

Competition for spot heats up before regional meet

By Zack Feldman
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

For the first time this season, there is uncertainty only a couple of days before Penn State's women line up for a meet.



Paige Anderson runs at practice last week.

Between senior Paige Anderson and freshman Emily Giannotti, coach Beth Alford-Sullivan is unsure who will round out Penn State's squad at the Blue-White Golf course for the Mid-Atlantic regional meet Saturday morning — the team's last chance to state its case for the Nov. 22 NCAA national championships.

After three years of relative obscurity on Penn State's "home squad," and without a single top-five finish in her previous three seasons, Anderson showed up with more determination than ever this season, placing second overall at the Sept. 3 Dolan Duals, one of Anderson's four top-five finishes for the Lions this season.

Anderson worked her way onto the nine-women travel squad for the Oct. 31 Big Ten Championships, placing eighth at the meet. Yet when asked about her expected lineup for the Saturday race, in which the team is allotted seven spots, Alford-Sullivan said there were still questions on the back end of the lineup.

"We'll run seven people," Alford Sullivan said.

"We have it down to eight but we have some big decisions to make. All the way through our five and six is pretty clear, but it's seven and eight that we've got to kind of lock and load."

Despite Anderson's showing this season,

finishing outside the top-seven at Big Tens put her "on the bubble" for the small regional team.

"Our seven and eight are Giannotti and Anderson," Alford-Sullivan said. "They've been back and forth in position on our team, so it's a matter of taking some time and talking with them and getting them into position and ready to go."

Before the season, Alford-Sullivan said she could not have expected the level of success Anderson has had this season, though when she saw improvement Anderson made during the summer, Alford-Sullivan knew this would be a breakthrough season for the Carlisle native.

"At the beginning of the season, Paige was really lighting it up. She ran in our top five, she was very strong for us," Alford-Sullivan said. "She's kind of broken through to a new level of competitiveness for herself. So I'm not surprised she's been in this position. And I hope it continues."

Anderson said the adjustment to college running took its toll on her, but said her final season approaching gave her extra motivation to prepare well.

"I just had to sit myself down, and be like, 'I want to do well in running,'" Anderson said.

"I stayed in State College with Kara [Millhouse] and Caitlin [Lane], my roommates, and I would go on runs with them because they're people I want to run around timewise. I just worked a lot harder

this summer, and I think it helped."

"Watching the team win Big Tens in the fall last year, I wanted to be on a Big Ten team in XC, because I hadn't done that before. I was so happy for the team, but it's a different experience to be on the team that's running it, and I just wanted to experience that."

As for her competition, Giannotti said she, too, hopes to earn a spot on the regional squad.

"I've been top-seven in every race, so I'm hoping I get to be one of those people, but at this point, I think the work's almost done," Giannotti said.

"At this point, we're getting rested and ready to race."

Ranked fourth within the Mid-Atlantic region, and with Villanova and Georgetown leading the way, Alford-Sullivan said the ranking might be the best indicator of the team's standing this weekend, though the ultimate goal for runners is to compete with and beat Princeton, currently ranked No. 3 in the region.

"Without anything to prove otherwise, Princeton's a better program than we are right now," Alford-Sullivan said.

"But I believe on any given day, we can beat Princeton. Our game plan is to go in there, run tough, and upset them for third place. Can we beat a better-ranked team? Absolutely."

Staff reporter, zef5005@psu.edu

WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Lady Icers to face off tonight at Consol Energy Center

By Christine Newby
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

The Lady Icers will face off tonight in an arena that is unlike any rink they've ever played on. The 5,487-seat arena has more fans than their home rink.

The team is playing at the new \$290 million home of the Pittsburgh Penguins, the Consol Energy Center, against the California University of Pennsylvania at 6 p.m.

"[Cal U] called me before the season started, probably back at the very end of the summer and said that they were going to be playing a game [at the Consol]," coach Mo Stroemel said. "[Cal U] specifically picked us, and we said, 'Well, yeah we'll do that.'"

Penguins center Tyler Kennedy is dropping the puck to begin the game, according to Stroemel.

Junior forward, Dana Heller, a

Collegian photo staff member, grew up watching the Penguins and will take the first much-anticipated faceoff.

"[Playing at the CONSOL] is a huge deal," the assistant captain said. "I'm really excited, especially because of the new rink. It hasn't even been played on that much. I'm really happy that Cal U asked us to play because it's Pittsburgh, it's my home and I love it."

Stroemel said the players have been looking forward to tonight's showdown.

"We have Penguins fans on our team so that's huge for them," he said. "To skate on the ice where their idols skate is kind of neat."

The Penn State Ice Pavilion's maximum capacity is 2,600 while the Consol Energy Center holds 18,087 people.

