Spikes, Pirates continue affiliation through 2012

COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The State College Spikes' slogan "The Bucs Start Here" will not be changing any time soon.

The Spikes and their parent club, the Pittsburgh Pirates, announced Friday night they will continue their affiliation for at least two more years, something both parties are excited about.

'We are very pleased to continue our affiliation with the Pittsburgh Pirates," State College General Manager Jason Dambach said in a press release, "and we remain firm in our commitment to provide their players, coaches and other player develquality facilities and a healthy new contract lasting only two

players can develop their skills as professionals both at the ballpark and in the community."

The Spikes have been the short-season Class A affiliate of the Pirates since 2007. The inaugural season for State College was 2006, as a St. Louis Cardinals affiliate.

'We are pleased to be able to extend what has been a highly productive partnership with the Spikes and to have our young players continue to play in front of the passionate baseball fans of Central Pennsylvania," Pirates President Frank Coonelly said in the press release.

Coonelly said during Friday opment staff with Major League night's game that despite the

long relationship with the Spikes. Though the current contract was poised to end after this season. Coonelly said he was not worried the Pirates and Spikes would come to an agreement.

"We work very hard at all of our affiliations, making sure that we're available, we're here," Coonelly said. "They know where to find us and that we have a good open repoire with each of our affiliates. That's really easy to do with the folks here in State College."

Dambach said the new agreement, which will run through the 2012 season, has been agreed on

The Spikes general manager said he felt it was important to

he did — prior to Friday night's in the major leagues. Spikes game against the Jamestown Jammers at Medlar Field at Lubrano Park — to quell any speculation of the Spikes joining another major league

team's farm system. "I think the last thing that we wanted was for this to drag on after the season and particularly into the period where we could have other clubs approach us or approach other clubs," Dambach said in an interview.

'That was never in the plans at

Though no Spikes have risen through the ranks and made the major leagues since they have been a Pirates' affiliate, six players from the 2006 Cardinals-affili-

environment in which the young years, the Pirates hope to have a make the announcement when ated Spikes are currently playing

Dambach said it is only a matter of time before a former State College player is playing at PNC Park in Pittsburgh, something that will further strengthen the relationship between the Spikes and the Pirates.

"If you look at the period from the time they're in short-season baseball to the major leagues, it's generally going to be four-to-five years," Dambach said.

"So we're just now getting to that point where we've been an affiliate of the Pirates that long. It's just going to be a matter of time and the floodgates will

To e-mail reporter: jyk5142@psu.edu.

Volleyball

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Stanford coach John Dunning said he wouldn't mind seeing the streak continue. Dunning said Penn State's success has put a national spotlight on women's volleyball, "which is definitely not a bad thing."

"But if anyone's going to beat them," Dunning said. "We'd like it to be us."

The Cardinal, who could play the Lions if both teams make the finals of next month's Nike Big

Four Classic in Florida, already have a role in Penn State's historic run: they were the last team to beat the Lions.

Since that defeat — a five-set decision - Penn State has rattled off a stretch of dominance that Dunning describes as "truly remarkable.'

'What we've seen is something that can happen once in the history of the sport," Dunning said. "They're a new team with new players. So anything can hap-

To e-mail reporter: exk5049@psu.edu

Soccer

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After former head coach Barry Gorman resigned last April, Jacob served as the interim head coach and the players rallied behind him, finishing their spring undefeated. Casais echoed Fetrow's appreciation of Warming's vast knowledge of the

"He brings another perspective again and he's a wise guy. The three of them are wise guys and we've seen things that we haven't seen before," Casais said of his

to make us better players."

Freshman forward Jordan Tyler, who scored Penn State's first goal Friday night, had signed with Penn State under Gorman but said there was no doubt he would play for the Lions even after Gorman left.

Warming's reputation also caught Tyler's eye.

"I like his title a lot that he was men's national coach of the year

in 2008, so I mean how bad can the guy be? That's kinda how I look at it," Tyler said. "In practice he helps out the whole team, but I also like how he'll pull guys aside and tell them things they need to

Goalkeeper Warren Gross has game, he gives some noticed a change in training and insights that we've never seen how he plays his position. before and hopefully that's going Warming is a former goalkeeper

and Gross said the coaches have helped him better utilize his 6foot-3 frame.

