

DAILY COLLEGIAN

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Penn State THON 2018 Dancers

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Friday 11AM-9:30PM
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Penn State diversity by the numbers

How does Penn State compare to other universities across the Big Ten?

By Allison Moody
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Back in January, nearly 50 students and professors gathered in Schwab Auditorium to participate in Stand for State’s “All that WE ARE” event. These students were asked which part of their identity was most important when simply walking down College Avenue — and almost all the students of color in the room moved into the “race” box, marked in blue painter’s tape on the stage floor.

“Being an African American woman who decided to go to a PWI, my skin color is [the most obvious],” one participant said.

When asked the same question recently, Seun Babalola, a member of the executive board of the Black Student Union, shared the sentiment.

“Being a black male is the first thing I recognize in myself,” Babalola (junior-political science) said.

Penn State is a Predominantly White Institution, or PWI, with white students composing almost 70 percent of the entire undergraduate population.

Looking at statistics, in a group of 100 Penn Staters, an African American student would on average only find about 5 others who look like them.

Statistics are similar for Asian American and Hispanic or Latino students, and even lower for those of Native American/Alaskan, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or “multiple ethnicities.”

“Penn State is deeply committed to building a diverse, inclusive and equitable environment and to prepare students to be successful members of a global community,” said Marcus Whitehurst, vice provost for Educational Equity, said via email. “Diversity and inclusion are woven into the fabric of Penn State’s strategic plan and are at the heart of our vitality and long-term survival as a university.”

At a university like Penn State, which puts such an emphasis on diversity and inclusion, do the facts support its claims? How does Penn State compare to other schools within the Big 10

conference?

Each Big 10 school breaks down its student population differently, and the statistics shown in this article are the most recent and accurate provided by each university.

University of Michigan, Northwestern University and Rutgers University have a completely balanced student population when it comes to gender, with an exactly 50-50, male-to-female ratio. Universities of Iowa, Wisconsin and Nebraska fall within two percentage points of the same ratio. Penn State, however, is a bit more divided, as 54 percent of students are male and 46 percent female.

Penn State ranks 6th in the Big 10 for the largest percentage of African American students, with a 5.8 percent across undergraduates university-wide. Whereas, student populations of Indiana University and University of Maryland are made up of 10 percent or more African Americans.

Penn State ranks 10 out of the 14 schools when looking at the largest Asian American population, while Rutgers University comes in first with 26 percent.

make up or men-to-women ratios.

While universities like Penn State are actively reaching out to people with disabilities, veterans, those in the LGBTQ community as well as those coming from different economic backgrounds — statistics on these underrepresented communities are standardized for comparison across all Big 10 schools.

“Not only is recruitment of a diverse student body important, but retention of those students and their ultimate success is our main goal,” Whitehurst said.

In order to bring in a more diverse student body, the Office of Educational Equity and other groups within the university try to put on certain programs and events.

At University Park, Undergraduate Admissions Multicultural Outreach hosts “For The Glory,” an invitation-only event “designed for the best and brightest in the applicant pool,” according to Whitehurst.

Penn State Admissions also has offices in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to help local students bound for college, offering admissions counseling,

financial aid and FAFSA workshops and more. Penn State Harrisburg Multicultural Recruitment and Community Affairs aims to create a student body and connect students with diverse backgrounds to the resources and opportunities available to them.

Penn State Student Minority Advisory Recruitment Team (S.M.A.R.T.) also hosts multiple events to recruit a diverse student body and help ensure that those students stay and graduate. For example, on Feb. 9, S.M.A.R.T. hosted over 120 perspective students from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Centre County for Let’s R.I.D.E., or Reach Individuals and Direct them to higher Education, including workshops and a bowling party with multicultural organizations.

According to Penn State admissions, students of color made up about 31 percent of Penn State’s undergraduate population university-wide during the 2016-2017 school year.

By comparison, University of Maryland’s class of Fall 2017 was comprised of 46 percent students of color, director of communications Jessica Jennings said in an email to The Daily Collegian.

“Our commitment to ensuring the recruitment of students of color is a top priority,” Jennings said.

color is demonstrated through our extensive statewide recruitment efforts, our campus and community based college admission and financial aid programs and our work with high school counselors and community-based organizations,” Jennings said.

So if Penn State and Maryland are employing nearly the same strategies to further diversify their student bodies, how is Maryland more successful?

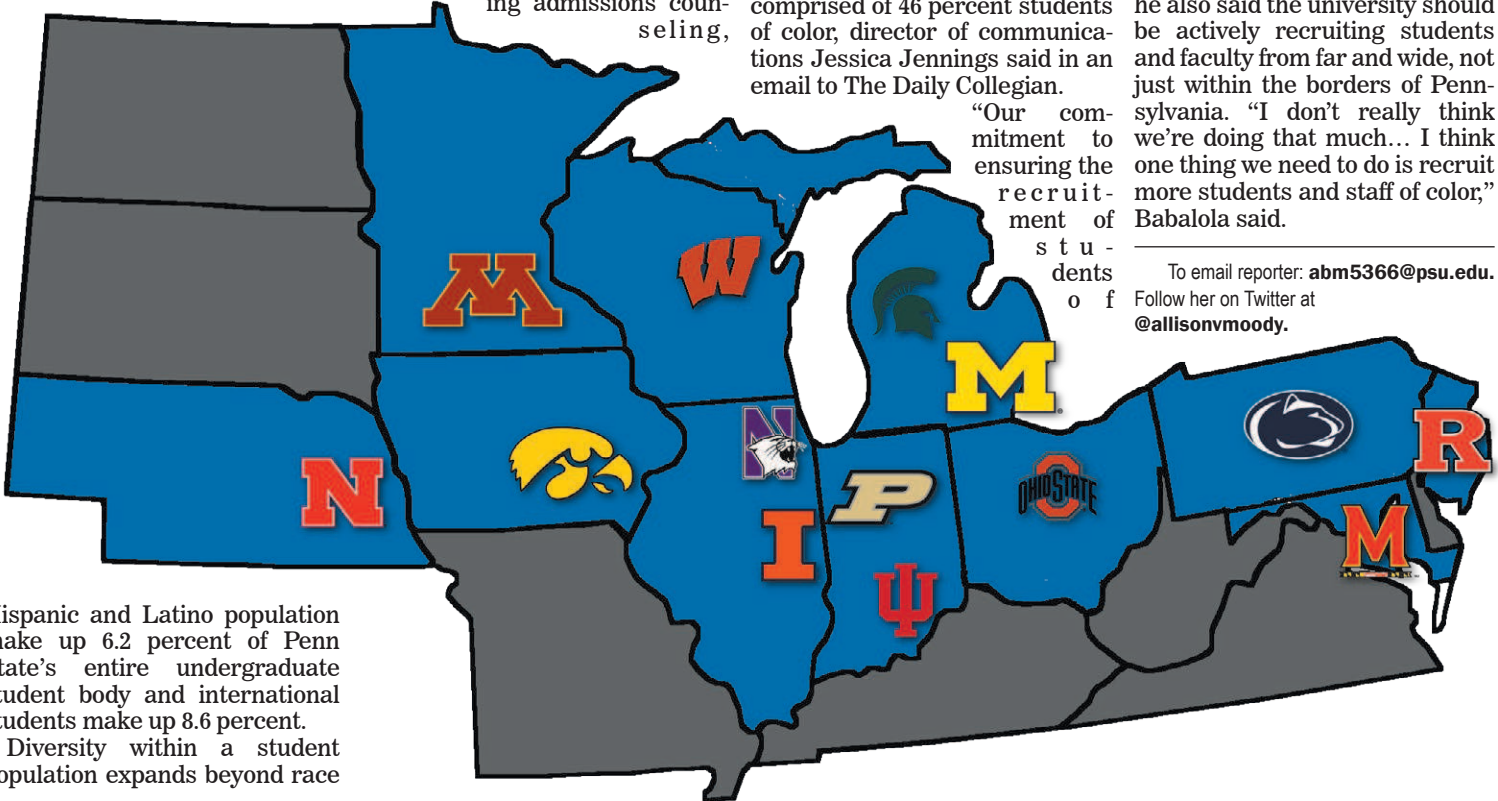
One possible explanation could lie in the geographic locations of the two universities. The University of Maryland is in a very urban area, just a handful of miles from Washington D.C., while Penn State is situated in the very center of rural Pennsylvania.

The racial and ethnic makeup of each state differs, as well. According to the United States Census, people of color make up 24.7 of Pennsylvania’s population and 50.6 percent of Maryland’s.

Thinking again of his question, Babalola agreed.

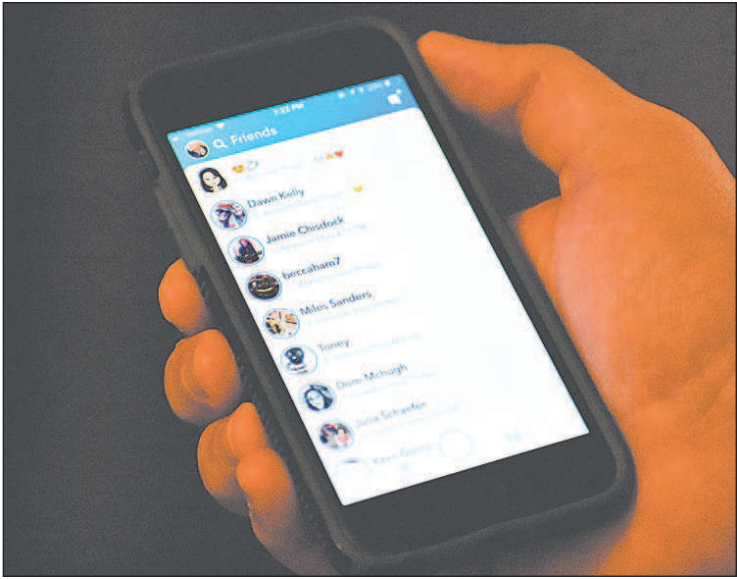
He agreed Penn State’s location plays a role in the diversity of its student population. However, he also said the university should be actively recruiting students and faculty from far and wide, not just within the borders of Pennsylvania. “I don’t really think we’re doing that much... I think one thing we need to do is recruit more students and staff of color,” Babalola said.

To email reporter: abm5366@psu.edu. Follow her on Twitter at [@allisonmoody](https://twitter.com/allisonmoody).



Hispanic and Latino population make up 6.2 percent of Penn State’s entire undergraduate student body and international students make up 8.6 percent.

Diversity within a student population expands beyond race



Amanda Thieu/Collegian

Snapchat released a new update earlier this week with a new layout that many users are unhappy with.

Students not happy with new Snapchat update

By Shannon Harney
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Snapchat users have been vocal about hating the app’s new update and Penn State students seem to agree that no new filter would be enough to cover up this update’s flaws.

Talia DiClaudio said she used to use the app all day, but has changed her ways since the update launched.

“I used to scroll through stories constantly,” DiClaudio (sophomore-education) said. “But now it’s harder to find my friends so I don’t really use it as much.”

DiClaudio said the people behind this new update “had some good ideas,” but they couldn’t carry out the ideas better.

“They had a lot of ideas, tried to push them all and it was too much,” DiClaudio said.

She went on to say she wants the app to change back to having all stories on one page, separate from messages.

“I feel like people are getting increasingly madder because Snapchat isn’t listening to its users,” DiClaudio said. “They want to make a difference in the app and they can’t do that.”

About the magnitude of the public outrage over this update, she said, “Maybe it’s being blown

out of proportion, but Snapchat needs to do something to fix it.”

