

Club XC prepping for national championships

By Robert Quinn
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Penn State's club cross country team is sprinting into the National Intercollegiate Running Club Association National Championships, after both the men's and women's teams won the NIRCA Northeast Regional Championship this past weekend.

The women's team, ranked first in the nation following an undefeated season, won its meet with a

score of 17 points, just two away from a perfect score of 15. Graduate student Lauren Philbrook, senior Julianne Schnepf and club Vice-President Kelsey Markham placed first, second, and third, respectively, while five Penn State runners placed in the top six. All while missing Cassandra Knight, a graduate student who placed in the top two in two of the previous three meets.

"For them to be able to win without Knight just goes to show how strong of a team and club we have," said club President Dave Chen.

"We really have so much depth.

its one of our biggest assets."

Schnepf is one runner in particular who stepped up to fill the void this past weekend, finishing second in the meet.

"Julianne has really, really come along this year," said Markham, a senior. "She has consistently run times 45 seconds faster than last year, when she was already running All-American times."

The fourth-ranked men's team won its meet with a score of 30 points.

Graduate student Stephen Van Wert and sophomore Mark Burnam led the way, finishing second and fourth, leading five Penn

State runners who placed in the top 10.

Both teams now enter Nationals on Nov. 13 with championship aspirations. For the women, their status as overwhining favorites and the pressure that comes with it is nothing new.

"Everyone knows how strong our girls are," said Chen, a senior. "They're running with a target on their backs every single meet."

The women will be relying on a well-rounded team effort to complete their perfect season.

"We are confident going in, like we are every year, but there is

always room for error," Markham said. "We are just going to work together and run together like always. For a lot of us this will be the last time we ever run for Penn State."

The men are relatively untested as one of only a few large schools in the Northeast region that sport a club cross country team, and enter the meet ranked behind mid-western powerhouses Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan.

"We are really motivated by how good those teams are, they push us to run at our best," Chen said. "All we can do is train hard, run our hardest and compete."

Road

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there, so we're going to prepare to head there Wednesday and try to get a result."

There is an advantage to all the travel involved with three road trips, it allows the coaches to better monitor the status of the players.

Warming said when the team is on the road, it's easier to relegate rest schedules and get the players the necessary recovery time after games. While the Lions know they can't overlook any team on the schedule, Wednesday's game means just a little bit more.

"If we can take care of that one and get a result on the road, we can be back up in the top 10 or 12 in the country in the RPI," Warming said.

The Lions are going to need the recovery time after piling up a little less than 52 minutes of overtime play over the last four games. This weekend's game, played on

"We can be back in the top 10 or 12."

Bob Warming
men's soccer coach

Saturday, did give the players an extra day off, but adding what amounts to just more than one half of soccer this late in the year has tired out the legs a little more.

While senior midfielder Matheus Braga, who hails from Brazil, would prefer a more traditional end to games tied after regulation, he also knows the players can't use fatigue as an excuse.

"We're supposed to play 90 minutes and it's just in college soccer that I've seen in my lifetime where if you're tied you go into overtime," Braga said. "We have the time to recover but we have a game Wednesday where we play away and it's not going to be easy, but we gotta keep going and keep winning."

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Tomlin dismisses league praise

By Alan Robinson
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH — Mike Tomlin didn't like it when the NFL was criticizing his players. Apparently, he doesn't like it any better now that the league is praising them.

Ray Anderson, the NFL vice president for football operations, applauded Steelers linebacker James Harrison for "heeding our emphasis" by avoiding a dangerous hit Sunday in Miami like the one on Browns wide receiver Mohamed Massaquoi the week before. Harrison was fined \$75,000 for the Massaquoi hit, although he wasn't penalized on the play.

"There certainly was one play on a hit on a running back, that James Harrison may have taken a shot at the running back going down, and Harrison let up," Anderson said. "I applaud James for restraining himself."

Tomlin insisted last week that Harrison's hit was permissible under NFL rules, and Steelers President Art Rooney II agreed. Now, Tomlin appears unhappy that anyone in the league is suggesting the Steelers (5-1) softening their physical style of play

during the 23-22 victory in Miami. Tomlin said there was no such "letting up."

"I didn't see anything of that nature," Tomlin said Tuesday. "If I appear short, it's because it's somewhat insulting to me to assume that we're doing anything under any normal circumstances other than trying to play within the rules. That how our guys play, that's how we coach. Number one, first and foremost, is it conducive to winning? That's what our intentions are when we step into stadiums to play, whether it's last weekend of three weeks ago or a month ago. Or a month from now."

As for Anderson's praise, Tomlin said, "It would be tough for me to care less about their opinion, to be honest with you."

Despite Tomlin's insistence the Steelers didn't play with less physicality, Harrison said after the game he once avoided slamming into running back Ronnie Brown because he felt he might violate the NFL's toughened stance on dangerous hits to the head and neck. Larry Foote made the tackle on the play.

