12 | FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2010

PORTS

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Lions looking for boost

By Brendan Monahan COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

An upward climb may be an understatement in describing what faces the men's lacrosse team at this point in the MEN'S season. The Nittany LACROSSE Lions finds

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with a 0-5 record, and things ion't get easier anytime soon. this weekend, the Lions face No. 8 Duke in Durham, N.C., and the Lions are 0-8 against the storied Blue Devil program.

The easygoing, tight-knit banch can't pinpoint a reason the its unsuccessful start but errow if anything can give it the boost it needs, it's a win against the recognized Blue Devils.

They're not untouchable, midrielder Colton Vosburgh said. "It's not going to make our season if we beat Duke. It's a start.

Lions out of position for one of said. "If we came out and play the nine at-large bids for the well and got a win against them. MAA tournament. So, most it would definitely turn it

likely, in order to make the tournament, they must win the Colonial Athletic Association.

The conference has a four team tournament at the end of the season to decide its automatic qualifier, and CAA play doesn't begin until an April 3 home game with Massachusetts. In short, the Lions still have plenty of time to turn things around

And they started doing so with a good week of practice. Vosburgh said the Lions are communicating with each other better and letting one another know when a player isn't play ing to his potential.

Attacker Matt Mackrides felt the losses were the result of the team as a whole and didn't blame either the defense or the offense. With the Lions' confidence down, the sophomore knows what a win against the Blue Devils would do for him and his teammates

"This could be really ready Penn State's 0-5 hole puts the big for our team." Mackades as playing awesome."

"This could be really, really big for our team." Matt Mackrides sophomore attackman

around for us as far as attitude." Team tri-captain Joe Britt sees the Duke game as a chance to get that elusive first win and doesn't want to focus on its implications of possibly turning the season around.

Though not turning the ball over and cherishing possessions have been emphasized points of improvement, Britt also felt the rough start was the result of a team-wide problem. The Lions need to play a full four quarters instead of having nonperformance periods.

We know we can play," Britt said. "We haven't showed it, but in each and every one of our games there's been glimpses of

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Captain Joe Britt passes during Penn State's season-opening loss to Robert Morris on Feb. 20. The Lions travel to play Duke, hoping to avoid going 0-6.

PSU hopes to correct missed routines

By Kevin Kline

TANK STAFF WRITER

Norse Virulasky knows his team's best enables has pread have been the floor Harrisburg. were's condiviantly.

Eation pately: the schoral o brows those MEN'S base here the pest two GYMNASTICS events the Oklahoma. 100

Iron State is ranked fifth and ninth in the center of on floor and vault, while the " Swakers are ranked first on floor and than accords in any of the four other -Cenix

Oklamation of Them. Saturday in the regalla second anale and will need a clean performance to upset the Sooners with postsear on play looming.

Moteound fast look at that vault and float are some of their good events and abe seen beforers, too," Virbitsky said, "It doesn't oudy matter.

many the field score at the end that motive second just gotta look at it from eventile comi

While contributing on floor exercise,

vault and high bar. Virbitsky will be competing against redshirt junior Ian Jackson, his former high school classmate at Central Dauphin High School in

The duo competed together on the club level with Artistic Sports Academy Plus in Harrisburg.

Jackson competes on rings, too, and is eighth in the country on the event. Oklahoma also boasts the defending NCAA all-around champion in junior Steven Legendre, as well as freshman Jake Dalton, who is ranked second in the rescaled as sault and are no worse country on both the floor exercise and vault.

"They put some big scores up and Nittany Lions host have got some great personnel," coach Randy Jepson said. "We expect them to be very solid and tough, but our game as usual is ourselves. And I wanna see our team go out and have a better hit percentage.'

The hit percentage has haunted the Lions all season. After each meet, Jepson calculates the number of routines that are "hit" or "missed." A miss means the gymnast suffers a fall or commits a major error during the performance.

The team has not hit above 75 percent of its routines all season, Jepson said.

And with about 36 routines each meet, that means there are around 10 or 11 routines that are missed each time, he said

"It's just not good enough," Jepson said.

You can't miss that many routines and expect to be in the hunt."

Against the Sooners, Penn State will have one final opportunity to correct the mistakes and eliminate the missed routines before the Big Ten championships begin on April 2.

But it doesn't matter how good the team is across the floor, sophomore Miguel Pineda said. The Lions need to focus on themselves and take advantage of the adrenaline from their final home meet of the season, a double dual with the Penn State women taking on Nebraska.

We need to put a full lineup of hits together on each event all the way through the meet and carry the momentum through and not let it die out," Pineda said

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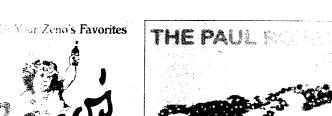
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Penn State freshman Parker Raque competer foor exercise Feb. 20 against Illinois. The Liquis heat 0. 2 Oklahoma at 7 p.m. Saturday.







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