

Lions excited for tough road test at Illinois

By Emily Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Penn State women's volleyball coach Russ Rose picked No. 9 Illinois as the preseason favorite to win the Big Ten.

Fighting Illini coach Kevin Hambly said the No. 2 Nittany Lions are unquestionably the team to beat in the league.

On Friday night, conference play kicks off with a showdown between these two elite squads in Champaign, Ill.

And the Lions couldn't be more excited.

"Oh, we're pumped," setter Kristin Carpenter said. "Illinois is good. They're always good. We're basically playing against the type of athletes that we are so it's good to get like a taste of our own medicine. And we can't wait."

Illinois is 8-2 so far this season, and will be with the services of Laura DeBruler for the first time in two weeks.

DeBruler, who sat out the last five matches with mononucleosis, has 1,738 career kills — just 23 short of the all-time record at Illinois.

The Lions are eager to match up against the best, but perhaps even more

"Their gym is one of the best gyms I've ever played in."

Fatima Balza
senior middle hitter

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

excited for the atmosphere they'll be playing in.

Huff Hall, which can hold 4,500 fans for volleyball matches, is a red brick and limestone arena, originally constructed in 1925.

It's where, in 1992, the Illini broke an NCAA single-season volleyball attendance record by packing 52,666 fans into the gymnasium over a span of 17 matches. It's also where, according to Illinois folklore, the term "March Madness" was coined, from the wild state high school basketball tournaments the arena hosted.

According to senior Fatima Balza, it's also the perfect environment for a Big Ten volleyball match.

"Their gym is one of the best gyms I've ever played in," Balza said. "The students are all against you, yelling. It's all very exciting."

Balza said that last year, senior Megan Hodge had a "superfan."

A male Illini student took a special interest in heckling Penn State's four-

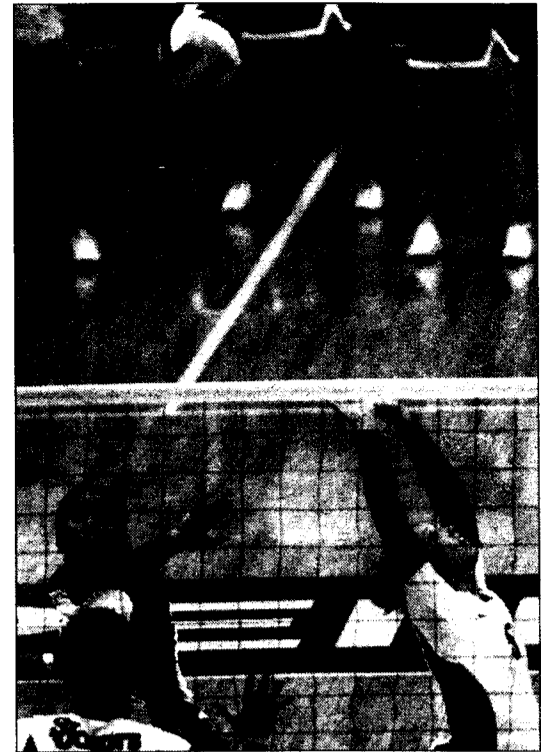
time All-American outside hitter.

Balza said he would yell things like, "Oh Megan Hodge, you're angry. Megan, you're angry."

"I think he graduated so that is good," Balza joked. "But we're ready for whatever else the other fans will do. It's fun to play there."

Freshman Deja McClendon said some of the veterans on the team have given her a heads up about what to expect in her first career Big Ten game. But McClendon said she — and the rest of the Lions — are ready for it. Penn State is already battle tested from this month's Nike Big Four Classic, which featured matches against now-No. 1 Stanford and now-No. 3 Florida.

