



Photo by Caitlin Lee/Collegian

AN UNFIT ENDING

Penn State blew a 15-point halftime lead and fell to Michigan State in Lamar Stevens' final home game as a Nittany Lion

By Matt Lingerman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Fire spewed upward from a pair of flamethrowers stationed at Penn State's tunnel as Lamar Stevens walked out to Meek Mill's "Dreams and Nightmares" one final time.

In that moment, as the 6-foot-8 forward from Philadelphia elicited the loudest ovation from the more-than 13,000 fans that packed the Bryce Jordan Center, it felt like Stevens was destined to lead his team to another marquee victory in his last home game as a Nittany Lion.

Maybe Stevens would even score the 40 points necessary to beat Talor Battle's all-time points record. Something unique was in the BJC air on Tuesday night — and it wasn't just the pyrotechnics.

Then the game started, and what followed ended as one of the most difficult offensive performances of Stevens' illustrious career, thanks in large part to the defensive stylings of Michigan State forward Xavier Tillman.

"Give Tillman credit," Pat Chambers said. "I haven't seen anybody guard Lamar like that in four years. He did an outstanding job of really frustrating him all night long."

Through more than 10 minutes, Stevens failed to register a point.

But in typical Stevens fashion, the industrious senior didn't allow the slow start to serve as an impediment on his value or morale.

He continued to defend and rebound at a high level, and there were still those classic bursts of positive emotion which have become such a defining aspect of Stevens' game.

But there were also moments of oddity which perhaps could have predicted that Stevens' last game at the BJC wasn't going to go his way. The first came with just over five minutes remaining in the first half, when Jamari Wheeler stole a ball near the midcourt boundary and drifted toward the basket.

He saw Stevens streaking down the middle of the floor and threw a lob, which Stevens caught with one hand and threw down — onto the rim. It kamed high into the air and back into play.

The ball ended up in Myles Dread's hands, and he drilled a 3-pointer. Penn State's lead over a hot Spartan team was now at 16 points, and all Stevens could do was shrug and laugh that his missed alley-oop ended up being a good thing.

"Lamar knows it's not about Lamar Stevens," forward John Harrar said. "He wants to win. It's about Penn State basketball. If one of us wants to score six buckets in a row and Lamar doesn't touch the ball, you know, he doesn't care. He wants to win basketball games. He doesn't want to score 30 a night."

That's a truth Stevens has proven again and again over his four years in blue and white, and it's a driving force behind Penn State's best season in more than two decades.

But at the same time, Stevens' night was abnormal, even when compared to other tough starts he's had over the course of his career.

Penn State went into halftime up 46-31. Stevens went into halftime 0-for-9 with two points via a pair of free throws. Yes, Stevens was struggling, but Penn State was not.

Then the Spartans came out of halftime like a bat out of hell, scoring at a blistering pace and closing down shooting looks which had been available to Penn State during the first 20 minutes.

"We get a lot of easy buckets when Lamar commands that double team," Chambers said. "And then we have them chasing. And that's the goal on offense, right? You want the other team, their defense, to chase, and the way they played, they were jamming some screens. They were going under some screens. But Tillman was velcroed to Lamar all night long. And he's long. He's

big, he's strong. He did a heck of a job."

Stevens did eventually hit a field goal, and he managed to finish the game as Penn State's second-leading scorer with 15 points. But he shot only 3-of-19 from the floor and was a minus-15 on the night. And, when called upon in the guts of the game, Stevens wasn't able to be the Superman he so often has masqueraded as at Penn State.

It was a bittersweet ending to his career in State College. The crowd and his teammates showed the adoration they have for him, and his litany of pro-

lific moments was shown on the jumbotron before he addressed the fans who remained to watch the postgame senior ceremony — that's the sweet part.

But it's unfortunate that a loss like Tuesday's is how his senior night ends.

After most losses, the take away is that Lamar Stevens can't do it all by himself.

On Tuesday, in an unfitting conclusion to his Bryce Jordan Center career, Penn State couldn't do it without Stevens.

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Caitlin Lee/Collegian

Forward Lamar Stevens (11) wipes tears from his face during the senior day ceremony after the game against Michigan State at the Bryce Jordan Center on Tuesday, March 3.

Second half run by Spartans dooms PSU

By Caleb Wilfinger
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Pat Chambers knew that his team wasn't out of the woods yet.

Mike Watkins had just finished an acrobatic layup at the rim in the waning seconds of the first half to give Penn State a 46-31 lead at the break, capping off a near-perfect opening 20 minutes.

In their final home game of the 2019-20 season, the Nittany Lions played one of their best halves of basketball of the year and thoroughly dominated a red-hot Michigan State team.

As they left the court, the hosts were serenaded with cheers from the nearly 13,500 fans at the Bryce Jordan Center, and it seemed as if Penn State had found its mojo once again.

But Chambers' team knew that the run was coming.

In fact, it happened back on

Feb. 4, when the Spartans rallied from 11 points down to take the lead at multiple junctures of the second half, even as Penn State ultimately pulled out a victory in the Breslin Center.

So, the Nittany Lions were prepared for Michigan State to make a run coming out of the locker room.

They just couldn't stop it.

"I think that we got away from our formula in the second half," John Harrar said.

"I keep going back to our formula when it comes to buying into our own roles, and defending and rebounding. They have a bunch of weapons out there, and they're really tough [to defend]."

It started with a 3-pointer from Aaron Henry on the opening possession of the second half.

After empty possessions from both teams, Rocket Watts made a driving layup, and followed that up with a jumper in transition.

Suddenly, the Spartans had trimmed the deficit to just eight points with 18 minutes to play.

Chambers called a timeout, but things only got worse for his side, as it only took three more minutes for Michigan State to tie the score at 49 and quickly take the lead on a Xavier Tillman layup off a turnover.

During this stretch, Penn State's offensive execution was virtually nonexistent, as the turnovers and missed shots piled up.

"Well we gotta get to the free throw line," Chambers said. "That's the time where we really need to post up and get an easy one or an offensive rebound put back or a dagger 3-pointer."