Sarah Weir is another avid Snapchat user.

“The update makes it harder to find and connect with people,” Weir (junior-agribusiness management) said.

She said she used to use the app on a daily basis, but that all changed when the update made it so much harder to use.

Instead of restoring Snapchat to how it was immediately before the update, Weir said she wants them to revert the app “all the way back” to its original layout.

“I want them to make it so that we can all see each other’s best friends,” Weir said.

She said the update is just not practical.

“Users have to change their routine of swiping right to go to the stories,” Weir said. “That doesn’t seem like a big deal, but it’s annoying.”

Cameron Franz said he uses Snapchat every day.

He recoiled at the mention of the app’s new update.

“You can’t even see people’s stories anymore,” Franz (sophomore-geography) said. “Well, I mean you can, but it’s super cumbersome.”

To read full story, visit collegian.psu.edu.

State College resident, storyteller, traveler, shares experiences

By Laura Zaks
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Growing up, my father would teach me basic concepts of math, most of which never stuck. I can’t even add properly.

But one thing always did stay in my heart – a lesson that does more than just help a girl pass the fourth grade.

Boris Zaks sat across from me at the kitchen table and told me, “Laura, two negatives make a positive.”

I don’t know what propelled him to talk about mathematical concepts over dinner, but in my head, I realized the power of turning a negative into a positive.

Cancer takes the lives of millions across the world. No cultural background, ethnicity, salary, language or networking has the power to spare someone.

We are all affected. Every day. To me, cancer is one of the most negative concepts out there, pairing up with other negatives like loved ones passing or worlds being turned upside down.

So how do we deal with the negatives? It’s easy to just let

them break us, right?

But since when was the easy way the best way?

Penn State doesn’t take the easy way. We take the positive way, the harder way – the way that leads us to the kids, for the kids.

Canning, canvassing, fundraising and dancing – that’s our way.

Staying up on our feet for 46 hours and representing families dealing with hardship or gaining strength from survivors – that’s our way.

This is going to be my first THON experience and I am beyond anxiously excited to see what it’s going to be like.

I feel like being a freshman witnessing THON is like putting a meat-lover in a steak house for the first time – I’ll be hungry for more.

I already know I am so lucky to be a part of a university that patrons light, hope, faith, friendship and love in a weekend where it all comes together to show that no negatives out there are more powerful.

We can’t give cancer the power. Life and love and people coming together to celebrate both will always and forever be stronger.

I can’t imagine the exhilarating feeling of standing and dancing for a future cure and sharing that experience with all of Penn State.

I can’t even fathom what it will be like to hear everyone sing, see the tutus glow and the smiles radiate through the pain of both cramps and memories of loved ones that we’re standing for.

THON is for the kids – I know that.

But it’s also about bringing the community together to fight for something so much bigger than ourselves, something that we should never bow down to. The fight will never end, until cancer is eradicated. We will never surrender.

Dancing and loving and laughing unapologetically for a cause as great as THON... I consider this a blessing in my life.

All our hard work fundraising throughout the year will come to a point, and thinking about that makes me so grateful.

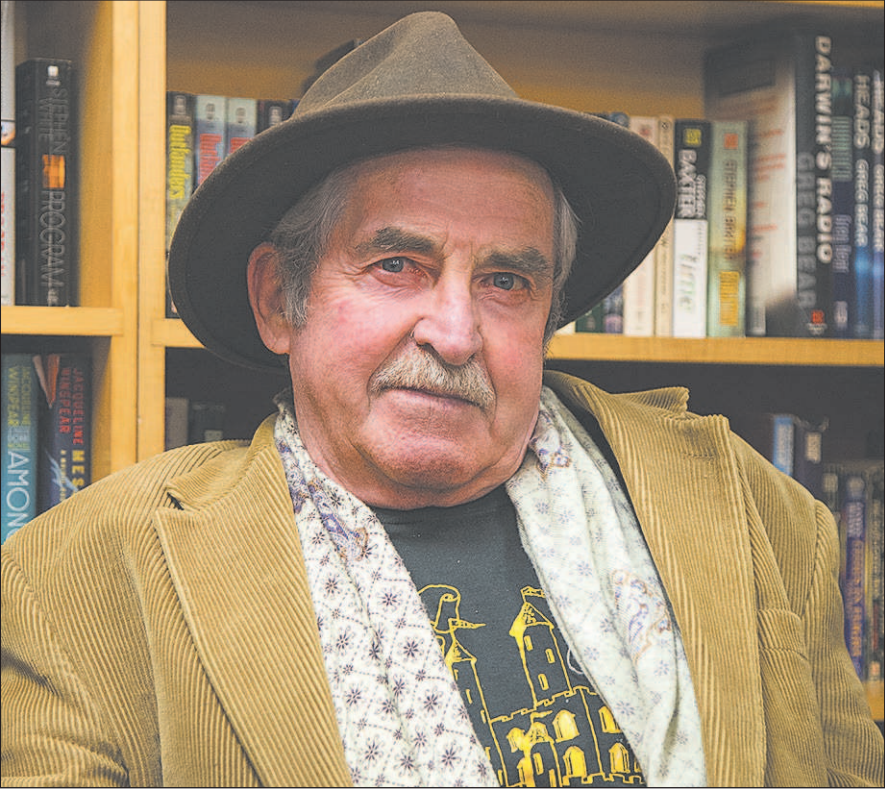
To have the power to change lives is never a power to take lightly and THON takes that power even higher.

I can’t wait to see everyone move their feet to the music and to the songs of change. I can’t wait to stand in line – the only line I won’t ever complain about standing in.

I am excited to witness the stage and platform on which progress rests, on which brings the Penn State community comes together to make Happy Valley a haven for the kids.

After all, they are the true fighters who need our positivity now, THON Weekend and beyond.

Let’s fight for this positivity, let’s dance for the kids and let’s come together and share this experience for the glory.



Lindsey Shuey/Collegian

Jon Vickers-Jones, State College storyteller and traveler originally from England, poses in Webster’s Bookstore Cafe on Monday Feb. 12.

To email reporter: lmz5186@psu.edu. Follow her on Twitter at [laura_zaks](https://twitter.com/laura_zaks).

ROTC: Balancing school and training

By **Chelsea Kun**
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

There are many things students can be certain about in life, one of them being that college is hard work.

This persistent and hardworking trait in many college students is not only because of schoolwork and classes, but the clubs, committees and organizations on top of it.

There is one organization that is included in this bunch, but it is different than the others.

It requires an amount of commitment that not many people understand.

They are training to serve the United States -- ROTC.

ROTC, which stands for Reserve Officer Training Corps, is a program all over the country that trains college students to become officers in the U.S. military.

Obviously, an intense amount of training comes with this commitment, which is unlike any experience a college student can have.

Joining ROTC as a freshman

is a different way to kick off college, but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Of course, ROTC has its ups and downs. They have an early morning because of physical training, according to Marine ROTC member Jared Dayton.

"I get up at 4:45 every day. On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday I have PT and we'll usually meet at Wagner by 5:30," Dayton (freshman-political science) said.

He also has drill on Wednesdays and Fridays, which prepares for the Villanova Military Excellence Competition, an annual ROTC event.

All branches have different schedules, so PT is not the same for everyone.

Aaron Howey, who is in Army ROTC, has PT on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and tactics club every Tuesday morning.

"If I have to shave in the morning, because we all have to be clean shaven, I'll wake up at 4:20," Howey (freshman-criminology) said.

"Then I'll meet my friends and

we'll walk down to [the Multi Sports Facility] at around 5:15."

Other students in the Army branch, such as Dante Whited and Austin Feldman, have a similar morning routine.

"If we're lucky we'll have PT in Wagner, which means I get a couple more minutes of sleep," Feldman (freshman-psychology) said, due to Wagner's proximity to East Halls.

Abby Givens, who is in the Army branch, talked about her first ROTC experience when she took her PT test over the summer.

"It doesn't count, but it shows you where you're at," Givens (freshman-psychology and neuroscience) said, "I was so nervous going into that."

She said that it helped seeing another freshman girl there, Mackenzie Kerns, as it made her feel better to have someone with her same level of experience.

"I said to [Kerns] 'I'm really bad at running' and she said 'me too.' So we suffered together,"

Givens said. "We passed [the test] by about eight seconds."

Jake Witmer has a rare situation because last semester he went to Penn College, which had a different ROTC program. He said that it was widely run by cadets.

"I had no idea what I was doing at first," Witmer (freshman-biology) said. "When it came to things like formation and stretching drills I thought, 'what is all this fancy jazz?' I caught on pretty quickly, though."

Dayton talked about the start of the semester, and the waking up early aspect, and not getting as much sleep as he would like to. He said he remembers waking up and feeling horribly due to lack of sleep.

To read full story, visit collegian.psu.edu.



Collegian File Photo

Dancer Relations Captains perform the line dance during Penn State THON 2017 at the Bryce Jordan Center on Saturday, Feb. 18.

MY VIEW | **LAURA ZAKS**

Mentally preparing for my first THON

Growing up, my father would teach me basic concepts of math, most of which never stuck. I can't even add properly.

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Josh Rosen/Collegian

Two Penn State Marine ROTC members participate in their morning physical training.

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DAILY COLLEGIAN
Independently published by students at Penn State

Memories not money, that’s what #FTK is all about

This Friday marks the start of THON, the annual 46-hour dance marathon run by Penn State students to raise money for childhood cancer, and all of us at The Daily Collegian are looking forward to another weekend full of love and hope in the Bryce Jordan Center. We’ll be there covering the event all weekend long and can’t wait to see all the good our campus community does for children with cancer, as well as their families.



OUR VIEW

THON is such a wonderful event because of the joy Penn State students can bring to those children who are fighting for their lives due to a terrible disease.

However, all of us at Penn State need to remember the importance of THON isn’t rooted in the specific amount of money we raise but in the memories we make with those around us this

weekend, especially the Four Diamonds patients and their families. We know this is an easy concept to preach. Everyone we’ve talked to involved with THON will say, first and

foremost, that this weekend is for the kids. But what does it actually mean to be #FTK? We can’t define it with numbers and a dollar sign. We can’t find it scrolling through Twitter or Instagram, regardless of what the captions say. We can’t articulate it with current events in a catchy poem we chant, though the line dance is always a jam. Of course, the money we raise is important, as the proceeds go to the Four Diamonds cancer treatment center, but we cannot get too caught up in it. When it comes time for the dancers to sit and the totals to be revealed, we can’t worry about raising more money than we did in years past, especially when the total is going to be millions of dollars either way. Yes, the photos we post on social media are good. After all, the stories and images of THON are part of the reason why we’re able to raise so much money and help the kids and their families as much as we do.

Still, we must remember to be present while we’re in the BJC. It’s hard to fully participate if we’re constantly staring at our phones. Speaking of being present, don’t be if you’re sick. All the cancer patients who are in attendance have weaker immune systems than we do, so however minor illnesses are for us, they could cause serious harm to the THON kids. And for the love of all things good about THON, do not show up drunk or high. This should go without saying, but every year there are selfish people who attend while intoxicated. If you can’t be sober for one weekend, going to THON is the least of your concerns. All of these things: money, publicity, the line dance and sobriety all help THON be about the kids because they add to the overall experience for the kids. Ultimately, THON is such a wonderful event because of the joy Penn State students can bring to those children who are fighting for their lives due to a terrible disease. Showing them we care and devoting our time to make sure they’re having the best weekend of their lives is the only thing that matters. That’s #FTK.

