

Lady Ruggers rally in second half, beat Delaware

By Greg Fernandez
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After the whistle blew to signal halftime, the Penn State Lady Ruggers found themselves in a precarious position, down 11-5.

WOMEN'S RUGBY

But coach Pete Steinberg rallied his team and reminded them one thing going into the second half: "You're better than them."

After the pep talk, the Lady Ruggers came out strong in the second half, scoring six tries, and defeated Delaware, 46-11.

Throughout much of the first half, the team was threatening in Delaware's zone, but was unable to punch it in for a try when given the opportunity. After a crucial turnover by senior Lisa

Henneman and two penalties that were converted for conversions, the team found itself down at the end of the first half.

"When we step out this year as the national champions, teams come and are ready to play us," Steinberg said. "They were ready to give everything. We just said for the second half, use the wind and stop making poor decisions."

In the first half, the Lady Ruggers started a few of their inexperienced players to get them a little time in a game on the "A" side.

For the second half, Steinberg made key changes, subbing in freshman Kelsey Corbett, junior Kasey Ferlic and senior Devan Owsiany, who all scored tries in the second half. Steinberg said he was pleased with the contributions from the subs, and expected

the fresh legs to make an impact. Ferlic, who scored the first try of the second half, said she wanted to come in and make an impact both in the physical and intensity aspects of the game.

The substitutions and an aggressive defense all contributed to the second half onslaught that included 41 unanswered points.

"The defense is what won us a championship last year, so it's something we are really proud of," Steinberg said. "We always want to be aggressive on defense when we can."

Starting games off poorly has been a problem for the team this year, something junior Sadie Anderson said the team needs to improve on throughout the season.

"We didn't have the intensity or the experience that we needed to

get the game rolling at the beginning so I think that might have had something to do with the slow start," said Anderson, who scored two tries. "But the players that were out there and were experienced should have been able to step it up."

Steinberg agreed, stating the team needed to bring an intensity that they haven't had at the beginning of games. It's a challenge the team will be working on over the last few weeks of the season.

Ferlic said another factor in the slow starts might be the team's mentality before the games.

"Every team we play has a chip on their shoulder, because they are coming out to play the national champions so they have nothing to lose," Ferlic said. "We have to come out, knowing that they are going to come out and give every-

"We always want to be aggressive on defense."

Pete Steinberg
women's rugby coach

thing they got. We have to go out and do the same."

One thing the team can take away with this victory is how powerful momentum can be in deciding the outcome of a game, something Anderson said usually works in the Lady Ruggers' favor.

"When we have momentum, we usually can keep it, use each other and have everyone playing with the ball, making us hard to stop," Anderson said.

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Wins

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practice, it is different with a crowd watching and the energy of the game up.

The Lions hope to work out their serving problems when they practice today and Tuesday before venturing to Columbus, Ohio for their first midweek match of the season Wednesday night.

Rose described the Buckeyes (16-5, 4-4), who upset Minnesota Saturday night, as a team with

veteran players at key positions on the court.

After Saturday night's performance, Brown said it will be easy for the team to get back into the gym to prepare for Ohio State.

"We want to work on things in the gym. We want to get better," Brown said.

"Having a Wednesday game, it's a little different but every opponent is the same in the Big Ten — everybody's good. So we have to be ready."

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Tie

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"It felt great just getting that goal and putting the team up 1-0," Hertog said. "I felt like we controlled the game and everyone's work rate was great, so it felt good to finally get that one goal when we had a couple chances earlier that we couldn't finish."

Hertog's goal was assisted by senior co-captain Drew Cost, who'd missed the previous two games with a foot injury.

Having Cost back on the field for 102 minutes on Sunday paid dividends for the Lions.

"He just controls the middle really well," Hertog said of Cost. "He plays us the easy balls and just starts the attack for us, so he's a great player to have on the field."

However, just 41 seconds later,

the Lions' spirits went from the highest of highs, to the lowest of lows.

Right from the ensuing kick off in the center circle, the Wildcats penetrated through the right side of the Penn State defense, and sophomore Kyle Schickel finished a cross from freshman Scott Larkin off the back post, tying the game at 1-1.

"It was just so disappointing because we'd been playing so well and we felt like the goal was just gonna come and we thought we might get some more, and we give one up," Warming said.

"That was certainly a quick turn of events."

Despite the setback, the Lions came out firing in the second half.

Holding Northwestern to just two second-half shots and putting seven shots of their own on the Wildcats in the same period of time, Warming and the Lions

were sure the go-ahead goal would come.

Unfortunately, the game-winner never came.

"We really locked them down," Warming said. "We had the possession of the ball and were doing really well in the second half, but just couldn't get the next one."

Penn State only had two shots in the overtime periods, and neither of them were on goal.

Following Sunday's tie, the Lions sit at 1-1-1 in the Big Ten.

After failing to finish in another overtime, the Lions know what they have to do to be successful.

"It's frustrating playing good soccer all the way up and then having one let down," Hertog said. "But we're gonna go to practice this week, focus on when we score a goal, keep the ball, and not giving opponents any chances."

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Icers

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from a Bronchos' defender before falling to the ground with his hands raised high after delivering the game-winning goal in overtime.