Over the course of a nearly-eight minute span to open the half, the Nittany Lions were outscored by a 24-3 margin and looked completely out of sorts on both sides of the ball.

The crowd that had been cheer-

ing in full voice for most of the evening was in a state of shock as Penn State was continually forced to take ill-advised shots and paid for it on the defensive end.

"We weren't making our [3-pointers] and we weren't making our free throws - and I think we missed some layups during that run," Chambers said.

"So they were able to get the rebound and then take the ball from one end, just like we do, from one end to the other very quickly, and they were able to get some easy baskets."

Once the Spartans took the lead, they never looked back.

Tom Izzo's group is deep, talented, and led by one of the best tandems in college basketball in Cassius Winston and Tillman.

Even as Penn State rallied late in the game, it never felt like the Nittany Lions were going to re-take the lead and undo their abys-

mal shooting stretch at the start of the half.

Michigan State is an experienced, battle tested side that will be picked by many experts to advance deep into the NCAA Tournament.

But Penn State blew a 19-point lead at home, and that doesn't happen if Chambers' group was able to handle the Spartans onslaught to start the final 20 minutes.

"Those first four minutes were massive," Chambers said. "They got some rebounds, they made a three, we had some turnovers, some long, missed shots, some real quick shots too. I think that definitely swayed the momentum their way...They definitely made some big-time attitude or winning plays that kept the momentum going in their favor."

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Vaping and the lack of education

By Madigan Lubold
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As people are finding loopholes to the newly implemented legal age to purchase electronic cigarettes, there is concern with lack of education on college campuses regarding health risks with vaping.

The United States Food and Drug Administration raised the minimum age to purchase e-cigarettes from 18 to 21 years old — however, according to Jessica Yingst, an assistant professor at the Penn State College of Medicine, online vendors don't always ask for proof of age.

There are a host of ways for students to get access to these products, even if they aren't over the age of 21, she said.

Products can be purchased by friends who are of age and online, which makes things difficult, Yingst said.

She said while there's a higher percentage of high school students who vape, it is still a huge issue on college campuses as well.

According to Jonathan Foulds, a professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences Division of Health Services and Behavioral Research, the rate of reduction in teen smoking has accelerated since 2010 when e-cigarettes came on the market.

Additionally, it can be very easy for students to obtain such products.

"State College is like any other community in the country with lots of young people," Foulds said.

"In such communities, vaping products like Juul go through the roof."

He said it's also important to follow the rules and regulations the FDA sets for retail stores, even if they lose busi-



Collegian file photo

There are an increasing number of students who vape on campus.

ness from some of their younger target markets.

"If the name of the game is to eliminate the use of e-cigarettes, the first thing is to follow the rules," Foulds said. "While these new laws should make a difference, there is already evidence that these laws are not being strictly enforced and both teens and retailers are trying to take advantage of loopholes."

Access to retail locations is diminishing, as more places have banned the distribution of vape products.

According to Yingst, restricting access with age and location is going to help discourage vaping among students.

The FDA recently approved the

banning of any flavored pods for Juuls — or any cartridge similar to the Juul pod — according to Yingst. There have been reports that customers are drawn to Juul due to the flavors, she said.

"We hope this step will cut down on e-cigarette consumption," Yingst said.

However, new disposable products called Puff Bars recently came out, which is a way of circumventing the FDA's rule about flavored cartridges.

There isn't much enforcement from the FDA when it comes to single-use devices, she said.

A way of deterring students away from e-cigarette devices is to educate the public, according to Foulds.

"If we assume that high school and college-aged students are using e-cigs, it is reasonable to educate people that these are harmful," Foulds said.

It is important to distinguish between nicotine e-cigarettes and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) vapes, according to Foulds. It is illegal to use THC products in Pennsylvania at any age without a prescription from a medical professional.

Although e-cigarettes may not be as bad as cigarettes, it is still unclear how harmful they are due to the novelty of e-cigarettes.

The 2019-2020 epidemic of serious vaping related lung disease was caused by contami-

nated THC vapes, not by nicotine e-cigarettes, he said.

However, he said nicotine e-cigarettes are not harmless — the nicotine can be addictive, and the long term effects of inhaling large amounts of propylene glycol and glycerin are unknown.

Therefore, for a student who decides to use e-cigarettes would see "significant worsening of health" if they are not regular smokers, Foulds said.

"E-cigarettes are less harmful than smoking a cigarette, but we don't actually know the long term effects yet," Foulds said.

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Courtesy of Ryan Valencia

Ryan Valencia, a graduate of the Class of 2016, poses.

Where are they now? Alums pursue politics

By Lilly Riddle
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Many Penn State alumni have gone on to pursue a variety of major careers, from Keegan Michael-Key's career in entertainment, to Lara Spencer's career in broadcast journalism to Saquon Barkley's career in the National Football League.

Many alums of Penn State's student government, the University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA), entered the political arena post-graduation, some becoming elected officials.

Michael Pipe graduated from Penn State in 2009 with a degree in political science. He now serves as a county commissioner for Centre County, a position he has held since 2012. When Pipe was a member of UPUA, he was an elections commissioner — a role he said helped him prepare for his current job.

At the time, there were six elections commissioners for UPUA, and each focused on a different area. Pipe worked on press and advertising, which entailed making people aware of elections and increasing voter turnout.

"In 2009, I wasn't on the ballot. It was my goal to increase turnout, so I was agnostic when it came to who won," Pipe said. "One of the roles of [Centre County] commissioner is to serve on the elections board, which works to increase voter turnout, so it uses a lot of the same skills."

Pipe continues to work with members of UPUA to increase student turnout in Centre County.

Ryan Valencia joined UPUA in 2015 during the fall of his junior year. He served throughout his senior year before graduating in 2016.

Valencia was an at-large representative and eventually became the chair of the governmental affairs committee. He said he was also a co-founder of the "new and rejuvenated" Pennsylvania Association of State-related Students (PASS).

Upon graduation, Valencia did campaign work, whether it was as a field director, a consultant or a campaign manager. In November 2018, he was successful in electing Christy Smith — a California state assemblywoman for the 38th District. Smith then named Valencia the district director for California's 38th assembly district.

