



# Lions creating points off defense

By Andrew J. Cassavell  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

During the final eight minutes of the first half in Tuesday's Penn State-Illinois basketball game, points were at a premium.

Quality offensive possessions were even rarer.

The Nittany Lions' defense held the Illini scoreless during that late first-half stretch, going on a 7-0 run to take a five-point lead into the break. But even when the Lions scored, they did so by creating steals and pushing the ball after defensive stops.

With his team's halfcourt offense struggling, coach Ed DeChellis said it has made defensive intensity even more critical.

"We're a team that not only needs to play great defense, but we need to score off of our defense," DeChellis said. "I'm not sure we're a high-powered, halfcourt potent offense, but we can score."

That was never more evident than in the Lions' loss to Michigan on Jan. 7, part of a four-game losing streak to open conference play that dropped the Lions to 8-8 and has put an early dent in their already slim chances of securing an at-large bid to the NCAA tournament.

In getting out to a 15-point halftime lead,

Penn State forced nine turnovers, leading to 11 transition points and 13 points off turnovers. But when the Lions blew their chance at a first conference win during the second half, they did so by forcing only three turnovers and scoring no points off them or in transition.

Sophomore guard Chris Babb, who was recently given the task of defending the opponent's premier guard, said there is little room for defensive letdowns because it would halt a large portion of Penn State's offensive production.

Against Michigan, Babb said, that showed.

"I think we lost a little bit of our defensive intensity, which kind of stopped our offense, too," Babb said. "We got kind of comfortable, but if we want to win games like that, we've got to play the full 40 minutes."

As a guard, Babb has also been key for the Lions' transition game in a defense that stresses rebounding from perimeter players.

Point guard Talor Battle leads the team in rebounding with 5.5 per game, and Babb, who pulled down 10 boards on Tuesday, has had a similar impact on the glass with four per cent.

Even freshman guard Tim Frazier has three per game, despite averaging only 21

minutes of game time on the year.

Junior forward Jeff Brooks said being able to run right after a rebound, coupled with the Lions' quickness at guard, makes their fast break a dangerous one.

"It puts a whole lot of pressure on them," Brooks said. "A lot of guys can't catch up to those guys when they have the ball from baseline to baseline. If those two get a breakaway you might as well just watch and be in awe sometimes."

During the stretch to end the first half against Illinois, it was the three guards who keyed the run offensively. Again, it started on the opposite end of the floor.

Babb gave the Lions the lead after Battle grabbed a rebound and immediately started the break. Battle found Babb in the frontcourt for a layup and the foul.

Two possessions later, Frazier stepped in front of an errant pass. By the time he got to the rim and dunked the ball, no one was within 20 feet of him.

"There's no defense when you can get steals in the backcourt," DeChellis said. "It's just really hard to defend, and we saw that the other night. I think for us it's about trying to get hands on balls and be active and push it and try to convert on the other end."

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# Bench players key in success

By Bill Landis  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Seven times during Sunday's overtime period against Penn State, an Indiana player attempted a 3-point shot. Six of those times, tired legs led to that shot coming up just a bit short.

While the Lady Lions seemed to have more energy in the extra frame, Indiana appeared to be feeling the ill effects of using just three players off its bench.

The result was a 77-71 victory for Penn State that was due in large part to the Lions having fresher legs. But the win also demonstrated something that has been a strong point for the Lions so far this season — the ability to rotate players in and out of the game without sacrificing much on either side of the ball.

While the team still relies on starters Tyra Grant and Alex Bentley to provide the majority of the offense, those players have

maintained their impact throughout the game because of the rest they get.

"We have 13 players on our team, so it's easier for somebody who has a lot of players on her bench to get quality minutes," Grant said after Sunday's win. "They can do great things and replace what we've already done as starters."

The Lions have relied on their bench to provide key minutes this season en route to a 3-2 conference record, putting them in a four-way tie for second place in the Big Ten.

Penn State will need to continue to rely on the production of its bench players Thursday when it travels to Iowa for its second game against the Hawkeyes in 17 days. The Lions defeated Iowa in overtime in the last meeting and have a knack for going down to the wire with the Hawkeyes.

Two of the last three contests with Iowa have gone into overtime, while the other game was a six-point Iowa victory that was close until the end.

Forward Janessa Wolff, one of five players to come off the bench for the Lions against Indiana, said the bench players are aware of their role on the team. She said teammate Nicole Arcidiacono does a nice job of keeping the bench players mentally prepared to enter the game.

"I like it just because I give another burst of speed to the starters," Wolff said about her role. "We know as soon as we step on the floor we're going to give it our all."