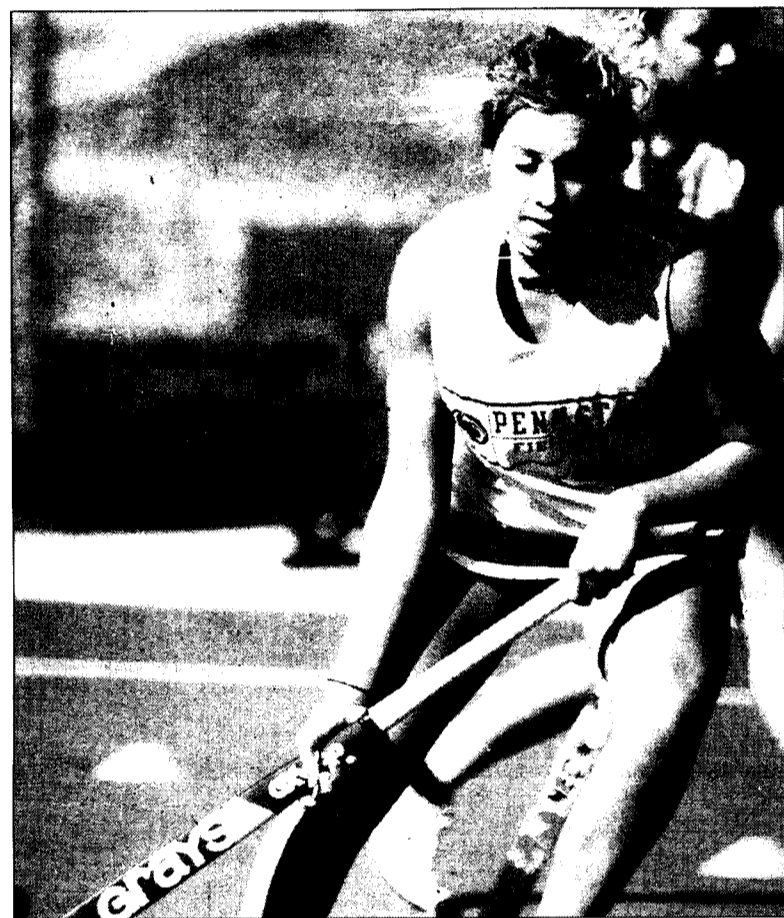
"[Illinois] is going to be a packed house, and the crowd is going to be insane," McClendon said. "But our tournament in Florida also had a pretty big crowd, so I'm not super worried. I'm just excited for the competition."



Kristin Carpenter (5) sets to teammate Fatima Balza during the Lions 3-0 sweep of St. John's.

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Reddig overcomes injury, establishes threat



Whitney Reddig runs a drill during field hockey practice earlier this season. Reddig has bounced back from injury to contribute this year.

By Zach Fleagle
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Whitney Reddig has had a slow start to the 2010 field hockey season, but not because she doesn't have the skill to contribute.

FIELD HOCKEY

One of the Nittany Lions' eight freshmen coming into the season, Reddig battled a groin injury that kept her off the field during an early scrimmage against Maryland. Reddig was struck with an injury again against Old Dominion, as she hobbled to the sidelines after being hit in the knee, forcing her to sit the next three games.

Although she said she's not 100 percent recovered from the bruise, Reddig said the injuries are a thing of the past.

On Sept. 15, Reddig made her first contribution during a home game against Lafayette. The 5-foot-7 forward made several runs that had head coach Char Morett smiling, if only to herself.

Reddig's long strides allowed her to get past the Panthers' defense and although she didn't score, she proved she can be a spark off the bench, which Morett is ready to take advantage of more frequently.

"We were really bummed when Whitney got hurt. She gets the competitive side of competing. You get 100 percent effort," Morett said. "She runs down every ball, she puts pressure on the other team, she's always around the cage. Whenever Whit's around the ball something's happening."

That hustle was rewarded as she recorded her first career goal the very next game against Temple.

The Lions' leading scorer, Kelsey Amy, said Reddig's speed really compliments her own and gives the two a natural understanding of how to use space.

Although Reddig stands a few inches taller than the 5-foot-4 Amy, both players, as well as forward Jess Longstreth, make long runs toward the opposing net to push the ball forward. Morett said having Reddig as another option can only make the team more dangerous going into Big Ten play.