Valencia said his involvement with UPUA allowed him to see things from an advocacy standpoint through "battles with the Board of Trustees."

He said his current job gives the opposite perspective, since people meet him with a list of priorities and problems to be solved, instead.

Valencia said UPUA was "probably the best learning experience" he had.

"Even though it's on a more micro scale, student government does tackle huge issues, whether

it's mental health or diversity," Valencia said. "Having to work on bills with such a large assembly, it gave me insight on what I do now on a day to day basis."

For Dave Harrington, the county commissioner for Lehigh County since 2019, UPUA proved to be a useful experience he could discuss when applying to law school. He graduated Penn State in 2013 and from law school in 2016.

In UPUA, Harrington was the chair of the facilities committee, and said it was a "really rewarding" experience that taught him how to delegate authority, advocate for votes, compartmentalize jobs and network.

"I kind of feel like I'm back in UPUA sometimes, trying to get people on board with different ordinances we're trying to pass," Harrington said.

He said meeting with different clubs while in UPUA was similar to meeting with different interest groups in Lehigh County.

For students looking to join student government, Harrington said to go for it — even if they don't get in right away.

"The election is rewarding even if you lose," Harrington said. "If you're interested in government, the only [way] to change something is to want to do it."

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Movin' On announces 2020 lineup

By Lindsey Toomer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Movin' On 2020 will feature performances from Foster the People, Lil Yachty, Two Friends and Sasha Sloan.

The festival will take place on the last day of classes, Friday, May 1, at the Intramural Fields located north of Park Avenue.

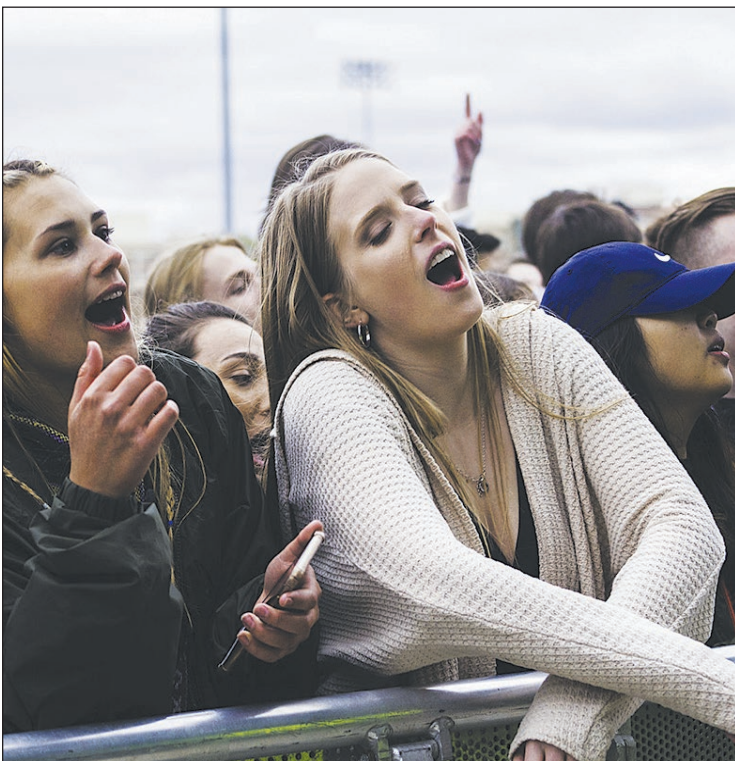
A student performer will also be selected to open the festival following the Battle of the Bands competition on Thursday, March 26.

The lineup was announced halfway through Movin' On's

HUB-Robeson Center takeover where they were selling merchandise for the organization and handing out flyers to promote the festival. There are also student performances throughout the day at the new HUB stairs by Jamba Juice.

The Student Programming Association's concerts committee funded Sasha Sloan's performance and also had a table present at the HUB takeover, along with UPUA and ARHS.

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James Leavy/Collegian

Students dance to Snakehips at the Penn State Movin' On Music Festival at the IM Fields on Friday, April 26, 2019.



MOVIN' ON 2020

FOSTER THE PEOPLE

LIL YACHTY

TWO FRIENDS

SASHA SLOAN

MAY 1, 2020 | IM FIELDS

Graphic by Lindsey Toomer/Collegian

MY VIEW | Madeline Messa

All bars should have code-named drinks to prevent sexual assault

Anyone who has been to a bar has witnessed a girl who is uncomfortable with an overly-pushy guy — some of us have been that girl. Every time Penn State sends out a text notification that a sexual assault has been reported, we are reminded of the increased risk we are at as college students.

Bartenders and bouncers are responsible for more than serving drinks and preventing underage drinking; they oversee and can control what takes place in a bar.

Yet, they cannot be expected to be eagle-eyed enough to catch every instance of misconduct.

A new “drink” makes it possible for distressed bar-goers to alert bartenders to troubling situations.

Some bars are introducing a means for patrons to discreetly request help if they are uncomfortable with someone or fearful of sexual assault: the angel shot.

The angel shot goes by different names and has

different implications depending on the bar, but its purpose is always to prevent sexual assaults.

It was inspired by an anti-rape support service in London, which instructed women to “ask for Angela” at a bar if they needed help.

At Pickle’s in downtown State College, a customer can order a single angel shot to cue intervention or a double to insight that police should be called.

While the angel shot is not listed on drink menus, it is not exactly a secret either.

After all, patrons have to be aware the code exists so they can make use of it.

The code is typically advertised on posters in women’s bathroom stalls.

With the notorious statistic that one in five women will be sexually assaulted during their college years, it is perhaps unsurprising that the code is chiefly oriented toward women.

However, sexual assault is not gender-exclusive.

While it is not unreasonable to argue that the angel shot should be kept quiet so sexual offenders are not made aware of it, I think it is necessary to make it known that the call for



Collegian File Photo

help is an option to anyone — regardless of whether they are male or female.

Though Pickle’s does not suggest the angel shot to males, Onward State reported its manager is not opposed to the idea.

The angel shot should become universal among bars.

