

Win breeds confidence for tough weekend

By Joe McIntyre
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

With No. 17 Duke and No. 5 Princeton coming to Happy Valley this weekend, the No. 11 Penn State field hockey team needed a little confidence boost coming off a shutout loss at the hands of Ohio State.

The Lions (10-4, 3-2 Big Ten) lost to the No. 6 Buckeyes on the road Sunday and a shot of confidence is exactly what they got with a 4-1 victory over Bucknell (6-9) Tuesday evening.

"I think it's really important going in with a win," coach Char Morett said.

"It's really important going in with the way we've been playing. Just the speed we've been playing with, the ball control, we're doing a nice job."

Morett recognized that if the Lions were going to compete with Princeton and Duke, a win against the Bison was a tremendous boost. Princeton (10-3) leads the

Ivy League and the Blue Devils are coming off two straight wins, including a 4-3 overtime win against Old Dominion on the road.

The last time the Lions faced a top-5 team and had another tough game to follow, they lost to then-No. 3 Virginia before falling to 1-2 after a loss to then-No. 5 Connecticut.

But before facing two top-20 teams this weekend, the Lions had a game against a Bucknell team that the Lions are 32-2-2 against all-time and they took advantage of it.

"Not to say going in with a loss would make a huge difference but it just helps knowing what you can do and having confidence," senior midfielder Jenny Purvis said. "You just have that trust even a tiny bit more than you would normally, which is good."

After falling to a 1-2 record early in the season, the Lions haven't had a losing streak of more than one game. After a 2-0 loss to Michigan, the Lions came back

with a 5-3 victory over Iowa. And after a 3-0 loss to Ohio State, the Lions came back with the 4-1 win over Bucknell.

The Lions seem to have a short-term memory coming off losses and Morett said if the team works hard in practice following a defeat, there's no reason they shouldn't rebound quickly.

"I'd like to see our forwards eliminate a little bit cleaner," Morett said. "But I thought that the midfielders, Jessie [Longstreth] and Britt [Grzywacz] and Hannah [Allison], I thought the three midfielders really made a big difference in the game [Tuesday]."

Before the Nittany Lions face a Princeton team on Sunday who they haven't beaten since 2007, they have to go through a Duke team who has played uncharacteristically poorly over the past two seasons, and hasn't won an ACC conference game since 2008.

But the struggling teams can be the most dangerous this time of



Brittany Grzywacz (left) makes a play against Iowa this season.

year with players trying to earn spots on next year's team, and junior midfielder Jess Longstreth said the Lions can't afford to look ahead to Sunday's match-up against Princeton without first focusing on the Blue Devils.

"It's really important actually," Longstreth said. "We just ended on a positive note, so then we'll start this weekend on a positive note."

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James Harrison lacks class with recent comments

By Paul Casella

If it's all just a ploy for attention, then it just makes the situation that much more disturbing.

But if James Harrison is serious when he says he's considering retirement from the NFL, I have one simple response.

Please do it. Admittedly, I am not a Steelers fan, but as a die-hard St. Louis Rams fan and a Rochester, NY native, I have no reason to hate the Steelers — and until this week, no reason to dislike Harrison, either.

But in just a matter of days Harrison has jettisoned himself to near the top of my lengthy list of athletes I despise the most —

though he still hasn't reached the likes of Todd Bertuzzi or Brett Favre.

At this pace, however, he might get there soon enough. This week alone he claimed he tries to hurt people — his fellow players — and that he doesn't know if he can play by the NFL's rules anymore.

You mean the rules designed to keep players safe and prevent long-term injuries to the men who suit up alongside you every day and get paid millions of dollars to do so?

Even if the hits that knocked Joshua Cribbs and Mohamed Massaquoi out of Sunday's game were legal — they earned Harrison a \$75,000 fine — that's not where my problem lies.

As of Sunday night, Harrison was just a hard-hitting, aggressive football player in my mind.

But now, he's a hard-hitting, aggressive, ignorant football player who I would be thrilled to

never see play another down in the NFL.

To be fair, Harrison wanted to make it clear he doesn't try to "injure" players, only "hurt" them, meaning — by his definition — they are only shaken up and can return to play in the next series or game.

But keep in mind this is coming from a player who was suspended two games during his senior year of high school for challenging an assistant coach to a fight and then another game later in the year for making obscene gestures to fans. Not to mention he ultimately had to attend Kent State because national powerhouse teams lost interest in the line-backer after Harrison found himself dealing with legal troubles resulting from shooting a teammate with a BB gun in the locker room. No offense, but this isn't the first guy I'd go to if I needed help with vocabulary.

Even by Harrison's definitions, though, his hit Sunday left Cribbs injured, not hurt. After laying unconscious on the field for minutes, Cribbs eventually walked off the field, but soon retreated to the locker room with a concussion.

Surely Harrison would have some concern for Cribbs' well-being at that point, right?

Not exactly. "That ends the wildcat," said Harrison about his response to seeing Cribbs slowly walk off the field after laying there motionless for minutes. "It's out the window." And flying out the window right beside it was any respect I had for Harrison.

Not only was it apparent that Harrison couldn't care less if he had left Cribbs seriously injured, he even made light of Cribbs being unconscious afterward, saying the receiver was only "sleeping" and he would be "OK." Well, Cribbs still has not prac-

ticed this week and likely will not play in his team's game Sunday, all the while Harrison will be running around trying to injure — er, hurt — Chad Henne and Ronnie Brown when the Steelers take on the Miami Dolphins.

Then again, Harrison didn't practice yesterday either, but for a very different reason — he was taking the day to think about if he still wanted to play in the NFL.

Apparently too frustrated with the fine to practice, Harrison was excused from the team's workout so he could mull retirement.

Though it's highly unlikely he will just walk away from the game because he's pouting over a \$75,000 fine (he's in the midst of making \$51.175 million over six years), I really hope he's just arrogant enough to do it.

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MY OPINION

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