

LINEUP

- MLB**
Pittsburgh at Milwaukee
 1 p.m., FSP
Philadelphia at San Francisco
 3:30 p.m., CSN
 Minnesota at Detroit
 7 p.m., ESPN
- NHL**
 Montreal at Washington
 7 p.m., Versus
- NBA**
 Milwaukee at Atlanta
 8 p.m., TNT
 Utah at Denver
 10:30 p.m., TNT

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psucollegian.com

Sophomore expected to show leadership

Coach Suzanne Isidor anticipates midfielder Theresa Zichelli to emerge as a leader next year.

Birmingham's moxie improves in spring

The goalkeeper gained more confidence after a strong spring season.

Penn State in midst of dismal campaign

This year marked the first time the Lions went winless in the Big Ten since the 2003-04 season.

G Crawford claims Sixth Man of Year

After willingly accepting a backup role for the first time in his career, Atlanta Hawks guard Jamal Crawford was named the NBA Sixth Man of the Year in a landslide Tuesday.

He averaged 18 points a game in 31.1 minutes, a de facto starter who played a major role in Atlanta winning 53 games and earning the third seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs. The Hawks are tied 2-2 with Milwaukee in the opening round heading into Game 5 tonight.

Crawford won the award going away with 580 of a possible 610 points, including 110 out of 122 first-place votes. Jason Terry of the Dallas Mavericks, last year's Sixth Man winner, finished second this time with 220 points.

OUR THOUGHTS

Pre-draft interviews must be toned down

If Dez Bryant's pre-draft interview is normal for potential NFL players, maybe we need to rethink the process.

According to Yahoo! Sports, Miami GM Jeff Ireland asked Bryant last week if his mother was a prostitute. This was done as a procedural background check to see if prospective draft picks would be able to handle the rapid influx of money that comes with a high selection.

These checks may be necessary, but asking that question is not pertinent and far too personal.

TRIVIA

Q: Who are the only players to win the Sixth Man of the Year award twice?

Tuesday's answer: **Adalios Thomas** signed a five-year, \$35 million contract with the Patriots in 2007, the highest-priced free-agent acquisition in team history.

Aggressiveness dooms PSU

By Ryan Loy
 COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

As the La Salle third baseman swiped his glove across Sean Deegan's cleat Tuesday, the field umpire pumped his fist downward to indicate an out.

BASEBALL

Deegan was caught stealing for the first time all season, and it served as an omen for the Penn State baseball team (17-23, 4-8 Big Ten).

La Salle

A lack of offense and baserunning mistakes cost the Nittany Lions as they lost, 3-2, to La Salle (14-24, 8-7) Tuesday night at Medlar Field at Lubrano Park.

Penn State

Penn State had two men on base with the hot-hitting Elliot Searer batting in the second inning when Deegan was caught stealing for the third out.

away from the right fielder: Searer failed to pick up coach Robbie Wine's stop sign and was thrown out on a close play at third.

"They're both aggressive," Wine said of Deegan and Searer. "But yet, you have to honor the other team and respect the other team enough to understand this isn't Little League."

Providing speed on the bases has been a key part of Deegan's and Searer's style of play this season, as they are first and second on the team in steals, respectively.

Forcing opposing defenses to make plays in the field has been a focus of the team, right fielder Mario Eramo said. That proved to backfire Tuesday as La Salle made the necessary plays.

"They're just being aggressive, and that's what we try to do," Eramo said. "Maybe they were a little too aggressive, but we preach being aggressive. It just didn't work out our way."

See **BASEBALL**, Page 10.

When Searer came up to bat to begin the third, he hit a fly ball that caromed off the right field wall

PSU's bullpen shines in the loss to La Salle. | **SPORTS**, Page 10.



Second baseman Elliot Searer attempts to catch a fly ball during the Penn State baseball loss to La Salle on Tuesday.



Sophomore Morgan Long swings and misses in the second game of Penn State's doubleheader against Syracuse on Tuesday. The Lions struck out 24 times over the two games, both losses.

