

# Second half possession seals field hockey victory

By Zach Fleagle  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Kelsey Amy raced down field and corralled a pass from teammate Jess Longstreth for a breakaway goal in the waning minutes of Wednesday night's field hockey game, sealing the victory.

## FIELD HOCKEY

The Nittany Lions were in control against Lafayette all game, dominating play by running the field and finding passes in open areas.

Head coach Char Morett said that the game plan was, and has always been, catching the ball on the run instead of dribbling forward with it. This was something the Lions hadn't executed well in previous matches, but found success in the latter half of yesterday's game.

"We knew they were going to zone so we thought if we could

transfer the ball quickly around the backfield that we could catch them," Morett said.

"I thought that we gave up possession sometimes, but I thought the difference in the second half, for us, was that we took the ball on the move."

Amy, the beneficiary of judicious passing, said the team has been working on running into open space and trying to help the person with the ball make it easy to lead the team's speedy forwards.

"Our [midfielders] did really well with laying the ball down the field and letting us run on to it, which is when we're really successful," Amy said.

"[We forwards] really focused on cutting and making runs, trying to lose our defender running into space."

The Lions struggled to find room to run on Lafayette's aggressive zone defense but once they settled in the Lions were the

fiercer felines, out shooting the Leopards 17 to 11.

Another strategy Penn State used was sweeping the ball back and fourth in their defensive backfield, waiting for an opportunity. Captain Daneen Zug said that because of the teams' active defense, she and fellow back Kristen Schaefer could scan the field and find openings to transition into offense.

"One of our main goals this game was vision on the field," Schaefer said. "Just making sure that we see all of our options and when we do transfer, to make it hard and fast so we keep them running."

Freshman Whitney Reddig made a half-field run and stopped a long lead pass in Lafayette's defensive circle just before it went out of bounds. The Lion's were able to maintain possession and continue to control the clock late, and coaches and players alike noted her effort.

Morett praised Reddig for her desire on the play and the speed she flashed, but more importantly — for completing the play. The play, like Amy's goal, was the definition of the halftime blueprint — get open and run.

"We talked in the second half about really trying to find the

lanes and taking the space," the head coach said. "I felt like in the beginning we were dribbling right into them, which is like, we have speed to go around them. Use your speed and go to space and then look to combine."

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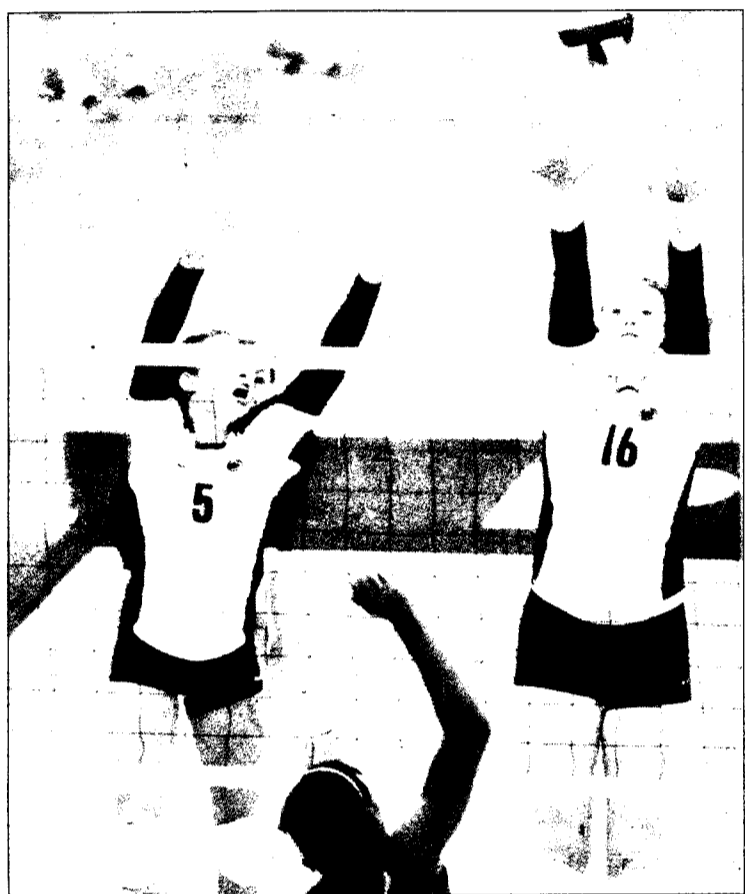


Kelly King/Collegian

Kelsey Amy (left) and Jessica Longstreth celebrate against Lafayette

# Freshman Katie Slay could see more significant role

By Ryan Loy  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER



Kelsey Morris/Collegian

Katie Slay (16) and Kristin Carpenter go for a block against VCU

As the Penn State women's volleyball team gathered at one end of Rec Hall's South Gym for Tuesday's practice, one player worked alone at the far side.

## WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Shuffling her feet like a basketball defender, freshman Katie Slay moved to the left side of the court before jumping, extending her arms up and over the net and blocking a ball hit by an assistant coach.

Slay is coming off her first start in the loss to Stanford and is becoming a regular in the No. 2 Nittany Lions' rotation on the court.

Head coach Russ Rose said Slay is an enthusiastic player as well as a good blocker. However, there was a time when it looked like Slay may be blocking basketballs in college rather than volleyball.

"She started out as a basketball player," said her father, Alan Slay. "She could have played in any conference in the nation, but after her freshman year [of high school] she made a decision to play volleyball."

Her father said her team at Wakefield High School in Raleigh, N.C., went 56-3 during her two years playing basketball. The winning ways aren't uncommon to the Slay family. Her mother, Maureen and her two aunts combined to win 125 consecutive basketball games in high school — causing Katie Slay's parents to root for the recently snapped Penn State streak to reach 125.

While her father said she was always tall, Slay didn't immediately develop her volleyball skills. Her father said Slay took the timing she developed as a good shot blocker in basketball and transferred it to the volleyball court.

Katie Slay said she's still working to improve and what she hasn't picked up from basketball or coaches, she's learned from Penn State senior middle hitter Arielle Wilson.

"I can learn everything from Ari," Slay said. "She wants to help, and she doesn't talk to me as if she's putting me down ever. She's always there for me. It's really nice to have her here."

Wilson is especially skilled in the area Slay is working to improve most — attacking. Last season, Wilson led the nation with a .540 hitting percentage.

Slay said she's working on getting on the ball faster by having a quicker arm swing. By being a threat offensively, Slay said she'll be able to free up the Lions' other hitters.

Senior opposite hitter Blair Brown said Slay is good and implements what she is taught right away.

"She's great at identifying the other team on the other side," Brown said.

"Right now, it's just getting her in there, getting experience playing at a high level."

Rose said it may have been hard on Slay's nerves to have her first start come against Stanford, but he said she played OK, while others played poorly.

Slay said she's concentrating on the team's accomplishments, but she said if her being on the court brings success, then she's excited for the opportunity.

She may get that chance because Rose sees the potential the team has with Slay on the court.

"I think probably our best volleyball has her. Not involved than on the sideline," Rose said.

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