



Bryan Wade Heritage/Collegian

Nittany Lion fans attempt to distract Hoosiers players during a game last season. Some basketball fans are upset that the games against Purdue University and Michigan State University will occur over winter break.

Schedule raises concern

By Paul McMullen
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Penn State men's basketball team will continue its Big Ten conference season against long-time rivals at the Bryce Jordan Center in early January.

But when the Nittany Lions compete against Purdue University and Michigan State University on the hardwood, students will be on winter break, which puts supporters in a difficult situation.

"If you take the students out of the equation, the energy level in the BJC drops by 100 percent," Nittany Nation Vice President Cassandra Leighton (senior-sociology) said. "It is hard to convince students to come back when some of them don't have a place to stay."

Though classes begin for students on Jan. 11, Purdue visits University Park on Jan. 5 and Michigan State on Jan. 8.

"There is a lot of student buzz and complaints surrounding this conflict," said Brian Siegrist,

assistant director of athletic communications. "Although there is no doubt that it presents a challenge, we need our students to show up, and I believe they will."

Penn State has played these two big games while students were on campus five of the past seven years, he said. The games were scheduled based on venue availability, Lady Lions games and the number of continuous away games, he said.

"Work hard and fans will show up. We have the best fans in every sport, and there is no reason why we can't get students to show up to these games," Nittany Nation Marketing Chairman Alex Cohen (senior-marketing) said. "With hard work, the team will get to a premier level which will attract a crowd."

Cohen said it will be easier to fill the BJC during the winter break if the team works hard and shows strength during their non-conference slate.

But hard work is only one part of the equation, Nittany Nation founder and Penn State alumnus

Justin Casavant said. If students show up to the big games, the energy could have a positive effect on the outcome of the games, he said.

"Penn State students love to boast how they are the No. 1 student fans in the country. If they truly mean what they say, they will turn those words into actions and pack the [BJC] this winter in support of Penn State basketball," he said.

"The Big Ten has challenged them. Now let the Nittany Nation answer the call."

But Nittany Nation President Katie Huber said students need to turn out for more than just Taylor Battle, who is attempting to break Penn State's all-time scoring record, which was set 55 years ago by Jesse Arnette.

"Penn State has been rated the No. 1 student section for football and students need to apply that same energy and passion after the football season," Huber (senior-public relations) said.

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UPUA gives 'S Book' to new PSU students

By Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Freshmen received more than just flyers in their mailboxes Monday.

"The 'S Book' — the student handbook created by the University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) — was delivered by the Penn State Multimedia and Print Center to all freshmen mailboxes in East Halls, Pollock Halls and South Halls, UPUA Assembly Chairwoman Jessica Pellicciotta said.



Pellicciotta

"That was just the best way to make sure every freshman gets them in their hands, so we're not asking every freshman to come find us," Pellicciotta (senior-political science) said. "It was the best way to do it with the timing issue."

Since the handbook could not be delivered to the mailboxes of freshmen living in North Halls or West Halls, Pellicciotta said UPUA is working on setting up tables in the commons area of both locations.

A date for the distribution is yet to be determined because it's currently a "busy time of the year," she added.

Lion Ambassadors President David Frankenfield, who also helped with the creation of "The 'S' Book," said being able to deliver the handbook to freshmen "feels great."

"I think it's going to help them navigate the university in the first couple weeks, but it's also a keepsake that they can treasure in years to come," Frankenfield (senior-economics) said.

Though UPUA passed out many of the handbooks at the Commonwealth Campus change-of-campus orientation held on last Sunday, Pellicciotta said UPUA hopes to set up hours

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David Frankenfield
Lion Ambassadors President

when transfer and change-of-campus students can come pick up the handbook in both the UPUA and the Council of Commonwealth Student Governments offices.

Pellicciotta said she has gotten positive reactions from those who have received the handbook already.

"They think it turned out well, and a couple upperclassmen said they wish they'd got it when they first started," she said. "I think it was pretty successful, but we're looking to improve it for next year."

One of the things Pellicciotta said she learned from creating the handbooks is to begin production earlier.

Originally UPUA planned to distribute the handbooks during the First-Year Testing, Consulting and Advising Program (FTCAP), but missed the deadline.

She said UPUA is already working on next year's handbook so that it will be completed in time for FTCAP.

"I think it would be beneficial to have them at FTCAP because students have a lot of questions when they first arrive at Penn State," Pellicciotta said. "This way they'll have a couple weeks to a couple months to look over the information and maybe make decisions off of that book."

Starting earlier will also give UPUA the opportunity to reach out to every person and organization that the student government wishes to include in the handbook, she said.

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Professor creates first-ever image of protein

By Brandon McNally
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Penn State professor Song Tan has created the first ever-image of a special protein that he said acts as the cell's "GPS" — a discovery Tan said could help researchers better understand genetic diseases.

Tan said the imaged protein, RCC1, is like a cell's GPS — or what he calls a "Genetic Positioning System."

Much like a GPS in a car, the protein tells the cell exactly where DNA is located in the nucleus, helping the cell make copies of DNA and properly move those copies into two separate

cells during cell division.

Frank Pugh, professor and director of the Penn State Center for Eukaryotic Gene Regulation, said Tan's research could help scientists create better drugs for genetic diseases in the future.

But in the short term, he said the discovery will enable researchers to better understand how DNA works, which is critical to understanding the human body.

"[Tan's research] is about understanding how chromosomes work," Pugh said. "Chromosome function is basic to all of human health. When they don't work right, you get disease and aging."

But taking a picture of the protein isn't as easy as it sounds, Tan

said. The proteins and DNA are simply too small to see even with the best microscopes.

"The nucleus is 10 micrometers wide — about 1/10 the width of a human hair," Tan said. "And in this tiny little space there is six feet of DNA in every cell."

To understand such a tiny structure, Tan used a process called X-ray crystallography to replicate RCC1 and crystallize the protein, creating a tiny crystal about 1/10 of a millimeter wide.

Tan said the process has been used for decades, but for it to work in this case, researchers had to create an extraordinarily high-quality crystal.

Certain techniques have been

developed in the past decade that allowed researchers to create higher quality crystals, which Tan said his lab built upon and improved.

After creating the crystal, researchers shot X-rays through it, and based on the patterns created by X-rays reflecting — or diffracting, as Tan said — in the crystal, researchers were able to get a clear picture of the protein's structure.

"What we get is a complicated defraction pattern," Tan said. "And hopefully based on that pattern you have enough information to work back the structure of the protein."

Joseph England, now a medical

worked on the project with Tan while he was an undergraduate at Penn State. England's job was to make tiny changes or mutations to the structure of the RCC1 protein. Researchers then compared the images of the mutated protein with images of the original to make sure the X-ray crystallography was consistent and accurate.

England said he was excited to hear the project reached his goal — a goal he said Tan had been working to accomplish for nearly a decade. But Tan said his work isn't done yet. "We really hope that this is just the beginning," Tan said.

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