

Fatima Balza (3) goes for a kill during the Lions' 3-0 sweep of Indiana at Rea Hall

Team seeking more energy

By Jake Kaplan

COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER set with the same energy they had after make adjustments and other teams know the first two has become a recent that the margin for emorphalit as great as quandary for the Penn State women's volleyball

In the first two sets of Set 1990 (1990) Saturday night's match against Purdue, the

Penn State women's volleyball team came out energized and won both sets by a combined 13-point margin. But then they headed to the locker

room for the intermission between the second and third sets, which is longer than any other intermission in the match. "We've kind of been struggling a little

bit lately to come out of the break and have that same mentality," senior libero and co-captain Alyssa D'Errico said after Saturday night's four-set win in front of the Rec Hall crowd. "When you come in here 2-0 you kind of have a lax attitude like 'Oh, we're ahead' and we just came out slow, came out tentative. [Purdue] played the same way throughout the entire match. We just didn't pick it up."

The No. 9 Nittany Lions (19-4, 9-3 Big. Ten) came out flat after the break hitting just .220 and erring on five serves on their way to dropping the third set to the Boilermakers (15-8, 6-6) and extending the match to a fourth set.

It wasn't the first time something like this has happened, either.

For instance, after winning the first two sets in their Oct. 15 matchup against No. 19 Minnesota, which also was at Rec-Hall, the Lions let the Golden Gophers stay in the match with a third-set win.

"It's a problem coming and that, but it's also a reflection that you we playing in a Leaving the locker room for the third great conference where other teams maybe the match score indicates." Penn State coach Russ Rose said.

Though the Lions won both of those matches against tough Big Ten oppe nents, they know they have to keen the a mentality the same throughout the cutte

"It is definitely a problem like of the after the break, the energy just goes down," senior middle hitter Fatima Balza said. "It's just like something we should control. We are two sets up, we just come into the game and finish the game right away. One more game with everything we have and that's it."

Senior defensive specialist Cathy Quilico agreed with Balza, and said it's a problem because when the Lons core out flat after the break they give their opposition a glimpse of hop-

Quilico said the Lions do talk about the quandary, but they have to actuary does Penn State will have that characteristic weekend, when it is and Michigan State at

The importance of cell real off strong in the third set might be even higher Friday night in Ann Arbon as the tale need Wolverines (20-4, 9-3) are in a second place tie in the conference with the Lion

"It's just us honestly just dom2 in Quilico said. "We did it a couple we did ago versus Ohio State and Northeas de co-I don't know what the difference was anweek, but we need to figure a out.

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Lions not focusing on title

COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The members of the No. 9 Penn State volleyball team find themselves in a new situation with four weeks left in the regular sea-

In the previous three years, the Nittany Lions didn't lose a conference match en route to three undefeated Big Ten titles.

Now: the Lions (19-4, 9-3 Big Ten) are in the middle of a tight race for the conference title sitting in a tie for second-place with No. 15 Michigan and two games behind conference leader Illinois. In order to obtain its eighth straight Big Ten title, Penn State will need a little help from other teams to catch No. 6 Illinois. Despite not having full control of the outcome of the conference race, senior Alyssa D'Errico said the Lions continue to approach each match the same way.

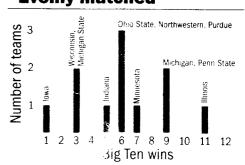
"We control our own destiny from here on out of what we win." D'Errico said. "If we do our job and take care of our business, we know that at least we have a shot. That's our objective right now.

Coach Russ Rose said he'll never look back of past teams and consider it a disappointment for finishing second in the Big Ten because of the number of great programs in the conference

Rose has had little to frown upon in Penn State's 19 years playing in the Big Ten before this season. In those seasons, the Lions finshed in first-place 13 times, second-place three times and third-place three times.

Senior defensive specialist Cathy Quilico said each year's team is different, and each season brings different expectations. One thing Rose knows about this year's Big Ten is

Evenly matched



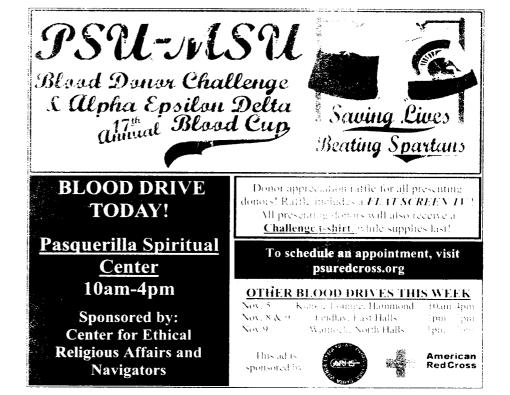
that any team can come away with a win. That's probably the part that's the most interesting." Rose said. "Iowa has one win and that win was against Indiana. And Indiana beat Penn State and Michigan, the two teams that are fied for second."

Quilico said the team is taking it one match at a time and not necessarily focusing on the conference title. While she believes winning the Big Ten would be "incredible." Quilico said the Lions still have the same goal — to play deep into December and be one of the final four teams at NCAAs.

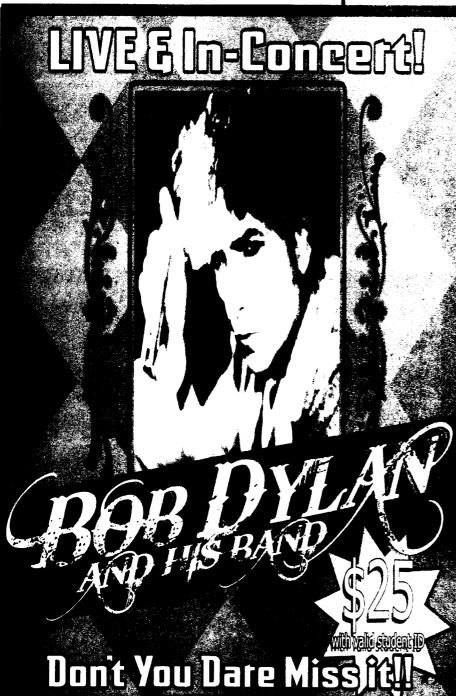
D'Errico echoed the same thought, saying the team's mentality has not changed. She said at the beginning of the year, the Lions lacked focus, which put them in the position they're in now.

"We have to focus on what we do every time we step on the floor, and hope that somebody else helps us out and we have a shot at the end of the day." D'Errico said. "If we don't take care of our business, it's null and void for trying to win the Big Ten title.

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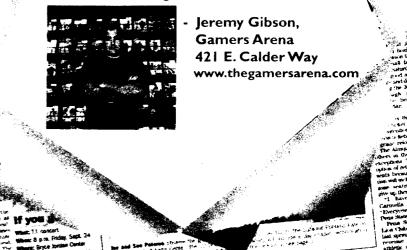




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