

# Pair of gymnasts leading on rings

By Jim Mauro  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Earlier this season, gymnasts Miguel Pineda and Scott Rosenthal made a pact: one of them must win the title on rings each meet.

## MEN'S GYMNASTICS

While they have not completely fulfilled this pact, they have still dominated all season on rings. In the nine regular-season meets for the No. 7 Penn State men's gymnastics team, Rosenthal finished in the top three five times and Pineda did six times.

Penn State coach Randy Jepson knows what it takes to succeed on rings, and he thinks Pineda and Rosenthal have the physical tools to score well in the event.

"They're strong kids," Jepson said. "Rings is an event you have to be strong on. That pays off."

Pineda won the event three times this season while Rosenthal has taken the top spot twice. They

also finished one-two in the individual competition at the West Point Open, with Pineda edging his teammate for the title.

With both gymnasts scoring well all year, it is no surprise the Nittany Lions have won rings as a team in six of the nine meets.

The Lions' only losses on rings have come at the hands of No. 4 Michigan, No. 5 Ohio State and No. 8 California. However, the Lions have never lost on rings by more than .75 of a point.

While Jepson knows the importance of Pineda and Rosenthal, he likes what the rest of the gymnasts have contributed this year.

"Noam [Shaham] has been very steady and put in a routine for us that has been very good," Jepson said. "Felix [Aronovich] is coming along, and we've made some changes to Matt Chelberg's routine that seem to be helping."

But there is no doubt the heavy hitters for the Lions are Pineda and Rosenthal. Pineda, sixth, and Rosenthal, 10th, are the only Lions who rank in the top-20 in the coun-



Penn State's Miguel Pineda competes on the rings during Saturday night's meet against Oklahoma in Rec Hall. Pineda and Scott Rosenthal, who have finished in the top three on rings a combined 11 times this year.

try on rings. As a team, Penn State is fifth in the nation in the event.

Rosenthal has competed only on rings in his freshman campaign. Pineda has competed in four other events this year but said rings is his favorite because it gives him the best opportunity to show off.

The two get along well in the gym and love to push each other with friendly competition. Both gymnasts said it helps to have competition in practice so they know what to expect in meets.

And this friendly battle has pushed them to try even harder when it is actually time to compete.

"Every time we go out there, we

joke, saying, 'Tonight's my night, you're going down.'" Rosenthal said. "He really pushes me to work hard and make sure I'm precise, and I try to keep him clean. It's nice to have someone who is right up there with you to keep you working all the time."

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# Ruggers prepare for rival in postseason

By Kevin Kline  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Bryan Oteri is friends with some of the Navy rugby players and sometimes socializes with them outside of rugby.

## MEN'S RUGBY

But after the season starts, the relationship between the senior outside center and his Midshipmen buddies becomes sour.

This weekend, the stakes are elevated from the regular season as No. 2 seed Penn State will take on its biggest rival, No. 3 seed Navy, in the semifinals of the Mid-Atlantic Rugby Football Union (MARFU) league playoffs.

"If you're not excited about

playing Navy in the playoffs, then you're not a Penn State rugby player," Oteri said.

Saturday's winner will secure a spot in nationals and move on to Sunday's league championship game.

There's a lot riding on Saturday's game, and coach Don Ferrell has stressed the importance of players keeping their emotions in check.

"We need to maintain our composure in the face of all the emotions," Ferrell said. "It's a physical and emotional battle, so it's a tough balancing act. You need to bring the fire and be able to control it as well."

The Ruggers will try to use the emotional aspect of the game to their advantage, however. After playing Navy so many times, the

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Bryan Oteri  
senior outside center

players know how easy it is to frustrate the Midshipmen and get them to lose their cool.

If they start getting angry at each other, and if the Ruggers keep their heads cool, then they'll be able to more easily exploit Navy's weaknesses, Oteri said.

That emotional edge on the field is especially valuable when playing Navy, as its players are typically more fit than the Ruggers, senior flanker John Knab said.

Knab and his teammates will

also have to increase their physicality to help balance Navy's fitness edge.

"We always have something extra in the tank when we play them because there's a lot of animosity against each other," Knab said.

"They always give us a good game, but everyone can get nasty, and that's just the nature of the beast."

The animosity between the two programs dates back to when

Navy was the premier rugby team in the east and a team Penn State wanted to be able to play with.

But in the last 10 years, the Ruggers have become competitive with Navy after joining with the Midshipmen and six other teams to create the MARFU in 1995.

The two teams that play in the league championship game earn a spot in nationals, and Navy and Penn State have met in the league championship game in each of the last nine years.

"Penn State and Navy are the most represented for the east in nationals, so there's a lot of mutual respect," Ferrell said. "But it's obviously a very, very heated rivalry."

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