While Tomlin doesn't want his team playing any different from it did before, he said safer play would result from officials blowing their whistles sooner, thus

lessening the possibility of unnecessary hits. Tomlin made the comment when asked if his players are taught to play beyond the whistle.

"Well, you let me know when you hear a whistle," Tomlin said. "That's one of my contentions. There's been a de-emphasis on the whistle, as far as I'm concerned, in the National Football League — and I don't agree with it. We talk about player safety, yet we don't blow whistles at the end of football plays. So that's kind of a misnomer when you're talking about the whistle. What we want to do is play until the action ceases."

The Steelers apparently benefited from an on-time whistle Sunday. With less than 3 minutes remaining, Ben Roethlisberger's touchdown run was negated upon video review because he fumbled before crossing the goal line.

The Steelers kept the ball because the review didn't show conclusively which team recovered the fumble, and they went on to kick a game-winning field goal.

A whistle blew after head lineman Jerry Bergman ruled a touchdown, so the officials didn't sort out which team recovered the fumble.

Forgue

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said of Forgue. "He's strong, he's fast, an excellent organizer, an excellent tackler and his feet are pretty good, too. He's just a stalwart in the back."

As an attacking midfielder for the defensive-minded Quakers, Cantrell has shown he has what it takes to lead an offense.

Cantrell's four goals and three assists have him sitting tied for second on the team in points this season.

Forgue knows how Cantrell has managed to rack up the points.

"He's unpredictable," Forgue said. "He's not a flashy player, but he's very creative on the ball and he'll find open teammates. He's not gonna hesitate to run at you with the ball, he's got some great fakes and a nose for the net."

Having played together for so long before parting ways for college, the two are aware of each other's tendencies and tricks on the field.

It's not every game that he has

such a thorough scouting report on another team's player. Forgue said. And there's no doubt each of them will use their knowledge of the other to his advantage.

"We know pretty much everything about each other when it comes to playing soccer together," Cantrell said. "So it's gonna be interesting to see what we can do to get the best of each other and help our teams gain success."

Last season, when Penn visited Penn State on Sept. 30 in a 5-0 rout of the Quakers, the two friends saw little time on the field together as substitutes.

But this season, with each of them earning starting spots and becoming key players on their respective teams, Forgue and Cantrell can expect a much more exciting one-on-one battle.

"He's one of my best friends and I grew up playing with him," Forgue said. "It's gonna be great to see him, obviously off the field. But then on the field, it's gonna be as it always was, as it was last year. It's competition."

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Celtics spoil 'Big Three' debut

By Jimmy Golen
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Boston Celtics showed the NBA it can be done: Three stars, slapped together in the same summer, learning how to play together and winning a title on their first try.

Now they're showing LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and the Miami Heat that it's not so easy to do.

In what was being called the

most anticipated regular season game in NBA history, the league's newest super team scored just nine points in the first quarter and lost 88-80 to Boston

on Tuesday night. In no quarter last season did the much less-talented Heat score so few points; nor did James and the Cleveland Cavaliers, for that matter.

It was only the first half of the first game, but it was an early reminder that paper talent doesn't always translate into a winning team, especially when superstars and their egos are involved.

James scored 21 of his 31 points in the second half in his first time back at the new Boston Garden since the Celtics eliminated his Cavaliers in the Eastern Conference semifinals, a second playoff loss in three years that helped convince him he could never be a champion.

Line

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which ranks ahead of only Indiana and Minnesota.

"We feel like our offense functions at its best when we're balanced, throwing the ball well," right guard Stefen Wisniewski said. "We showed that last week with several different quarterbacks looking good, throwing the ball and running the ball pretty well, too."

The Lions were only four plays away from equal run-pass distri-

bution against Minnesota. They passed the ball 26 times and ran it on 30 plays. Redd's fourth-quarter performance was a big part of that.

In the last 15 minutes, he received eight of his nine carries, three of which went for 17 yards or more.

His nine carries were way above his average of just over three a game.

The rushing attack is contingent upon the offensive line and the push it gets up front. Inconsistency has been stressed a lot among offensive linemen this

season, but Wisniewski couldn't pinpoint a specific area, such as footwork or position, that needed more consistency.

"It'll be one thing here," Wisniewski said. "It'll be another thing at a different time, but it's certainly a combination ... being feet here, being hands here, being maybe an assignment mistake here."

Having a chance to beat Michigan means keeping those things at a minimum, and the Lions' best chance at winning translates into outgunning the Wolverines.

Michigan has scored less than four touchdowns in a game on only one occasion, against Michigan State.

Quarterback Denard Robinson and his nation-leading 1,096 rushing yards come to Beaver Stadium against a defense that allowed 870 total yards in the last two games.