MY VIEW | Kara Fesolovich

Accidental diplomacy at Olympics

Every two years, either the summer or winter Olympics are viewed all across the world for a few weeks, becoming a common thread connecting countries. While it’s entertaining and inspiring to watch the individual athletes compete and share their stories, the Olympic Games also have the potential to mean a lot for diplomacy. The ancient Olympics were founded in 776 B.C. and were held at the site of Olympia in present day Greece. The original games pitted city-states against each other every four years and consisted of events such as wrestling and foot racing. The games were based around the Greeks’ polytheistic religion, therefore incorporating ritualistic scenes. The events were also used to train warriors, almost as a way of keeping them in shape. This also meant if a certain city-state’s fighter dominated the games, it functioned as a warning to the others. If the Spartans had the fiercest warrior, that would imply the same about their military, so don’t mess with them. The ancient Olympics ended around 393 A.D. under Roman rule. However, that was clearly not the end of the tradition. In 1896, the games returned to Greece at a modern stadium in Athens. This marked the rebirth of the competition, though it would now span various countries, not just contained to



Fesolovich

the Hellenic World. Until 1994, the Olympics were held every four years. The first two-year separation between the winter and summer games took place that year, and since, this is the schedule the Olympic committee follows. The only exception to rule occurred in 1940 and 1944 when the Olympics were cancelled because of World War II. Four years prior in 1936, the games were held in Berlin when Germany was already falling under the influence of Adolf Hitler’s regime. There is a famous photo of Jesse Owens, an African-American track and field athlete, receiving the gold medal on behalf of the United States. Silver and bronze went to Germany and Japan, two of the Axis powers in the future war. In the photo, the German athlete is following in the footsteps of Nazi Germany as he is pictured doing the salute. The 1936 games obviously didn’t dissuade Hitler, Mussolini or the Empire of Japan, but it did show how with tensions rising across the world. Athletes functioned as pseudo diplomats taking the temperature of various countries first hand. Later in his life, Owens claims to have formed some type of friendship with his German opponent, Luz Long, while they were exchanging advice for the long jump event. The two even embraced after Owens was victorious in 1936. Owens later spoke about the congratulatory hug following his win, stating “Hitler must have gone crazy watching us embrace.” Both athletes corresponded with each other through letters

until Long’s death in battle, while he was fighting with the Nazis in World War II. The story is really quite unbelievable. A Nazi living in a fascist country who believed in racial superiority and an African American athlete from a democratic nation still formed some type of friendship. In Long’s last letter to Owens, he asked him to “Someday find my son ... tell him about how things can be between men on this Earth.” With current political tensions — not even between countries, but within the United States — it is quite remarkable to look at Jesse Owens’ decision to befriend Long. Owens had every right to ignore Long. He could have easily refused Long’s embrace and never spoke to him again following the 1936 games. But Owens later said he knew how much courage it probably took for Long to befriend him under the gaze of Hitler. However heinous Long’s beliefs were or what horrible ideals he eventually fought and died for, Owens treated him as he saw him and as Long treated him — like a fellow athlete. The Olympics offer a place for dialogue between unthinkable people. This year, as the Winter Games are currently taking place in South Korea, all eyes are on the North Korean athletes, their “cheering squad” and their political diplomats like Kim Jong Un’s sister, Kim Yo Jong, and the nominal head of state, Kim Yong Nam. It’s quite odd and rare to see North Koreans outside of their country where there is an extremely heavy travel ban on

citizens along with many other human rights abuses. While Japan’s prime minister and South Korea’s president both acknowledged North Korean diplomats as an effort to increase a dialogue already brewing between the nations, Vice President of the United States Mike Pence chose not to engage any North Korean representative. There is no honest telling of what could have happened if Pence and a North Korean representative merely shook hands. The tensions between the two countries surely wouldn’t go away, but a hand-shake probably wouldn’t escalate tensions either. The Olympics in South Korea provided an opportunity for the first time in a while for the United States and North Korea to have some type of acknowledgement, privately or publicly. So far, a meeting has not happened. The Olympics are by no means a safe haven and a chance to fix everything that’s wrong with the world. In the ancient games, city-states still continuously battled with each other no matter the sportsmanship shown at the event. However, the Olympic Games are simply a place of respect, sportsmanship and perhaps some accidental diplomacy between countries across the world.

Kara Fesolovich is a junior majoring in History, Political Science and Classic and Ancient Mediterranean studies and is a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Email her at klf5448@psu.edu or follow her on Twitter at [@karafesolovich](https://twitter.com/@karafesolovich).

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DEFENDING THE WING

Sophomore Nazeer Bostick's emergence as a key role player off the bench will continue to benefit the Nittany Lions down the stretch

By Tyler King
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State coach Pat Chambers would have preferred that Josh Reaves not miss four games in the middle of the Big Ten season, but it may have turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

The Nittany Lions were without their star defender for four games in January, in which they went 1-3, but that game action that was missed by Reaves allowed Chambers to give some of his bench players more minutes.

"I didn't like those four games," Chambers said. "But maybe that's what we had to go through to get to where we are today."

One player in particular has taken full advantage of the extra minutes — Nazeer Bostick.

Losing the conference's leader in steals for four games is never a good thing for a team, but Bostick seized the opportunity in his more increased role and proved to Chambers (and his teammates) that he can play some big time minutes off the bench as the season winds down.

The first game without Reaves came on the road against Indiana, just the fifth Big Ten game of the season for the Nittany Lions, and Bostick was immediately thrust into that role.

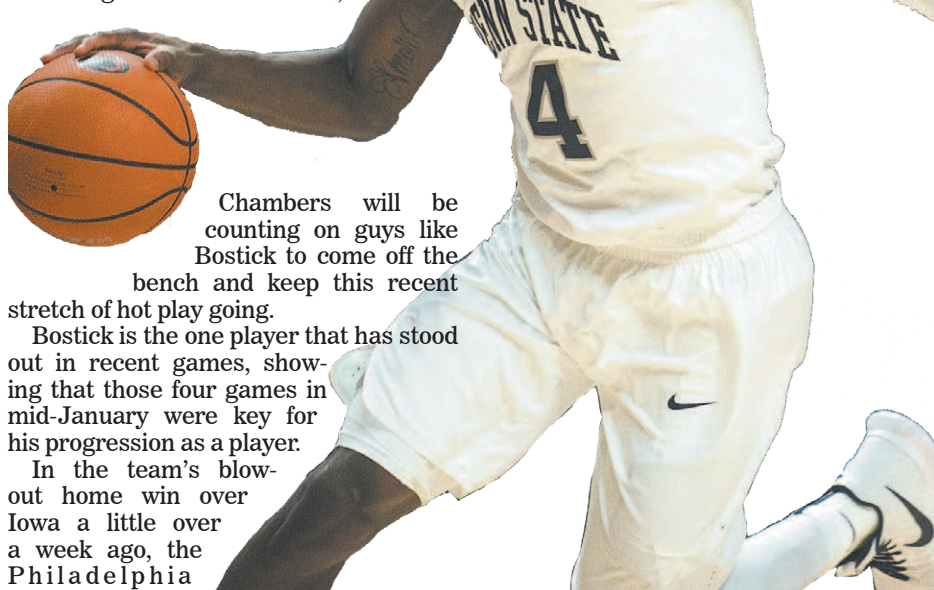
Although the sophomore guard, and the rest of the team, struggled in those four games, Chambers sees the value that those games will have on the rest of the season.

"I think those four games really helped us grow and mature," Chambers said. "To get Nazeer [Bostick] those quality minutes... I think it was important for those guys to learn on the fly and through in-game experience."

But it wasn't just the coaches that took notice of Bostick and the rest of the bench's improved play in that short amount of time.

"Those guys stepped up and got bigger roles," senior guard Shep Garner said. "They did their job and stepped up for [Reaves]."

Now that Penn State is heading into its final four games of the regular season (and its toughest four games of the season),



Chambers will be counting on guys like Bostick to come off the bench and keep this recent stretch of hot play going.

Bostick is the one player that has stood out in recent games, showing that those four games in mid-January were key for his progression as a player.

In the team's blow-out home win over Iowa a little over a week ago, the Philadelphia

native was plus-14 in his 23 minutes on the court. Once again in the team's dominant road win over Illinois, Bostick didn't light up the statsheet, but he had a positive impact on the court, finishing with plus-9 in 19 minutes.

Bostick's defensive abilities headline his reputation, and he's earned that, but he's been a much more effective player on the offensive end in his sophomore campaign. His offensive rating has seen a massive increase this season, as it's now over 100 as compared to his 69.2 rating from last season.

The Nittany Lions will welcome the No. 8 Ohio State Buckeyes on Thursday night and they will be bringing their talented wing and the Big Ten's leading scorer, Keita Bates-Diop.

Although Reaves will likely be matched up with Bates-Diop to start the game, that assignment will likely fall on Bostick when he comes in and Chambers is fully confident in putting Bostick on any wing in the conference.

"Because of Naz, now you have another big guard that you can bring off the bench to be able to defend the better players like [Keita Bates-Diop]," Chambers said.

The bench as a whole has been much improved since the calendar has turned to February and it's coming at the perfect time for Penn State.

Chambers said he's not only excited about Bostick's progression, but also the improved play from the rest of the guys off the bench.

Having a deep team is a rare occurrence for Chambers, but it's something he's looking forward to the contributions he gets from his reserves down the stretch.

"It's exciting when you have guys that you can go to hold down the fort for a little while."

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Follow him on Twitter at @King_TylerB

Junior guard Josh Reaves continues to prove that he is one of the Big Ten's best defenders since his return to the court

By Thomas Schlarp
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Three players garner much of the headlines when breaking down Penn State hoops. The sophomore triad of Tony Carr, Lamar Stevens and Mike Watkins consistently deliver leading performances that merit such talk.

But there's a fourth player proven valuable in his time on the court, with an even higher impact demonstrated when he was no longer on it.

Following Penn State's second game of the season, Fairleigh Dickinson coach Greg Herenda first referred to junior Josh Reaves as a "stocking stuffer of stats." Little did fans know at the time just how accurate this statement would prove.

At the beginning of January, Reaves was suspended indefinitely due to "academic concerns." At the time, Penn State was only 2-2 in the Big Ten, but still had plenty of time to accumulate solid conference wins and pad a tournament-worthy resume.

Reaves was the conference leader in steals.

In the team's first game without its defensive cog, his absence was palpable.

Despite 58 points from Carr, Stevens and Watkins, the Nittany Lions allowed their second-most points since November in a 74-70 losing effort to Indiana.

The next game fared not much better. The trio of sophomores went off for more than 60 points, but Penn State required an overtime session to top Nebraska.

The Nittany Lions then dropped their next two games, including an awful loss to Northwestern in which Penn State scored five points in the final 10:37, falling to 1-3 without Reaves.

The season appeared doomed. An invite to the College Basketball Invitational seemed a stretch.

But then came warmups before the team's game against the top team in the Big Ten, Ohio State.

Driven by the team's director of basketball Ross Condon after departing from State College at 1:55 p.m., Reaves arrived just in time to be mobbed by his surprised teammates and provide the emotional spark that propelled the Nittany Lions to their monumental upset victory over the Buckeyes. His return injected a new spirit into the team that has it knocking on the door of its first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2011.

Since Reaves return to the lineup, Penn State is 5-1 with its only loss coming on the road to conference top-dog and No.

2 in the nation Michigan State

But while the intangible element that Reaves brings to the team is certainly noticeable, it's the statistical impact that he brings that speaks equal volume.

Outside of the four-game suspension that Reaves served, Penn State has beaten opponents by 9.8 points per game. Without him, it lost by an average of 5.5.

