

HOME SCHOOLING

By Ryan Loy
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

During its run to three consecutive national championships, the Penn State women's volleyball team set many records.

The Nittany Lions became the only program to have two undefeated seasons, set the record for consecutive sets won, and defeated 109 straight opponents - a record

for women's collegiate sports.

Tonight, the Lions have an opportunity to attain one more notable accomplishment, as it looks to tie the NCAA record held by Nebraska for 90 consecutive matches won at home.

Seniors Blair Brown and Arielle Wilson said the Lions focus on dominating at Rec

Hall, and they've done just that. Penn State has won every home match since Sept. 1, 2006, meaning the seniors have yet to lose a match at Rec Hall during their careers.

This year's team is only a small part of the journey to 89 straight wins. Here's a look back at some of the most notable Rec Hall matches during the streak.

Dec. 9, 2005
vs. No. 17 Tennessee

Penn State's last home loss. The Lions' season came to an end when it dropped a four-set match to the Volunteers.

Aug. 24, 2007
vs. No. 4 Texas

The Lions began their current home win streak, as Alisha Glass and Megan Hodge made their Rec Hall debuts.

Nov. 1, 2008
vs. Iowa

In this match-up of top-5 teams, the Lions won in four sets. Nicole Fawcett had 21 kills, which gave her 1,000 for her career.

Sept. 1, 2006
vs. Eastern Kentucky

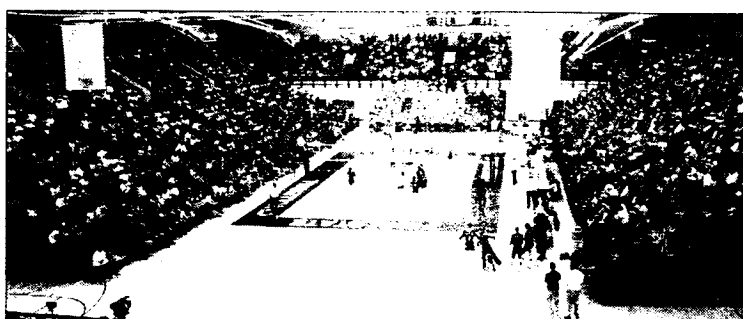
Christa Harmotto recorded 11 kills on .917 hitting, while getting 11 blocks. The victory was coach Russ Rose's 900th career win.

Sept. 21, 2007
vs. Michigan State

Hodge had 13 kills and 12 blocks, as Penn State became the sixth Division-I program to reach 1,000 wins.

Dec. 13, 2008
vs. No. 4 California

The Lions rallied from an early 7-1 deficit in the first set to take the game and the match - sending them to the NCAA semifinals.



Rec Hall during a home Penn State volleyball match.

Nov. 14, 2009
vs. Northwestern

It was standing room only, as 5,312 fans packed themselves into Rec Hall to see the Lions tie the 1990-94 North Carolina women's soccer team for consecutive victories with 92 - second among all NCAA sports and first for women's sports.



Penn State field hockey players compete in an NCAA Tournament game against Syracuse. The Nittany Lions lost the game 2-1 to end an up and down 2010 season.

Players happy with year

By Joe McIntyre
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Over the past two seasons the Penn State field hockey team has been on quite the roller coaster ride.

The team went from a 7-13 record in 2009, including 1-5 in the conference, to a 14-6 record in 2010, including the Lions' first NCAA tournament appearance since 2008.

But it's what has come in between the last two years that would force anyone who wanted to ride the Nittany Lions' roller coaster to have a seriously strong stomach.

The Lions' leading goal scorer and points leader, Kelsey Amy, said the 2009 season wasn't enjoyable for the Lions. She said there wasn't a good atmosphere at practice, during games or off the field.

It's easy to say that winning can fix anything, but Amy said it was team togetherness, leadership and overall chemistry that led to the Lions' success.

There wasn't a better atmosphere surrounding the team this season because they were winning, the Lions were winning because of the better atmosphere.