Penn State will have to keep up, and replicating last week's second-half rushing performance may be the best way to do so, especially because Paterno wasn't optimistic of quarterback Rob Bolden playing Saturday, and Matt McGloin and Kevin Newsome

have yet to experience significant time.

Center Doug Klopacz couldn't understand why slow starts happened in the rushing game, but the area won't be able to take a half off this weekend with Michigan's scoring abilities.

"That's going to be key," Klopacz said.

"They throw up a lot of points on the board, and we got to be able to fire right back with that, so that's going to be a big point of emphasis for us."

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Brothers

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indescribable brotherly bond — will play an integral role in the team's success.

If preseason practices are any indication, it certainly will.

Senior Steve Kirkpatrick said there are certain things he's noticed in the gym that indicate the two are going to excel on the court this season.

"[Battle] has no fear of saying some things to Taran that other people couldn't say to him out of brotherly love," Kirkpatrick said. "It's a great dynamic. It's two

great players and obviously Taran has had a great career. But Taran will, as well."

Battle said he and Buie have that chemistry because their relationship goes beyond just bloodlines.

"He's my best friend," Battle said. "Most of the times, he just smiles. Whenever I need a laugh, I know I can look at him. Just his smile can make me laugh. That's the promising thing about us."

But Battle has been more than just a brother, friend and teammate to Buie.

After Buie flirted with trouble this summer — receiving two citations in the span of a month —

there was one person who was harder on him than anyone else.

It wasn't his coach. It wasn't his mother.

It was Battle. "He's my biggest fan and my biggest critic," said Buie, a four-star high school prospect who highlighted Penn State's 2010 recruiting class.

"He came down on me extra hard... just because he's part of the team so I'm embarrassing him as well as the rest of our team and our family."

Now, Buie said he's re-focused. And coach Ed DeChellis is excited about the promise of Battle and Buie becoming a potent one-two

offensive tandem for the Lions this season.

Beyond their on-court synergy, though, DeChellis is looking forward to seeing Buie develop individually as a player.

The coach thinks Buie's style of play could be similar to that of Battle's, a two-time All Big Ten selection.

Battle, who has led Penn State in scoring in all of his three seasons, has been known to take clutch shots throughout his college career.

Most notably, he banked a game-tying 3-pointer at the buzzer in the Lions' first round National Invitational Tournament game

against George Mason in 2009, which sent the contest — an eventual Penn State win — into overtime.

DeChellis said Buie might have some heroics in him, too — once he adjusts to the college game.

"[Buie] has the ability to do that," DeChellis said. "Let's wait and see what happens when the game is on the line and everyone is there."

"Then we'll see who wants to take the shot. I know No. 12 does. Hopefully, Taran will get to the point where he is one of those guys, too."

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Defense

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eight of which made it to the keeper.

Penn State was able to contain Princeton's forward, also the nation's leading scorer, Kathleen Sharkey to only three shots in the shutout.

"I think it was a real great team effort this weekend," said coach Char Morett.

"You just saw all the hustle and I think they played with a lot of heart and we haven't seen that in a long time."

Morett credited senior captain

Daneen Zug with being the anchor of the defense and really playing to her full potential this weekend. Morett said her consistency in the backfield really kept the opposition off balance.

Zug, who plays the middle-back position of the field, is like a free safety in football.

When the ball gets through the midfield, Zug decides whether to sit back and allow her teammates to recover or to move aggressively up field and attempt an interception.

This weekend, it was the latter and it helped the Lions stay on the offensive for much of the game.

"We've worked on our defense a

lot these past weeks and we're really working together as a unit," said Zug, who shifted to the new position this season.

"We know how to talk to each other and how to get each other to do what we need to do as a team to succeed."

Small tweaks have led to success for the Lions, such as moving Jess Longstreth to the 'flyer' position on defensive penalty corners instead of freshman Lauren Purvis. Longstreth, the team's second-leading scorer, transitioned to midfield after playing forward earlier this season and Morett said she's finally putting everything together.

"Jess has done a great job," the coach said.

"I think she's combining her dribbling skills with her passing skills and it's helping her defensive skills."

Purvis said the team's chemistry is most beneficial on the defensive end.

"I think we communicated really well because that's been a flaw when we've been breaking down sometimes — we didn't talk," Purvis said.

"It helped us get back to where we wanted to be."

With the combination of steady defensive play, goaltending and forward pressure on defense,

Morett said players use each other as motivation and it shows. This weekend specifically, Morett said the Lions "rose to the occasion" and must continue to if they want to reach their goal of playing deep into November.

Zug said she has her eye set on just that.

"We need everybody to play defense and our defense starts with our forwards," Zug said. "If they shut them down then it makes the job really easy for us back on defense. They're doing a great job [helping us] and I hope it continues."

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