



Kelley King/Collegian

Members of the women's volleyball team hold their Big Ten championship trophy.

# Regular season ends

By Emily Kaplan  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

It was a joyous ceremony, but senior Arielle Wilson said she couldn't help but think the moment was bittersweet.

At halftime of the men's basketball game Sunday afternoon at the Bryce Jordan Center, the No. 7 Penn State women's volleyball team was honored for capturing an unprecedented eighth-consecutive Big Ten title.

All 20 players — sporting the same navy blue warm up and brand-new championship hat — gathered at midcourt as they posed with their newest trophy. Cameras flashed and smiles were a plenty. And as the team walked off, the crowd erupted in all-too-familiar chant for the Nittany Lions: "Big Ten Champs! Big Ten Champs!"

"It was awesome and great to be out there in front of all of those people cheering for us," Wilson said. "But yeah, I'd say it was a little bittersweet because of what happened [Saturday]."

Penn State concluded its regular season Saturday night with a five-set (14-25, 21-25, 26-24, 25-23, 23-21) loss to No. 15 Minnesota (24-8, 14-6 Big Ten). The Lions (26-5, 16-4) squandered a 2-0 lead and blew a match-point opportunity in the third set and then two chances to close it out in the fifth set.

It was also the first time the Lions dropped a regular season finale since 1993

— also against Minnesota. Saturday night's loss concluded what was a tumultuous season for the Lions.

Penn State — the near-unanimous pre-season favorite to win the Big Ten — spent several weeks trailing No. 10 Illinois for first place in the conference standings.

Also in the season, several of the Lions' record-breaking streaks were snapped, including their string of 109-consecutive wins and 65-straight wins over Big Ten opponents.

Yet with a win over unranked Iowa Friday night — combined with Illinois' loss to Minnesota on the same night — the Lions clinched the title and the conference's automatic berth in the NCAA tournament.

Penn State will host Niagara (25-8) this Friday night in first-round play. "We were pretty much fighting all year to win the Big Ten," Wilson said. "So to have captured this is awesome."

Senior co-captain Alyssa D'Errico said Saturday's loss was tough, especially because it was a five-set match. Yet the team is ready to move on and start preparing for the postseason.

Senior Fatima Balza agreed. "It's an honor to be a Big Ten champion," Balza said. "The beginning of the season was hard for us, but we kept fighting. Now we did it, and it's great, and we're ready for the tournament."

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# Fans travel to Maryland

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — They were clearly outnumbered and they should have been drowned out by the crowd around them.

But like any good soccer fans, the small contingent of Penn State students that made the trek to College Park, Md. to support the men's soccer team made sure they were heard. After becoming a fixture along the sideline at Jeffrey Field this season, "Hertzog's Hooligans" and "Jeffrey's Den" decided the least they could do was support their team on the road.

"Sweet Sixteen, national championship, that's all we're working for so we're trying to come out and support the team," Brian Wrobel (junior-business management), founder of "Hertzog's Hooligans," said.

But instead of their usual spot along the sideline, the roughly 15 members of the student section that travelled to Ludwig Field sat in the bleachers behind Maryland's net. Wrobel, who is close friends with Nittany Lions junior forward Corey Hertzog, said Hertzog asked the group to sit behind the Terrapins net so it could heckle their goalkeeper.

During the first half, on every goal kick, the "Hooligans" belted out "MacBeth" as Terps keeper Zac MacMath's foot touched the ball.

Aside from their chants, which included "Fake Lee," directed at Lions midfielder Justin Lee's twin brother Alex, the students brought their familiar dark blue "Hertzog's Hooligans" banner. While some

of the Terrapins fans said they didn't know who Hertzog was, Alex Stunz (sophomore-DUS) said the sign was there to remind them.

"Everybody knows who he is," Stunz said. "If you don't know who he is, then you don't know soccer."

Most of the students drove down from State College early Sunday morning and set up a tailgate in the stadium's parking lot with the players' families and other fans. Wrobel and Sean McHugh (junior-psychology) said they both went back to State College Friday, went to Saturday's football game, then got up and made the trip down to College Park.

McHugh proved his dedication, saying he lives in Maryland, drove back to school Friday night then came all the way back to his home state on Sunday.

While this season was the first where the Lions had a consistent student presence, if the members of the groups have anything to say about it, it won't be the last.

"This is not a one-year thing," Max Amerman (junior-marketing) said. "We're going to keep this going."

The fans and the energy they bring haven't been lost on the Penn State players either.

"Those guys were great for us the whole year," senior midfielder Matheus Braga said.

"Just to see them here, it was a great time for us. I talked to Drew [Cost] at halftime, we were having a great time on the field having this atmosphere here. Even the Maryland fans, it was nice to be able to play with that."

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# Cost excels in loss

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Drew Cost couldn't of struck it any better.

But the laser from the senior midfielder was stopped by an incredible diving save by Maryland goalkeeper Zac MacMath in the 23rd minute. Despite the fact his powerful volley was stopped, Cost and midfielder partner Justin Lee played their best games of the season in the Penn State men's soccer team's 1-0 loss at Maryland in the third round of the NCAA Tournament.

"They're a great team in the air and we had to challenge everything, pick up loose balls, challenge on 50-50 balls," Cost said. "We knew we had to come out and do that and I think we did that pretty well."

