

Lions focused on remainder of season

The laxers want to get one more win tonight before the CAA season.

By Mike Still
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Of the six teams the Penn State men's lacrosse team had lost to before Saturday's win, five have been included in the top-20 teams in the Nike/Inside Lacrosse Media Poll at some point this season.

MEN'S LACROSSE

But more importantly, none of those teams are in the Nittany Lions' conference, the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA).

Though their record appears lopsided at 1-6, the Lions have lost to talented teams, and senior attackman Anthony Basciano realizes the importance of carrying the momentum gained from Saturday's victory into their CAA schedule.

"Hopefully we get a winning streak with our CAA games com-

Men's Lacrosse vs. No. 18 Bucknell

7:30, tonight
Jeffrey Field

ing up," he said. "We win those and we still have a chance at making the tournament. That's what we're looking forward to."

Before Saturday's 13-11 victory, the Lions' confidence was beginning to dwindle as the losses piled up, sophomore attackman Matt Mackrides said. They sensed the need to turn things around before league play.

The Lions will have one more chance to warm up for conference play at 7:30 p.m. tonight, as they take on No. 18 Bucknell at Jeffrey Field.

"We had our heads hung a bit, and we didn't know if we were gonna get one," Basciano said. "There was a lot of talk outside of the team that we might have a winless season, and there was no way we were gonna let that happen."

The Lions open up CAA play

Saturday when No. 19 UMass visits Happy Valley, but before then, they'll have one more opportunity tonight to warm up for conference play in a matchup with Bucknell.

The Bison provide the Lions with valuable final practice before they start the games that really matter because they're always a tough opponent, senior defender Earl Ross said.

Last season, the Lions defeated the Bison, 9-8, in Lewisburg. Mackrides scored two goals and tallied two assists in the game.

No strangers to facing the nation's best talent, the Lions won't prepare for Tuesday's game any differently than they have all year, coach Glenn Thiel said.

"They'll be as good as anybody we've played," Thiel said. "We've got to be more solid in the cage, and we can't make mistakes because they have a very dangerous offensive team."

Regardless of Tuesday's outcome, the Lions are primarily shooting for one thing — to be ready for Saturday.

"We're gonna try to build our



Andrew Beam/Collegian

Penn State senior Anthony Basciano (front) chases after a loose ball in Saturday's 13-11 win over St. John's at Jeffrey Field.

momentum, try to firm up our basic strategies and make sure that when we go into CAAs, there's no question about what we're doing," Ross said. "We just have it down."

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Bell producing from multiple lineup spots this year

By Jake Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Cassidy Bell doesn't care where she hits in the lineup — and it's showing.

The freshman center fielder for the Penn State softball team (19-9, 1-1 Big Ten) has batted both leadoff and third this season, producing in whichever role coach Robin Petriani put her in.

SOFTBALL

"It doesn't matter," Bell said. "Being a leadoff is nice because you have the opportunity to start something. But if you're in that three spot, you have the opportunity to whoever started it, to help them finish it."

Bell's production has been rewarding for her team, too. The freshman leads all Penn State starters with 34 hits, 28 runs and a .378 batting average. Her run total ranks her second in the Big Ten. Bell is also first on the Nittany Lions with a .477 on-base percentage and is one of three players to start all of Penn State's 28 games.

Bell leads the team with the most multi-hit games and said there is a different mentality leading off opposed to batting third.

When she comes up first, the freshman looks to get on base and spark a rally. When she comes up third, she hopes to knock the first two batters in to score. However, Bell said the different mindsets apply only the first time through the batting order.

The Lions are 14-8 when Bell leads off and 5-1 when she bats third. She batted first in both of Saturday's games



Andrew Dunheimer/Collegian

Cassidy Bell fields a hit against Minnesota this weekend.

against Minnesota and despite Penn State losing the front end of the doubleheader, Bell did her part.

Though Bell did not account for any of Penn State's five hits in the first game, she walked in two of her three plate

appearances. When the team is struggling to get hits, it increases the importance of finding ways to get on base and creating opportunities like

Bell did, sophomore catcher Danea Collett said.

After Bell added a single in the third inning and later came around to score, Minnesota pitcher Alissa Koch walked her on four pitches in the fifth inning.

Petriani acknowledged the influence of Bell's walks. "I don't know if they were afraid to pitch to her, but any time you get walks and you get somebody that knows how to run the bases the way she does, that's an added bonus when they put her on like that," Petriani said.

Bell's early success hasn't gone unnoticed by Petriani. The coach said the most impressive thing about the young center fielder is something that went unseen in Bell's recruiting — her temperament.

Petriani said though Bell is a competitor, the Bakersfield, Calif., native still knows how to have fun and is always smiling.

"There are some intangibles that she has about her personality that in the recruiting process, you don't see," Petriani said. "But now that she's on the roster, she's just a great player to have."

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