With Reaves, the Nittany Lions steal the ball 7.7 times a contest. Without him, they average 4.25.

The team's rebounding margin dropped over 6.25 rebounds a game in his absence, and the team averages almost three fewer assists per game without the Fairfax, Virginia, native.

According to Sports Reference data, Reaves' win share of 3.4, an estimate of the number of wins con-

tributed by a player due to his offense and defense, ranks third on the team behind only Watkins and Carr. Reaves'

box plus/minus, an estimate of the points per 100 possessions a player contributed above a league-average player, leads all Nittany Lions at 12.7.

His offensive rating of 129.3 is the third-best in all of the Big Ten.

So while the junior may not receive all the adulation and recognition that fans and analysts hurl at his teammate Tony Carr, Penn State's postseason success seems to all but hinge on the availability of Reaves.

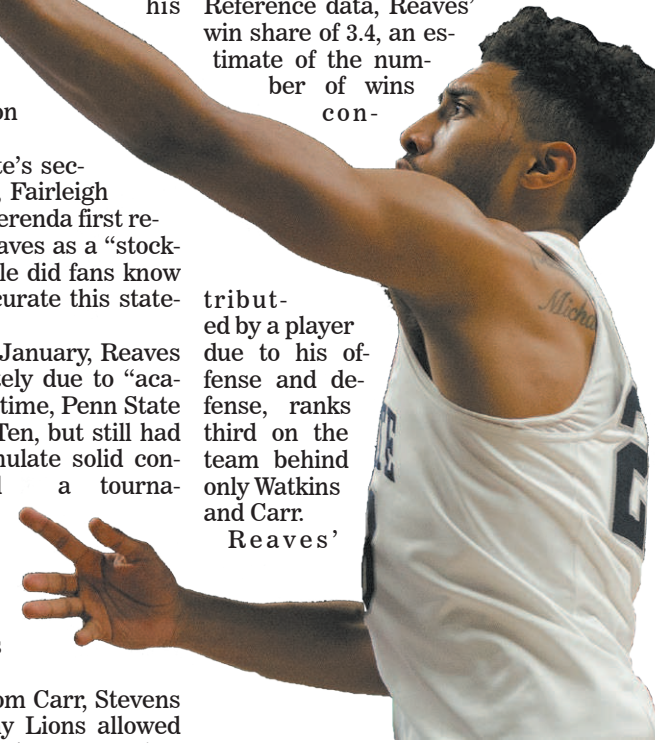
There seems to be more than the 10.9 points and 4.7 rebounds a game the "stocking stuffer of stats" brings to the table.

"Reaves is just omnipresent," Herenda said.

"He's really, really so valuable."

With the impending rematch versus the Ohio State team that the Nittany Lions upset just three weeks ago thanks to the energy-igniting return of Reaves, Thursday's game is even more important for a solid performance from Penn State's X-factor to keep postseason dreams alive.

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Follow her on Twitter at @TSchalrp



Key storylines on the diamond in 2018

By Caleb Wilfinger
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Ready for spring? Still disappointed with the lack of Major League Baseball Hot Stove excitement?

Fear not, because the 2018 college baseball season is finally upon us.

Starting this weekend, the long journey to the College World Series in Omaha will begin across the country.

This means that there will be tons of meaningful baseball games played in February, weeks before the first MLB spring training game.

With that being said, Penn State will start its 2018 season on the road at Elon on Friday.

Let's recap the offseason for the Nittany Lions and look ahead to what this season could bring. Here are the five things you need to know for the upcoming campaign:

Starting fresh

It's no secret that last season didn't quite go as planned for coach Rob Cooper and company.

The Nittany Lions finished the 2017 season with a record of 18-37, which included a record of just 4-20 in Big Ten conference play.

However, the mood around the program has been a lot more optimistic this season, starting with the head coach himself.

"Obviously as a team, we did not have a year that we feel was acceptable for Penn State



Penn State baseball manager, Rob Cooper, laughs between innings during a game against Nebraska held at Medlar Field at Lubrano Park on Thursday, May 18, 2017.

baseball," Cooper said. "But I'm real excited about what these guys have put forth this fall, and I think everybody is going to be real excited about what kind of team we can put out there this year."

This optimism is shared by the players as well, who are just as eager to get the new season underway. Towards the end of

last year, certain members of the team held a meeting in which they vowed that this year would be different.

"There were four things that we thought we could do to change our results," junior starting pitcher Justin Hagenman said. "We focused on competing, toughness, selflessness and accountability throughout the offseason and the

guys have really brought it to what we want to accomplish this year."

Youthful exuberance

The Nittany Lions will remain a young team in 2018 with 14 newcomers to the squad, none of which have played in an NCAA Division I baseball game yet.

The group features 11 true

freshmen who have been with the team since the fall and have already shown great promise.

Penn State's freshman class comes in with some of the highest expectations for the program in recent years. The recruiting class was ranked as the 42nd-best class in 2017 by the leading recruiting service, Perfect Game.

"I've been very impressed with the poise and composure of the freshmen," Cooper said. "They've handled themselves well on and off the field, and I'm really looking forward to what they can bring to the team once the season starts."

Dual-Sport athletes

Penn State added two dual-sport athletes to the squad this year, and both of them have already created a buzz off the diamond.

Senior wrestler Matt McCutcheon is a three-time NCAA Championships qualifier, who also has a background in baseball.

The Apollo, Pennsylvania native played baseball through his sophomore year of high school, before devoting his full attention to wrestling.

Now in his final season of eligibility, McCutcheon will also try to make his mark on the diamond.

He'll be joined by Mac Hippenhammer, a true freshman football wide receiver who joined the team at the start of the spring semester and has been getting rave reviews from his new teammates.

To read full story, visit collegian.psu.edu.

Erin O'Neill/Collegian

BEHIND THE SERVE

How Lee Smith has set Penn State men's volleyball up for success

By Mike Fortugno
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Ninth-ranked Penn State is taking on undefeated No. 15 Fort Wayne in the South Gym of the Penn State Rec Hall complex.

The gym is smaller than what the Nittany Lions normally play on in Rec Hall, but South Gym's close quarters and high school style bleachers give Penn State the home court advantage so desperately sought after in any type of sporting event.

"I think the energy part of South Gym," coach Mark Pavlik said about the atmosphere. "You get 725 people packed in in South Gym; it makes it kind of fun it makes it kind of loud."

The score is 28-27 Penn State and the match is tied one set apiece.

Neck-and-neck all the way to the end, the Nittany Lions had survived match point to force extra points on a Kevin Gear kill to tie the set at 25.

Penn State then failed to ice the set at 26-25 and 27-26 in what had become an eerily similar game to that of set one, a game that the



Eric Firestine/Collegian

Lee Smith (9) celebrates with his teammates during a match against Fort Wayne on Feb. 3. Penn State won the match 3 sets to 1.

visiting Mastodons forced the Nittany Lions to earn 30 points for a victory.

At 27-all, Jalen Penrose recorded one of his 15 kills to once again give Penn State one more chance at taking the set.

Serving for Penn State would be redshirt junior Lee Smith.

The sea of Penn State faithful are on their feet, the volume is amplified by the smaller walls of

South Gym and these fans are desperate for their beloved Nittany Lions to put the nail in the coffin that is this third set of a classic Saturday afternoon match.

Smith comes ready to serve and the once boisterous crowd is silent.

He serves lightly and the ball hits the top of the net tape.

The gym population stands

still, and the ball stands still on top of the net.

After what seems like an eternity, the ball falls forward and ultimately to the ground, right in front of the diving Fort Wayne player.

Ace.

"I served it and it hit the tape," Smith said. "I thought it was going to land on our side, but somehow it did something and went on theirs and I was just shocked."

The set is won, and after an anticlimactic 25-15 fourth set victory by the Nittany Lions, the match is won, but the story of Smith's service ace is not.

"Here's the real story," Pavlik said. "We're playing triples [in warmups] and the net that was on the standards broke. So we had the new net put up and the net tape that has Penn State written across it is

one of those that's folded across the net held by Velcro. It's a real pain in the butt to put on. Cal Mende and Lee Smith put that tape on."

While Pavlik says he isn't into any conspiracy theories, he did say this about the tape that Smith put up.

"I think we had a friend."

Smith's service ace not only gave the Nittany Lions the set win, but also a 2-1 match lead against an undefeated visitor looking to prove itself against their highly touted hosts.

The Mastodons had lost their second extra point set, deflating their hopes of escaping Happy Valley victorious.

With nothing left in the tank, Fort Wayne was quickly swept away by Penn State the following set, suffering their first loss of the young season.



To email reporter: mjff5733@psu.edu. Follow him on Twitter at @Mikey_F33.



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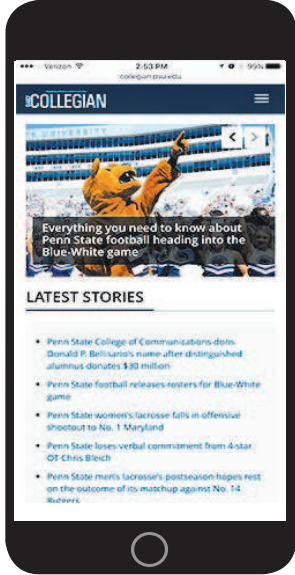
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- Water taxi
- Colorful dessert
- Screen symbol
- Alleviate
- Completely
- Hole in the wall?
- Conclusion
- "Lulu" composer
- Low card
- Harden
- Locomotive
- Mongrel
- Nicotine's partner
- Percussion instrument
- Center of activity
- Showy flower
- Egg cells
- Whole alternative
- Dream up
- Cut through
- Lend a hand
- Remarkd
- Prone
- Choir member
- Albanian coin
- Putting problem
- Head start
- Coquette
- Skillful
- Auto pioneer
- Obligation
- Where Hawkeye served
- NASA scrub
- Mexican peninsula
- Ham holder
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- Before, poetically
- "___ so fast!"
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- Stellar phenomenon
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- Beast of burden
- Baal, e.g.
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- Lady of Spain
- Wax-coated cheese
- Work on a doily
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- Freshwater duck
- Oklahoma city
- Gambling
- Put on the books
- Average
- On vacation
- Avarice
- Turkish dough
- Corn units
- Bellicose god
- Unwanted buildup
- Wowed
- Disfigure
- Stand for a portrait
- Carpenter's tool
- Freshwater duck
- Oklahoma city
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WORD SEARCH

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Animated Films

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Kakuro (Cross Sums)

The rules are easy to learn: A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it. A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it. You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit may be used only once in any sequence.

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Answers bit.ly/1CBcyRI ©2018 PuzzleJunction.com

Bigar's Stars

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018

This year you have a way of stunning others by taking the most unexpected actions. People find hanging out with you to be exciting and noteworthy. Your creativity mixed with your willingness to take risks creates dynamic situations.

If you are single, you could meet someone from out of the blue. Look to the second half of this birthday year to meet this person.

If you are attached, your sweetie might point out that you seem unusually rigid. You might want to show more interest in others' ideas.

A fellow AQUARIUS could be just as stubborn as you are.

