

Lions sweep weekend series against Hawkeyes



Lisa Akamine (12) pitches against Iowa on Sunday at Nittany Lion Field. Akamine pitched a complete game, following Jackie Hill's on Saturday.

By Tom Kinslow
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Once she made contact, Lauren Rossi knew there was no doubt about it.

The ball rocketed off the freshman's bat and flew out of Nittany Lion Field for a three-run home run, her third of the season.

Rossi's blast started the offensive firepower displayed in the Penn State softball team's 5-2 win over Iowa on Sunday, which gave the Nittany Lions a sweep of the Hawkeyes.

Penn State's offense came alive during the weekend, managing 23 hits over two games less than a week after being one-hit by No. 2 Michigan over two games.

On Sunday, six Lions tallied hits, four of them registering multiple hits.

In all, seven different Penn State players reached base.

Throughout the weekend, the Lions believed they were seeing the ball better than they had been in recent games.

"During practice, we've been

"When your pitchers are dominating, it keeps the offense in there and keeps everyone focused."

Cassidy Bell
freshman outfielder

SOFTBALL

Penn State

Iowa

focusing on relaxing more and just having fun and not getting too tense, so I think that had an effect on everyone, just relaxing at the plate and just getting solid hits," outfielder Cassidy Bell said.

Not only were the Lions able to get hits, they were able to do it against a formidable pitching duo.

Both Chelsea Lyon and Amanda Zust came into the weekend with ERAs under three, yet the Lions hit them both around.

The pair surrendered 12 runs over the weekend — production that Penn State believes is a big step going forward.

"I think it just boosted our confidence up a lot this weekend because we know they're a really good team," said Rossi, a Yardley, Pa., native, "and they're top in the Big Ten and have really good pitching so it just was a good confidence builder."

While the hitting put Iowa on the defensive, the pitching was able to dominate and seal the deal for the Lions.

Both Jackie Hill and Lisa Akamine controlled both games

from start to finish against the Hawkeyes.

Hill tossed a one-hitter on Saturday, striking out nine.

The senior was slated to pitch on Sunday but felt ill on Sunday morning, suffering from headaches and other illnesses, so Penn State coach Robin Petri decided to hand the ball to Akamine.

The sophomore also went the distance, striking out seven and scattering five hits across seven frames.

Bell believes these pitching performances help balance the team all around and elevate Penn State's play.

"When your pitchers are dominating, it keeps the offense in there and keeps everyone focused like, 'Hey, let's help our pitchers out and get a couple runs in,'" Bell said.

"Also, by getting so many runs, it just helps the pitcher relax and get done what they need to get done."

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Penn State falls to No. 14 Towson in final quarter

By Tom Copain
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Out of the 12 games the Penn State men's lacrosse team has played this season, many of them seem to follow a similar script:

The opponent jumps out to an early lead, and the Nittany Lions attempt a comeback, only to watch it fall just short.

The latest act in what has become Penn State's roller-coaster season — a 10-9 loss at No. 14 Towson Saturday in a game broadcast on ESPN — stayed true to form, right up to the Tigers' game-winning goal late in the fourth quarter.

"We had some good chances," Penn State coach Glenn Thiel said.

"We just couldn't tie the game." Normally the plot involves the Lions (2-10, 1-3 CAA) getting the first goal, followed by a big run in response from the opposing team.

Instead, Towson scored the first two goals of the game to jump out to an early lead.

By the time the Tigers' Brock Armour scored his fourth goal of the season, Towson had a 4-1 lead early in the second quarter.

Every time the Lions scored Towson (6-5, 4-0) had an answer.

The Tigers led, 7-5, at halftime and the CAA regular season champions had five three-goal leads on the afternoon.

"We just couldn't tie the game."

Glenn Thiel
Penn State head soccer coach



Thiel

As the teams swapped goals in the third quarter, Penn State still found itself down three goals.

But as has been the case many times this season, the team bounced back.

For the second straight week, the offense was spurred by freshmen Nick Dolik and Billy Gribbin.

Dolik's first goal of the season put Penn State on the board, and his second goal of the game brought Penn State within one, 5-4, in the second quarter.

Gribbin scored his first goal right before the end of the half.

And when the pair combined to score two goals in the fourth quarter — Gribbin first and Dolik 56

seconds later — it accomplished two feats.

Each had a hat trick, and Dolik's tally forced a 9-9 tie with less than nine minutes left.

"They've provided a spark, obviously," said sophomore defender Matt Bernier, a Malvern Prep graduate.

"But the biggest thing is as a defense, you know you just need to get a couple of stops."

It appeared Penn State could possibly recreate what it did last weekend, when it used a big comeback to upset Hofstra.

But the feeling lasted all of 2 minutes, 16 seconds of the fourth quarter, as long as it took for Will Harrington — Towson's leading goal-scorer — to find leading scorer Christian Pastrick with a man-up.

Pastrick's 19th goal of the year was the game-winner and the conference winner for the Tigers.

Visit the Crosse Check blog for more information on sophomore Matt Bernier's injury: psu.collegian.com

Towson clinched the top seed in the conference tournament with the win.

Penn State is destined for its last game of the regular season — a showdown with Delaware which could decide the fourth and final spot in the CAA Tournament.

And perhaps for the Lions, a chance to re-write the script and possibly gain entry into the conference tournament in its first year as a member of the CAA.

"We have to win Delaware," Thiel said.

"That's the one that will get us in."

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