Until then, it is unfortunately an unreliable system.

Uneasy patrons should be able to approach any bartender with an angel shot order and

receive assistance.

Currently, however, patrons have to determine what a particular bar’s version of the angel shot is or if the bar even has one at all.

The last thing someone in a desperate situation needs is a confused look from a bartender who is being enlisted to help them.

The angel shot can save people from uncomfortable sexual encounters and even has the potential to save lives.

Its reliability is questionable though.

All bars must implement the same system, inform patrons of its availability and train bartenders to respond properly to truly capitalize on the angel shot’s benefits and prevent sexual assaults.

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MY VIEW | Adriana Guidi

Coronavirus abroad: anxiety of being sent home

The first time I heard the word “Coronavirus” I thought it had to do with the beer. I wish I was joking.

Clearly after dominating the headlines around the world, I am well aware of what the virus entails.

Penn State, similar to many other universities, has pulled students out of all programs in Italy, which is a popular destination for students to study abroad, as well as China, South Korea, and Japan — this has been a hot topic of conversation.

I feel sad for everyone who is being sent home.

Studying abroad is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I would be extremely upset if my time abroad was cut short due to something that is out of my control.

When I was at the airport in Prague, I got the email from the study abroad office informing all students abroad about how the university is sending students in Italy home.

Even though I was not in

Italy and have not travelled there since I have been in Europe, I became on edge.

The email did not sit well with me as I was sitting in an airport where almost half of the people there were wearing face masks (which I read do nothing unless worn properly).

I began to look around and wonder what the future held for my time in Europe.

Then, today March 3rd, the Center for Disease Control released a statement that called for universities to consider sending all students abroad back to the United States.

While this was merely a suggestion and not an official statement calling students back to the U.S., it was still not an email that I was happy to read.

Right after I received this email, my program sent out an email saying that they will not be cancelling my program as of now and that classes will remain as usual.

This reassured me that things in the UK are fine, and I

“...I do believe that people shouldn’t be scared and need to continue on living their lives for now.”

Adriana Guidi

should not worry over this matter.

I feel very fortunate as of right now that I am able to continue my studies abroad.

So far, I have visited places I always dreamed of visiting and am learning a lot about myself, which I believe is critical to all travel.

On a personal note, the fact that Italy is currently classified as a Level 3 travel warning is upsetting to me because I was supposed to meet my grandmother in Florence, Italy.

And she already bought the ticket.

We have both never been to Italy before, and I knew this trip would have been the one with the most meaning to me.

My grandmother is truly like a second mother to me, and I was looking forward to this trip.

There is hope in my heart that Italy will become safe toward the end of April, when the trip is planned, and that we still can both travel to Florence.

But that part is unknown, just like the entire case of the virus. That is the thing — everyone seems to be planning about what to do if the virus gets worse or if they get sent home, and I do not understand this thinking.

If professionals and government officials cannot predict what will happen with the virus over the course of the next few

months, neither can you or I.

But something I’ve learned abroad has helped settle my worries around the situation: Stop being so scared and planning out the future.

I usually get anxiety about the future.

Where will I live? Who will I meet? Will I achieve my career dreams? How can I become prominent?

These are all questions that no one can answer.

Though you do have control over how you carve out your life, you can’t predict what will happen.

This anxiety disrupts my day to day life, and I have been trying to learn how to not get worked up over these questions.

I think this lesson applies to the whole case of the Coronavirus, more so for people not living in currently highly infected places.

I cannot speak for anyone in places where this has become an epidemic, and I send love to everyone affected by this virus.

While my lesson about not worrying too much about the future might be a far stretch to connect it to the Coronavirus, I do believe that people shouldn’t be scared and need to continue on living their lives for now.

Although a hard lesson to learn, it is essential to finding some peace within your mind.

If you cannot do that, then life might be more difficult than it needs to be.

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Nam Y. Huh/AP

Travelers wear protective masks as they walk through terminal 5 at O’Hare International Airport in Chicago, Sunday, March 1.

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PSU's Nick Lee on a new level

By Jake Aferiat
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Anytime Nick Lee has stepped on the mat this season, there's been pressure on him.

Pressure to prove that he's one of the nation's preeminent 141-pounders after back-to-back fifth place finishes, the standard issue pressure which comes with donning a blue and white Penn State singlet week after week, or even the pressure to rise above the fray and standout in a lineup with stars like Mark Hall and Vincenzo Joseph.

And yet, in spite of the unrelenting pressure he's under to succeed, Lee has managed to handle it with relative ease, compiling an 18-0 record with five ranked wins over Big Ten opponents, four top-10 wins and 15 bonus point wins.

That was in the regular season, though.

When the postseason gets underway with the start of the Big Ten Tournament at the Rutgers Athletic Center on Saturday, the pressure —perhaps amplified — will be on Lee once again to go show up on a big stage and produce.

It's in this pressure of the post-season however, where Lee finds some degree of self-actualization, some degree of belonging even despite being one of the nation's top wrestlers and having the self-confidence to realize that.

"It's a very select group of people in the country that get to compete in nationals and the Big Ten Tournament," Lee said. "So everybody — no matter what team you're from — if you're there, you should be proud of that and try to have fun in the tournament. The pressure's there but it's a blessing. It means you're doing something right."

Lee has always produced.

He's finished in third place at the Big Ten Tournament each of the last two seasons and in fifth place at nationals in that same time span, good for All-American nods.

He's also racked up an impressive 82-11 record not even three full seasons into his career, including 24 ranked wins.

But this season, Lee's teammates have noticed something different.

The talent is still there like it always has been. Instead they point to a certain work ethic and mindset that has been elevated, which will bode well for Lee come postseason time.

"He's a beast. He's gonna win nationals this year," Lee's teammate Jarod Verkleeen said. "There's a lot to learn from him: his pace, his style of wrestling — it's good, it's really good."

Verkleeen at 149 pounds along with his teammate Bo Pipher at 157 pounds, are making their postseason debuts this season, and both are looking to Lee as a source as inspiration with the biggest moments of their careers are on the horizon.

