

Corner attempts a struggle for Lions over weekend

By Joe McIntyre
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

With the No. 11 Penn State field hockey team is second in the Big Ten in penalty corner attempts.

The Lions (12-4, 3-2 Big Ten) have prided themselves all season on their execution of penalty corners and the fact that they have the ability to score on any given corner and any given variation.

But in this weekend's victories against No. 17 Duke and No. 5 Princeton, the Lions went a very uncharacteristic 0-for-15 on penalty corners. It was the first time all season in which the Lions had gotten at least one goal in a game and one of them wasn't off a penalty corner.

"It's too bad our corners didn't execute a little bit more [Sunday]," coach Char Morett said. "I thought that we were just a little slow executing that."

It was also the first time all season the Lions had gone more than one game in a row without a penalty corner goal.

Morett wasn't necessarily disappointed with the corner execution this weekend, she said the Lions were just a little "off," which sometimes happens when a team faces two top-20 squads.

"I think a lot of it was just timing," Morett said.

"We might have had a good push, but we didn't have good timing on the hit and I think that was a big part of it."

"It's too bad our corners didn't execute a little bit more [Sunday]."

Char Morett
Penn State coach

This was certainly an out-of-the-ordinary weekend for the Nittany Lions, but it does prove one thing — the Lions have the ability to score in a number of different ways.

Two of the Lions' three goals this weekend came off penalty stroke attempts from junior midfielder Jess Longstreth.

The strokes were awarded to the Lions because of the pressure they applied to the opposition off their corners and it forced them to take a penalty inside the circle.

Different from a penalty corner, a penalty stroke is awarded when defenders commit a deliberate foul in the circle that prevents an attacker of possession or the opportunity to play the ball, or when any penalty prevents a probable goal.

And although the Lions didn't take direct advantage of their penalty corner opportunities, it was their pressure off corners that led to Longstreth's penalty stroke goals and eventually two important wins.

For a field hockey goalkeeper, penalty strokes are some of the most difficult shots to save, but had either the Blue Devils or the Tigers seen what Longstreth had



Freshman Lauren Purvis (10) controls the ball during the Lions' win vs. Princeton on Sunday afternoon.

son and throughout her career. They may have had a better chance to stop her.

"I do the same one pretty much

every time," Longstreth said following Saturday's win over the Blue Devils.

"I go to my low left. I've just

always done it, even since high school."

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D'Errico

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Rose said reaching the milestone was "nice," but not something he or a player like D'Errico necessarily focuses on.

D'Errico has always been "team-first," Rose said.

When asked about her individual achievement, D'Errico was quick to deflect the credit to her teammates. She said the reason she reached the mark on Saturday night was because the left side did a great job blocking, which allowed her to dig.

"It's cool, obviously, but nobody can accomplish any type of statistical milestones like that without the play of your teammates," D'Errico said. "It's not a sport that you can individually shine without people who can shine and support you and make your job easier."

The Lions, though, know their success comes in large part because of D'Errico.

Freshman Deja McClendon said the libero has been working on being a bigger presence on the court.

"[D'Errico's] on her stuff right now."

Deja McClendon
freshman setter

"She's definitely helping me out a lot more," McClendon said. "She's on her stuff right now."

Teamwork is second-nature for D'Errico. She's been around the sport her entire life. Her mother, Cindy, was a member of the 1977 volleyball national level A2 team. Her sister, Brianna, was an all-conference volleyball player at Ithaca. And her father, Dave, is a referee.

Rose said D'Errico brings a strong leadership presence and a lot of volleyball knowledge to the Lions.

"She's made a great contribution to the program," Rose said. "She's got a couple months left in her college career and I hope she focuses and continues with the great effort."

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Battle

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Not letting it affect how he attacks games heading into the season.

"If we win, all that stuff will come along with it," Battle said. "That's my mindset. I hear it all the time, 'Oh, it would be cool to do this. It would be cool to do that.' It will be, but more important is winning games."

For the second straight season, Battle enters the season on the Wooden Award top 50 list, given to the nation's top player.

Desperate to make the NCAA tournament this season for the first time in his career, the senior is the type of player who will sacrifice putting up his usual high numbers for the good of the team.

"I think our team has put their egos out the door," coach Ed Dechellis said. "I don't think we care who scores. I don't think Talor cares who scores either. We won a

game on the road at Northwestern where he didn't score that much. He just wants to win."

In that game, Battle scored just 10 points — 8.5 points lower than his season average — while teammates DJ Jackson and now-transferred Chris Babb shouldered the load with 20 each.