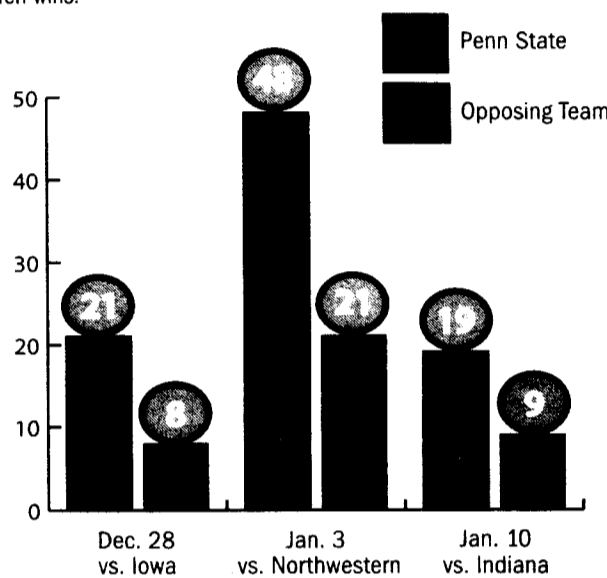
In a win against Northwestern on Jan. 3, the bench provided 48 of the team's 88 points. While the scoring output wasn't quite as prolific in the win against Indiana, the bench players still did what was necessary to help the team win.

That's all coach Coquese Washington asks for out of her bench players. She knows they won't always contribute half of the team's offense, but if the bench players can continue to do the little things well, then the Lions' success should continue.

"When you talk about a game

## Bench scoring

The Lady Lions' bench has outscored the opponents' bench in their three Big Ten wins.



Source: [gopsusports.com](http://gopsusports.com)

Tiffany Liao/Collegian

that is single digits and it comes down to the very last possession of the game, every rebound, every basket, every stop is critical," Washington said.

"I anticipate that because of the way they practice, they will continue to get better."

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# First year in CAA excites Penn State

By Kurt Bopp  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Six straight wins to end the season and a 9-5 record wasn't enough to get the men's lacrosse team in the NCAA tournament last season — but this year it might be.

The Nittany Lions left the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference (ECAC) for the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA). The switch to the CAA has Penn State's players and coaches excited as they get a new opportunity: a conference tournament.

"The new competition got us really excited," senior defender Earl Ross said.

"What got us the most pumped up was the conference tournament."

The tournament gives the Lions another shot at getting into the NCAA tournament. Previously, Penn State had to finish the season with the best ECAC record. Ross said one loss basically eliminated a team from contention.

Penn State captain Joe Britt said the

tournament provides his team with a great opportunity that plays right into the Lions' strengths.

"We always go on a hot streak at the end of the season," the senior midfielder said.

"Now we have a lot of ways to sneak in [to the NCAA tournament]."

The Lions finished last season on the 6-0 run, including wins against two top-20 teams.

But Penn State struggled to get going early on, starting out with a three-game losing streak and going 3-5. It also dropped its first three conference games, eliminating it from contention for the ECAC crown and the elusive NCAA bid.

Though the Lions would rather be consistent the entire season, captain Brian Shea said the team has a tendency to build up as the year goes along. Shea and his teammates hope Penn State goes into the conference tournament hot as it chases the conference crown and automatic NCAA bid.

Penn State is not the only ECAC team making the move, as Massachusetts will also join the Lions in the CAA. The Lions lost, 9-8, at then-No. 14 UMass last March.

Britt said the teams he will miss playing are Loyola — a team his class never beat — and Georgetown, a tough team that generally plays the Lions in epic games, including a 12-10 win at Georgetown last year.

Though Shea will also miss playing Georgetown, he hopes the switch will only benefit Penn State.

"This conference has teams in the top 5 all the time," Shea said. "I'm looking forward to playing every one. Six or seven of them I've never played before."

Ross and Britt are excited to play nonconference games against Notre Dame and Duke in particular.

"I'm looking forward to Duke, because the notoriety they hold with them," Ross said. "Notre Dame is always great competition, and I love good competition."

Coach Glenn Thiel said the move to the CAA is "definitely a plus" and he looks forward to the new season and new competition.

"Top to bottom, it's the toughest conference," Thiel said. "Anybody can win it."

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Attackman Matt Mackrides (left) fires a shot against St. John's in a game April 11. This season, Penn State will play for the first time in the Colonial Athletic Association.



# SPRING SPORTS PLANNER

## LADY LION BASKETBALL

AT THE BJC

### PSU vs. Michigan State

SUN, JAN. 17 @ 1PM

Pack the House Day & Autograph Day

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## NITTANY LION BASKETBALL

AT THE BJC

### PSU vs. Indiana

THURS, JAN. 21 @ 7PM

### PSU vs. Illinois

WED, JAN. 27 @ 6:30PM



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**PSU Student Tickets Buy One Get One FREE!**  
**First 100 Students Receive Pink Zone Teel**

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## MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

AT REC HALL

### PSU vs. St. Francis

FRI, JAN. 15 @ 7pm

### Alumni Match

SAT, JAN. 16 @ 3pm



## PENN STATE WRESTLING

AT REC HALL

### PSU vs. Illinois

FRI, JAN. 22 @ 7pm

FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON ALL PENN STATE SPORTS VISIT: **GoPSUsports.com**