"Nick always wrestles his hardest and is always ready to go every weekend. He's always consistent and he's always someone who's going to give his best effort no matter how he feels and no matter what the situation is," Pipher said.

"So he's definitely someone I look up to."

Now a junior, Lee has emerged as a go-to leader and point scorer and integral part on a Nittany Lion team vying for its ninth NCAA title in 10 years under Cael Sanderson.

The Evansville, Indiana, native is known for his unrelenting positivity, which often manifests itself in a smile and a trademark

level-headedness regardless of if he wins or loses.

Lee's teammate and fellow All-American Shakur Rasheed even went so far as to say last year that Lee is "always cheesing" and is the wrestler Rasheed would comfortably bet on to routinely be in a good mood.

It's in being himself where Sanderson feels Lee's and others' leadership does the most good.

"We're not really a rah rah kind of a team. We just love to compete and have a high expectation and we try to keep things in perspective and that gives us a lot of strength and power," Sanderson said.

"We have individuals that just by being themselves, that's the best leadership we can have."

This postseason is different than most that Sanderson and even Lee in his young career, have been a part of.

This season has been more laden with lineup changes, freshman starters, spot starters, injuries and pulled redshirts than nearly any in Sanderson's tenure.

It's something he's admitted the Nittany Lions have had to cope with and adjust to, and it's resulting in five Penn State wrestlers making their postseason debuts this weekend.

But in Lee, Sanderson's got a calming voice and a leader who in addition to leading by example, will also be leading by not saying much at all, for fear of psyching out the relative newcomers.

"There'll be a time to talk about that but I don't wanna get in their ear too much. These guys have been wrestling the whole season and they've wrestled in big tournaments before," Lee said. "Nothing like the Big Ten Tournament probably, but I don't want them to have it in their head that it's anything



Noah Riffe/Colegian

No. 2 Nick Lee wrestles No. 1 Luke Pletcher during Penn State's match against Ohio State on Saturday, Feb. 15 at the Bryce Jordan Center.

other than just another tournament because it's not. I just want them to be their best just like any other tournament."

Lee is taking his own advice and isn't treating the Big Ten and NCAA Tournaments like something worth stressing over.

So when Lee steps on the mat, he'll likely do so with a target on his back as some combination of No. 2 Luke Pletcher of Ohio State, No. 7 Chad Red of Nebraska, No. 8 Mitch McKee of Minnesota, No. 11 Tristan Moran of Wisconsin and No. 18 Dylan Duncan of Illinois, will look to avenge their regular season losses to Lee.

The caliber of those opponents and having seen them once before gives Lee a certain confidence heading into the postseason.

"Getting tough matches throughout the year benefits everyone. And I think if you ask anybody in the Big Ten on any team, they'll tell you the same thing: seeing the best guys in the nation the entire season is definitely an advantage experience-wise going

into the national tournament," Lee said.

It's also those tough matches and depth at his weight which led Lee to dub the Big Ten Tournament the country's toughest.

That means for at least one more weekend this season, Lee will be under that pressure which he revels so much and has risen above often times before, meaning he'll get one more chance to showcase his skills and prove that his regular season success wasn't a fluke.

"The Big Ten Tournament, in my mind, is probably the toughest tournament in the country. That's the exciting part too though — you're not gonna have any matches that you can overlook," Lee said. "You've got to be ready for every single one. So I think that's the exciting part for me — I get to show my strength and try to be my best for every match so that's the exciting part."

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Lily LaRegina/Colegian

Bo Pipher wrestles during Penn State's meet against Maryland in Rec Hall on Sunday, Feb. 2.

Replacing a legend at 157

By Gianna Galli
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

For three consecutive years, Penn State could bank on national title coming its way at 157 pounds.

It was hard to imagine any other outcome happening with the seemingly unbeatable and routine No. 1 Jason Nolf setting the standards high almost each and every time he wrestled at the middleweight.

As a two-time NCAA champion and three-time All-American at the time, Nolf was easily prepared when the 2019 Big Ten Tournament rolled around.

But with one of Penn State's most legendary wrestlers graduated for over a year now, it will be junior Bo Pipher who gets to fill the big shoes of the prominent weight class this weekend at the Big Ten Championships.

It's a spot that is a daunting, but important, one to live up to.

"Jason's someone really good to look up to. He's always pushed himself to get the most out of himself and tried to do better than he did the week before," Pipher said. "He's always trying to get better. Watching him and seeing what he does is inspirational to me to just go out and do the same things."

That doesn't mean Pipher is looking to replicate one of the best to ever fulfill the weight class. He's just looking to make sure he does it to the best of his ability like he has for quite some time.

"I think I have gotten a lot better than I was at the beginning of the year and right now I feel the best I have felt and I'm super excited to compete," Pipher said. "Getting more matches than I have in previous years makes me feel more ready to go."

Before Pipher became a top-10 wrestler under Cael Sanderson

this season, he competed in a total of 42 matches over the course of two seasons as a redshirt compared to Nolf who saw the mat over 60 times after the end of his sophomore year.

Pipher finished the 2020 regular season 9-11, 2-8 in dual matches and 1-6 in Big Ten duals, which has this Penn State program waiting to see if it will all pay off for him in what will be a brand new world of wrestling.

"There's been some uncertainty with that weight, and, yeah, we were hoping to have Brady back by the end of the year," Sanderson said. "But we had Pipher wrestle off last week and he's just been getting better and better and really has earned that spot."

As Sanderson prepares his team for the most important part of any wrestling season, a handful of the roster, including Pipher, will enter the Big Ten Tournament with a rather unfamiliar sense to suiting up and getting Penn State on its way to another title.

In fact, when it comes to contributing to Penn State's latest national success, Pipher's position has gone as far as the hype man on the sidelines.

"It feels like it will be pretty much the same thing and I've gone a couple times to Big Ten's with the team," Pipher said. "I have warmed guys up to be there as a workout partner and it's just the same match as every other weekend."

However, it won't be Pipher warming other guys up. It'll be his turn to take the mat. But he will do so without much experience.

He was the 2019 Southern Scuffle runner-up, which is where most of his experience comes from when talking about tournament play.