BORN TODAY

Actor Chris Farley (1964), actress Jane Seymour (1951), actor John Barrymore (1882)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet
www.jacquelinebigar.com.
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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Some of your friends seem to be out of sorts. You can expect one of them to make a major change that could affect you. You might not understand what is happening right now, but when you look back, you will know that today was important. Tonight: Where the crowds are.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You are determined to make a difference. Know that you are likely to run into the unexpected. Your smile opens doors and permits you to lead others through this wildly emotional day. Stay calm, but be ready to take the lead, if need be. Tonight: On top of the world.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ You could experience some fast changes that you did not anticipate. How you deal with a close friend at a distance could surprise not only that person, but you as well. Understand your limits. Realize what is expected of you, and happily oblige. Tonight: Read between the lines.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You could be emotional and somewhat unclear about what to do. Trust that in a few days, you will have made the right decision with the help of a partner. You seem to be overwhelmed when considering the pros and cons of a financial situation. Tonight: Make headway.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ You might feel as if there is no other choice than the present one. Stay more in touch with what you need. Do not hesitate to forge ahead to make your wish a possibility. Others seem testy at times, and at other times could be quite accommodating. Tonight: Go with the flow.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You can be difficult and touchy. In fact, today you might feel more irritated than usual just doing your normal thing. If you don't feel comfortable with what is going on, stop and reflect on the issue before starting up a conversation. Ask questions. Tonight: Opt for togetherness.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Be realistic about what you find out. You might want to keep some information to yourself for now. Reflect on what is happening, then assess the implications and your choices. Not coming to a decision might be OK for a while. Tonight: Stay within your budget.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ You could be at a point where you can't deal with the stress surrounding an older person or relative. You would be well-advised to keep your cool for now. Do a better job of listening and digesting information. If others seem off the rails, don't worry. Tonight: This, too, shall pass.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ You could be trying to approach a situation differently. Stay with the tried and true for now, while you weigh the pros and cons of a potential new direction. Take your time, as it could be difficult to reverse course at the last minute. Tonight: Plans could change at any moment.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You will need to stay on top of what is causing you and a close friend some stress. You might not be as comfortable handling a certain financial arrangement as you thought you'd be. Support yourself, especially if you feel the need for change. Tonight: Pay bills first, then decide.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You might want to head in a new direction. Your vision could be changing because of a new set of needs and desires. You are likely to make this adjustment more gracefully than you had thought possible. Others will respond better than you had anticipated. Tonight: All smiles.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Reach out to someone you rarely spend time with but trust implicitly. The two of you will enjoy the bantering back and forth. Whether you realize it, you are helping each other question one another's beliefs in order to make a health, strong decision. Tonight: Make it early.

Lions desperate for wins at MSU

By Dylan Jacobs
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State has an excellent opportunity to get themselves back into prime position in the Big Ten standings this weekend. Following a bye week, No. 16 Nittany Lions head to East Lansing, Michigan for a series with Michigan State.

Looking towards the tournament

Penn State currently sits in sixth place in the Big Ten but has a huge chance to move up. The Nittany Lions currently sit three points behind Wisconsin, who is off this weekend, and four points behind Minnesota, who faces Ohio State this weekend before making a trip to State College next weekend. A sweep of the last place Spartans could put them in position to seal home-ice in the first round of the Big Ten Tournament, but Penn State isn't going to score-board-watch and take Michigan State likely.

"We realize what's at hand here," defenseman Trevor Hamilton said. "It doesn't matter if we were playing Notre Dame, Michigan State or Ohio State. It doesn't matter who we play. I think we all have the same



Linsey Fagan/Colegian

Defenseman Trevor Hamilton (11) moves the puck past Mercyhurst defenseman Jeremy Wu (10) during their game at Pegula Ice Arena on Friday, Nov. 3, 2017.

mentality that going in there we need two wins."

Notre Dame has already locked up first place, Ohio State will most likely hold onto the two seed. Michigan has a small cushion in

third place, but it ends the season with a nonconference series, so the third seed is up for grabs.

Home-ice in the first round would give Penn State a great chance to move onto the

second round, which could seal an NCAA Tournament berth.

Building off Notre Dame

Even though the Nittany Lions didn't get a win against the

Fighting Irish, they had a strong weekend with a lot of opportunities to win.

"I thought, as far as chances go, we actually had one of our better weekends of the year," coach Guy Gadowsky said. "We faced a goaltender who was phenomenal, but I thought we generated a lot of chances."

Following a tight series with one of the best teams in the country, Penn State now has confidence going forward for the rest of the season.

"It's definitely a step in the right direction," Hamilton said. "If we can keep the momentum and keep that same mentality ... we'll have success."

Scouting Michigan State

While the Spartans have struggled this season, they have actually played well in East Lansing, posting a 7-6-1 record this season. They are led by Mitchell Lewandowski, who leads the Big Ten in goals with 15, and Taro Hirose, who is second in the Big Ten in assists with 23. Shutting down those two is the key for Penn State, because those two are the only consistent contributors on the offense.

The series begins Friday at 6:30 p.m. and Saturday at 5 p.m. with both games on Big Ten Network.

To email reporter: dkj5109@psu.edu. Follow him on Twitter at [@DylJacob](https://twitter.com/DylJacob).

Penn State hosts SHU, Harvard

By Giana Han
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Nittany Lions' goal of going undefeated in the EIVA will be tested this weekend by one of the teams that ruined its perfect conference record last season. Despite winning back the EIVA title last season, Penn State knew it had still left some points out there on the court.

Its 21-11 season record included three conference losses — two of which were to Sacred Heart, a team Penn State had crushed the season before.

The frustration of the losses still lingered well past the season end.

The weekend before the 2018 season started, libero Royce Clemens and outside hitter Frank Melvin said they were looking forward to the Sacred Heart game because it left a sour taste in their mouths.

"We made a lot of errors," coach Mark Pavlik said. "I think when we were at their place, I didn't have the guys ready to play. When you have that on one side of the net and on the other side of the net you have a focused group, they just didn't let us off the hook."

The Nittany Lions will have the advantage of facing Sacred Heart for the first time this season at home in Rec Hall before it plays Harvard, another team that continuously competes with them.

"We've been a top team in the conference, so we always kind of have that target on our backs," middle blocker Kevin Gear said. "We've got to be prepared to stay in rallies, and we've got to be prepared to end them."

Serving is key

Last weekend against St. Francis, Penn State was surprised



Zack Gething/Colegian

Penn State's Kevin Gear (12) celebrates with teammates Luke Braswell (4) and Aidan Albrecht (15) at the men's volleyball game vs. Ball State.

by the off-speed attacks the Red Flash were throwing its way.

As the match progressed, the Nittany Lions adjusted and came to see the off-speed attacks as a testament to how well they were serving.

Tougher serves resulted in worse passes for the offense to work with, so the Red Flash hitters had to adjust the best they could.

"If we can have the same success with any team with our serve that we managed to have against St. Francis, we're going to put teams in situations where they've got to make the best of a bad situation," Pavlik said.

From what the Nittany Lions have seen on film of the Sacred Heart and Harvard hitters, they like to swing away. Tough serves will be the first line of defense against the hitters.

Quietly consistent

The 70 mph swings from Jalen Penrose and huge solo blocks

from Jason Donorovich can be eye catching, but the solid performances by Gear and Matt "Steve" McLaren are just as essential, if less flashy.

Gear has continuously hit about .400 and had a block or two a game, as well as digs during the rotation he's in the back row.

"You just kind of know what you have with Kevin," Pavlik said. "He's not a guy that's going to talk about himself ... he's just going to come in, have fun playing, have fun being around his team."

McLaren is starting to draw more attention now that he's led the team in kills several games in a row, but over the past few years, he's stayed under the radar.

"He just kept plugging away and plugging away and plugging away, and all of a sudden he's playing with physicality," Pavlik said.

McLaren may have surprised people on the outside, the team has always been intense.

"He's one of those guys

that you see in practice and everything you see in practice he does in a match," Gear said.

Still on the mend

Starting opposite Calvin Mende, who was hurt in the match against USC, is still "day-to-day," Pavlik said.

"It's just a matter of us saying, let's make sure everything is lined up so that when we do pull the trigger on that, he is good to go," Pavlik said.

The team spent a few matches trying to find the best rotation to play while Mende is out. It finally settled on moving Penrose from middle blocker to opposite and bringing Donorovich off the bench to fill in for Penrose.

It's the best option the team has at the moment, but it lacks the consistency a rotation with Mende has.

Penrose, who has played opposite as well as outside in the past, was moved to middle blocker when the coaching staff realized they could maximize his efficiency there. While Penrose continues to contribute, his potential is not being maximized as a pin hitter.

The other players who have filled in for Mende, including Aidan Albrecht and Melvin, also are not at their best when in the opposite position.

"You look at the numbers that Cal puts up on a regular basis," Pavlik said. "There's just a consistency with him that we don't give up points as easy as with somebody else at that opposite spot."

A third of the way through

Although conference play has just started, the team is already a third of the way through its season.

To read full story, visit collegian.psu.edu.

Home Games

Men's hoops vs. No. 8 Ohio State

When: Thursday, Feb. 15 at 8:00 p.m.

Where: Bryce Jordan Center

Details: In arguably the biggest game in the tenure of coach Patrick Chambers, the Nittany Lions look to sweep the season series with the Buckeyes.

Women's hockey vs. RIT

When: Friday and Saturday, Feb. 16 and 17 at 6:00 and 3:00 p.m.

Where: Pegula Ice Arena

Details: Playing their second-to-last series of the season, the Nittany Lions have a good chance to record a couple of wins as last-place RIT comes to town.

Wrestling vs. Buffalo

When: Sunday, Feb. 18 at 2:00 p.m.

Where: Rec Hall

Details: After tearing right through the Big Ten, the Nittany Lions look to close out an undefeated regular season when the welcome the Bulls to Rec Hall for a nonconference dual.

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DAILY COLLEGIAN BUSINESS DIVISION STAFF MEMBER OF THE WEEK



Ilana Rocke
Business Operations Rep
Your turn has come at last!

#5 IN A SERIES OF SIX WEEKLY FREE PUBLIC LECTURES

PENN STATE LECTURES ON THE FRONTIERS OF SCIENCE

JAMES KASTING
Evan Pugh Professor of Geosciences, Penn State

Earth-like life needs a planet with at least a solid or liquid surface and adequate supplies of carbon and water. Other factors might be important too: enough energy for life to begin, volcanism and plate tectonics to regulate climate, sufficient gravity and perhaps a magnetic field to hold onto an atmosphere. Learn how scientists are trying to discover how often these factors combine to create habitable environments beyond Earth.

What Makes a Planet Habitable?

Saturday, February 17
11:00 a.m. to about 12:30 p.m.
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Sami Myers/Collegian

Kyle Slavic (sophomore-business) embraces Sarah Earnesty (sophomore-business) during THON at the BJC on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2017.

Discovering Tradition: Eric Replogle

By Bailey Jensen
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When Eric Replogle found out he was dancing in Penn State THON, he called his dad right away.

He comes from a family in which THON is considered one of the most important causes. His dad, Robert Replogle, graduated in 1988 and danced all four of his years at Penn State through the business fraternity Delta Sigma Pi.

"It feels surreal," Replogle

(junior-accounting) said. "I'm a third-generation Penn State student, so THON has been nailed in my head. I've always wanted to dance, and when I first got here I told myself I needed to find a way to get down on the floor in the BJC."

Replogle was chosen to dance for the Penn State Club Ski Team. And now that it's happening, he said it feels "awesome."

In the 30 years since he father danced, THON has changed enormously.

Robert said back then, THON

was held in the White Building. It was smaller, mainly for fraternities and sororities, with the dancing space boarded off with caution tape and the stands only five rows deep.

There was a DJ, people could come and go as they pleased and a small morale committee gave dancers leg massages every eight hours. People in yellow shirts would walk around the dance floor, assisting when needed.

There was a line dance, but it had no words and Robert re-

members it was a Steve Winwood song back when he was a senior.

