

SPORTS

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

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Members of the Penn State women's volleyball team celebrate a point in a match earlier this season against Michigan State at Rec Hall.

Kelly Rootes-Murdy/Collegian

Icers hoping for revenge

By Anthony Barton
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Icers sophomore defenseman Rich O'Brien remembers the disappointing end to last season.

He remembers being on the bench, a helpless spectator as Central Oklahoma's Jonathon Cannizzo skated by and ended the Icers' season with an unassisted goal in overtime of their ACHA national quarterfinal game.

Back-to-back games tonight and Saturday mark the first matchups between the two teams since, as the Icers (3-0) take on the Bronchos (3-6) at the Greenberg Ice Pavilion.

When the puck drops at 9 tonight for the first game, junior forward and assistant captain Paul Daley said he knows what the Icers want to do to the team they've had circled since the schedule came out.

"We want to bury them," Daley said. "We want to let them know that last season, the loss was a fluke and show them how good we really are."

Senior forward and captain Marek Polidor said not capitalizing on their 40 shots in last season's game proved to be the downfall of the Icers.

"We had a ton of chances in the game last season, but we only had one goal," Polidor said. See REVENGE, Page 16.

ICERS



Balboni

Rec Hall to host tough matches

By Jake Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

There are no weekends off in Big Ten volleyball. And for the No. 9 Nittany Lions, this weekend is certainly no exception.

On a two-match losing streak for the first time since 2002, Penn State (13-4, 3-3 Big Ten) hosts No. 19 Minnesota (14-4, 4-2) at 7 tonight at Rec Hall and Iowa (6-9, 1-5) at 7 Saturday night. To avoid losing three consecutive matches and snapping their 82-match home-winning streak, the Lions know they have to bring their 'A' game against the Golden Gophers.

The Gophers contend for a Big Ten championship every season. Minnesota has finished in the top three of the Big Ten for each of the last eight seasons and made it all the way to the Final Four before losing to Texas last year.

"They've got great arms," Penn State coach Russ Rose said. "If you've got size and good arms and good setting and a good libero, you have all the makings of a good team. I think they're playing well."

This season, all four of Minnesota's losses have come against ranked opponents with three of them going to five sets. Their only Big Ten losses came against No. 15 See HALL, Page 16.

Team hopes to follow trend

By Emily Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

In this year's ultra-competitive Big Ten women's volleyball conference, nothing is a given. Seven weeks into the season and the league has already seen the seven-time defending conference champions, Penn State, fall to back-to-back unranked opponents (Purdue and Indiana).

A perpetual sub-500 squad, Northwestern, has emerged as a legitimate title contender, as it currently trails first place Michigan by only a half game.

And of the current top three teams in the See TREND, Page 16.



Kelley King/Collegian

Blair Brown (9) goes for a kill in a match against Michigan earlier this season at Rec Hall. The Lions are back home this weekend.

If you go

Women's Volleyball vs Minnesota
When: 7 p.m. Friday
Where: Rec Hall

If you go

Icers vs. Central Oklahoma
When: 9 p.m. Friday
Where: Ice Pavilion

Game sends statement

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Wednesday night, the Penn State men's soccer team sent a message to the rest of the country.

It stood toe-to-toe with the best team for 107 minutes and it isn't going anywhere.

Despite falling to No. 1 Akron, 2-1, in two overtimes on a controversial foul call, the Nittany Lions can take plenty from the game. All week, the team looked at the game as a measuring stick and Wednesday's performance showed just how far the Lions come this season.

"Once the sting of the loss wears off we'll be able to look back at this and really be able to extract the good points," defender Brian Forgue said. "I think we sent a very clear message to the rest of the country. We're contenders and we're not going to back down."

Against the Zips, Penn State didn't play tentatively. Instead, they pressed early and their aggressiveness was rewarded by a fifth minute goal.

Forgue said he didn't think Akron expected the type of game the Lions played, but Penn State has played the same way every game this year. From the forwards to the

See STATEMENT, Page 16.



