

Soccer

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held up. For the first ten minutes, Penn State didn't record a shot and got its first attempt from the foot of senior Matheus Braga with 34:19 left in the first half.

Coming into the game, the Lions high-scoring tandem of Braga and junior Corey Hertzog had been on a tear, but Maryland was ready. Hertzog was blanketed for much of the game by Terps

centre back Ethar White and the Terps were prepared for Hertzog's style of play.

"We communicated very well," White said. "It was just knowing where he was, he likes to cheat on the backside and the outside backs were talking to us and telling us what was going on behind us."

Junior midfielder Justin Lee provided a spark when he entered the game in the 21st minute and the Lions dominated play going into the half. Senior Drew Cost

had a shot saved in the 23rd minute and Braga missed wide on an open side of the net in the half's closing minutes.

Defensively, Birmingham commanded his line and box well, despite not being credited with a save. The 6-foot-5 goalkeeper rose up every time a ball was served into the box and often came down with it in his hands or was able to punch it away.

The redshirt freshman also got some help from his back line. "We knew that they had some

players that were really good in the air and we knew we might not always win the first ball," redshirt senior defender Andy Parr said. "We wanted to get up and challenge and make sure he didn't get a good header on it but we also knew we were tucking in tight behind covering."

The loss ends coach Bob Warming's first season at Penn State. With the team losing five seniors, and possibly Hertzog to Major League Soccer, there are questions looming and holes to fill.

But the season provided its share of positives, including the deepest run in the NCAA Tournament since 2005 and one of the nation's best offenses. While Warming wasn't ready to see his first year end, he was pleased of the effort from his team.

"I couldn't be prouder of the team," Warming said. "I'm pleased that our seniors had such a great performance to finish their careers."

To e-mail reporter: adr5079@psu.edu

Shooting

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right now, and the biggest thing to do is to knock down the shot.

"Then we try to get teams to guard us out in the perimeter and then we get our drives to the basket."

The Lions' ability to knock down open perimeter jump shots opened up the lane easy baskets in the paint, and that was never more evident than on a second-

half drive to the basket by guard Talor Battle.

Battle used a screen set by DJ Jackson, who popped to the 3-point line after picking Battle's defender.

Battle hesitated as if to pass the ball to Jackson, who shot 3 of 6 from 3, sending both defenders Jackson's way. Battle then cut down the lane and finished with a lay-up.

Brooks also continued his hot start to the season, extending his run of double-digit scoring games

to start the season to six. Brooks was 3 of 4 on 3-point attempts against the Paladins and is now 8 of 14 on the season, good for a percentage of 57.1, which leads the team.

Coming into the season, Brooks was a career 27.7 percent from 3. "My arch," Brooks said was the reason for the staggering difference in percentages between this season and his first three.

"I was in (the gym) every day."

To e-mail reporter: jps5226@psu.edu

Loss

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the biggest thing we were trying to do [Sunday] and the offense will take care of itself."

Penn State did just that when it returned to the Bryce Jordan Center in its win against Furman, 70-49.

The Lions limited the Paladins to 37.5 percent shooting.

It was the first time Penn State held an opponent to less than 50 points since holding UMBC to 42 points on Dec. 8, 2009.

That was a stark contrast from Friday night, when Mississippi shot 52 percent from the floor including a 13-for-29 performance from behind the arc.

"It was spoke about after the Mississippi game, it was spoken about [Sunday] morning during shootaround," DeChellis said. "We have to defend and we have to rebound the ball to give ourselves a chance to be successful."

Senior Jeff Brooks said the message got through to the team, as the biggest thing he took away from the Mississippi loss was the importance of containing the ball and not letting opponents get open shots on the floor.

Ole Miss junior guard Trevor Gaskins burned the Lions Friday for 24 points on 6 of 11 3-point shooting.

Overall, DeChellis said he was pleased with the Lions' bounce-back defensive effort on Sunday afternoon.

"I think our communication

was better defensively," DeChellis said.

"We had some lack of communication Friday where we gave them open shots because we ran into screens, we didn't switch it the right way."

The coach did, however, point out that guarding the speed of Mississippi — from the tough Southeastern Conference — is much different than guarding the speed of Furman (3-2), a school in South Carolina with an undergraduate enrollment of 2,600.

Wednesday's game, against a talented Maryland squad at 9:15 p.m. at the Bryce Jordan Center, will pose new challenges too, DeChellis added.

The coach said he was happy with the way Penn State shut down Furman's offense — leading scorer Amu Saaka recorded only 10 points on 5-of-15 shooting. But DeChellis was sure to add that the Lions weren't perfect.

Penn State had a few lapses, especially toward the end of the game, he said.

In a four-minute stretch midway through the second half, the Paladins cut a 24-point Penn State lead down to 15 points. DeChellis called a timeout and pulled seniors Battle and Brooks.

"I said to the guys, 'This is such a four-, five-minute stretch of lack of maturity. You're up 20-something points and we don't execute, we were trying to do things ourselves, we're not defending,'" DeChellis said.

"But to those guys' credit they came in and bang, bang got it back to where it needed to be."

To e-mail reporter: exk5049@psu.edu

Mexico

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7-of-12 from 3-point range. Edwards turned in her best game of the young season with a 13-point, eight rebound showing and shot 5 of 8 from the floor.

Against Utah, the Lady Lions opened the half on a 5-0 run to start the second half to overcome

a four-point halftime deficit and then built on their lead, putting away Utah 70-58.

Greene led Penn State with her third career double-double, scoring a career-best 24 points to go with 13 rebounds.

The sophomore center shot 9-of-10 from the floor in the win, while Bentley had nine points and a team-best four assists.

Lucas started her strong week-

end with an eight point, four rebound and personal-high four steal effort off the bench.

Players and coaches were not made available during the road trip.

The Lady Lions are off until Thursday, when they travel to Boston College to compete in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

To e-mail reporter: adr5079@psu.edu

Seed

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top seeded teams in the tournament, respectively. The University Park quadrant of the bracket, of which Penn State is the top ranked team, also consists of fifth seeded Northern Iowa (30-2), 12th-seeded Duke (24-6) and 13th seeded LSU (25-4).

Northwestern (19-12), which Penn State swept twice this season, is in the same region.

Penn State, which has won 13 straight postseason matches, has never faced Niagara or Virginia Tech and hasn't faced Delaware since 1981.

Lions senior middle hitter Mielle Wilson said the Lions will scout and watch film of the Purple Eagles this upcoming week.

Senior libero Alyssa D'Errico, a Byron, N.Y. native, said she knows a bit about Niagara's team, as two of her former club teammates are now Purple Eagles.

"I know a little bit about the school, a little bit about the team, just from being near that area and being around them," D'Errico said. "And every team is playing for the end of their season. So every team's going to come out and want to win."

The last time Penn State hosted the opening two rounds and Regionals in the same year was in

2008, when the Lions swept all of their matches en route to a second consecutive national title over Stanford. They also hosted their opening four postseason matches in 2007, when they went on to win the first in their trio of titles.

"It's all on the line and we've got nothing to lose," said D'Errico, who along with the other two senior co-captains, is hoping to finish off a perfect career with an unprecedented fourth national title. "We're going to play our butts off and hope to make it back to the Final Four."

Collegian staff writer Emily Kaplan contributed to this report.

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