Lee didn't start the match, but came on as a substitute for Mark Fetrow 21 minutes into the game and provided an instant spark. While Fetrow, at 6-foot-5, was meant to provide height to battle the bigger Terrapins, Lee's energy helped the Lions dictate the flow of the game for the last 20 minutes going into halftime.

For Lee, a native of Derwood, Md., the game was a homecoming of sorts, enhanced by the fact he was facing his twin brother Alex, a defender on the Terrapins, for the first time. While the game had extra meaning for the junior, his teammates didn't see a difference in his preparation.

"He plays pretty hard no matter what," redshirt senior Andy Parr said.

That thought was echoed by senior winger Matheus Braga.

"Every time he comes and plays for us, he comes after it really hard," Braga said. Cost said he could tell it meant "a hell of a lot" to Lee coming home for a big game. In the 79th minute, Cost was taken down

just outside the Terps' penalty box and did not get a whistle. Instead of complaining to the official, the senior got up and pressed the man who had taken the ball from him, all while getting shoved and jostling for position.

When the Lions went on the offensive in the second half, Terrapins coach Sasho Cirovski pointed to the composure Cost said was such a key in the central midfield's effectiveness.

"They gave us a lot of trouble, they really opened us up a little bit," Cirovski said. "Their three midfielders underneath their two forwards really cheated a little bit, so when we went forward they were comfortable with their back five and when we would lose the ball, they would have some numbers up."

Cirovski said paying attention to the direct way Penn State played was a major focus at halftime and the Terrapins did a better job containing the Lions in the second half. But even pinned back, Cost, Lee and his eventual replacement in Mackenzie Ament were still strong defensively.

"I couldn't be prouder of them and how hard the midfield guys worked to keep the ball in front of them," Lions coach Bob Warming said.

On his shot, Cost said forward Corey Hertzog played it back and intended to turn and shoot but the ball found its way to Cost's foot. The senior co-captain said he half-volleyed the shot and was ready to celebrate because he thought it was going in.

"That man made a hell of a save. It was unreal," Cost said.

"I mean, my hat goes off to him he made some huge saves to keep them in it during the first half."

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# Eagles lose to hot Bears

By Andrew Sellman  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO (AP) — Still doubting the Chicago Bears?

Jay Cutler tied a career high with four touchdown passes and the Chicago Bears beat Philadelphia Eagles 31-26

to take sole possession of the NFC North lead on Sunday.

The win was their fourth straight and it put them a game ahead of Green Bay in the division. It also came against one of the top teams in the NFC.

The Eagles (7-4) had won three straight, but were unable to break off big plays against one of the league's stingiest defenses and fell into a tie with the New York Giants for the NFC East lead.

Vick threw for 333 yards and two touchdowns. But he also threw his first interception in four years when he got picked off by Chris Harris in the end zone late in the first half, stopping a potential go-ahead scoring drive.

Julius Peppers had a sack for Chicago (8-3) after collecting three the previous week, and the Bears got that signature win after beating struggling teams like Buffalo, Minnesota and the injury-ravaged Dolphins.

Matt Forte ran for 117 yards — the most by anyone against Philadelphia this season. That included a 61-yarder to set up the first touchdown. And when he wasn't running by the Eagles, Cutler was picking them apart.

He had a 146.2 rating for the game, going 14 of 21 for 247 yards without an interception.

Devin Hester caught three passes for 86 yards, and Earl Bennett added two touchdown catches.

It didn't hurt that the Eagles were missing their top two cornerbacks after Pro Bowler Asante Samuel stayed home with a

knee injury and Ellis Hobbs went on injured reserve during the week with a neck injury. Defensive end Juqua Parker also sat out with a hip flexor strain, but they still had a rejuvenated MVP candidate behind center.

Even so, the Eagles fell to 5-1 in games Vick has started and finished. He hit Brent Celek with a 30-yard TD that made it 31-26 with 1:54 left, but Johnny Knox recovered the onside kick, preserving the win.

The Bears led 14-3 through the first quarter, scoring two quick touchdowns after the Eagles' David Akers booted a 45-yard field goal about six minutes into the game.

Chicago immediately responded, with Forte setting up the first TD by breaking through the line and up the left side for that 61-yarder before getting pushed out of bounds. Two plays later, Cutler zipped a 10-yard pass through three defenders to Bennett in the end zone, giving Chicago a 7-3 lead.

On the second TD, Cutler connected with Hester on a 39-yard screen and then found a wide-open Knox for a 20-yard scoring pass after cornerback Joselio Hanson slipped to make it 14-3.

The Eagles pulled within one in the second, getting a 10-yard TD catch by Jeremy Maclin in the opening minutes and a 36-yard field goal from Akers after Peppers sacked Vick for a 16-yard loss. But one big interception stopped the momentum and set up a late TD by Chicago that made it 21-13.

Vick, who spent 1½ years in prison for running an illegal dogfighting ring, had gone 238 passes without an interception after throwing one for Atlanta against Carolina on Dec. 24, 2006.

That streak came to an end on his 21st attempt of the game, and 212th of the season.

With the Eagles at the Chicago 4 and trailing by one, Harris picked off a pass in the end zone.

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