Kelley King/Collegian

Penn State goalie Brendan Birmingham (yellow) makes a save against Akron.

Women's soccer to face different challenges

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Friday night, the Penn State women's soccer team will face a team that does the same exact thing every year and will try to press plenty of players forward.

Sunday afternoon, the Nittany Lions will go up against the complete opposite, a team that will load up on the defensive end.

After two weeks on the road, the

Lions return to Jeffrey Field to face Minnesota and Wisconsin. While their opponents play different styles, the Lions nonconference schedule helped give them an idea what to expect.

"That's why you play the out of conference schedule," Penn State coach Erica Walsh said. "You try to play different kinds of teams and prepare them

for opponents like Minnesota who's going to present one challenge and Wisconsin that presents a completely different one."

Penn State will take on the Golden Gophers at 7 p.m. tonight and will have to contend with the three-defender set Minnesota plays with. With a small back line, it allows Minnesota to play a larger midfield and Walsh said that will be the biggest challenge.

To counter the numbers in the midfield, Walsh said Penn State may keep the ball along its back line more and press its outside

backs, Bri Hovington and Jackie Molinda, into the attack. Senior co-captain Megan Monroig said pressing up on attack and using effective counters will be key to breaking down Minnesota's formation.

"Our defense definitely has to be on their toes and the midfield getting back to help our defense is going to be huge for us," Monroig said.

"To break them down, it's getting our numbers forward against their three-back. A quick counter can really do well for us because

they put so many people in the box."

Minnesota has outscored its opponents by a 29-8 margin on the season, but Sunday's opponent Wisconsin is the polar opposite. The Badgers, who sit second in the conference, have given up just five goals, but have only scored nine and come into the game with a 6-3-4 record overall.

Earlier this season, the Lions faced a Dartmouth team that packed its defense and left Jeffrey Field with a 1-0 victory. Because See CHALLENGES, Page 16.



Walsh

THE LINEUP

SPORTS ON TV

MLB

Texas vs New York (AL)
8 p.m., TBS

TRIVIA

Q: Who did the Philadelphia Phillies use as mascots before the creating the Phillie Phanatic in 1978?

Thursday's Answer: Russ Nixon managed the Atlanta Braves for three seasons prior to the hiring of Bobby Cox in 1990.

QUICK HITS

Arenas suffers real injury

Washington Wizards guard Gilbert Arenas left his first home game since being suspended for bringing guns to the Verizon Center last season with a strained right groin.

Arenas didn't start Thursday night's pre-season game against the Milwaukee Bucks, two days after faking a knee injury to miss a home game. He left after playing three minutes in the first quarter.

Arenas didn't attempt a shot, but had three steals, a rebound, an assist and a blocked shot. He teamed with John Wall on some neat passes.

Arenas entered with 7:05 to play in the first quarter to tepid applause.

Vikes deny running up score

Coach Brad Childress says the Minnesota Vikings were not trying to run up the score late in last season's 34-3 playoff victory over the Dallas Cowboys.

Brett Favre threw a touchdown pass to Visanthe Shiancoe with less than 2 minutes to play in the game for the final margin. The play prompted Dallas linebacker Keith Brooking to confront Childress on the sideline and call it "disgusting and classless," accusing the Vikings of running up the score.

"People can do what they want," coach Wade Phillips said on Wednesday. "It's not what I would've done."

The Vikings led 27-3 late in the game when they had a fourth-and-3 at the Cowboys 11. Favre found a wide open Shiancoe for his fourth touchdown.

OUR THOUGHTS

Arenas victim of Karma

Gilbert Arenas got a little taste of his own medicine Thursday night.

A day after being fined for faking a knee injury to avoid playing a home game, Arenas suffered an injury to his groin and was forced to leave the Washington Wizards game against the Milwaukee Bucks in the first quarter.

No stranger to controversy, Arenas' latest stunt was a sign of disrespect to his teammates, his coaches and Wizards fans.

Luckily for all of us, fate decided to get Arenas back. This isn't hoping that his injury is serious, but that maybe he'll wake up and realize it's time to shut up and start playing basketball.