Strikeouts silence offense

By Jake Kaplan
 COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Lisa Akamine stood in the batter's box at Nittany Lion Field with the bases loaded and a count of two balls and two strikes against her.

The sophomore took the next pitch for what she thought was ball three until the umpire rung her up to end the inning, drawing puzzled reactions from the Penn State side.

Akamine's strikeout in the first frame was not the only Penn State strikeout during Tuesday's double-

header against Syracuse, though. The Nittany Lions (28-18) were punched out 11 times in the second game, a 6-1 loss. It came after the Lions struck out 13 times in the first game, which ended in a 2-0 loss.

After the Orange (27-20) took a 2-0 lead in the top of the first inning of the second game, the questionable strike three call on Akamine in the bottom of the stanza came as a momentum killer for the Lions. It would turn out to be their biggest scoring threat of the contest.

Penn State had a scoring opportunity in the first game, also, when second baseman Lauren Rossi stood on second base with no outs in the fifth frame. However, catcher Dance Collett and third baseman Desi Giordano struck out before pitcher Jackie Hill grounded out, squandering the scoring chance.

Left fielder Ashley Griffith said she thought the abundance of Penn State strikeouts occurred as a mixture of good pitching by Syracuse's Jenna Cairra, who

See **STRIKEOUTS**, Page 10.

Orange sweep Lions

By Wayne Staab
 COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Penn State hitters knew what was coming, so the result made if that much more interesting.

Facing a pitcher with a big drop on her changeup, the Nittany Lion softball team (28-18) was swept by Syracuse, 2-0 and 6-1, Tuesday afternoon at Nittany Lion Field.

Orange pitcher Jenna Cairra started both games in the Big Ten, the doubleheader, tossing a combined 12 shutouts and surrendering only two runs. She also notched 20 strikeouts.

"It's definitely a big accomplishment," left fielder Ashley Griffith said of the campaign. "We're definitely capable of competing with the best. We're a great team. We just need to adjust quicker."

In the first game, Cairra struck Jackie Hill out on a bunt in the top of the second, and she tossed six scoreless innings to start the game and help the Orange finish out the night when Hallie Gibbs hit a home run off the seat in the seventh inning to provide all the runs in Game 1.

In her last two starts, Cairra given up just three runs on eight hits in 14 combined innings. On Tuesday, the California pitcher came through with no runs on base in the first six innings and stranded 10 runners.

"It means a lot, to be able to rely on her," catcher Dance Collett said. "Jackie knows what she's got to do, and she gets it done."

But in the second game, Penn State's offense continued to struggle against Cairra. The pitcher said while it wasn't the game plan for her to start both games, the coaching staff figured it made

See **SWEEP**, Page 10.

Depth in backfield pivotal to success

By Brendan Monahan
 COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Evan Royster won't tell Curtis Dukes and Silas Redd how to play the running back position.

"I'll tell them you missed this, or you could've done this or that," Royster said.

But the redshirt senior only points things out. He doesn't tell them what to do — they already know how to play the position. The two backs have made several "high school" mistakes such as missing blocks and cuts, but the true freshman Redd and Dukes, a

redshirt freshman, have the raw talent.

This raw talent, combined with experience, gives the Nittany Lions a deep backfield. But with a new quarterback and more switches possible on the offensive line, talent in the backfield may not be enough to carry the offense.

Brandon Beachum the pressure is on with a new quarterback but said it's a challenge he, Royster and Stephon Green are capable of dealing with, which is evidenced by their production last season. Tight end Andrew Szczerba said taking pressure off the quarterback lies with the offensive line.



Redshirt freshman Curtis Dukes (26) carries the ball Saturday. Dukes and true freshman Silas Redd bolster Penn State's depth at running back.

"I don't think the running backs take a ton of pressure off the quarterback if the line's not doing its job," Szczerba said. "I feel like it's a whole team effort."

Joe Paterno said Royster is 481 yards away from being Penn State's career rushing leader, but have a productive season — as

See **DEPTH**, Page 10.