Looking through old photos, Robert said THON couldn't have been more than 200 dancers.

"It was still important, and we certainly raised a lot of money," Robert said. "But, it was nothing like it is now."

The process has changed a great deal as well, as students who wished to dance back in 1988 only had to sign up far enough in advance that they were guaranteed a spot — and dancing wasn't in high demand.

Today, dancers are chosen based on their involvement in THON activities and commitment to the cause. It's considered an honor that requires hard work to achieve.

Robert said he remembers the total collected in 1988 was roughly \$150,000, a far cry from today's figures.

Robert said he is proud of his son for being chosen to dance. He, along with Replogle's mom, younger brother and sister will be there for support.

"I'm very excited about it," Robert said. "I haven't been to THON since it was moved to the Bryce Jordan Center. It's grown into such an important part of the university."

Starting her first year on campus, Replogle's sister, Addison, is a Dancer Relations committee member this year.

"I'm excited to be on the floor with my brother," Addison (freshman-business) said. "I'm happy for Eric and I can't wait to be there to help him. THON is such an amazing opportunity and cause."

Replogle said he's known about THON for as long as he can remember, from seeing the canners on his sidewalks and hearing stories from his dad.

He got involved in THON as much as he could while on the Ski Team.

During his freshman year, there was a ski race scheduled during the weekend of THON and Replogle couldn't attend as a result. However, as a sophomore, he was at THON for well over 30 hours.

After that year, Replogle said he knew he really wanted to get on the dance floor someday.

Leading up to the weekend, he said he doesn't need to prepare very much because he already exercises with the Ski Team, doesn't drink coffee and sleeps eight hours.

"It feels awesome to be a dancer," Replogle said. "I've really always wanted to get involved and help out with THON's cause. To be able to do this and experience this is amazing because there is nothing else like it."

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Follow her on Twitter at [@baileyejensen](https://twitter.com/baileyejensen).



Linsey Fagan/Collegian

Eric Replogle completes a jump off of a rock while free-skiing at Blue Knob All Seasons Resort on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2017.

Discovering Leadership: Andrew Smith

By Bailey Jensen
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

With Penn State THON Weekend hitting State College, the executive committee is tying up loose ends to ensure this year's dance marathon runs smoothly.

Executive Director for THON 2018 Andrew Smith is looking forward to the weekend and it might be interesting to take a look into his life as the head of the largest student-run philanthropy in the world.

In preparation for the 46-hour dance marathon, Smith (senior-accounting) has been eating healthier and going to the gym a couple times a week.

"During this time of year, it's especially important that everyone involved in THON makes sure they are healthy," Smith said. "I have been harping on the executive committee to keep this in mind and I have been trying to do that myself because it would be one of my worst nightmares to not be able to come to THON this year."

Smith has been involved in THON since the very beginning of his college career. Throughout his five years, he has also been involved in the special interest organization Axis, a rules and regulations committee member, a rules and regulations volunteer safety captain and rules and regulations volunteer safety director.

Smith said his older brother, from Penn State class of 2010, sent him a link to the THON 2013 live stream as a way of convincing him to attend his alma mater.

"Being the annoying little brother, I didn't want to come to Penn State because I wanted to do my own thing," Smith said. "Eventually when I decided to come here, I remembered seeing the live stream and my tours on campus where the guide would talk about THON."

While Smith knew very little about THON's mission at the time, he knew enough to believe it was a meaningful organization he wanted to immerse himself in.

And Smith has done just that.

Finishing classes by noon on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Smith goes to the THON office and remains there all afternoon. With no classes on Tuesdays and



Bailey Jensen/Collegian

Andrew Smith (senior-accounting) works in THON office during week leading up to the dance marathon on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

Thursdays, he simply wakes up and goes directly to the THON office.

"I scheduled all of my classes in the morning so I would be done and have most of my day free," Smith said. "I like to sit at the desk by the window, put headphones on and do work."

It's tough to pinpoint a daily routine, as his days are always different, but Smith said that's what makes it fun.

Smith said he receives roughly 60 to 70 THON-related emails per day and is in constant contact with the 16 THON executive directors.

As for his weekends, Smith said there is a saying on the executive committee that goes: "Sundays are for THON."

Executive committee meetings are

held, as well as a variety of THON focus group meetings, throughout the day.

Smith said on Saturdays, though, he generally tries to work on larger THON projects because the day is less busy.

"I make sure I take time every day, both on week and weekend days, to get my work done because there are times when I feel like if I don't take advantage of every day, my work piles up," Smith said. "I have tried hard not to stay in the THON office past 10 o'clock because I think doing so is a bad habit. It's important to get sleep. I'd rather come in early and work than stay late."

Smith said it's safe to say that most, if not all, of his friends are involved in THON in some capacity.

Tim Miller, the THON rules and regulations volunteer safety executive director, said in previous years, he and Smith would get together every other week or month. But, now it's a little more difficult to find the time, Miller said.

"Andrew is a very laid back, fun loving guy," Miller (senior-aerospace engineering) said. "He's an ideas guy — very good at leading an executive committee because he has the foresight and strategy to move THON in directions we can all agree it should move."

When reflecting on his position, Smith said every executive director has a different strength.

See **LEADERSHIP**, Page B3.

Two THON dancers taking the stage FTK

By Tina Locurto
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When Jason Cillo and Evan Dadswell first picked up musical instruments in middle school, they had no idea that as college students they would be performing in front of a crowd of thousands — all for the fight to end childhood cancer.

The pair, part of local State College band The JENKs, is taking its musical talents to THON Weekend, not only as performers but as dancers for the 46-hour marathon.

Humble beginnings

Cillo, a member of special interest organization Apollo, and Dadswell, an independent dancer, formed The JENKs at the beginning of the Fall 2016 semester. Prior to the band's creation, The JENKs was under a completely different name — Oh Man! — with different members.

Cillo, along with Nicole Schaefer, a current JENKs member, performed with Oh Man! at the THON 5K in 2015.

Dadswell, who was in the crowd, was immediately captivated. Ever since, the two have been making music.

“I made my connections and broke in, and then I just stuck around,” Dadswell (senior-biobehavioral health)said.

As a 13-year-old practicing the guitar, Cillo (senior-electrical engineering) said he lived up to the “angsty teenager playing in [his] garage” stereotype.

Dadswell on the other hand went to a K-Mart with his family and bought an electric guitar one day against his mother's wishes. He also purchased a drum kit that was “held together with half a broken skateboard.”

Along with keyboardist Schaefer and guitarist/bassist Will Want, the band can be found at the Phyrst every Friday night performing a wide variety of classical rock, 90s alternative and pop covers.

But when Cillo and Dadswell aren't pumping up crowds with “All Star” by Smash Mouth, they are dedicated to lifting the spirits of children diagnosed with cancer.

‘Never giving up’

Joining Apollo as a freshman, Cillo said he admired those who were doing a “very awesome thing.”

It wasn't until he personally met THON families, though, that



Aabha Vora/Collegian

Jason Cillo (senior-electrical engineering), dancing in THON for Apollo, and Evan Dadswell (senior - biobehavioral health), an independent dancer, pose in the HUB-Robeson Center on Thursday, Feb 8.

Cillo said he really amped up his involvement for the philanthropy.

“It's crazy to think about how much of an impact you can have, for just a little bit of time and a little bit of effort means the world to them,” he said.

Sam Boland, the president of Apollo, met Cillo during his freshman year. Borland (senior-biomedical engineering and mechanical engineering) said Cillo has taken Apollo's motto — “Never Give Up” — to heart.

In December 2015, Apollo's Four Diamonds child, Olivia Lynch, lost her battle with cancer. At a vigil, Cillo performed Coldplay's “Fix You.”

“The entire time I was playing...I knew if I would've looked up and saw everybody else with their candles tearing up, I would've broken out into tears too,” Cillo said. “The crazy thing about all of that was that I hadn't personally met Olivia.”

Though the vigil was held in December and it was freezing cold outside, members came to support their THON child.

Toward the end of his performance, Cillo said his fingers were “numb and cold,” but he kept playing.

“I will never forget the strength

that Jason exhibited during that performance,” Borland said via email.

Borland said choosing Cillo as one of Apollo's seven dancers this year was a “no-brainer.”

Dancing in THON had been a longtime dream for Cillo and Borland said he was happy to bring it to fruition.

While Cillo dances, he will also contribute to raising everyone's spirit as the hours trudge on, performing a four song setlist with Dadswell.

“Performing music has so much meaning for Jason, so I really hope that it makes his THON experience unforgettable,” Borland said. “I know composing himself to perform on stage after dancing for over 30 hours will be a challenge for Jason, but if there is anyone who can do it, it's him.”

Dancing independently

Dancing independently, as opposed to with a THON organization, comes with risks — most notably, not being selected in the dancer lottery. To be eligible, dancers and partners must raise enough money to earn a ticket.

The more money a couple raises, the more chances they have to be selected from the lottery

decline in health.

However, Dadswell said he plans to see Logan during this year's THON Weekend.

“I'm more excited to dance because my entire year has been fundraising for that, and performing is in awesome bonus,” Dadswell said.

Raise The Song

With a performance slot of less than 10 minutes, Cillo and Dadswell compiled a list of four songs to play THON weekend.

“I decided I wanted to play songs that everyone's going to want to sing along to,” Cillo said “Not often do you get the opportunity to play in front of thousands of people, so I thought we should probably get songs that thousands of people would want to sing to immediately.”

Cillo and Dadswell will “mash-up” four separate songs, a signature move for The JENKs, that will flow one into the next, creating a smooth transition.

The songs in their set include “All the Small Things” by Blink 182, “Sweet Caroline” by Neil Diamond, “I'm Gonna Be” (500 Miles) by The Proclaimers and “Hey Jude” by The Beatles.

Cillo said they are slated to perform toward the back end of THON, after the Pep Rally.

“I'm really praying for an adrenaline kick right before,” Dadswell said.

Cillo added that after they finish performing, the rest of THON Weekend will be easy.

“Dancing and performing, that's what I call fully soaking it up,” Schaefer (senior-economics and telecommunications), the keyboardist, said.

Dadswell said he is looking forward to water gun fights at THON, while Cillo said the memories alone will be enough.

Planning to bring an arsenal of 12 water guns, Dadswell said, “They won't know what's coming.”

THON Weekend is like the Super Bowl for the families, Cillo said, and he's eager to meet more people who benefit from the Four Diamonds.

“If I make a couple of those kids smile, the rest of the weekend could be just me completely dazed walking around in leg pain,” Cillo said. “But, if I make one kid smile, that's good enough for me.”

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Follow her on Twitter at: [@tina_locurto](https://twitter.com/tina_locurto).

One special interest org ‘Eclipses’ path to THON

By Katie Johnston
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In a sea of hundreds of other Penn State THON organizations, Eclipse has already made a name for itself in its brief existence.

Two years ago, on the first floor of Packer Hall, Colin Heminway was sitting in a conference room with a few of his friends, talking about the things they had wanted to accomplish when they arrived at Penn State.

“Everyone said Penn State's this crazy place that has so much opportunity,” Heminway (junior-secondary education) said.

“We definitely didn't feel that we were reaping the benefits in our first semester of our freshman year.”

In that moment, one of Heminway's friends mentioned the idea of starting their very own THON organization.

Heminway said he felt as though he had a “bigger purpose” than simply joining an existing

THON organization.

“We liked the social atmosphere that we created between just our friends,” Heminway said. “We knew that if we created a THON org by our means, it would eventually be successful, and we knew that we would really, really enjoy it more than having to apply ourselves to a different type of atmosphere.”

