

Inconsistency dooms Icercs in weekend split

By Greg Garcia
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

What a difference 24 hours can make.

After a lopsided 4-0 victory against No. 4 Delaware on Friday night, ICERS head coach Scott Balboni finally

believed he witnessed his team's best all-around performance this season.

With a 28-save shutout performance from freshman goaltender Mathew Madrazo and the return of three key players, the No. 11 Penn State Icercs (12-5-0, 3-3-0 ESCHL) seemed as if they would carry that momentum into Saturday afternoon's rematch.

Saturday marked the tale of another team. The Icercs' offense managed to put up only two goals on the scoreboard and watched the Blue Hens (17-1-1, 6-1-1 ESCHL) tally seven of their own,

winning the game in blowout fashion.

In what junior forward Paul Daley described as a "huge breakdown," the Icercs' loss is reminiscent of their inconsistency this season.

Aside from a six-game winning streak to start the season, the Icercs have gone a mediocre 6-5 in their last 11 games.

Four of those six wins have come against unranked and historically dominated West Chester and Towson.

Assistant coach Josh Hand is still attempting to figure out what exactly went wrong on Saturday. All Hand could do was attribute the recent loss to mental lapses.

"It's really confusing why one game you're on and then you can't do anything right the next game," the first-year assistant said. "Friday night was completely different. We just flip flopped."

Balboni agreed with Hand saying the team lacked mental focus.

The Icercs had a man in the penalty box for 44 minutes throughout the weekend, which included both game misconduct and unsportsmanlike conduct calls. Additionally, with Penn State trailing only 2-1 on Saturday, the Icercs immediately allowed three goals in a matter of 35 seconds, deflating the comeback attempt.

After the series, Balboni felt he made the right decision by sticking with the same personnel that looked so impressive the night before.

"It didn't matter if we changed anything," Balboni said. "The situation is we need to play better hockey."

Daley felt the high emotions from Friday night's game might have carried over into Saturday. The junior said everyone was pumped for the game and maybe his team started to feel overconfident.

"In perspective, it's not that bad of a loss," Daley said.



Tyler Szemore/Collegian

George Saad (left, white) celebrates a goal during the Icercs' win Friday.

"We split with a team ranked ahead of us, knowing we didn't have to go back to what we do." To e-mail reporter: glg5044@psu.edu

Lady Icercs one win away from reaching team goal

By Christine Newby
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Coach Mo Stroemel hopes to accomplish two goals during the Lady Icercs' trip to play Elmira's junior varsity team: Add another win to their 7-4 record and schedule a game for next year against Elmira's varsity team.

The Lady Icercs face the Soaring Eagles' junior varsity squad at 7 tonight, at Elmira, a small school in southern New York.

Elmira's varsity team is Division III, and Stroemel is eyeing up the team as a possible opponent for next season.

"When I'm [at Elmira], I'm meeting with their varsity coach

to see if I can arrange a game for next year with their varsity team so we'll see what happens," Stroemel said.

Beginning in the 2012-2013 season, the Lady Icercs will move to Division I, rather than their current club position. Stroemel said he already has several Division III schools lined up to play next year which will serve as a transition into competing against Division I.

Three Division III universities set to play the Lady Icercs are Chatham, the State University of New York at Potsdam and SUNY Cortland.

The Lady Icercs played Elmira's junior varsity team last year and won 3-2.

"I thought we outplayed them [last season]," Stroemel said.

"We played a lot of the game in

their end. We just couldn't score. I think this year we have a few more goal scorers, and we are shooting better than we were last year. If we can play in their end again, we'll be fine. We just had trouble putting the puck in the net. We outshot them. We outplayed them. We even missed a wide open net completely. It was that sort of game."

Junior defender Lydia Scott said they can't underestimate Elmira's junior varsity team.

"You never know how many players they get each year, who's back or who's not," Scott said. "We have to make sure to play hard, stay focused and not worry about what happened last year."

The Lady Icercs didn't practice over Thanksgiving break, but the time off doesn't faze the team

about its chances in tonight's matchup.

"I don't think we are going to have any trouble bouncing back," Scott said.

"I think everyone works out on their own so I don't think we will have a hard time getting back in shape."

Junior defender Abby Miller, along with Stroemel, also believes not practicing for a week shouldn't be a factor in how the Lady Icercs perform tonight.

After tonight's game, Penn State has a month and a day off from competition.

The University of Rhode Island will travel to the Ice Pavilion for an American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) showdown on Jan. 7.

"[A win against Elmira] is really

important because we can end the semester 8-4 which we've never done before," Scott said. "I think that will give us a lot of momentum going into our games in January, even though we have a month off."

Just finishing it on a good note is going to make sure morale is high and we'll be excited to come back and ready to play."

Miller said the team's long-term goal has been to finish the semester 8-4.

"We really want this win, and I think we will be really ready for this game," Miller said.

To hear more from the Lady Icercs, check out the audio slideshow at: psucollegian.com

Club boxing reversing trends, getting off to hot start

By Rob Quinn
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

The Penn State boxing club knows what it wants: respect. Following a 13-4 start to the year this fall, it's hard to imagine anybody overlooking them now.

"We got robbed in a few fights," said vice president Brad Stauber, a junior.

"We could easily be 15-2." The quick start to the 2010-11 season is refreshing for a proud club that, in recent years, had fallen on hard times.

While the club's resurgence owes to several factors, the

results, thus far, have been undeniable.

"Our biggest accomplishment of the fall was definitely going 6-1 in bouts against Army," said club President Matt Roy. "They usually set the standard for collegiate boxing. They've won four of the last five national titles."

Both Stauber and Roy believe the team's improvement and success are due in large part to coaching, including the arrival of assistant coach Osahon Omo-Osagie, a national champion and two-time All-American in his time at Lock Haven.

"Os does a good job of helping individuals find their style," Roy, a junior boxer, said. "Just a fresh take really helped us a lot."

Another huge factor has been the sheer amount of fights and training the club has been able to squeeze in this fall.

In college boxing many fighters join clubs with little to no experience at all, so the experience of its boxers goes a long way in determining the overall success of a team.

Penn State added 30 new fighters while training this fall.

"Experience is huge in college boxing," Stauber said. "Some schools throw kids in there like sacrificial lambs. We're not going to get you hurt like that."

The spring season will go a long way in determining just how far the club has come.

Penn State will have to measure up to powerhouses Lock Haven, Maryland, and Army in the regional championships in the late spring, of which they are the host, in order to secure berths in the national tournament.

"Our final goal is, honestly, to win nationals," Roy said.

"We want to send a full team to regionals, which means having a fighter in every weight class, and we want to win enough fights in nationals to win the team title."

Stauber added, "We want to take that away from Army, that would be huge. We want to earn that respect from other schools."

For that to happen, the Lions will have to rely not only on coaching, but each team member's individual efforts, a drive that Roy

says never left the squad's players.

"Winning doesn't come from the coaches putting pressure on us as fighters," Roy said.

"Winning is just a team culture, we've always had that."

The collegiate boxing spotlight figures to be heading Penn State's way at just the right time this spring.

In addition to the men's regional tournament, Penn State will host a show in February and the first ever women's national championship tournament.

To some, it seems, the pressure is a welcome arrival.

Stauber asked, "If you strive to be anything less than a champ, then what are you working for?"

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