

# Icers hoping for extended hockey coverage

By Steven Petrella  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Ever since Scott Balboni took over as the Icers head coach, he has made efforts to get the Big Ten Network to cover his team and get them on the map.

With the announcement of Penn State joining the NCAA Division I hockey ranks, the possibility of a Big Ten hockey conference and expanded coverage on the Big Ten Network appears to be imminent.

## ICERS

However, the Big Ten Network wouldn't be forced to expand its coverage based solely on the emergence of Penn State's new program.

Melanie Collins is a Penn State alum and is currently a correspondent for the Nittany Lions on the Big Ten Network. Collins said she believes a Big Ten conference is on its way within a few years, but the coverage will not be expanded until that conference is created.

"Everyone I have talked to is pointing in the direction [of a conference]," Collins said. "Unfortunately, I think it will take one for us to cover it more."

In a Sept. 16 press release, the Big Ten said that the addition of a Big Ten hockey conference is likely in the future, but did not mention anything about any type of expanded coverage.

Five Big Ten affiliated teams already compete in NCAA D-I hockey. Wisconsin and Minnesota are in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association, while Ohio State, Michigan State and Michigan play in the Central Collegiate Hockey Association.

This year, the Big Ten Network will feature only nine hockey games, much different than its coverage of basketball, with every conference game broadcasted.

Icers junior forward Kurt Collins, the brother of Melanie, said he believes the move of Penn State to D-I will have a positive impact on the coverage of NCAA hockey as a whole.

"It's going to shift the whole make up of college hockey," the Icers forward said. "It will create so much buzz, the Big Ten Network will have to cover it more to compete with ESPN, or Comcast, or whoever's covering it."

Kurt Collins also said the announcement has given his team additional attention so far this season. The Big Ten Network featured the Icers on its Big Ten Tailgate program last week. He said he believes the Big Ten Network will track the Icers' progress in some way over the next two seasons before the team moves to D-I in 2012-13.

His sister said she believes the Big Ten Network will keep an especially close eye on the Icers in these next two seasons of ACHA competition.

"I think they will have something on the progress of the construction of the arena," Melanie Collins said. "The coverage will gradually get greater as the move gets closer."



Icers forward Kurt Collins (right) is hit by URI players last season. Chris Donadio/Collegian

# Smarter, simpler play contributes to victory

By Alex Angert  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Lions are a fast team. Sometimes, a little too fast.

But Sunday against Iowa, they slowed things down — and it worked.

Instead of relying on their strikers' speed and opting for long

passes as they have in the past, the Lions played with a much simpler, methodical attack en route to the team's 3-0 victory.

## WOMEN'S SOCCER

"I feel like our team is actually starting to play soccer now," red-shirt sophomore Bri Garcia said.

"We're not getting it and kicking it down. If we just keep playing smart, playing simple and playing the soccer we know how to play, it's only going to get better from here."

Many times this season Penn State has become too complacent, sending the ball downfield and hoping one of its speedy frontline players would chase it down.

Here and there, an occasional goal has been scored that way, but typically it's been the short game that has provided the most fortune.

Earlier in the season against Bucknell, the Lions worked as a cohesive team and used the short passing attack to give their fast frontline players better opportunities. In the 5-1 win over the Bison, Penn State's forwards tallied four of its five goals off of short passes, which was the only time it scored more than two goals in a game this season.

That is until Sunday when the

Lions used the same strategy.

"We just started passing," Garcia said. "Usually what we do is we get it and look up and see if we can get Dani Toney or Maya Hayes with the ball up top and see if they can run. But today we had a lot of different combinations of players who can keep the ball and find that penetrating through ball to somebody."

That was the difference in the team's dominating victory over Iowa. And as great of athletes as Toney and Hayes are, relying on their speed to score a goal every time wasn't working.

By not forcing balls and trying out different lineups through the game, Penn State's offense ironically came alive by slowing down.

This simplistic strategic approach led to three goals — all by players who aren't known for their speed. Garcia scored on a header off of a corner kick, and Julie Hubbard received a through ball from Tani Costa at the end of the first half to give the Lions a 2-0 lead. Costa continued to benefit from the slower pace in the second half by scoring off a cross by Hubbard. Behind a simpler attack

emphasizing the short passing game, the Lions came out on top, and Costa earned Big Ten Freshman of the Week honors.

"To be honest, the pace of the game was a little bit slower and there was space in front of the backline for [Costa] to play," coach Erica Walsh said. "She did the best job of using that space and it's kind of her strength."

Abandoning hope that the team's speed would lead to the razzle-dazzle play on a long pass, Garcia said the players displayed confidence in their passing ability.

Garcia added the key was players had faith in each other that something good would happen.

Instead of just clearing it down, she was impressed by their chemistry in the passing game.

"We weren't forcing balls," she said. "If nothing was on we'd pull it back, go to the middle of the field, spring it out to the other side and we'd try to attack from that side. I think that was definitely a big difference for us, especially between our past games and [Sunday's] game."

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Freshman Tani Costa (22) defends a Virginia player earlier this season. Sarah Finnegan/Collegian

# Women's soccer getting lift from reserve players

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The role of a reserve player is simple — step on the field, fill in the designated position, don't let the level of play drop off and maybe add a little bit of production.

As this weekend proved, the bench players on the Penn State women's soccer team have the role down to a science. Whenever Nittany Lions coach Erica Walsh moves to make a substitution, she knows exactly what she will get.

"Our reserves have been a major bonus for us this year," Walsh said. "Some of them are clearly pushing for playing time and we need to consider that but our depth is a positive for sure."

Sunday afternoon in Iowa City, the reserves provided all the scoring in a 3-0 win over Iowa. The high level of play the reserves have shown all season has also pushed the starters to work harder and hold on to their jobs.

From game to game, Walsh may turn to a different set of players depending on the matchup, a sign of just how deep the Lions are.

Junior midfielder Ali Schaefer parlayed a strong turn on the bench into two starts over the weekend.

"We've come together as a team and we don't see each other as starters or reserves, we're just one whole," Schaefer said. "The best part about this Penn State team is we do have so much depth to our bench and what that means is once that first, second, third and even fourth different bench player comes on the field it's just like the starters are in."

Schaefer has played every mid-field position off the bench this season, one example of the versatility that needed as a substitute.

At the top of the formation, the Lions can rotate forwards throughout the game, keeping the players fresh for key late situations.

The reserves can also add different dimensions to Penn State's formation. Redshirt sophomore Bri Garcia has added crisp passing and possession over the last few weeks after rounding into form a knee injury last season.

Over the weekend, Walsh used her possession-minded players to



Julie Hubbard (24) heads the ball downfield during the Blue-White intrasquad match earlier this season. Tyler Sizemore/Collegian

grind out wins instead of repeatedly trying for lightning-strike offense on long balls. Redshirt freshman Tani Costa and sophomore Julie Hubbard both scored Sunday, and got extended minutes because of their technical ability on the ball.

Schaefer said the depth helps the team, especially in weekends

where it has multiple games. In the junior's eyes, every player that comes off the bench brings a certain energy and willingness to give their all for whatever amount of time they're going to play.

"Every single player who comes off the bench has provided that spark and either maintained the level or brought it to the next

level," sophomore midfielder Maddy Evans said.

"They're definitely doing their jobs and it's a huge asset to our team because every single person has proved they can do what they need to do the second they come in."

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