

THE LINEUP

SPORTS

NCAA Basketball

Illinois at Penn State
6:30 p.m., BTN
6:30 p.m., BTN
7 p.m., ESPN
Ohio State at Iowa
8:30 p.m., BTN
Florida State at Duke
9 p.m., ESPN

NBA

Philadelphia at Milwaukee
8 p.m., CSN

QUICK HITS

PENN STATE

Single-game tickets to increase in fall

While public and student season tickets for football games will stay the same next season, the cost of individual games will increase, the Penn State athletic department announced Tuesday.

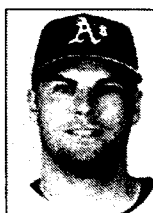
Single-game tickets will rise from \$64 this past season to \$67 in the upcoming fall.

Public season tickets will remain at \$55 per game in the 2010-11 season, while student season tickets will stay at \$29 a piece.

MLB

Oakland, Sheets agree to 1-year deal

The Oakland Athletics added another veteran arm to their young rotation, agreeing to terms Tuesday with free-agent righty Ben Sheets on a \$10 million, one-year contract.



Sheets

The 31-year-old Sheets has been plagued by injuries. The four-time NL All-Star didn't pitch in the majors last season while recovering from elbow surgery but last week held a pitching session for several scouts in Louisiana.

The A's sent two representatives to watch Sheets throw. Director of player personnel Billy Owens and minor league roving pitching instructor Gil Patterson.

Sheets spent his first eight major league seasons with the Milwaukee Brewers.

OUR THOUGHTS

NFL

Raiders drop ball with coaching hire

The Raiders decided to kick the JaMarcus Russell project into high gear by bringing in former Ravens quarterbacks coach Hue Jackson as their new offensive coordinator.

That's right, folks: THE Hue Jackson is going to make the No. 1 pick of the 2007 draft a real NFL quarterback.

To refresh your memory, this is the man who took Joe Flacco, a second-round pick from Delaware, into a superstar QB in Baltimore, someone who has amassed a 3-2 playoff record his first two years in the league.

We'll throw out the fact that Baltimore's offense had almost nothing to do with Flacco, who threw 223 yards, no touchdowns and three interceptions in his two post-season games this year.

The fact is, Hue Jackson is going to make a star out of JaMarcus Russell — because Al Davis said so.

For more of our thoughts, and to share yours, visit the MAKE PLAYS blog at psucollegian.com.

TRIVIA

NFL

Q: Which teams have never appeared in a Super Bowl?

Monday's answer: The North Carolina men's basketball team was unranked was January 2006.

Following last season's buzzer-beating win over Illinois, the Penn State men's basketball team looked NCAA-tournament bound. Now sitting at 0-7 in conference play, Penn State players and fans are wondering ...

HAPPENED

THIS SEASON



Freshman guard Tim Frazier lies on the floor after being knocked down against Robert Morris on Nov. 16. After winning the NIT last season, Penn State is 8-11 this year and currently on a seven-game losing skid.

LAST SEASON



Penn State fans storm the Bryce Jordan Center court last March after the Nittany Lions beat Illinois, 64-63, on a buzzer-beating shot. The win helped the Lions earn a berth in the NIT, which they went on to win last April.

By Andrew J. Cassavell
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

When Illinois invaded Happy Valley last March, Tabor Battle's last second shot — one that bounced four times before dropping — sent hundreds of students sprinting onto the Bryce Jordan Center floor.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Earlier this season against the Fighting Illini at Assembly Hall, the Nittany Lions were affected by a similar bounce — this time, one that didn't go their way.

Illinois guard Demetri McCamey managed to gain possession of the ball he had been fumbling and got off an off-balance 3-pointer with a hesitation in mid-air. Somehow it found the bottom of the net.

Plays like the McCamey 3-pointer have characterized the Lions' season — one that already features seven losses by six points or less, and one that has quickly turned into a rebuilding year for head coach Ed DeChellis.

When the Illini, losers of three straight games, take the BJC floor at 6:30 tonight, there will be a distinctly different meaning, and, in all likelihood, a distinctly different atmosphere from that contest last March. Much of that can be blamed on the Lions' 0-7 record in conference play and 8-11 mark overall.

Penn State has followed up last season's National Invitation Tournament title with its worst start to conference play since it started the 2002-03 season 0-10. The Lions' 10 losses to start Big Ten play that season is their worst start since beginning Big Ten play in the 1992-93 season.

The Lions are coming off an overtime loss Sunday in which they blew a 16-point second-half lead against No. 16 Wisconsin.

While DeChellis said the losses haven't changed his preparation aside from necessary lineup changes, he acknowledged they have taken a toll on his young team.

"We're upset, frustrated, all those kinds of adjectives — See STRUGGLES, Page 10.

Men's basketball vs. Illinois

6:30 tonight
Bryce Jordan Center
TV: BTN

Sophomore Molinaro to face Big Ten's best

By Ryan Loy
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Being the underdog in three-straight bouts is rare for the No. 5 wrestler in the nation.

But that's what Penn State 149-pounder Frank Molinaro is experiencing right now — at least on paper.

The sophomore is set to square off with No. 1 Brent Metcalf of Iowa and No. 2 Kyle Ruschell of Wisconsin during the wrestling team's dual meets Friday and Sunday.

Molinaro heads into the matches coming off a tight 5-3 loss to Ohio State's No. 3 Lance Palmer.

Though the rankings suggest Molinaro is the underdog in these matchups, he believes he's just as talented as his opponents, and teammate Adam Lynch said Molinaro's mental strength may equal his physical strength.

"He's a very confident kid," Lynch said.

"He definitely has a good mental frame of mind."

Comparing his mentality to his physical strength is high praise, as

Lynch considers the 5-foot-5 Molinaro to be among the strongest on the team despite his smaller stature.

Molinaro said he'll prepare for his marquee matchups by watching a little more film this week.

While looking at Metcalf, he'll see a 2008 NCAA champion, as well as a 2009 Big Ten champion and NCAA runner-up, who currently has a 21-0 record this season.

Meanwhile, Ruschell is currently 20-1 on the year and is coming off a third-place finish at the 2009 NCAA Championships.

With four wrestlers in the top five, it's clear to see why Penn State assistant coach Cody Sanderson said the Big Ten's 149-pound wrestlers make up possibly the toughest weight class of any conference in the country.

Lynch believes Molinaro's task of competing against the top three wrestlers in the span of a week is one of the toughest any wrestler can experience.

However, Molinaro doesn't believe he's facing anything

See MOLINARO, Page 10.

WRESTLING



Molinaro



Freshman Ian Hendries (12) jumps to spike against Juniata Tuesday.

Lions bounce back, claw past Eagles

By Emily Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

When Jeremy Price saw the Penn State men's volleyball team struggle in its win over Springfield College last Friday, he had his team's fate sealed at the door of Rec Hall.

The head coach of Juniata College — the top-ranked team in Division-III — knew the Eagles had just a glimmer of hope

against the No. 5 nationally ranked Nittany Lions.

"I don't like it when these guys struggle in a match before they play us," Price said. "Because they rarely struggle two matches in a row." See WIN, Page 10.

3 Penn State

0 Juniata

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

lan Hendries and Penn State's middle hitters stepped up Tuesday night. psucollegian.com



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