Vice President of Eclipse Carly Weiss said every week the founders of the organization would get together to talk about future plans.

Eclipse was registered as an official Penn State organization in February 2016.

Entering the Fall 2016 semester, Eclipse's roster knew only 15 names — which Heminway said scared him initially.

“Because you have these THON orgs with 200, 300 plus people,” Heminway said. “It's very belittling in a sense because we're like, ‘how are we even going to make an initial impact.’”

But, Heminway also said he likes the fact that Eclipse is a new name on campus.

“It's very humbling, and I think that's what makes us work harder,” he said. “We know we can consistently get better — that goes with leadership, that goes with social atmosphere, that goes with raising money.”

Heminway said he thinks the “energy” Eclipse has is different from other THON organizations.

“I think people are always looking for something new,” Heminway said.

“We're new. I think we appeal to a lot of kids that were exactly like us. Kids that didn't have a place, kids that didn't have some social ‘in.’ Because it's hard freshman year — it's like getting hit by a white loop.”

Eclipse attended its first THON in 2017 with about 40 members.

While not common with a new organization, Eclipse had two members dance for THON 2017 after winning the Independent



Courtesy of Christina Rapone

Members of special interest organization Eclipse hold up the letters they made for THON Weekend 2017.

Dancer Couple lottery.

Weiss (junior-media studies), one of the dancers, said her experience was “insane.”

“It was a great experience,” Weiss said.

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Former DR captain to dance in THON

Zach Firestine's years of Dancer Relations experience take to the floor

By Tina Locurto
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When most Penn State THON dancers hit the floor of the Bryce Jordan Center for the first time, they often don't know exactly what to expect.

However, as Zach Firestine prepares to join the 700 other dancers this weekend, he will bring his years of experience as a Dancer Relations Committee Member and Dancer Relations Captain alongside him.

As a freshman arriving to Penn State, Firestine (senior-secondary education) had no idea what THON was, but now, the 46-hour dance marathon is something he can't imagine his life without.



Behind the Shoes

The role of the Dancer Relations Captain is akin to a cheerleader.

Making sure dancers are properly taken care of physically and motivating them to keep their morale high are key for any member of Dancer Relations.

From Firestine's perspective, the dancers he has talked to said the majority of dancing is 90 percent mental and 10 percent physical.

The physical aspect, he said, entails making sure dancers are stretching properly, eating enough and staying hydrated.

"The mental aspect is something that I was really focused on," Firestine said.

At any given time, the mood of a dancer can go up or down. Dur-

ing those downs, Dancer Relations step in to act as a "motivational boost."

For example, if the dancers were feeling down, Firestine said he would take them over to a Four Diamonds child to remind them that "this is what they're here for."

Firestine compared THON dancers to children: He easily distracts them with various fun activities and games to keep them preoccupied.

"You'd take these 20- to 22-year-old people who are dancing, and they just want to have fun the entire time," he said. "So you're just there to remind them to have fun and to really live in the moment."

Firestine recalled one particular memory of him helping out a struggling dancer during THON 2016.

The dancer was upset because her boyfriend was unable to attend, so Firestine decided to step in.

Firestine contacted the boyfriend and had him record a video of encouragement.

"I showed it to her and it was amazing. She started sobbing and I was sobbing," Firestine said. "It was cool because that's all you need."

Brady Lucas, THON 2018 special events director, said Firestine puts his heart and soul into



Courtney Taylor/Collegian

Independent dancer Zach Firestine (senior-secondary education social studies) poses near the Duck Ponds on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

everything he does.

"He constantly expresses energy and dedication to the organization in every way possible," Lucas (senior-biobehavioral health) said. "When I met him the first time, his passion for the Dancer Relations Committee inspired me."

Every time Firestine met a new dancer, he would always ask the same question: Why are you dancing?

He was amazed to hear the different reasons.

"No two reasons to THON are the

same," Firestine said. "It's really cool to hear the diverse reasons of why people join the organiza-

tion in the first place."

Now, with his last year in the organization, Firestine will be at the Bryce Jordan Center once more to dance.

"I think dancing in THON 2018 is the perfect way for Zach to wrap up his inspiring and impactful career at Penn State as a THON Volunteer," Lucas said.

Dance, Dance

Dancing in THON was something Firestine never truly considered, until his friend and eventual dancer partner Kayla Czekaj brought up the idea.

What began as a mere joke soon became serious. And once they decided to dance, even creating a Facebook page for donors, the pair went all in.

Independently dancing is very different from dancing for a

THON organization.

A dancer couple needs to raise a certain amount of money in order to even receive a lottery ticket.

The more money raised, the more lottery tickets a couple can acquire to have a higher chance of being selected from the dancer pool.

"Finding out we were picked to dance was the happiest moment of our lives," Firestine said.

Since finding out, Firestine said he has been doing everything he can to prepare for the 46-hours of standing without sleep.

The preparations include converting to vegetarianism, walking on a treadmill every day and taking yoga classes.

To read full story, visit collegian.psu.edu

UNITE IN THE FIGHT

Independent dancers met through THON, plan to stand for 46

By Bailey Jensen
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Tracey Tardif and Kristin McKeown owe their love for working with children to Penn State THON.

The two were chosen as independent dancers for THON 2018 on Jan. 25 after raising a total of \$7,844.64 of their initial \$10,000 goal.

As a senior in high school, Tardif (senior-elementary and early childhood education) was co-director of her high school's second-annual mini-THON. In this position, she said she had the opportunity to meet Penn State students involved in THON. Later, she was let on the floor of the Bryce Jordan Center for 10 seconds.

"That moment was unlike any other," Tardif said. "I remember saying to myself, 'I have to be a part of this.'"

McKeown (senior-elementary and early childhood education) said her brother, who graduated from Penn State in 2014, encouraged her first visit to THON. He had been a morale captain in his senior year, and when he finally pushed McKeown and the entire family, it was a four-hour road trip to see what the 46-hour dance marathon was all about.

"When we got to THON late Friday night, it was breathtaking," McKeown said. "I still can't find the best words to describe what it felt like. Seeing all of the different colors, signs and smiles was incredible. After that visit I



Photo courtesy of Tracey Tardif

Tracey Tardif (left) and Kristen McKeown pose during Color Wars 2018.

was fully committed to coming to Penn State."

Tardif and McKeown have both been involved in THON since their freshman year. They met each other their sophomore years while on the same dancer relations committee and have been close friends ever since.

When they came back to campus at the start of their senior year, Tardif and McKeown were deciding what they were going to do for their last year of THON while students at Penn State.

"We thought of becoming independent dancers and said, 'Why not? Let's just go for it,'" McKe-

own said. "It was kind of on a whim."

This semester, they are both full-time student teachers in Clearfield, Pennsylvania, which is roughly an hour from State College.

They were both teaching on the day they discovered they had been chosen to independently dance.

"I tried to keep my phone off all day, but I couldn't resist checking it," McKeown said. "During lunchtime, I got an email from David Candito that I had been picked."

To read full story, visit collegian.psu.edu

Leadership

FROM Page B1.

He said last year's executive director, Austin Sommerer, was great at event planning. Smith, meanwhile, said his accounting background has helped him focus on the fundraising side of THON.

"When I meet people who were involved in THON in the past, especially Penn State alumni, one of the first questions I'm asked is whether being involved in THON is like a fulltime job," Smith said. "To an extent, it is, but it's also really fun. It's very easy for me to come to the office and want to do work all hours of the after-

noon." Smith has people like Suzanne Graney, the Four Diamonds executive director, a THON adviser, as well as past executive directors to look to if he needs any help — a lifeline that Smith wasn't aware he would have until he entered the position.

"I've so enjoyed working with Andrew this year and seeing him grow as a leader through his THON experience," Graney said via email. "He is very committed to our shared missions, and is thoughtful and caring in his approach to both THON student volunteers and Four Diamonds families. He is incredibly dependable and responsible in his role, while still remaining dedicated to his studies."

And, Smith said past executive directors can provide a lot of valuable insight when it comes to making decisions. He said it's really cool because they are a very involved group and

even though they graduated they are always available to help.

Erin Thompson, the THON finance executive director, is another friend of Smith's.

"He is very good at problem solving and thinking outside of the box so as not to just stick to what THON has done in the past," Thompson (senior-accounting) said. "Hopefully, he passes that on to future generations so THON can continue to be successful, many years to come."

The majority of Smith's job is complete the week leading up to the 46-hour dance marathon. During THON Weekend, his job is to be present and available to help when needed.

He will be at THON for the full 46 hours, taking two, 4-hour sleep shifts.

"Coming from rules and regulations, my time was very structured, and I knew where I was needed pretty much at all times," Smith said. "Now, I have the opportunity to have a little more freedom and just jump in wherever I am needed, and I am looking forward to it."

Smith said his favorite aspect of THON Weekend is watching the Four Diamonds families and children interact with the dancers, volunteers and spectators.

"It's really interesting because you see a dancer who could be so out of it and be tired and have their legs be sore, but somehow they will still have a great time playing with a child on the floor," Smith said. "The interactions are what give people so many meaningful memories during THON Weekend."

To email reporter: bej5070@psu.edu. Follow her on Twitter at @baileyjensen.

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ATHLETES GO DANCING



Christopher Sanders/Collegian

Brooke Hollis, (sophomore -computational data sciences), **Caitlin Stack** (junior-biobehavioral health), **Jill DeMaio** (junior-pre-law), and **Peyton Haefner** (junior-animal sciences) pose for a photo on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

How THON gives club swimming a new meaning

By Jim Krueger
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

To someone who is unfamiliar with Penn State, understanding the influence THON has throughout the entire Penn State community and the level of commitment needed to prepare for the one weekend out of the year can be difficult.

Brooke Hollis, Jill DeMaio, Caitlin Stack and Peyton Haefner joined the club swimming team at Penn State simply due to their love of the sport.

However, their love of the sport has led all four of them towards a title none of the expected: THON Captain. Now, all of them say they could not imagine having one without the other.

“I came initially because of swimming, but I stayed because of THON,” Hollis (sophomore - computational data sciences) said, a sentiment her peers agree is common throughout the club.

Diving head first into THON is a feeling many Penn State students can relate to, but club swimming has taken it a step further.

Club swimming’s commitment to THON shows not only in the passion of its members, but also in the stats. Last year, club swim raised \$54,000, more than any other club sports team on campus.

Being involved with THON through a club sport is a special experience. Members of the team have a personal relationship with a Four Diamonds family that committees and organizations may not have.

Since 2015, club swimming has been paired with the Butler family. Seven-year-old A’Niah was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in 2014. Club swimming has been with her throughout her fight.

For those who know A’Niah and her two siblings, Aiden (13) and Rockie (4), the inspiration they give has encouraged them to not only stay committed to the Butlers, but also to club swimming.

“A lot of people join obviously for the swimming aspect because we are a swim team but I think having such a strong THON base and being very involved as a team, it keeps everybody coming back,” DeMaio (junior - pre-law) said.

Since club swimming has been paired with A’Niah, she has undergone her last chemotherapy treatment, which the team

went to Penn State Hershey Medical Center to see, and now, A’Niah is in remission.

“The day that we got to celebrate A’Niah being in remission, we realized that might not have happened if it wasn’t for THON,” Haefner (junior - animal sciences) said.

The impact that the Butlers have on club swimming is evident. Not only has club swimming been the top sports club to raise money, but the members of the club have been influenced by the strength A’Niah has shown going from diagnosis to remission and they have been there every step of the way.