Over the next few weeks, the rest of this junior's season is go-

ing to be centered on overcoming a second-place finish at an informal point in the season.

In order for Pipher to progress through the tournament, he will need to place within the top six at the end of the Big Ten Championship to qualify for his first ever NAAs.

Furthermore, Pipher will have a monumental opportunity to compete at the highest level among a select group of competition for the first time in his Penn State career.

Pipher will most likely come across potential opponents like Iowa's Kaleb Young and Ohio State's Elijah Cleary throughout the tournament.

Coming from experience, Pipher's teammate, No. 1 Nick Lee, knows that there is nothing about the Big Ten tournament Pipher has to be afraid of.

Lee has full belief in not only Pipher but each of the five who are new to this sort of thing and is ready to see all their hard work pay off.

"I don't want to get into their ears too much, these guys have been wrestling the whole season now," Lee said. "They have been in tournaments before, maybe not like the Big Ten Tournament, but I don't want them to have in their head that it's anything different. I think they're ready to go."

But when it all breaks down, to Pipher, there is no pressure on him to compete a certain way or to have a different outlook on a sport he has been comfortable competing in for years.

"I'm just trying to wrestle my hardest because there's something you learn from every match whether it is a win or loss," Pipher said. "How big the match is doesn't matter to me."

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Cael's thoughts on PSU's chances

By Jake Aferiat
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Few things excite Cael Sanderson more than the month of March.

It's the month where his Penn State teams have routinely proven themselves to be one of the nation's preeminent athletic programs over the last decade.

His squads have won eight of the last nine NCAA titles, including four straight and have six Big Ten titles to go along with that.

And yet, in spite of all that postseason success, Sanderson's not jaded and still revels in the opportunity for the Nittany Lions to be competitive when the third month of the year, and the postseason, get underway. "These are the fun weeks," Sanderson said. "I know I jump out of bed with a little more spring in the weeks of the big tournaments and the days of the big tournaments and I think our kids feel the same way about it."

Sanderson's right — to an extent.

Half of Penn State's lineup heading into this weekend's Big Ten tournament have never competed in collegiate postseason and don't know what to expect.

But for the half of the Nittany Lion lineup that have been to the postseason, including two-time All-American Nick Lee, it's hard to match Sanderson's enthusiasm surrounding March — even if it's not a far deviation from Sanderson's regular demeanor.

"I think Cael moreso than everyone else — he's probably the most excited, but I think everybody is pretty excited. It's hard not to be," Lee said. "Cael's the kind of guy that has a spring in his step every day, so he might say it [March means more] but it's nothing new for him."

Sanderson's wrestlers can learn a thing or two from his seemingly unrelenting positivity as a coach but can also learn from Lee and his consistency

this season as well.

And despite his team's relative youth and inexperience, the preparation remains the same this week.

"The mentality and the work ethic and everything, it's got to be a year-round thing," Sanderson said. "We're not changing anything this week so it's just time to go compete. If you're a competitor, you should be excited."

Lee is currently ranked No. 1 at 141 pounds and is 18-0 this season with four ranked wins, including a win over former No. 1 Luke Pletcher of Ohio State as he continues his breakout junior season.

"The consistency and just being your best all the time is a great tool because then we know what we

can work on. We're not going back trying to get this kid to give his best effort," Sanderson said. "Having a great effort is definitely the best long term solution to improvement and it's drip-by-drip and it's a slow and steady approach that works."

Lee, along with veterans Roman Bravo-Young, Vincenzo Joseph, Mark Hall and Shakur Rasheed will be integral to Penn State's title hopes at both the Big Ten and NCAA Tournaments in the coming weeks.

However, many presume Iowa to be the odds-on favorite to win both the Big Ten and NCAA title thanks to the Hawkeyes' depth, talent and ranked wrestlers at nearly every weight.

Sanderson isn't paying much attention to conventional wisdom, though.

He knows what he has talent-wise, can draw on past experiences and knows if they stick with the same principles that got them this far, the Nittany Lions' chances are better than people give them credit for.

"We're still trying to score as many points as we can. We can't control any other team, so all we can do is go in there and score as many points as we can and wrestle with that fire and enthusiasm," Sanderson said. "If we do that, we like our chances."

To email reporter: jxa5415@psu.edu. Follow him on Twitter at [@Jake_Aferiat51](https://twitter.com/Jake_Aferiat51).

"We're not changing anything this week so it's just time to go compete. If you're a competitor, you should be excited."

Cael Sanderson

Penn State ends winter workouts

By Benjamin Ferree
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Over the clanking of weights, the yells of the players and the bass of the music coming through the speakers in the weight room at the Lasch Building, Antonio Shelton's voice boomed. "Aye. Turn it up."

It was the second-to-last lift of the winter workouts for Penn State football as the Nittany Lions prepare for spring football and chart their progress through the first part of the offseason.

A learning experience

The Penn State strength program features more than just lifting the most weight or running the fastest times.

Dwight Galt, the assistant director of performance enhancement, explained the three tiers of the program and how once a player reaches a certain point, instead of continuing to push their weight, they focus on velocity training and speed.

"If I can see anything happening, I think the velocity based, speed based and not just linear speed, speed of movement, those are the things that we will continue to push even more and find more creative ways for guys to maximise their potential there," Galt said.

Galt also explained how this approach adds mass to the players more slowly but produces a leaner mass, allowing the players to get bigger and move faster at the same time.

And a big part of this is taking a look at how the team recovers from his workouts.

"The second thing is giving them this heavy workload and being able to get them to recover in shorter periods of time so you can do it again and we now have



Caitlin Lee/Collegian

Running back Journey Brown (4) reacts after being weighed during a strength and conditioning session at the Lasch football building on Wednesday, March 4.

these tools, these methodologies that we use that we can get them to recover faster and if you can recover faster then you can train harder the next workout," Galt said. "So I think recovery, regeneration, nutrition, all of these things we are really trying to embrace so we can put a better product on the field on Saturday."

And a big part of recovery is also making sure that the team can peak at the right time, right before the game on Saturday.