"I think it will be a real shock

[when we first step on the ice], going from our rink to the Consol," said captain defenseman Sara Chroman, a Collegian business staff member. "Everyone is really excited so the excitement and adrenaline will kick in."

Stroemel believes there will be a "wow factor" to playing at the Penguins home.

"I hope they get over it relatively quickly," he said. "The fans yell all the time, and when I sit in the stands with fans that are yelling, I just kind of shake my head because as a player you don't even hear it. You don't hear anything because you focus in on what's happening on the ice in front of you. You never even hear it."

Despite being a New Jersey Devils fan, senior goalie Heather Rossi said it will still be a great opportunity.

"Some players are a little more excited, while for others it's just kind of another game," Rossi said. "Hopefully those that are really excited can get right to the game

though when it starts." Off the ice, Stroemel senses a different atmosphere going into the game, but said business is usual on the ice.

"Our team is pretty good about focusing on the work at a game," Stroemel said. "When our team focuses, and they focus on the job at hand, and they stay with the work that they know they have to do and how they have to do it, they play very well."

Several meetings with the Vulcans over the past couple years, have the Lady Icers, a Division I club team, familiar with the Cal U Division II club team. "We have to shut down a couple of their players who can hurt us on their own," Stroemel said. "We just need to shut them down. We changed our defensive zone over a little bit, and as long as everybody buys into it and does their job within the system, we'll be fine."

The Lady Icers' last game was a 4-3 victory over Rhode Island

days ago. Stroemel isn't worried about the long rest, though.

"As long as we recreate the same situations in practice, I don't think it really matters," Stroemel said.

"We try to do that almost every practice. We even do things that simulate their shifts so that they get into a rhythm based on how long we want to be on the ice."

Chroman said the win over Rhode Island was huge for the team.

"Definitely, the momentum from that will help us against Cal U," she said.

Assistant captain Michelle Clark said to be where the Penguins skate makes her feel like she's stepping into something important.

"I think that it's a great opportunity for us to be a part of the Penguins inaugural season in the CONSOL," Stroemel said.

"It's a great opportunity for us to play in a big arena for a change. I think it's going to be fun."



Stroemel

NITTANY LION SPORTS PLANNER

For advanced ticket purchase information visit GoPSUsports.com/tickets; 814.865.5555; BJC Ticket Office



NITTANY LION BASKETBALL
BRYCE JORDAN CENTER
HOME OPENER Friday (11/12) @ 7:30 PM vs. LEHIGH
Tuesday (11/16) @ 7:30 PM vs. SAINT JOSEPH'S
DOLLAR DOG NIGHT
FRESHMEN ADMITTED FREE with Penn State Student ID



LADY LION BASKETBALL
BRYCE JORDAN CENTER
HOME OPENER Sunday (11/14) @ 2:00 PM vs. RIDER
FRESHMEN ADMITTED FREE with Penn State Student ID



WRESTLING
REC HALL
HOME OPENER Sunday (11/14) @ 2:00 PM vs. LEHIGH
PENN STATE STUDENTS GET IN FREE with PSU ID



FENCING
WHITE BUILDING
Saturday-Sunday (11/13-14) @ 8:30 AM
THE GARRET OPEN
FREE TO ALL



CROSS COUNTRY
REC HALL
Saturday (11/13) @ 12:00 N (women) & 1:15 (men)
NCAA REGIONALS
FREE TO ALL



NCAA FIELD HOCKEY
PENN STATE FIELD HOCKEY COMPLEX
Saturday (11/13) @ 11:30 AM vs. SYRACUSE
1ST 50 STUDENTS GET IN FREE WITH PENN STATE ID
Sunday (11/14) @ 2:00 PM REGIONAL FINAL



WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL
REC HALL
Friday (11/12) @ 7:00 PM vs. WISCONSIN
DIG PINK
Saturday (11/13) @ 6:00 PM vs. ILLINOIS
CODE BLUE
Wednesday (11/17) @ 7:00 PM vs. OHIO STATE
PENN STATE STUDENTS GET IN FREE with PSU ID



MEN'S SOCCER
JEFFREY FIELD
Thursday (11/11) **BIG TEN TOURNAMENT**
@ 10:00 AM MICHIGAN VS. MICHIGAN STATE
@ 12:30 PM OHIO STATE VS. WISCONSIN
@ 3:00 PM PENN STATE VS. NORTHWESTERN
1ST 100 STUDENTS GET IN FREE WITH PENN STATE ID
Friday (11/12) @ 1:00 PM & 3:30 PM*
BIG TEN TOURNAMENT SEMI-FINALS
Sunday (11/14) @ 12:00 N
BIG TEN TOURNAMENT FINAL
*IF PENN STATE WINS ON THURSDAY, IT WILL PLAY INDIANA AT 3:30 IN THE SEMIFINALS