

Lady Lions looking to make statement

By Audrey Snyder
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

While Penn State is guaranteed to have its first winning season during Coquese Washington's tenure, the Lady Lions want to make a statement.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

When Wisconsin (19-8, 9-7 Big Ten) takes the court at 7 tonight's tip off, the Lions will know a lot is at stake.

With just two regular season games remaining, Penn State (16-10, 8-8) wants to put itself in a position where it can improve its Big Ten tournament seeding, but a stifling Badger defense stands in its way.

"It's gonna be a battle," Washington said.

"Everyone in the Big Ten is fighting for, jockeying for positioning in the Big Ten tournament, so this game definitely has some significant implications for us along those lines."

The Badgers hold a one-game lead over Penn State, but if the Lions sweep the series, they can improve their chances of getting a first-round bye.

Senior Tyra Grant said while a

Lady Lions vs. Wisconsin

7, tonight
Bryce Jordan Center

lot of her team's postseason hopes hinge on tonight's game, overcoming the Badgers' defense, which is the best in the conference, will be key.

Grant was held scoreless for the entire first half during the team's previous game with the Badgers, but the Lions still found a way to win by 11.

"They played a sagging man-to-man defense, and it's hard to do a lot of things, and that's when you allow your team to take over for you," Grant said.

"At the end of the day you can shut me down and do whatever you need to do, but we've proven time and time again that I don't have to score for us to win. I have a substantial amount of confidence in my teammates."

Washington echoed Grant's sentiments, adding the team needs to keep seeing increasing production from forwards Marisa Wolfe and Meredith Monroe.

Both played a significant role in the Lions' win against Michigan, but if Penn State wants to better its conference seeding, Washington said it's going to take an entire team effort.

Senior Nicole Arcidiacono said tonight's game, the team's last home game of the season and also Senior Night, sets the stage for the Lions' postseason fate.

She said she'd love to win the rest of the games and finish the season on a high note — much like the men's program did last year with a National Invitation Tournament championship — but the team still has its mind set on earning an NCAA tournament berth.

Washington said she can't focus on the "big picture" just yet but said her team has to continue to get better if it wants to make a statement to the selection committee.

"You just have to take care of business," she said. "Is it a statement game? I don't know how much of a statement it makes to the NCAA committee. But I know what kind of statement a loss makes, so we can't afford to have that happen."



Andrew Dunheimer/Colegian

To e-mail reporter: aas5220@psu.edu Gizelle Studevent (25) blocks Minnesota's Katie Ohm on Feb. 11

Range of emotions come with Senior Night

By Alex Angert
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER



Peter Tesonero/Colegian

Senior Meredith Monroe shoots against MSU.

Dancing into the media room with a smile stretching from ear to ear, Tyra Grant reached into her bag of jokes.

Sitting side by side with fellow seniors Nicole Arcidiacono and Meggan Quinn, Grant and her teammates spent the following 10 minutes laughing about the past and kidding around about the future.

But by the end of Wednesday's press conference, it was her glasses — instead of her bag of jokes — that Grant reached for, needing to lift them off her face in order to wipe away the tears that were slowly rolling down her face.

The three seniors — the fourth senior, Meredith Monroe, was in class — displayed a range of emotions talking about their Lady Lion careers and looking toward Thursday's Senior Night showdown against Wisconsin.

"We know this game is coming," Arcidiacono said. "But right now it's like, 'Oh, it's just another game. We have a game tomorrow.' But it's like, 'Wait a sec — it's our last game at the Jordan Center.'"

"It's going to be very emotional for me, and I'll tell you that right now."

Each senior has had her own unique journey that has led to where she is now. Arcidiacono joined the Lions her sophomore year as a walk-on, finding herself a spot on the back of the bench and the role of "Team Mom."

Quinn has played only one full season for Penn State, and she has sat out the entire season this year after tearing her

left anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) last season — her second ACL tear in four years.

And Monroe and Grant are both starters for the Lions. However, each plays a much different role for the team.

Monroe is a role player averaging five points and a little more than five rebounds per game this season as a starter after three years coming off the bench.

As for Grant, she is the team's star and has been since day one. One of the top players in the Big Ten and all of college basketball, Grant has been a starter all four years and is only 55 points shy of becoming just the fourth-ever Lady Lion to reach 2,000 points.

"It'll be interesting for them," coach Coquese Washington said. "Senior Night is always such an emotional night. I think this group of seniors, they've been through a lot, and I'm glad they are able to go out in a season experiencing some success."

The third-year coach didn't recruit the four seniors or coach them during their freshman year, but she wasn't at a loss for words when it came time to talk about each player.

She spoke about Quinn's perseverance, Arcidiacono's attitude, Monroe's improvement and Grant's greatness.

However, the coach wasn't the only one not short for words, as Grant, Arcidiacono and Quinn reminisced together.

They recalled the senior pranks they played last year on Brienne O'Rourke and Mashea Williams, making them wear ridiculous short shorts and tank

tops all week. And they were especially proud of the time they put blue dye in Charity Renfro's and Amanda Brown's mouthguards when they were freshmen.

However, the seniors have yet to be on the other end of any pranks this week. Quinn said the younger players aren't as clever and Grant — while letting out an evil laugh and rubbing her hands together — said the seniors were too sneaky.

"Actually, surprisingly, none," Grant said about whether they have been pranked yet. "I don't think they know, and we're not pressed to tell them. We got Bri and Mush and them good. And Amanda, so I'm watching just in case they slip or slide something in there."

But all the fun aside, it was tears that were coming down Grant and her teammates' faces in the end.

Nevertheless, they were tears of joy from all the happiness, fights and ups and downs the four went through together through their years at Penn State.

As for if the four are going to remain close when this season is all said and done, there was no question about it as they joked about moving down to Maryland together after graduation to live near their other former teammates who have since moved to that area.

"We're together almost everyday," Quinn said. "Even on our days off, we're always going to dinner together or lunch. You get into such a routine for four years, and it would be almost virtually impossible for us to not be together."

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SPRING SPORTS PLANNER

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Sun, Feb. 28 @ 12pm

Megan Hodge honored at halftime for the Honda player of the year

Women's Volleyball autograph signing before game!

Women's TRACK

ASHENFELTER MULTI-SPORT COMPLEX
Big Ten Indoor Championships
Sat, Feb. 27 & Sun, Feb. 28
ALL DAY

Women's LACROSSE

HOLUBA HALL
vs. Vermont
Fri, Feb. 26 @ 6pm
vs. Colgate
Sun, Feb. 28 @ 1pm

Lady Lion BASKETBALL

AT THE BJC
vs. Wisconsin
Thurs., Feb. 25 @ 7pm

Tyra Grant figurine give-away

LAST HOME GAME!

Men's TENNIS

ASHENFELTER MULTI-SPORT COMPLEX
vs. Cornell
Sat, Feb. 27 @ 12pm
vs. Army
Sun, Feb. 28 @ 10am
vs. Lafayette

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