"We don't want their peak to be on Tuesday at practice, we want their peak to be right before that

game so that is really where we are going so assimilating that sport science into the strength conditioning and merge them fully together to be able to maximize their training," Galt said.

Leaders emerge

These off-season workouts often show early leaders for the season to come and according to Galt, multiple players have taken that next step over the course of the workouts.

"One guy that is in his third year is Castro-Fields," Galt said. "He's starting to ascend a little

bit. You just see that presence with him."

"PJ Mustipher, he is one of the hardest working guys on the team and really has done a nice job with presence," he added.

Galt also mentioned Micah Parsons and Jesse Luketa, before ultimately coming back to Journey Brown, a player who has really separated himself this offseason.

"He's just been punching the clock, every week, every month. I think his patience, his consistency just coming in every day and working hard is starting to pay dividends for him,"

Galt said. "That was the culture Saquon provided in that room and Miles did a really, really nice job doing it his one year and now Journey has picked up that mantle."

New records on the board

Throughout winter workouts, multiple players improved on old personal bests and will have their names added to the record board in the corner of the weight room.

And one of the records broken was Saquon Barkley's all-time bench record.

Defensive lineman Antonio Shelton took down the record by lifting 465 on Tuesday.

"Saquon isn't going to be real happy," Galt said. "That was impressive to see him do that. Antonio is strong. He's really done a great job and we are really impressed with him."

Parsons also set a linebacker power clean record and Des Holmes took an offensive line record, but while multiple players didn't break records they still impressed in winter workouts.

"Journey Brown, at 211 pounds, got 395 [on the bench] and was broken hearted that he couldn't get 400 but that is a darn good bench press, almost a double bodyweight bench press for one of our running backs. He did a really good job," Galt said.

Galt also pointed to offensive lineman Will Fries as one of the top performers during winter workouts.

"Will is over there [squatting] 405 for three sets and that's his training weight," Galt said. "He is a guy who came in, running a 5.5, not very strong and now he is in his fifth year and has just done a tremendous job building his body up and putting himself into a position to be an elite player for us at right tackle."

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Crossword

Across

- 1 Shopper's delight
- 6 Enthralled
- 10 Subsidies
- 14 Close-knit group
- 15 Like a crone
- 16 Cooking fat
- 17 New York city
- 18 Clairvoyant
- 19 Combustible heap
- 20 Hibernation site
- 21 "Go team!"
- 23 Ghost's cry
- 25 Chemical ending
- 26 Female Irish spirit
- 29 Trimmed
- 31 Jewish calendar month
- 33 Chicken ____
- 34 Like some ears
- 35 Dress
- 36 Tint
- 37 Bug
- 41 Band booking
- 42 Military simulation
- 44 Old French coin
- 45 University
- 47 Adam's madam
- 48 Wild guess
- 49 It may be framed
- 50 ____ Aviv
- 51 Table scraps
- 52 Connections
- 55 Porch
- 57 Bit of binary code
- 58 Genteel affair
- 60 Turkish title

Down

- 1 Soviet ballistic missile
- 2 Poet laureate of 1700
- 3 Capital of Scotland
- 4 Curve
- 6 A Bobbsey twin
- 64 Highlander
- 66 Wallop
- 68 Molten rock
- 70 Prefix with China
- 71 Certain
- 72 Kind of fire
- 73 Twiggy digs
- 74 Snaky swimmers
- 75 Carpentry grooves
- 5 Gain knowledge
- 6 1998 Jackie Chan movie
- 7 Biographical bit
- 8 Annapolis frosh
- 9 Trainee
- 10 Psychic power
- 11 Purchaser
- 12 European capital
- 13 War horse
- 22 Driveway type
- 24 Express a thought
- 27 Priest's robe
- 28 Bible authority
- 30 Reply to a question (Abbr.)
- 31 Breakfast choice
- 32 Secular
- 34 Moratorium
- 38 Alienated
- 39 Jacket
- 40 Vats
- 42 Least good
- 43 Norms
- 46 Common deciduous tree
- 48 Lawn base
- 52 Register
- 53 Asinine
- 54 Must-haves
- 55 Worth
- 56 Fingered
- 59 To be, in old Rome
- 62 Bullets
- 63 Some floor votes
- 65 Kit and caboodle
- 67 Dot-com's address
- 69 Santa ___, Calif.

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WORD SEARCH

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"To Kill a Mockingbird"

- Alabama
- Atticus
- Bob Ewell
- Boo
- Calpurnia
- Courthouse
- Dill
- Evidence
- Evil
- Finch
- Halloween
- Harper Lee
- Innocent
- Jem
- Jury
- Lawyer
- Maycomb County
- Mob
- Pulitzer Prize
- Radley
- Scout
- Sheriff Tate
- Summer
- Tom Robinson
- Trial
- Unfair
- Verdict

B E T A T F F I R E H S T P B Y U L
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A A C L H G D I F W F K E U L C E X
E I I N R E M M U S P L J E L K G R
J C J N O E D J J L L E W E B O B T
H H N S R P P Z E N B R H W T E R Y
O N V E G U F R E I E B V F N I T X
C O I H D X P E A Y R L B R A N N V
E J B Y V I W L W H J O V F U F E A
S C E O E O V A A G Q T N O G Y C E
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U J I X C H O Y C T K P G J M O A C
O J N A S V A B A U A D U X T U B T
C G P Y L M L I V E L H A E B U F I

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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		17							
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11									
23					22				
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				20					
				28					

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Bigar's Stars

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

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PISCES (2/19-3/20) ★★★ You are unusually vibrant. Others seem to naturally respond to your ideas and suggestions. Creativity soars as the result of a brainstorming session involving several parties. Try to separate business and pleasure. Tonight: Acting as if there is no tomorrow.

ARIES (3/21-4/19) ★★★ Someone might find you unusually perceptive and insightful. You might choose to say little, but the words you choose and the tone you assume clues others in to your thoughts. Tonight: Call it an early night.

TAURUS (4/20-5/20) ★★★★★ How you deal with an upset friend or associate reveals a lot about you. You demonstrate understanding during a conversation. Your attitude is appreciated more than you realize. Tonight: Speak your mind.