Amy echoed Morett's thoughts about the type of play when Reddig is on the field.

"I feel that Whitney brings a lot of aggression and just pure heart to our team," Amy said. "She's brought a lot of speed and skill too, and has given us a new

dynamic look with our forward line."

Morett said the Big Ten features a much higher speed of play, something that players like Amy and Reddig should strive on — but the focus isn't all offense. In fact, for Morett, it's all about defense, specifically pressure on the ball.

Reddig said she doesn't mind the running, but she has to get used to the tempo, and some other changes from high school to college — defense included.

"Two hands on the stick," Reddig said of things she hears most often.

"It's definitely a different pace of game because I played on grass in high school. Every girl is very skilled too so that's different."

Adjustments aside, the tall forward has made a mark in the eyes of her coaches and teammates. For now, everyone is waiting to see what's in store.

"She was hurt for a few weeks and she waited patiently and when she came back I think that patience really paid off in the last couple games," Amy said. "She's feeling better every game and I'm excited to see what she'll do in the future."

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New women's golfer proving worth to teammates

By Katie Montgomery
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

When an opportunity to play for the Penn State women's golf team came calling at Christina Vosters' door, she didn't waste any time answering the call.



Vosters

After looking into Ivy League schools, other Big Ten schools and southern schools such as South Carolina and North Carolina State, Vosters knew from the beginning that Penn State was the right choice for her.

"[The team] has good chemistry," the freshman said. "I think

we work really well together. We all really want to do well and when you have a group of teammates who want to give 110 percent into what they're doing and be successful, you are going to be successful."

After weeks of practicing with the team Vosters impressively qualified to compete with four other veteran teammates in the Cougar Classic on Sept. 13, the first tournament of the season.

Although the Nittany Lions finished tied for 14th out of the 19-school field, Vosters shot a personal-best 79 in the final round to end with a 241 on the tournament finishing tied for 99th place.

"She's certainly more talented than that," coach Denise St. Pierre said.

"She didn't have her best performance and it was a little bit of a surprise because she had qualified so well here at home."

"It's certainly a different experience when a player goes off on their own and I think there's a lot that she was absorbing all at once and I think it got a little overwhelming for her."

Collegiate golf differs from the style of golf Vosters had been playing since she decided to pick up a golf club in seventh grade and give the sport a try, she said.

As a junior golfer Vosters was responsible for her own success, but in collegiate play she had to adjust to playing with a team instead of as an individual.

"It's a different type of pressure than junior golf," Vosters said.

"She's very dedicated to her improvement."

Denise St. Pierre
women's golf coach

"When I was on tour [as a junior golfer] I was competing against other juniors to get a spot on a college team. Now that I'm on a college team I'm competing because I want to be out there, you're playing it for your team which makes it all that much better."

To ensure she performs at her best Vosters always eats a healthy steak meal before competing because the iron and protein helps keep her focused and energized during the competition, she said.

With a long list of first-place junior finishes, including wins in the

PGA Junior Callaway Series and the International Junior Golf Tour, Vosters' pre-tournament ritual seems to be paying off.

"Christina is a very hard worker," St. Pierre said.

"She's very dedicated to her improvement and performance in the sport. For a freshman, she's very mature but certainly, like all of us, has a lot to learn, but she's very open to the learning process, which makes her very enjoyable to coach."

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Friday (9/24) @ 6:00 PM vs. INDIANA
Sunday (9/26) @ 1:00 PM vs. MICHIGAN

FOOTBALL
BEAVER STADIUM
Saturday (9/25) @ 3:30 PM vs. TEMPLE

MEN'S SOCCER
JEFFREY FIELD
Friday (9/24) @ 7:30 PM vs. INDIANA
Wednesday (9/29) @ 7:00 PM vs. ST. FRANCIS

WOMEN'S SOCCER
JEFFREY FIELD
Sunday (9/26) @ 1:00 PM vs. MICHIGAN STATE