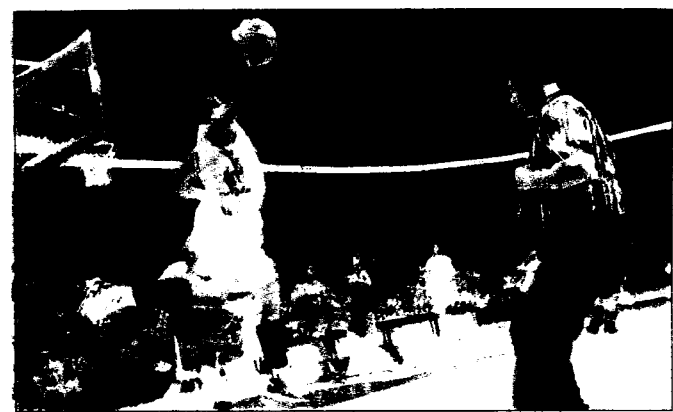
"You've got to play smart defensively, but I didn't think we did that when we got the thing in striking distance."

When Battle scored his 13th point of the game, he became the 29th 1,000-point scorer in Penn State history. With the loss, the Lions will face Tulane at 12:30 p.m. Friday. DeChellis said he would have the team watch tape and it would be important to have the players ready for the quick turnaround.

"I don't know if we're going to forget it, we're going to go back and watch the tape," DeChellis said.

"I'm not forgetting it, we didn't play very well. We need to figure out what we didn't do. We've got to figure out who we are now."

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Benedict A. Samuel/Collegian

Tyra Grant (left) saves a loose ball earlier this season.

## Win

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entered and Bucknell temporarily switched to man coverage.

While the switch didn't faze Grant, who scored 10 points in 15 minutes of play, it helped freshman center Nikki Greene see more looks down low. Greene finished the game with 11 points, six of which came in the second half.

The Bison defense was focused on slowing down and double-teaming Grant, which made the Lions look to get points in the paint.

Bison coach Kathy Fedorjaka said her young team, which boasts five freshmen, may have looked like they even switched into a 3-2 zone during part of the second half because Grant's play caused them such confusion.

"She's so athletic, she's so strong," Fedorjaka said. "Her presence certainly is huge, the physical attributes she brings to the table are probably the biggest challenge she poses."

Fedorjaka said Grant is just a "different level of athlete" out on the court and that her play created many matchup problems for the Bison.

After Grant helped the Lions stretch their lead to 20 points, Washington felt her team became a bit complacent and gave the Bison too many opportunities to score. She said her team seemed a bit sluggish and didn't close the game particularly well.

"I think that we need to pick up our intensity and put a lot more effort into what we do," Trogele said. "Yeah we beat them, but we're going face a lot more talented teams and a lot stronger teams, so we need to pick it up on our part."

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## Sprawl

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of the growing interest in the team.

"We really try to focus on the fact that we all have a common goal," Freeman said. "We want to win the national title at the end of the season."

Freeman, although not a starter, believes he is vital to that goal, and the quest that continues Sunday as the Nittany Lions travel to Binghamton, N.Y., for the Sprawl and Brawl Duals.

But, he warns people not to count him out of a starting role. The redshirt freshman knows he holds the motivation needed on Sanderson's team.

Freeman said others in his weight class will also benefit from his work ethic because he will push them when wrestling together and believes this falls into the correct mindset and focus that Sanderson brought to the Lions.

This mindset, for Freeman, equals one thing — success.

"Penn State is going to grow, and the country has something to look forward to because we have a lot to show," Freeman said.

"The nation should be getting ready for us."

So far this season, the No. 19 Lions hold a 1-1 record, several weight classes are up for grabs, and the only meet against a ranked opponent, No. 14 Lehigh, resulted in a 23-14 road loss. The unproven Lions can solidify their place in the rankings and kick-start their push toward a national title on Sunday. Penn State will take on Rutgers, Harvard and No. 15 Edinboro.

With a sweep of the three, Penn State's road to national-champion status will be one step closer. For the Lions' goal to be reached, Freeman said each day needs to be taken as it comes.

Dan Vallimont, a 149-pounder, said his goal is to block out the surrounding talk while on the mat and stretch his opponent for seven minutes. He thought the expectations don't equal pressure because eventually a national championship for the Lions is bound to come.

"Whether it be this year or a few years down the road, Penn State is going to be the best team in the country," Vallimont said, "and they're going to hold a dominant spot for years to come."

The future depends on freshmen such as David Taylor and Ed Ruth, who were both touted recruits during high school.

But because Sanderson will redshirt the freshman class, both Taylor and Ruth will sit out this year. Taylor looks forward to the redshirt season, and after his intrasquad match, said he looks to move up a weight class or two. Improving strength is his main goal.

"Next year," Taylor said. "I want to be a national champ."

Vallimont said the theme of national-title winning echoes around the team. And the road to it starts Sunday.

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