

Lions to face foes from old conference

By **Brendan Monahan**
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

For West Virginia coach Craig Turnbull, the Nittany Lion-Mountaineer rivalry began in 1990.

Turnbull recalled his No. 8 West Virginia team defeating No. 4 Penn State. The Mountaineers won the Eastern Wrestling League title, but maybe more importantly, the upper hand over the dominant Lions.

While the years of the Penn State-West Virginia rivalry have faded away after the Lions left the EWL to join the Big Ten, Penn State wrestling will replay its EWL days at West Virginia on Friday and at Pittsburgh on Saturday.

Former Penn State wrestling coach Rich Lorenzo recalled the EWL's beginning. It started with the Penn State football team leaving the Eastern College Athletic Conference in the 1970s.

Football's departure from the conference forced every Penn State sport to leave including wrestling, which severed ties with the affiliate Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association.

Lorenzo and other coaches formed the EWL with Penn State joining in 1976. The league became, in Lorenzo's terms, a top-three wrestling conference with only the Big Ten and the Big

Eight, which formed into the Big 12, ahead of it.

"The EWL received the third-most qualifiers of any conference," Lorenzo said. "We had some tremendous rivalries, and Pitt and West Virginia were two of them."

The EWL is now a far cry from the third-best conference and has stood in the shadow of the Big Ten, which the Lions joined before the 2005 season. With the loss of Penn State, the Lions dealt the EWL a difficult blow.

"The EWL would have wished we stayed," Lorenzo said. "We were getting 40-some qualifiers at that time, and we had built it up from about 20."

Ken Chertow was Penn State's 118-pound EWL champion in 1988 and 1989. Chertow believed Penn State's change from the EWL to the Big Ten only benefited the program.

This weekend's Penn State-Pitt match pleased Chertow, and he hopes the Pitt and West Virginia matchups with Penn State continue in the future.

"I'm sure those are huge matches for Pitt and WVU," Chertow's id.

"It's good for wrestling that Penn State goes there. It's probably more beneficial to Pitt and West Virginia than it is for Penn State."

Although Penn State was the premier program as a member of

"We had a great world when we were in the EWL."

Rich Lorenzo
former wrestling coach

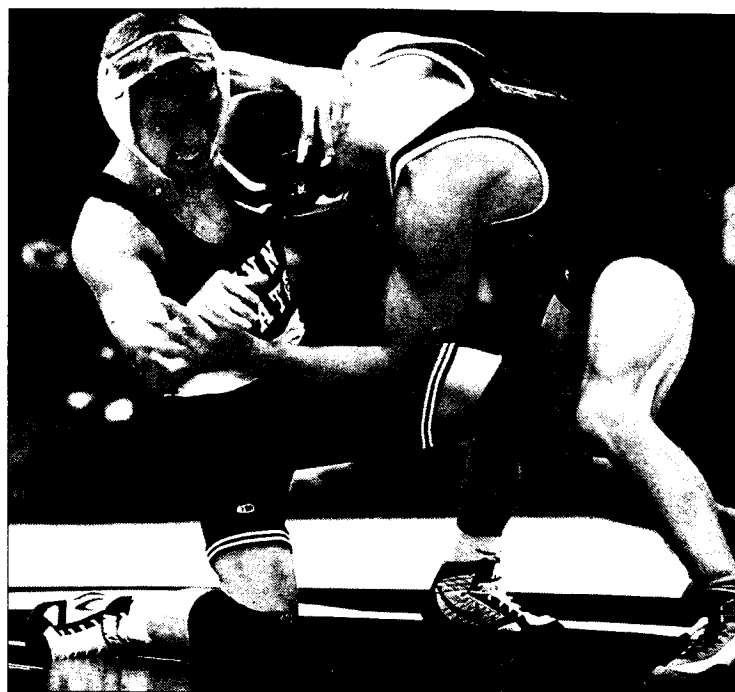
the EWL, the Lions didn't always skate through their conference opponents. Lorenzo remembered his team being exuberant after beating a Big Eight school. They would then have to face an EWL team as their next opponent, and the result was usually a slim-margin win.

"Everybody was hunting for us then because they didn't have the opportunity to go wrestle the Big Eight," Lorenzo said. "Their budgets or their program didn't allow it. They figured if they got a piece of us, they could claim all that we were claiming."

The Lions have already defeated a current EWL opponent in Edinboro this year.

Edinboro coach Tim Flynn wrestled under Lorenzo with Chertow at Penn State and won the 126-pound EWL title in 1986 and the 134-pound EWL title in 1987.

Flynn said there was no question Penn State's departure hurt the EWL especially when considering the Lions were often a top-10 team under Lorenzo. Lorenzo believes the EWL still has talent,



Lynn McGowan/Collegian
Penn State's Brad Pataky (left) wrestles Bloomsburg's Jason Guffey Nov. 15. The team travels to Pittsburgh and West Virginia this weekend.

but the conference's stock has also declined.

"As far as the depth and the commitment, a lot of schools have slid off," Lorenzo said. "Where they were trying to compete with us and stay with us, they have since slipped and are no longer the national-ranked powers."

Even though Edinboro has

dominated the EWL and remained a powerhouse, the conference's glory days linger long in the past.

"We had a great world when we were in the EWL," Lorenzo said. "For wrestling, the EWL was a great conference."

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THE GRID

		TIME	PLACE	TV	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
Men's Basketball	vs. Virginia Tech	7 p.m. Saturday	Bryce Jordan Center		Penn State tries to push its record to 2-0 against the ACC.
Lady Lions	vs. No. 15 Pittsburgh	1 p.m. Saturday	Bryce Jordan Center		Can the Lady Lions build off of Wednesday's victory against a more experienced Pitt squad?
Women's Volleyball	at Florida	6 p.m. Fri., 4 p.m. Sat.	Gainesville, Fla.		Lions continue quest for a third straight national championship.
Wrestling	at West Virginia, at No. 24 Pittsburgh	8 p.m. Fri., 7 p.m. Sat.	Morgantown, W.Va., Pittsburgh		The Lions hit the road for two tough dual meets and hope to extend their four-meet win streak.
Iciers	vs. Niagara	9 p.m. Friday	Greenberg Ice Pavilion		The Iciers play their last game of the fall semester and won't play again until Jan. 8.
Women's Track	Blue-White meet	All Day Saturday	Multisport Facility		Look for this year's freshmen to begin taking center stage for distance and sprints
Men's Track	Blue-White meet	All Day Saturday	Multisport Facility		The return of star runners Sam Borchers and Vince McNally.
Ice Lions	vs. Rider	3:15 p.m.	Greenberg Ice Pavilion		The Ice Lions resume play after being snowed out last Saturday.

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