



AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

SURPRISE, SURPRISE: THE WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL TEAM HIGHLIGHTED THE BEST OF PENN STATE ATHLETICS THIS SEASON. BUT WHO ELSE SHINED?

AY TO

TEAM OF THE YEAR

1 WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

For the third straight season, the women's volleyball team proved it was the best. In the past three years, the Lions put up a 110-2 record and a 102-match winning streak. The Lions lost only eight sets all season and played all five sets in a match only twice. Despite all the pressure placed on the team and its success, the Lions never let it get to them. The team was led by its strong offensive attack, finishing with the highest hitting percentage (.381) in the NCAA. Anielle Wilson led the league with a hitting percentage of .540, nearly 50 points above the next contender.



Daniel Bott/Collegian

2 FENCING The Penn State men's and women's fencing teams took home their 12th national title after competing neck-and-neck with Notre Dame and St. John's at this year's NCAA Championship. The teams entered the final day in third place but came away with their fifth national title win since 2000.

3 FOOTBALL No. 9 Penn State won 11 games and the Capital One Bowl, the team's fourth bowl win in the last five years. The Lions won a double-digit number of games in consecutive seasons for the first time since the 1993 and 1994 seasons. Six players were first-team All-Big Ten.

GAME OF THE YEAR

1 WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Forget about game of the year in Penn State sports — the NCAA women's volleyball title already had that one locked up before the match even began. It was the nation's top two teams, the nation's top three players and the Lions defending a 101-game win streak against a Texas squad that had lost once all season. The Lions rallied back from two sets to none to secure their third straight national title and their second consecutive undefeated season.



Atty Drey/Collegian

2 CAPITAL ONE BOWL Penn State rode a last-minute drive, capped by Collin Wagner's fourth field goal on the Jay, to beat then-No. 12 LSU 19-17 and win the Capital One Bowl on a sloppy field. The Lions' first win over a ranked opponent sent Darryl Clark out as a winner.

3 MEN'S VOLLEYBALL UPSET BY RUTGERS It was an improbable upset — one that sent shockwaves throughout the entire league. The unranked Scarlet Knights defeated the then-No. 6 Lions 3-1, the first time in program history Penn State ever lost to a team in the EIVA's lower Hay Division. "They will definitely think we're beatable now," setter Edgardo Goas said.

COACH OF THE YEAR

1 RUSS ROSE WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Though he is quick to defer any accolades he might receive, the coach of the women's volleyball team has certainly earned them. This season, Rose eclipsed the 1,000-win mark for his career, but more important to Rose is the third straight national championship his team won on Dec. 19. "Coach Rose will make you feel as bad as possible so you can fix what you have to fix. I really love the way he does and the way he talks during practice, after practice and before practice," men's volleyball libero Dennis Der Vaile said. "I just like listening to him because he knows what he's saying."



Atty Drey/Collegian

2 BETH ALFORD-SULLIVAN ALFORD-SULLIVAN helped the women's cross country and indoor track teams to Big Ten championships while being named Coach of the Year for each season. In the national rankings for outdoor track, the women's squad currently sits at No. 6 and atop the Big Ten. Penn State had a total of eight All-Americans at March's NCAAs.

3 EMMANUIL K Aidanov Kaidanov boasts a 356-24 (94 percent) men's record and a 343-32 (91 percent) women's dual meet record in 29 years at Penn State. This year, he coached both teams to their 12th national championship team title — the first consecutive titles since 2000.

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

1 CHRISTINE NAIRN WOMEN'S SOCCER MIDFIELDER

Nairn's first collegiate goal, a game winner against UConn, set the tone for the season she would have for Penn State. Nairn adjusted quickly to the physical Big Ten conference. Entering the season on the MAC Hermann Trophy watch list, Nairn scored seven goals and led the Big Ten with 10 assists. Nairn was also a unanimous first-team All-Big Ten pick and also made the conference All-Freshman Team. "She has a sense of maturity that you don't really see in an 18-year-old on the field and on the ball," senior goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher said.



Chloe Elmer/Collegian

2 MARGHARITA GUZZI-VINCENTI Penn State epee fencer Margharita Guzzi-Vincenti — a mid-year transfer from Milan, Italy — has led her Lion career by beating out favored championship team epee-fencer Ken Byerts and qualifying to compete in the NCAA Fencing Championship tournament.

3 DARCY DORTON The outside hitter finished the season with 276 kills and a hitting percentage of .285. Her contributions came from her energy and enthusiasm, coupled with her play on the floor. Dorton was named the Big Ten Freshman of the Year.

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

1 JASON YEISLEY MEN'S SOCCER FORWARD

Yeisley led the Penn State men's soccer team to the Big Ten Championship and a first-round NCAA tournament bye. The current FC Dallas player overcame two season-ending knee injuries in 2006 and 2007. Recovering from the 2007 injury forced Yeisley to redshirt the 2008 season. In 2009, he was injury-free, and won the Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year award. "I don't know if I'd be able to play, again when it first happened," Yeisley said in September.



