



Alexander Ochocki (right) celebrates with coach Emmanuil Kaidanov after last year's NCAA championship.

Fencers Ochocki, Willette named to junior nationals

By Greg Gajda

Two Penn State fencers, Alexander Ochocki and Willette, have been named to the 2010 Junior National Championships. Ochocki, a foil fencer, and Willette, an epee fencer, will represent the Nittany Lion State at the national tournament in March. Ochocki is a two-time national champion and a four-time world champion. Willette is a two-time national champion and a four-time world champion.

Ochocki was not able to compete in his division at the national tournament last year because of an injury. He was named to the team this year as a consolation prize. Willette was named to the team as a consolation prize.



Willette



Ochocki

U.S. tops Swiss in opening round

By Ira Podell
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The U.S. kids were all right. The youngest collection of American hockey players since the NHL began supplying the talent for the 1998 Nagano Games opened this tournament with a workmanlike 3-1 victory over Switzerland on Tuesday.

Bobby Ryan scored late in the first period, and David Backes and Ryan Malone added goals in the second to help the United States avoid a repeat of an opening-game letdown. During the 2006 Turin Games, the Americans began with a 3-3 tie against Latvia and never challenged for a medal.

Ryan Miller considered the key to the U.S. chances to reach the podium was solid in making 14 saves. He turned aside the handful of scoring opportunities the Swiss created and complied with rules barring corporate sponsorships by placing tape over the words "Miller Time" painted on his mask.

His only blemish came with 10:15 remaining when a pass attempt by Roman Wick struck the goalie's outstretched stick and tentatively trickled behind him for a power-play goal.

With only goalie Jonas Hiller and defenseman Mark Streit as regular NHL players, Switzerland put up some early resistance but couldn't sustain it. Hiller stopped 21 shots, facing only two in the third period.

In the appetizer before host Canada faced Norway, the Americans looked crisp and coasted to victory after a fast-paced start. Outside of a few miss connections on some passes, there was no clear evidence the Americans had only one practice before play began.

Many fans were decked out in red Canada jerseys, but there was plenty of support for the U.S. and Swiss teams. The biggest cheers were reserved for American forward Ryan Kesler of the hometown Vancouver Canucks, and Mike Eruzione, who captained the U.S. to Miraculous Ice glory in 1980.

Just when it seemed Switzerland might get even at 1:11, Miller fought off a bouncing puck between his pads and got a rush started the other way. Backes streaked down the left side, cut inside of defenseman Yannick Weber, and used a backhand-to-forehand shift to beat Hiller at 5:52 of the second.

The Americans needed only 2:08 more to make it 3-0 as Malone found a

Medal count

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze
United States	1	0	0
Switzerland	0	0	0

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Former Penn State player Maren Walseth talks to current players during a game Feb. 7.

Former player uses past as Lions' assistant coach

National Invitational championship team. Her college success and familiarity with the Penn State program has been something she has been able to use in practice with the current players.

For Washington, this has been a big advantage for the team. "She does an outstanding job of trying to convey to the current team the history, the traditions and the expectations that come with being a Lady Lion," Washington said. "I think she has a passion for this place because she is an alum."

Washington also added this has been a big advantage for her, too. "With Washington now in her third year of rebuilding Penn State's basketball team, she said Walseth has been an invaluable asset on the bench.

"As the head coach, she helps me in a lot of ways understand what certain things mean and how significant some things are and how insignificant some things are to what we're doing in terms of the direction we're taking this program," Washington said.

Washington's description of Walseth compares a lot to how Walseth described Portland. Walseth said Portland was the kind of coach who had a very basketball-specific language she was able to translate to her players when explaining what to do on the court.

Walseth, a one-time student of the game, has stepped into Portland's former role. "Maren is a very intense coach," Washington said. "She does a great job with the post players. Our post players have such a great relationship with Maren. She's an excellent, excellent teacher of the game. Very methodical."

Currently in the midst of a rollercoaster season — which has seen both a six-game winning streak and a six-game losing streak in the past month and a half — Walseth has been a major reason for the team's growth this year. "If you look at our post players since the time that we got here, you can see their steady growth and their steady improvement," Washington said.

"I think that is in large part to the way Maren teaches and develops them." Walseth has been instrumental in the development of freshmen Nikki Greene and Marisa Wolfe, and Washington credits the amount of time and pride her assistant coach puts in with them. However, the amount of time Walseth puts in with the players is no surprise, as she realizes how special of a situation she is in being able to coach the team she once played for. "I know that I am in a unique situation to be able to take advantage of it," Walseth said. "It's a lot of fun. I obviously am a product of the environment, and I was successful in having a good experience. I kind of see it as my role to help other kids have that same experience that I did. "Or a better one."



U.S. forward Joe Pavelski (blue) watches a shot from teammate Ryan Malone slide into the net against Switzerland in Tuesday's opening round of men's hockey play at the Winter Olympics. The U.S. defeated the Swiss 3-1 and is now 1-0 heading into its next game Thursday against Norway.