"He made a great defensive play and then turned it into a great offensive play," Balboni said.

"Those are the types of plays that win you games."

The Icers completed the sweep Saturday afternoon, after scoring three first-period goals.

Junior forward Chris Cerutti led the charge scoring two goals after capitalizing on two breakout plays.

Cerutti later admitted working on the breakout in last week's practice helped to prepare for the game.

Junior forward Paul Daley, who came into the game scoreless on the season, added his first goal coming off of a powerplay.

The Bronchos were never able to overcome the first period, as the Icers' defense began to lockdown.

After receiving his first start as an Icer, junior defenseman Kevin Miller did not disappoint his team as he recorded two assists and

rarely let the Bronchos' offense get in good position to score on Hume.

Miller said that every time the Bronchos dumped the puck into the zone, the Icers would regroup, thus making it difficult to stay aggressive on offense.

"These teams do not like each other," the Robert Morris transfer said. "It's a great feeling, I love it. It's always easier when you have talented guys around you like I do."

Cerutti feels the weekend sweep could do wonders in the future for his team.

He described the win as a "great team victory" and hopes to maintain this type of physical play for the remainder of the season.

After their biggest test so far in the young season, Balboni still saw some things to take into consideration for this week's practice.

"We did a good job on working the systems, but we still need to work on the board play from our forwards," he said. "Anytime you're learning and winning games at the same time, you're in a good position. This is one of the better weekends that I can remember."

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Comeback

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could say. We worked all the way back and then to concede right away, it's like, 'Okay, we've got to push it again to get the equalizer again.'

That second tying goal never came for the Lions as the players walked off their own field with their heads hung low and spirits down despite the valiant effort.

After squandering an early scoring opportunity in front of the net by shooting the ball right into the keeper's chest, freshman Maya Hayes found redemption in the 78th minute.

Receiving a pass from senior Dani Toney, Hayes ripped a shot from 15 yards out and put it in the back of the net.

With the game now tied, Hayes leaped into the air in celebration as Penn State's bench erupted.

Less than a minute later,

Wisconsin responded with a goal of its own and regained the lead.

"It's pretty frustrating," forward Tani Costa said. "We worked so hard to try and get the lead back. We tied it up and fought so hard and we let a little goal in. Little mistakes like that we really have to work to fix."

Earlier in the game, Costa had given Penn State its first goal on a shot from the top of the box off of a cross from senior Megan Monroig.

On the play, Monroig had raced down the sideline and delivered a ball in front of the net that both Toney and Wisconsin's keeper leaped up for.

Neither made the play as the ball sailed to Costa, who put it in to give the Lions a glimmer of hope heading into the half to cut the Badgers 2-0 lead in half.

"It was huge because a 2-0 lead is the worst lead to have in soccer," Monroig said. "Everybody knows it. One goal and bam they

are back in it and usually if you score you go back and get another one. It was huge having her score that and not being down as much going into halftime."

And though the Lions used that momentum to eventually tie the game up, Wisconsin's third goal was one too many mountains to climb up.

A slow start by Penn State and two Badger goals off of set pieces didn't get the Lions too down, but after completing the first comeback, another goal just was too much for the team to pull off.

"We knew they were going to come back at us," Monroig said. "Especially a team like Wisconsin, where their soccer skills aren't the best. All they do is try to kill the game, kick the ball forward and run after it. So it's definitely hard. It definitely knocks you down and it's hard to deal with."

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Physical

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Though Daley said the Icers played smart for the most part, there was one play at the end of the first period Saturday that could've changed momentum in favor of the Bronchos.

With the Icers already up 3-0, senior forward Tim O'Brien made a run at one of the Broncho players, knocking him to the ice and getting called for a double-minor holding and cross checking penalty. With momentum from the

ensuing powerplay, the Bronchos were able to capitalize early in the second period on a goal by Anthony Knuth before the Icers defense was able to shut down the Bronchos and hold on for a 3-1 win.

"I put our team in a bad position there and just let my emotions get the best of me," O'Brien said. "It won't happen again the rest of the year."

One Broncho player constantly instigating scuffles was goalie Nick Holmes. With Icers crashing the net, Holmes slashed and checked Penn State players caus-

ing referees to get involved multiple times.

"Most of the time goalies are pretty quiet, but he kept coming out of his net and getting involved after the whistle," O'Brien said. "I don't know what he was doing or what he was trying to prove, but obviously it didn't work."

Coach Scott Balboni was pleased with his team's response to the Bronchos' style of play.

"Our gameplan all year is to be physical, rolling four lines and wear teams down," Balboni said. "I thought we did a good job of that both games this weekend."

"Our gameplan all year is to be physical."

Scott Balboni
Icers coach

Moving forward, the Icers will now prepare for No. 2 Ohio as the Bobcats make a visit to the Greenberg Ice Pavilion for a two-game set next weekend.

Daley said Ohio is much more skilled than Central Oklahoma and doesn't anticipate the after-whistle scuffles the Icers saw this past weekend.

"You won't see the stuff after the

whistle when you have two highly-skilled teams on the ice, but anytime you can throw some bodies out there and play physical and try to knock the other team off their game it's a good thing," Daley said. "This weekend was a good test and a stepping stone as we get ready for next weekend."

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