Megan Kanagy/Collegian

2 SEAN LEE Coming back from a torn ACL in his right knee that forced him to redshirt in 2008, Lee bounced back to record 86 tackles and earn second-team All-Big Ten honors despite missing three games with a sprained left knee. The Cowboys drafted him No. 55 overall.

3 AYLSSA NAEHER Naeher overcame a PCL tear in her right knee she suffered last April to captain the women's soccer team to its 12th straight Big Ten title. Despite playing the entire season with a bulky knee brace, the three-time All-American contributed to all 11 of the team's shutouts, posting seven solo scoreless efforts and a 1.04 goals against average.

PLAY OF THE YEAR

1 ADRIAN CLAYBORN BLOCKED PUNT IN IOWA GAME

Penn State was nursing a 10-5 lead in the fourth quarter of a primetime, rainy game when Clayborn plowed through Nick Sukay to block Jeremy Boone's punt attempt. The big defensive end scooped the ball up and returned it 53 yards for the score to give Iowa an 11-10 lead. The Hawkeyes scored twice more in the quarter to leave Happy Valley with a 21-10 win and stun the Beaver Stadium Whitehouse. The game came to seal each team's postseason fate, as Iowa was chosen as the Big Ten's No. 2 BCS team and went to the Orange Bowl despite the same 11-2 record as the Lions.



Peter Tesoriero/Collegian

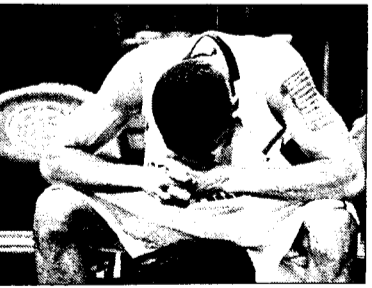
2 MEGAN HODGE With the Lions leading Texas 14-13, they entered into their second championship point. After a Cathy Quilico dig and Alisha Glass tip, Anielle Wilson sent the ball to Hodge, who drilled it over the net, giving Penn State its third straight national title.

3 TARA DAVIES Tara Davies, a graduating senior defender on the Penn State women's soccer team, scored the first goal of her career in her final regular season game. But the celebration was the greatest part. After scoring on a chip shot, Davies did a backflip.

SEASON TO FORGET

1 MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Lions followed up a season in which they won their first postseason championship game in school history with a lackluster, disappointing season. There were tough losses down at the wire — a 66-64 buzzer-beating loss at home to Minnesota, a 66-64 loss to Virginia Tech, a 54-53 loss at Illinois and a 67-65 loss at Michigan State — and there were losses in which the team looked lost on the court: a 79-71 overtime loss at Wisconsin after leading by 16 in the second half. The season ended with a 19-point loss to Minnesota in the first round of the Big Ten tournament.



Chloe Elmer/Collegian

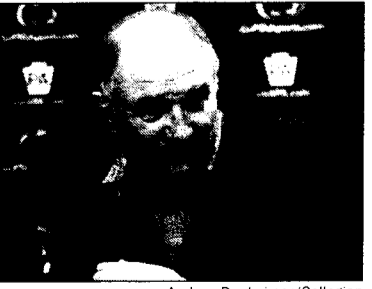
2 FIELD HOCKEY The returning Big Ten regular season champions entered the season with the nation's No. 11 ranking, but quickly fell. The Lions were shutout a program-high six times and the 13 losses were also a team record. The Lions failed to qualify for the NCAA tournament and the team dealt with the loss of head coach Char Morett's long-time boyfriend.

3 WOMEN'S TENNIS In Dawna Prevette's third season as coach, the Lions suffered through their worst season in more than a decade. The Lions finished the regular season winless in the Big Ten and 4-16 overall. Over a two-year period, Penn State has lost 15 consecutive regular season matches in conference.

QUOTE OF THE YEAR

1 EMMANUIL K Aidanov FENCING COACH, BEFORE PENN STATE FACED DUKE

"They are the Devils," Kaidanov said. "And where do devils belong? That's right, we are going to give them hell."



Andrew Dunheimer/Collegian

2 KENNY JACKSON "Football, if you've got a set of balls, and you're tough, and you're an athlete, you can be a football player. Greg Paulus is tough."

— on the difference between playing football and basketball and why Syracuse quarterback Greg Paulus was able to transition from playing basketball at Duke.

3 JAMELE CORNLEY "That's something that I took as disrespect to the senior class last year, because we were able to win games. I thought that we were able to leave those qualities and those tactics for this team."

— on the Lions' disappointing season.

The selection committee is comprised of eight members of the sports editing staff: Adam Clark, Matt Fortuna, Stephen Hennessey, Bill Landis, Dave Martin, Nat. Minik, Andrew Robinson and Dan Rorabaugh

MEGAN HODGE

THE COLLEGIATE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