"This year was just fun, we had fun at practice, we had fun off the field and we would all hang out," the sophomore said. "I just think there was a different atmosphere this year and it definitely paid off on the field. Everyone got along really well, so that also showed with our chemistry on the field and such. So it was definitely a huge turnaround from last year."

Coming off the disappointing showing in 2009, the Lions didn't exactly start 2010 off on the right foot.

The Lions went 1-2 in their first three games losing to then-No. 3 Virginia and then-No. 5 Connecticut. But the slow start was simply that — a start.

The Lions then reeled off five straight victories, including wins in 12 out of their next 14. Wins in that stretch came against then-No. 5 Princeton, then-No. 7 Michigan State, then-No. 17 Duke.

The Lions' roller coaster season corkscrewed and turned what looked like another possible letdown season into an improbable run that saw them host a NCAA tournament game.

"For us being so young and having so many players that are inexperienced at this level, for them to go out and compete against [Syracuse] was great," coach Char Morett said. "I'm just really, really, really so proud of this team and the season they had."

There's much for the Lions to be excited about for in the next few seasons, as the team will only lose three seniors for next year — Jenny Purvis, Ali Meves and Daneen Zug.

The majority of the Lions are either freshmen or sophomores, meaning the core of this team will be playing together for years to come.

And although the 2010 season has ended, redshirt sophomore goalkeeper Ayla Halus is pleased with her team's effort but feels the Lions are still on the chain lift, well on their way to the top of NCAA field hockey.

"I'm really proud, we really turned our season around. I definitely had anticipations of us going even farther than [the NCAA first round], but we gave everything," Halus said.

"It was evident on the field that every girl gave everything they had and they left it all on the field. Throughout the season I thought we just became so much better as a whole and we're all pretty young so it just makes me really excited for the seasons to come when we can grow as a team."

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Hernandez wins award

By Ben Walker
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK—For once, Felix Hernandez got all the support he needed for a big win.

The Seattle ace earned the AL Cy Young Award on Thursday despite a modest 13-12 record. His major league-leading 2.27 ERA and superior stats put him far ahead of Tampa Bay's David Price and the Yankees' CC Sabathia and their impressive win-loss numbers.

Victimized by the Mariners' poor hitting all season, Hernandez found ample backing with the voters in this pitchers' duel. They clearly recognized how little the last-place Mariners helped him - in 10 starts, they were either shut out or held to one run.

"This confirms the Cy Young is an award not only for the pitcher with the most wins, but the most dominant," a teary-eyed Hernandez said while celebrating with relatives at the family home in Valencia, Venezuela.

King Felix got 21 of the 28 first-place votes and 167 points in balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America. The 24-year-old right-hander led the league in innings (249 2/3), was second in strikeouts (232) and held AL opponents to the lowest batting average (.212).

Price, who went 19-6 with a 2.72 ERA, was second with four first-place votes and 111 points.

Sabathia, who was 21-7 with a 3.18 ERA, drew the other three first-place votes and finished third at 102.

"I feel like they got it right," Price said on a conference call from Nashville, Tenn. "Felix, I thought he deserved it, even though he didn't have a lot of wins. You can't really control all that. You can't control the offense, and the hitters and stuff like that."

"The numbers he put up - those were pretty ridiculous numbers outside of the won-loss column," he said.

"I feel as if Felix was on a different team - if he was on the Yankees or something like that - he's going to win quite a few ball-games."

The 13 wins by Hernandez marked the fewest for a Cy Young starter in a full season - Tim Lincecum set the record last year with 15 victories for San Francisco.

Fernando Valenzuela won the NL award in strike-shortened 1981 after going 13-7. His mark of six games over .500 had been the lowest for any Cy starter until Hernandez.

"It's not only the wins, it's the whole stats," Hernandez said.

A month after the All-Star break, Hernandez appeared to be a long shot for the award.

He was 8-10 on Aug. 15 after 26 starts, but a debate had already begun to brew about his Cy Young candidacy. Many fans who rely more traditional numbers - win-loss record for pitchers - didn't think he rated at the top of the list.

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