

Balanced production defining Lady Lions offense

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Posting a double-double of 11 points and 11 rebounds and earning a coach's praise for being the best player on the floor at times doesn't often get overlooked after a win.

But on Wednesday night, Julia Trogele's effort against Army managed to slip under the radar thanks to a 23-point effort from Mia Nickson and 20 points from Maggie Lucas.

This collaborative effort has been an ongoing theme this season for the Lady Lions.

"Each game calls for different things, different people to step up," Lucas said at Tuesday's press conference.

"There's going to be games where the posts have the high game, then when the guards have the high game, it depends what the other team is giving you. I think we've been handling that pretty well and showing that a lot of people on our team can put up some pretty good numbers."

Going into Wednesday night's meeting with Army, the Lady Lions ranked second nationally in 3-point shooting percentage with a 47.5 percent mark, just 0.6 percent behind the national leader Drexel Dragons.

Though the team shot 42.9 percent from beyond the arc Wednesday, the Lady Lions haven't been forcing shots this season.

It's shown in the box scores

"There's going to be games where the posts have the high game, then when the guards have the high game, it depends what the other team is giving you."

Maggie Lucas
freshman guard

through the first 10 games.

So far five different players have posted at least one 20-point effort, the first time since 2004-05 that the Lady Lions have boasted such a diverse offense.

"Obviously that's one of our strengths that everyone can contribute offensively," Trogele said Wednesday.

"I think we really need to work on our defense, make sure we don't have mental lapses. We need to hold ourselves to a standard on defense and hold teams to a certain point, then keep pushing on offense. I'm not really worried about our offense, but come Big Ten play our defense needs to improve a lot."

Penn State coach Coquese Washington has talked about her team's balance all season, saying she isn't surprised by how well her players have been sharing the ball.

Lucas echoed her coach, saying she saw the balance in pick-up games over the summer and, against the team's all-male practice squad, the Lady Lions "light them up."

While the outside shooting has

highlighted the nonconference schedule so far this season, the Lady Lions have a strong post game, as well.

Lucas said opposing teams have to "pick your poison" when guarding the Lady Lions and the team is capable of taking advantage of whatever the other team is giving them.

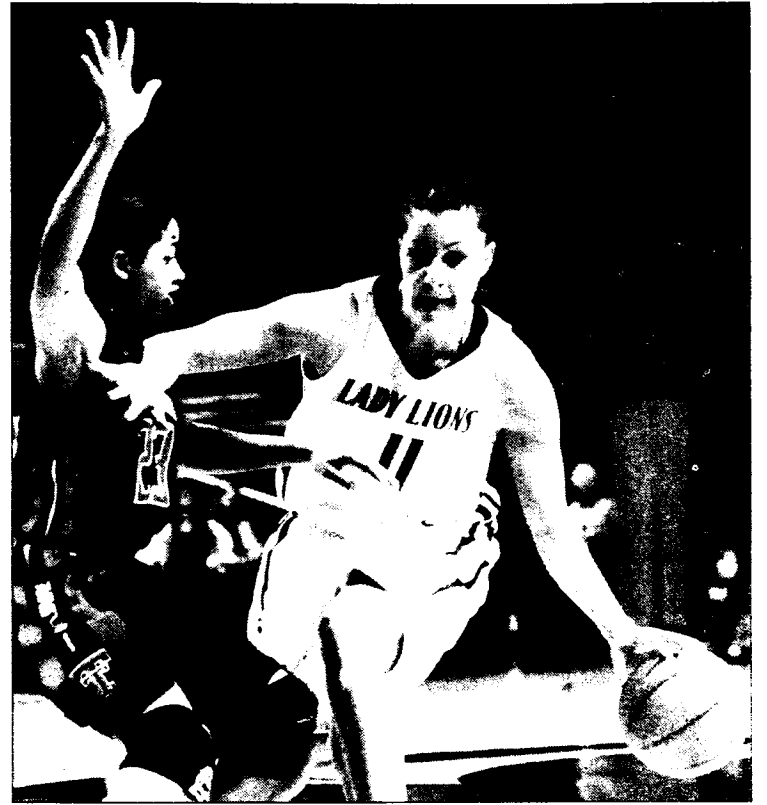
As far as the success from deep, Washington attributed it to good ball movement and smart shot selection.

At the same time, sophomore point guard Alex Bentley's continuing development and ability to get into the lane has opened up space.

"The ball movement definitely helps, then me and [Zhaque Gray], Alex is looking for us so much," Lucas said.

"She gets right in the lane and she makes great decisions when she gets in the lane. She either dishes off to the post or kicks out to us or gets one of those little fadeaway jumpers, so a lot of our scoring and 3-point shooting is due to her."

Before dropping 35 points on Army, Penn State's offense had



Senior forward Julie Trogele (11) pushes the ball up the floor against Texas Tech during the Lions' win earlier this week.

been ranked seventh nationally at 86.2 points per game.

Washington has no doubt the scoring can continue at its current pace and said the challenge is now getting the players to put that kind of intensity toward stopping opposing teams.

"Having so many weapons on

the offensive end has been really good for us," Washington said.

"Now we just need to just turn some of that energy and focus on offense, we need to transfer it down to the defensive end of the floor."

To e-mail reporter: aadr5079@psu.edu

Icers set to battle Niagara in final game of semester

By Anthony Barton
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Penn State Icers host their final game before the winter break Friday night at 9 p.m. when they take on the Niagara Purple Eagles at the Penn State Ice Pavilion.

The No. 11 Icers (12-5-0, 3-3-0 ECAC) have made a habit of facing the Purple Eagles (10-8-0) to end the first half, doing so the past three seasons. Penn State has won all three previous matchups.

"It's become kind of a tradition that we play [Niagara] the last game before break," junior cap-

tain Marek Polidor said. "We always expect a good game and we never take them lightly."

While Penn State split their series against No. 3 Delaware last weekend, the team comes off a 7-2 loss and junior assistant captain Paul Daley acknowledged the importance of getting on the right track heading into the winter break.

"We want to enter winter break and next semester on a high note," Daley said.

"We want to put together a solid game [tonight], we want to play well and carry some momen-

tum into the next semester."

In preparation for the Purple Eagles, the team had a short week of practice as Penn State was off Wednesday to visit the Ronald McDonald House in Danville.

"A couple times a year we go out to the community and try and give back and be a positive influence on some people," Daley said.

The Icers focused on fundamentals in practice, something Daley said was stressed after the loss to the Blue Hens.

"Supporting guys on the boards with the puck is clearly something that we needed to work

on moving forward," Daley said.

On top of fundamentals, senior assistant captain Tim O'Brien said the team took a unique approach to practice Tuesday.

Coach Scott Balboni first split the Icers into two teams. The winning team was allowed to leave the ice, while the losing team was forced to skate an extra 20 minutes in conditioning drills. With that incentive, O'Brien said it definitely helped the team's bond.

"I think that helped us fix the little bit of a mental lapse we had against Delaware Saturday," O'Brien said.

The Icers learned late in the week they can play in the first game against Delaware, when O'Brien said the team needs to focus on putting more effort over the winter break weekend, not just on game day.

"Especially in the second half of the season we need to get together full weeks and play teams that are going to be tough as Delaware," O'Brien said.

"That starts tonight, it's up to Niagara."

To e-mail reporter: acb5152@psu.edu

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