

All-Americans bring skill

By Stephen Planovich
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Penn State's men's and women's track teams had eight athletes named All-Americans in the 2010 indoor season.

TRACK AND FIELD

Six of them are returning in 2011.

The men's team has five of those All-Americans coming back. Owen Dawson, Ryan Foster and Lionel Williams were all named USTFCCA NCAA Division I All-Americans in the 800m run.

Blake Eaton and Joe Kovacs



Collegian File Photo

Owen Dawson runs at the Penn State Northeast Challenge.

earned the honor in the shot put.

All of the returning All-Americans are seniors this year and all of them, except Dawson, were voted team captains at the beginning of the season.

Having five All-Americans returning for the 2011 indoor season is the second most in the Big Ten, as only Minnesota is returning more with six.

The Nittany Lion women only return one All-American for 2011, but it is someone who was named an All-American in two separate events.

Senior Shavon Greaves was an All-American in both the 60m dash and the 220m dash last season.

Greaves was also voted a captain by the team earlier in the year.

The returning All-Americans feel honored by being named to an exclusive group.

"I was really happy," said Greaves about hearing the news that she was an All-American. "I came up short the last year, and it was something I wanted to accomplish."

However, this year their focuses are shifting to the one thing better than being an All-American: becoming a national champion.

"This year I have bigger goals," Kovacs said.

"Definitely a national championship is within the reach for

Blake and I and a lot of people on this team."

Having already accomplished being All-Americans and all being seniors, all of the returning All-Americans are definitely motivated to become national championships.

"This year coming in as an All-American just gives me a little bit more fire to be a national champion," said Greaves.

The women's team has had national champions recently when their 4x400m team and Shana Cox in the 400m won championships in 2008.

The men have not been as fortunate.

There has not been an indoor or outdoor national champion since Brian Milne won a national title for the Lions in the discus in 1993.

Since five of the six All-Americans coming back are captains, they are definitely concerned with the success for the team not just their individual success.

Both the men and the women are hoping to compete for a Big Ten title.

"For the past couple years we've always been hearing that one day we could get a Big Ten banner, and now we have all the experience, and we're starting to mesh as a team that will at least be in the running for a Big Ten championship," said Kovacs.



Chris O'Meara/Associated Press

Urban Meyer (right) helps hold the Championship Trophy in 2009.

Urban Meyer neglected family duties far too long

By Jared Shanker

He just couldn't do it. Urban Meyer couldn't save himself from himself. His family tried, only to lose out once again to the same 50,818 people who have consumed his every waking minute and kept him on edge since 2004.



MY OPINION

One hundred seventeen players, nine assistant coaches, one athletic director and 50,691 students. Last year, they all took priority over the Meyers.

Like an overmatched heavy-weight boxer, Meyer's family was dealt body blow after body blow, somehow managing to stay in the fight, even as Meyer sat texting recruits in church or missed yet another one of his daughter Nikki's volleyball matches.

Well, six rounds after the opening bell, when Meyer the husband and father took a backseat to Meyer the Florida Gators head coach, Meyer's family lifted its head off the canvas and mustered up enough strength for one last haymaker. The punch connected, not with those 50,818, but with Meyer's head, finally knocking some sense into it.

On Wednesday, Meyer, 46, announced he was stepping down as coach of the Gators, making the Jan. 1 Outback Bowl in Tampa, Fla., his final game.

"At the end of the day, I'm very convinced that you're gonna be judged by how you are as a husband and a father, not how many bowl games you won," Meyer said. "I've not seen my two girls play high school sports. I missed those four years. I can't get that time back."

Haven't we heard all of this before? For those of you keeping score at home, this is the second time Meyer has retired in the last 12 months. In the week leading up to last season's Sugar Bowl, Meyer, citing health and family reasons, retired. Within 24 hours, though, Meyer was having second thoughts and a few days later returned.

However, last year's change of heart had little to do with Meyer and everything to do with protecting Florida.

"No. 1. I changed my mind for

our staff and our players." Meyer said. "The timing for my boss was not appropriate."

The result: a 7-5 season that had Gator Nation demanding Meyer make changes to his staff — namely fire offensive coordinator Steve Addazio. Meyer instead just cut the head off, stepping down permanently. No, *finally*.