The redshirt sophomore said he has a tendency to play small, but the coaches have been encouraging him to play bigger in the net. Though the season hasn't officially started yet, the players are encouraged by what they've seen from their new coaching

"Everyone's been happy with the preseason and the way it's been run," Gross said. "The coaching staff has been a huge improvement. We feel like we're a professional outlet and it's been really amazing. They make us excited to show up everyday and give it our all.

To e-mail reporter: adr5079@psu.edu

Rugby

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Ferrell, head coach of the Ruggers.

Circled around the tree dedication were countless Ruggers wearing custom shirts made to honor Schweppe. Each shirt had a picture of Schweppe hurdling an opposing player that read, "Schweppe happens."

As Schweppe's father spoke to the crowd, his mother began to cry. Ferrell embraced her while Pullara recited the moving speech Schweppe used to give before every game. During the speech, members of the team became nostalgic of their fallen friend.

"He was an outstanding young man," Ferrell said. "He was really funny and a good friend to everybody, it is just a shame his life was cut short."

After the dedication ceremony, it was back to business as usual for the Ruggers. The men's team

has many new players to showcase, and each one has their coaches raving.

'We have high expectations good thing to do," said Don with a lot of good freshmen coming in," Pullara said. "They are really big, athletic kids."

These new freshmen will have to step their games up, as two of last year's All-Americans, Chris Saint and Kevin Kimble, will be out for the fall season. Saint is currently recovering from a torn anterior crucial ligament (ACL), and Kimble is currently playing

"It will be interesting to see how the young players step up," Ferrell said. "Everybody will be looking for a spot on the spring

be geared toward developing his young players. He would welcome having all of

Ferrell said the fall season will

his player's turn out like "He played with tenacity," said

Ferrell. "He will be missed."

To e-mail reporter: bmg5094@psu.edu

"On the video, when we analyze

"It's always nice to dominate through a start and then come out again and have that same momentum pushing your back and pushing your arm."

Tyler Waldron

Spikes pitcher

Spikes

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Waldron has been sharp on the mound lately.

In his latest start, a road outing against the Aberdeen IronBirds, Waldron threw five no-hit innings in State College's combined one-

The Oregon State alum extended his no-hit streak to 8.2 innings Sunday night before a Carlos Moncrief chopper got past Spikes' shortstop Drew Maggi in the third

Waldron said he carried a 'ton' of momentum from his last start into Sunday night's strong performance. "It's always nice to dominate through a start and then come out and pushing your arm," Waldron

"It's just nice to stack up a couple good ones."

Third baseman Kelson Brown, who went 2-for-3 with a run scored, said he always looks forward to when Waldron pitches because it makes for quick innings and keeps the fielders more focused throughout the game.

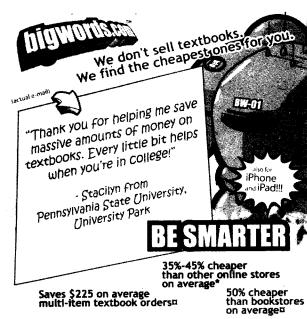
"He's the guy you look forward again and have that same to because you know he's go momentum pushing your back throw strikes," Brown said. to because you know he's going to

"You know he's going to be smart.

The Scrappers (26-36) and the Spikes, who sit in fourth in the Pinckney Division with just 14 games remaining, will play the rubber match of their three-game home set at 7:05 tonight.

Following the game, the Spikes will travel to Mahoning Valley to play three more with the Scrappers and attempt to move up in the standings.

To e-mail reporter: jyk5142@psu.edu

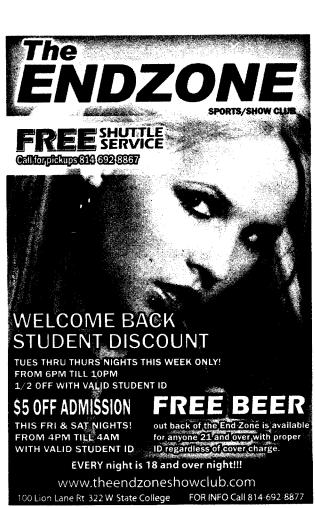


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