

Hume's status unknown while battling flu

By Paul Casella
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Teddy Hume was planning on spending this week battling back from a poor performance in last weekend's series finale against **ICERS** Delaware.

Instead, he spent it battling the flu.

As the No. 2 Penn State Icers prepare to take on the No. 10 Rhode Island Rams in a pair of games that will have a big impact on who wins the ESCHL regular season conference title, it is unclear whether the team's starting netminder will be ready to go.

After not practicing all week because of the illness, Hume was back on the ice Thursday but will be a game-time decision this weekend.

"I feel perfectly fine on the ice right now," he said, "but if I get in there and take two shots and I'm totally winded, our plans are going to have to change, obviously."

Hume is coming off one of his worst starts of the season after



Goalie **Teddy Hume** dives for the puck Oct. 31 against West Virginia.

being pulled during the second period of last Saturday's 4-2 loss.

The last time Hume was pulled from a game was a Nov. 29, 2009, loss to NCAA Division III Massachusetts-Boston, when he was also benched in the second period.

Hume came back the following

weekend and stopped 72 of 73 shots in a two-game sweep of rival Delaware.

"This sickness could not come at a worse time," Hume said. "After you have a performance like my last one, you just want to get back on the ice and redeem yourself. But, unfortunately, I've

been sidelined all week and it's been real frustrating."

Regardless of last week's benching and Hume's inability to practice this week, coach Scott Balboni said Hume is still the team's No. 1 goaltender, and the switch last weekend was more of an attempt to spark the team than anything else.

On the season, Hume has a 19-3-1 record with two shutouts, improving his career record as an Icer to 43-6-6.

"This year he's grown and knows the starting role is his," Balboni said.

"He's consistently shown he's our leader in net and the guy we're looking toward to win a national championship."

If Hume is unable to go, that leaves junior John Jay and freshman Dan Ivanir to take over the goaltending duties this weekend.

Neither Jay nor Ivanir have started two games in a weekend yet this year, but they have combined to go 5-0, with Jay winning four games and Ivanir winning his lone start.

"This sickness could not have come at a worse time."

Teddy Hume
junior goalie

Balboni said both Jay and Ivanir have looked good in their appearances this season but future playing time depends on who the team is playing — and of course, the status of Hume.

As for this weekend, though, Hume said he hopes to be on the ice, but even if he's not, the most important thing is just getting two wins for the team.

"I'm just glad I've been able to play as much as I have been," Hume said. "I just want to keep being a part of it, and hopefully we can get two wins this weekend."

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The Icers can clinch the regular season title. | **SPORTS**, Page 12.

Lions glad to return home after road trip

By Emily Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Dennis Del Valle loves the comforts of home.

On the day of a home match, the junior libero comes to Rec Hall about three hours before the first serve. Before he's required to join the team at 5:30 p.m., to watch video, Del Valle likes to casually roam around the building, talk to friends and family in the crowd, hang out on the bench or chat with any of the opposing players he knows.

"Actually, when I think about it, I probably do just about the same thing at away matches," De Valle said with a laugh. "But it's not the same. I just relax more when I'm here at Rec Hall. It's just like my home. I love it. And I don't have to take a bus to get here."

After an exhausting road trip to Illinois last weekend — where the players spent more than 20 hours cramped on a small charter bus — the No. 8 Penn State men's volleyball team returns home today to face

Rutgers-Newark at 7 p.m., opening up a six-match homestand.

And the Nittany Lions couldn't be happier.

"The guys are probably glad to come back to Rec, but probably happier they don't have to go on a bus for a while," coach Mark Pavlik said. "Those bus rides are rough. There's just no good way to do it. I'm a normal-sized guy — reasonably — and I just don't know how the 6-foot-7, 6-foot-8 guys do it."

They do it with great difficulty. Each player gets two seats to himself, but even that is not ample enough legroom for their lanky volleyball frames.

The team travels mostly at night, but it's hard for the guys to fall soundly asleep. They say the lack of space is just too constraining.

"I'm the short one," said Del Valle, a 5-foot-8 defensive specialist. "And even for me I think there's not enough room."

Some players have gone through great lengths to find comfort.

Senior captain Will Price brought an air mattress to last weekend's road trip and laid out on the top of two seats for much of

the nine-hour trip to Chicago.

"But I'm not sure if that even helped," redshirt sophomore Joe Sunder said. "I don't know if there's anything that could help. The rides are tough."

Besides the comfort factor — freshman Ian Hendries said his neck and knees were sore for about 24 hours after the trip — the players complain about excessive boredom.

Hendries, in his first road trip with the team, brought along a pillow, blanket, PlayStation Portable and an iPod.

"Next time I'm bringing more books though," he said. "The trip was just so long."

When the team arrived in Illinois, Hendries said he felt exhausted. He said the trip didn't affect the team's play too much — the Lions beat Lewis Friday night but was upset by then-unranked Loyola-Chicago on Saturday — but said travel inevitably plays a factor in a player's performance.

"When you go on road trips, as much as you don't like to think about it, the travel really does affect your game," Pavlik said. "There's nothing like sleeping in your own bed, going through your own routine and



Ian Hendries (12) spikes the ball over a Juniata defender during a Jan. 26 match at Rec Hall.

playing in front of your friends and family in the great Rec Hall environment."

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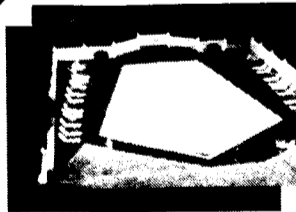
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