“We always want to go and see them,” Stack (junior - bio behavioral health) said. “We’ve been paired with them since 2015 so that was our freshmen year and we’ve come back every single year because we have the connection with the family.”

Club swimming has given them the opportunity to not only play the sport they love, but also grow an appreciation for THON and the Butler’s are the reason for this.

“It’s given me a reason why I THON,” Haefner said. “Being in club swimming and being paired with the families is very different from the experience that you get on a committee because a lot of committees don’t get experience or don’t get interactions with Four Diamonds families and for us to be so close to the Butlers and to see them all throughout the year, that really is why I THON, it’s for them because they light up our lives.”

Beyond the impact the Butlers have on club swimming, THON has made club swimming much more than just a club.

Swimming is a sport where team interaction is sporadic. Practices can be at different times for different people and sessions usually consisting of swimming laps by yourself, any social interactions between the team are usually just quick conversations between laps.

But, THON has given the team a place to become closer.

To read full story, visit collegian.psu.edu.



“It’s pretty special going into THON knowing that your teammates always have your back.”

Caroline Layden

Penn State Club Volleyball



Erin O'Neill/Collegian

Club water polo’s THON dancers, Emily Argentati (junior-finance), **Robert Terchek III** (senior-biochemistry) and **Caroline Layden** (senior-hospitality mangement) toss a water polo ball in front of Old Main on Wednesday, Feb. 14.

Club water polo teammates to dance in THON

By Elena Rose
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It’s a no-brainer that water polo and supporting the cure for childhood cancer go hand-in-hand. Well, at least to Emily Argentati, Caroline Layden and Rob Terchek it is.

This weekend, these three students are about to live out one of their Penn State dreams together — dancing in THON 2018 for club water polo.

The group declared they will be representing much more than club water polo, however. They’ve spent the entire year fundraising, planning, bonding with and now dancing for their organization’s Four Diamonds families, the Wagners and the Benders.

As the road to THON 2018 dwindles, the trio — perhaps surprisingly — isn’t most concerned about the whole “standing for 46 hours straight” thing, especially Terchek (senior-biochemistry), who “accidentally” stood for all 46 hours last THON.

At the end of the day, they’re most concerned about gratitude: never taking the opportunity to dance for granted, knowing not everyone who applied to dance for club water polo was selected.

“I would say I was surprised to be picked [to dance],” Terchek said. “Caroline and Emily both deserved it, but I think the other two [who did not get selected] also deserved it very much.”

Five club water polo players applied to dance for the organization, but to meet THON’s exact dancer quota, only three teammates would be allowed to dance. With an organization as passionate about THON as club water polo, every applicant knew the stakes to dance would be very high.

Argentati (junior-finance) was already unsure of her chances when she applied, knowing that as a junior instead of a senior, people could vote on her differently. Regardless, she knew the story behind why she participates in THON was important and she wanted to share it with her teammates.

Three years ago, Argentati’s aunt was

diagnosed with brain cancer. She claims the impact it left on her family was something “no family should ever have to go through.”

“Just seeing how that affected [my aunt] — the most positive, upbeat person I know — came out of nowhere,” Argentati said. “So I think we’re out there to THON, not just for our [club water polo THON] families, but all the families impacted by cancer. Everyone, adults alike, impacted by cancer.”

Additionally, Argentati coincidentally attended Governor Mifflin High School with Brittany Wagner, one of club water polo’s Four Diamonds children. Argentati said the home connections make THON and her personal relationship with “Britt,” now 17-years-old, even more special.

“When I was a senior in high school, Britt was a freshman,” Argentati said. “It was neat to, not exactly ‘grow up’ with her, but to have our friendship grow and our bond get deeper over the years.”

For Layden (senior-hospitality management), childhood cancer is personal, too.

She was motivated to dance in THON 2018 for multiple reasons, but one reason in particular stuck out to her: On the last day of eighth grade, one of Layden’s future high school volleyball teammates, Julie, was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

By February of their freshman year, the disease had claimed Julie’s life.

Even though Layden didn’t get to know her teammate very well, Julie’s loss is one that will stick with her forever. As the anniversary of Julie’s passing, Feb. 23, soon approaches, THON hits even closer to home for her.

“She was supposed to be my teammate and she never got to be. It was really sad for me,” Layden said. “[Julie] being impacted by childhood cancer when she was supposed to be my friend and teammate first, that hits home to me — I’ll definitely be dancing for Julie out there [THON weekend].”

Terchek roots his motivation to dance in the impact the Wagner and Bender families have made on him in his four years on club water polo.

“One of the other things I’m very excited to experience this THON is [standing] on the floor with our THON families, just because the smiles of Brittany and Alison brighten everyone’s day,” Terchek said.

To read full story, visit collegian.psu.edu.

Athletes go from the field to the floor

By Ben Ferree
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Two Penn State athletes will be in a familiar situation when the THON dancers stand on Friday night.

Charlie Shuman, a football offensive lineman, and Megan Schafer, a star on the pitch for women’s soccer, will be dancing in their second THON after successfully completing it last year.

Schafer cites her younger cousin, who successfully defeated cancer, as the motivation for her participating in THON.

Women’s soccer will join football by having two dancers in the Bryce Jordan Center this weekend as Schafer’s teammate Sarafina Valenti will be dancing for the first time. Safety Nick Scott will also take to the floor of the BJC, dancing on behalf of the student leaders organization.

“I’m really excited to have another football player with me,” Shuman said. “Nick and I have been going back and forth at workouts the last couple weeks saying that we have to get ready and make sure we are prepared and flexible for the weekend.”

Delani Higgins (field hockey) and Connor Raaman (men’s golf) will conclude the five student athletes that are dancing through the Student Athlete Advisory Board. Scott brings the total to six.

For Shuman, giving back to children with cancer and rare diseases did not start when he came to Penn State.

The senior helped create “Big Helping Little” while he was still



Caitlin Lee/Collegian

James Franklin encourages Penn State football player, **Charlie Shuman**, to step forward and wave during Penn State THON on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2017 at the Bryce Jordan Center.

in high school. The foundation raises awareness and funds for rare diseases and points to one boy as his main inspiration for doing THON.

Shuman and Scott both realize the impact of dancing at THON and representing the sport most associated with Penn State.

“Nick and I have a huge platform that we can make a huge difference in THON, especially having a second time to dance and using that platform is unreal that we can take advantage of what we have while we have it, because football isn’t going to last forever,” Shuman said.

Scott is grateful for the level of experience that Shuman brings with him and will be using his knowledge of THON to make sure

he is successful himself.

“If I have any questions I’ll definitely find him, it won’t be hard. I’m sure he will be the tallest person in the building,” Scott said. “He’ll probably help me with packing and everything like that.”

Scott is now just a few days from taking the floor, and even with the guidance of Shuman is unsure of what he is going to experience during the event and how to prepare for something as physically and mentally demanding as standing for 46 hours straight.

“I don’t really know because I’ve never done it. I hope I’m doing the right things,” Scott said. “I’ve been trying to get to bed at least 9:30 or 10 [p.m.] and I’ve been trying to eat right. I

can’t say I’ve totally fasted from candy because candy is one of my passions. I’m just trying to get enough sleep and eat healthy.”

Unlike Shuman, Scott was first introduced and experienced kids with cancer through a visit Penn State football made to Penn State Children’s Hospital in Hershey.

Scott’s eyes were opened by the experience and he said he was blown away by all the precautions he had to take, like washing his hands before going into the rooms.

“It hits you hard, but you are glad that you get that exposure and understanding and it humbles you. It really makes you grateful for the experiences you have,” Scott said.

In particular, a 13-year-old

girl that Scott met while the team was visiting Hershey his freshman year is something that he will never forget.

“She was awesome,” Scott said. “We talked with her we had a great time and learned her story and felt like we really connected.”

Only a few weeks later, Scott felt the pain that cancer causes so many across the world as the team found out the girl they had just connected with had died.

Scott said he knew from that point on that he wanted to be more involved in THON and that he will have her in the back of his mind when he feels the pain of standing for 46 hours straight.

“It was tough. She was a young girl. She was sweet, smart all those things,” Scott said. “We lost her to a terrible, terrible disease. From that point on I knew I wanted to do more for THON.”

For Scott, his love of children is also a major factor in his decision to push his body to the absolute limits during THON.

“When we would take visits to places like Hershey Hospital and we would see kids who are going through chemotherapy and things like that, and they don’t necessarily have the opportunity to have every day regular kid experiences,” Scott said.

“That’s something that I really take to heart and anything that I can do to put smiles on those children’s faces to give them more hope that’s an opportunity that I’m going to take.”



Independent dancer, **Dana Buck, class of 2017**, dances with her dancer relations committee member, Hannah Geller (junior-film) during Penn State's THON in the Bryce Jordan Center on Friday, Feb. 17, 2017.



Joe Jonas and JinJoo Lee of DNCE perform during the Penn State THON at Bryce Jordan Center on Friday, Feb. 17, 2017.

THON ON AND ON AND ON...



From left, **Devon Salasin (senior-planetary science)** and **Claire Lewis (senior-biobehavioral health)**, both dancers for Penn State Ski Team, stretch before Penn State's THON begins in the Bryce Jordan Center on Feb. 17, 2017.

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Romeo Rodrigues (4) brother of THON child **Layn Burger (11)** shoots water at dancer on the floor during THON 2017 at the Bryce Jordan Center on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2017.

Good Luck Dancing at THON!



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Tracey Tardif



I THON for more dreams. I THON so that my future students can grow up and be whatever they want to be and that nothing will stand in their way.

Kristin McKeown



I THON for my future students and so that no child has to hear the word 'no' to any dreams that they have.

Gaby Gladfelter



I THON for all the Four Diamonds families and all the Four Diamonds kids that I've met over the years.

Emily Kerner



I THON so hopefully one day we will have more organizations like the Four Diamonds throughout the country so that families won't have to go through that.

Jon Gross



We're a community that likes to help people — likes to help people in need. That's exactly what THON does and I'm honored to be a part of it and to have had the ability to fundraise for it and now this year to dance.

Ali Fetzer



I THON for so many reasons, mostly for our THON child Clay, who has been cancer-free for over 10 years and in honor of my dad.

Mollie Wood



I THON for Hope Westrick, who was Alpha Xi Delta's THON child who passed away sophomore year and I'm dancing in honor of her this year.

Rob Bieslow



Personally, I thon because senior year so far has been, I guess you could say, easy. I want to experience some adversity in my life and I think this would be something that would be good for me and a good learning experience moving forward.

Emma Dickson



I THON for my two THON families, the Pattersons and the Mehalicks. Maggie and Mackenzie are my THON children's names, so I THON for M and M, and they're my world.

Sarah Vasile



I guess saying 'for the kids' is very cliché, but I do think that's the reason why a lot of us do it — to support the people that are going through that now. And then to make sure nobody ever has to go through that again in the future, hopefully.

Emily Paulus



I THON so that people can have a break from the stress in their lives. They don't have to be sick for the day. They can be whatever they want for the day.

Cassie Oresko



I'm a student teacher right now, so I see one of the girls in my class — she has leukemia, so seeing what she goes through every day, I want her to have brighter futures and I want her to have every opportunity a first grader can have.

Todd Goldstein



I THON just because I fell in love with our THON families, everything they've been through, and all of my grandparents have battled cancer. I've worked in cancer hospitals. So I THON for everyone that is battling cancer.

Audrey Zavada



I THON for our THON children, Max and Dylan, for my cousin who had cancer — just so that no parent has to hear that their child has cancer and that no kid has to go through that.