

# Akamine, late offensive rally give Penn State split

By Wayne Staats  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

It took nearly 14 innings, but Penn State's offense came alive at just the right time. After being shut out the first 13 innings of the weekend series against Purdue, the Nittany Lion softball team scored a run in both the seventh and eighth innings Sunday to back another solid outing from Lisa Akamine and win, 2-1, in West Lafayette, Ind. The victory broke

**SOFTBALL**

**2**  
Penn State  
**1**  
Purdue

an eight-game losing streak against Purdue.

"All of my pitches were working pretty well," Akamine said. "And I knew my offense would come through for me."



Akamine

Penn State (22-10, 2-2 Big Ten) entered the weekend on a three-game winning streak but saw it snapped on Saturday when the Boilermakers hit three home runs to beat Jackie Hill, 5-0. But for the third time since March 24, Akamine won the second game of a doubleheader or series to help the Lions earn a split despite the offense leaving a

combined 17 runners on base against Purdue. The players said making contact wasn't the major problem, as it was mostly them hitting it right at the fielders.

But Akamine gave the offense time to turn it around Sunday. The sophomore, who had six wins last season, won her 11th of the season to match Hill's total. After having a 7.24 ERA through her first five appearances of the season, Akamine has lowered the number down to 2.38 with her career-high eight innings of work Sunday, when she surrendered just one unearned run. Coach Robin Petrini said Akamine did a good job getting ahead in the count and agreed with the pitcher's own assessment she is gaining confidence.

The one run against Akamine came on an error in the bottom of the seventh, when Penn State was just two outs away from the victory. The Lions had originally grabbed the 1-0 lead when Desi Giordano hit her fifth home run of the season off Suzie Rzegocki — who pitched both games of the series — with two outs for her team's first run of the weekend. After Penn State saw 101 pitches from Rzegocki on Saturday and almost seven more innings of work the next day, Giordano took advantage of the familiarity.

"She had the same pattern throughout the game," Giordano said. "I was waiting for a change-up."

Giordano got the pitch she anticipated and hit the low

delivery over the fence.

But Purdue (16-20, 1-3) tied the game when an error by Lauren Rossi allowed Ashley Barr to come home and knot the game at 1. It was just the third error of the season by the second baseman.

The tie was short-lived, however, as Penn State responded with another two-out rally. Three straight singles from Danee Collett, Kailyn Johnson and Rossi gave the Lions the eventual winning run as Rossi atoned for her error minutes earlier. The single was Rossi's third hit of the series.

"We have fast runners so I knew they could come around and score," Rossi said. "Just make contact and make things happen."

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**SEVEN-LOVE**



Bryan Wade Heritage/Collegian

Freshman Amy Simidlian is substituting in the No. 1 spot for fellow freshman Petra Januskova while she is out with a stress fracture in her foot. She lost her match 6-3 against Minnesota on Sunday afternoon. For the full story on the Lions' team loss to the Gophers, visit [psucollegian.com](http://psucollegian.com).

# Lions notch wins vs. Ball St., IPFW

Penn State gutted out five- and four-set wins on an Indiana road trip.

By Emily Kaplan  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

"These weekend matches weren't pretty matches by any stretch of the imagination."

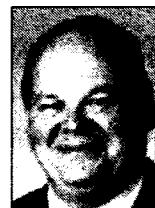
Mark Pavlik  
men's volleyball coach

Ball State and IPFW entered their matches against Penn State last week looking to prove something to their fans. The Nittany Lions entered looking to prove something to themselves.

**MEN'S VOLLEYBALL**

The result: two Penn State wins.

A thrilling five-set victory over No. 15 Ball State (20-30, 30-28, 30-23, 26-30, 15-10) Thursday night in Muncie, Ind. and a 3-1 (33-35, 30-24, 30-26, 30-18) decision over the unranked Mastodons in Fort Wayne, Ind., Friday left the Lions with bitter-sweet satisfaction. They weren't assuring wins — but they were wins. And that's just what the No. 9 Lions needed at this pivotal crossroad of the season.



Pavlik

"These weekend matches weren't pretty matches by any stretch of the imagination," coach Mark Pavlik said. "But the important thing is we were able to pull out two victories, and we competed. And that was important for the team right now."

The Mastodons and Cardinals traveled to Happy Valley for matches in late February. Penn State — playing what senior co-captain Max Lipsitz called "confident volleyball" — swept both matches, limiting each to a lower-than .120 hitting percentage.

But six weeks later, all three squads found the complexities of their seasons completely shifted.

IPFW, with a 9-14 record, has seen some of its young players emerge as future stars. Ball State upset then-No. 3 Cal State-Northridge March 27 for the team's biggest win in 11 years. And the Lions, who were soaring after a successful West Coast road trip, were upset by Rutgers-Newark of the EIVA's Hay Division, the worst loss in program history.

"I think we came out to Indiana just needing to win two games," Pavlik said. "And I think they wanted to get out there in front of their home fans and show them something."

But it was the Lions who did all the showing this weekend. Though their play was sloppy — Penn State tallied 60 attack errors in both games, hitting less than .300 in each — it resulted in wins. And John Speraw, coach of defending national champions UC Irvine, said that is the first step for the Lions to get back on track.

Speraw said as long as players like Lipsitz, who has leadership and experience, are contributing, Penn State will be fine.

He led all Lions with 39 kills this weekend.

"It surprised me that they lost to Rutgers, but anybody can beat anybody on any day," Speraw said. "Penn State is a good program that I know will be just fine by tournament time. And it looks like they're already getting back there."

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Male students are also strongly encouraged to attend.  
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Dates: March 31st, April 6th, 7th, 13th, 14th, 20th, 21st, 28th  
Time: 6:30-8:00pm • Location: Horace Ashenfelter multi-sport complex (Next to the Bryce Jordan Center aka indoor track)

Bring health insurance information.  
Only current PENN STATE students may attend. **NO COST TO ATTEND!**

The open gyms are an opportunity for you to learn the skills required at the April tryout. Also, it gives you an opportunity to learn if being a part of PENN STATE athletics is for you. The open gym workouts are all optional.