Over the next few days, Meyer will endure a firestorm of criticism from cynics. He'll be called a quitter or accused of never truly having his heart in coaching this season and should have stayed retired. And you know what? Those criticisms are justified.

Meyer tried to please everybody. He thought he could find a healthy balance between family and football. The problem is that Meyer doesn't know how to coach at anything less than full speed. Meyer is the definition of a "Type A" personality — intense, ultra competitive and high-strung. It's only fitting that the man who coined the term "Type A" is named Meyer Friedman, who created the term to help identify causes for heart disease.

Meyer burned himself out after 10 years of coaching, yet there might not be a coach who accomplished more in a single decade than Meyer, who began his head coaching career in 2001. Meyer was the original BCS buster, coaching his Utah team to an undefeated record and Fiesta Bowl win in 2004. In six years at Florida, Meyer won two national championships, becoming the first coach to win two BCS titles.

The thrill of those wins still wasn't enough to overcome the pain of losing — losses not on the field but at home.

"If it was a different timing in my family's life where they weren't involved in sports and involved in all the things a dad should be at, then it might be different," Meyer said.

"But I want to make that clear: that's the reason. To see my daughter (Gigi) sign a national letter of intent to go to Florida Gulf Coast and I've not seen the school yet. I guarantee I'm going to see it."

This time, he means it. This time, family won.

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Divers battling inconsistency

By James Nicol
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Consistency has been a challenge for a young men's diving team.

The men's team consists of sophomore Alex Marchinski and freshman Jordan Harris. This pair is part of a young contingent that has seen many underclassmen make an impact.

Though there is not a lot of experience between the two, they have learned to take instruction and translate it into results.

"They're learning really fast, they're sharp, attentive kids, who are ready to translate what I say into actual functioning work off the board and into the water," diving coach Craig Brown said.

"They've been really, really good, they fast track a lot of stuff that takes most kids four or five years to learn."

Jordan Harris was a two-time PIAA state champion before coming to Penn State, and Brown has been working with the freshman to make the adjustment to more difficult dives.

Harris' high school, Philipsburg-Osceola, didn't have a pool, but his junior diving experience has made the transition a smooth one.

"I did a lot of USA diving so that really prepared me for college with the three meter and just harder dives in general," he said. "so it wasn't too bad."

MEN'S DIVING



Brown

"Being a young team definitely has its disadvantages. It's tough to beat those older guys."

Alex Marchinski
sophomore diver

Marchinski sprained his wrist in the team's first meet of the season at West Virginia, limiting him for several weeks. During that time, he didn't dive into the pool on his hands, forcing him to enter on his feet.

Marchinski did a lot of work from the one-meter height during that time. He said he has been able to extend many of those dives to the three-meter board since his recovery and is happy with his improvement this semester.

"This first semester I've improved a lot," Marchinski said.

"That time off gave me a lot time to work on the basics."

The team has been working on practicing their more difficult dives.

Dives with a higher degree of difficulty lead to higher scores in competition.

"I think we need to build difficulty in our lists one dive at a time," Brown said.

"We have a couple dives that are on the burner, they're not cooked yet, but they're on the burner."

The divers have built up a competitive list, but have struggled to perform them at a high-level in competition.

Last weekend at the Georgia Invitational, Harris had one of his best meets at the one-meter height but struggled at three-meters, while Marchinski excelled at three-meters and struggled at one-meter.

"Consistency is where we're moving now," Brown said.

"Now that they have the dives we can compete with, we've got to make those dives, cleaner, higher, faster and more consistent."

Over winter break the diving team will travel to Indianapolis to take part in a meet against Wyoming and Arkansas. The meet will take place at the USA Diving National Training Center.

Brown is excited to take advantage of the facility and have the team around some of the best divers in the country.

"We're going to be around the national team and training at the best facility in the country," Brown said. "We're going to spend five or six days there and have that meet and also train with some of the best kids in the country."

The divers are young but they have the motivation to improve. Marchinski acknowledges they have a lot to learn, but he is optimistic they will be able to succeed.

"Being a young team it definitely has its disadvantages," Marchinski said. "It's tough to beat those older guys, but just having that experience and competing with those older kids and see what they can do, it gives you something to look forward to and something to build on."

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