That win is indicative of how Battle approaches games and individual accomplishments.

Now, with this being his final go around in college, the senior guard is doing whatever it takes to go out on a high note.

And if he breaks the scoring record on the way, it will simply be an added bonus.

"I don't think he focuses on any of the scoring records or trying to get any of the records," sophomore Tim Frazier said. "He's always a team player and it's all about the team."

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Saad

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two more games. Balboni said the team will continue to monitor the injury until he is 100 percent. He also said he did not want to risk his forward's future on one series.

"It's a deep bone bruise so it can't get any worse," Balboni said. "But it's still early in the year, so we're not going to take any chances."

Saad has been one of the Icemen's main producers on the ice this season. After scoring seven goals in 24 games in his freshman season, the sophomore has

responded with five goals in as many games. Saad ranks third on the team with seven points despite already missing two games.

The Gibsonia, Pa., native may be best known this season for his dramatic game-winning overtime goal against rival Central Oklahoma. Saad made a gritty defensive play that eventually resulted in a snipe shot past the Bronchos' goaltender.

"He's definitely a force to be reckoned with on the ice," Daley said. "He's a big guy and hopefully his presence will motivate some of the other guys on the team."

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Redd

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shortage of carries for the freshman, but Royster isn't concerned about Redd cutting into his touches.

"We need to get other people the ball," said Royster, who is 31 yards shy of becoming Penn State's all-time leading rusher. "If we want to be successful, we can't just run me or run somebody else. We've got to spread it around and keep defenses guessing."

Redd, a four-star recruit who enrolled in the spring, was not made available for Joe Paterno's policy. But that didn't stop his teammates from raving about his athleticism.

Royster called the 18-year-old "a major asset to the offense" and said the Lions need to find a way to get Redd the ball.

At 5-foot-10-inches, 200 pounds, Redd's stature might deceive defenders who may not expect the freshman to lower his should

er and pick up a few extra yards, left guard Johnnie Troutman said.

"He's just a shifty back," Troutman said. "He plays off of defenders well, he's good at absorbing hits and he keeps moving forward with the ball."

Royster said what makes Redd impressive is his ability to maintain his quickness while running hard through opposing defenses.

Redd has yet to score his first collegiate touchdown, but Royster said much like the roadrunner, the freshman's quickness never stops.

"He's gonna be one heck of a back," right guard Stefan Wisniewski said. "I mean he's really good already, so quick, so athletic. ... I'm expecting him to be a great one."

Notes: Quarterback Rob Bolden and safety Andrew Dailey are listed as probable for Saturday's game against Michigan. Defensive end Jack Crawford has been upgraded to possible.

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Favre suffers fracture

By Dave Campbell
ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — Brett Favre's ironman streak has endured a litany of injuries and even a pair of premature retirement conferences. Perhaps this is the week that, finally, Favre's health prevents him from playing. The 41-year-old Minnesota quarterback has a stress fracture in his left ankle that could end his NFL-record streak at 291 consecutive games started — 315 including the playoffs.

Vikings coach Brad Childress said Monday an MRI on Favre's foot revealed the stress fracture as well as an "avulsion" fracture in the heel bone. An avulsion fracture occurs when a fragment of bone is torn away by a tendon or ligament. Childress said neither injury requires surgery.

"He's got great pain threshold and also great competitive zeal," Childress said, succinctly summing up Favre's legacy of durability.

Favre is also the subject of an NFL investigation into allegations that he sent lewd photographs and suggestive messages to a female New York Jets employee in 2008, a development that first put his streak in danger with the possibility of a suspension under the league's personal

conduct policy. NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said Monday there was nothing to report about the investigation.

For this week, it appears Favre's biggest problem will be figuring out a way to heal fast enough to face New England on Sunday.

"He's got to be able to do all the things that his position does," Childress said. "You can't put a guy that's a sitting duck out there. His competitive nature I'm sure will come into it. But a lot of times you've got to protect people from themselves."

Favre had arthroscopic surgery on the ankle in May, and he received a series of lubricating injections in the joint at the beginning of the season. The ankle has bothered him at times this fall, but he hurt it on Sunday's 28-24 loss at Green Bay as he was being tackled from behind while throwing his first of three interceptions against the Packers.

Favre was limping around during the game and walking gingerly afterward, and Childress said he was wearing a walking boot around the practice facility on Monday to make him more comfortable.

He refused to rule Favre out of this week's game, which would likely mean a start by Tarvaris Jackson. But he also insisted that the streak won't influence the decision on whether to play him against the Patriots (5-1).

"We have to do what is right for the Minnesota Vikings," Childress said.

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