GEMINI (5/21-6/20) ★★★★★ You can

touch base with someone and totally change his or her mental state and perceptions. Use care when dealing with financial matters. Tonight: Pay bills first.

CANCER (6/21-7/22) ★★★★★ News opens you up to a different perspective involving a discussion and a decision that could impact your life in a manner you had not considered. Take your time weighing the pros and cons of this issue. Tonight: Surf the web.

LEO (7/23-8/22) ★★★ Take a step back. Sometimes, no action might be more significant than a reaction. If you are not sure you have the lay of the land or know the issues around a decision, stay mellow. New information will be forthcoming. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.

VIRGO (8/23-9/22) ★★★★★ Reach out for others. You might hear news that is not

as positive or supportive as you would like. Do not make this judgment just yet. You might realize you misread someone you could be dealing with. Tonight: Respond to a friend's suggestion.

LIBRA (9/23-10/22) ★★★★★ Tension might build despite your apparent attempt to do little and stay chill. You still have certain areas or issues to work through. You could be confused by the activity that surrounds an associate or a friend. Tonight: Do not hold back.

SCORPIO (10/23-11/21) ★★★★★ Reach out to a friend or person who has more knowledge than you about a topic. He or she might have solutions that you haven't considered. Go through the suggested options with this person. Tonight: Have an overdue chat with a child or loved one.

SAGITTARIUS (11/22-12/21) ★★★★★

Defer to a partner who is savvy and has more knowledge about the topic at hand. You do not need to agree to this person's solution or direction. A personal matter could come up for discussion. Tonight: Make it easy.

CAPRICORN (12/22-1/19) ★★★★★ Your words make sense to others, but do not be surprised if you need to re-explain certain concepts. You could have difficulty making your way through an unusual person's perspective to introduce a concept or approach. Tonight: Lie low if possible.

AQUARIUS (1/20-2/18) ★★★ You have a lion's share of work ahead of you. Your ability to zero in on an issue remains one of your strengths. Be more forthright about a money matter that could be holding you back. Expect to receive a suggestion or two. Tonight: Make it your treat.

BRINGING THE ROAR

Penn State men’s hockey earned home-ice advantage for the Big Ten Tournament and is expecting a unique and special atmosphere

By Dylan Jacobs
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

On Monday, Alex Limoges sat at the podium in the Pegula media room.

MEN'S HOCKEY

Towering over him on the table was the Big Ten Regular Season Championship.

The trophy illustrated the happiness in the room during the media session, but Limoges was happier about another aspect of the championship victory — the fact he won’t have to play on the road during the tournament.

Penn State earned home-ice advantage throughout the Big Ten Tournament and will host the one-game semifinal next weekend.

The Nittany Lions always embrace the environment, often praising the Roar Zone and its efforts after games.

But the environment next weekend will probably be something special, and they know how special it is to have that advantage.

“I think so,” Limoges said about if the home-ice advantage was the bigger prize.

“I think home-ice position no matter what is huge. Everyone knows how electric the atmosphere is on a game day, and remembering last year, against Wisconsin, it was just the next level, so I’m looking forward to that.”

Even with all of the tournament wins over the past two years, the Nittany Lions never had home-ice beyond the first round.

In the past three years, Penn State hasn’t eclipsed the No. 4 seed in the tournament.

This year, it was finally able to find that consistent regular



Jonah Rosen/Collegian

The Roar Zone cheers for a Penn State goal during the men’s hockey game against Sacred Heart at Pegula Ice Arena on Friday, Oct. 11, 2019.

season success, resulting in its first Big Ten Regular Season Championship.

With that comes the home-ice advantage, something that Penn State has seen only in a small sample size.

The past two years, Penn State has hosted the 2-out-of-3 Big Ten Quarterfinals.

Those have been similar to environments seen in the regular season, just with the quick turnaround required to purchase tickets.

Game 3 last year against Wisconsin showcased the problem with those types of series, as the crowd was not near capacity, mostly because people had to

decide to go that day.

March 14 won’t be anything like that game, as fans have two weeks to create a unique environment for the one-game playoff.

“It’s incredible. To play another game with the Roar Zone is huge,” forward Kevin Wall said. “They get behind us, and it

definitely shifts momentum on the ice.”

The atmosphere has helped, for the most part, as Penn State went 11-5-3 at Pegula this season.

But Penn State knows that this game will be nothing like it’s ever seen.

“I’m really looking forward to it. I mean I’m really looking forward to it,” Guy Gadowsky said. “Our fans, our student section are always so awesome. I’m just looking forward to seeing what they bring in a one-game winner-take-all.”

The past two years, the Nittany Lions’ Big Ten season ended on the road at Notre Dame.

That can’t happen this time around, with Penn State’s games guaranteed to be at home.

“It’s obviously huge for us,” Gadowsky said.

“There’s no other place on the planet we would want to play this game.”

While Penn State is focused on the semifinal, the idea of holding the Big Ten Tournament Championship on the ice at Pegula is not lost on the Nittany Lions.

“Having the chance to win [the championship] at home, at Pegula, for the first time would obviously be cool...” Cole Hults said. “Bringing it back here would be special for the program.”

The one-game playoffs will likely present an environment unlike anything Pegula has seen, and even Limoges doesn’t know what to expect.

“Not at all,” Limoges said when asked if he could picture the atmosphere. “They get a week and a half to prepare and get their tickets, so I’m looking for a sold out crowd.”

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Penn State’s defensive chemistry is paying off

By Shane Connelly
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

If there’s one unit that consistently faces the most questions year-in and year-out, it’s Penn State’s defense.

MEN'S LACROSSE

It’s not for a lack of talent.

Former players like Chris Sabia, Mike Aronow, Peter Triolo and others have produced for the team in the past.

Current players such as senior Nick Cardile, junior Brayden Peck and redshirt senior Tommy Wright have done the same throughout their careers.

Through five games this season, though, something has been different.

“This year, we’re really connecting,” Wright said.

Associate head coach Peter Toner, whose specialty is the defensive side of the ball, attributes that shift to his players’ willingness to listen and learn.

“Everyone has a pretty clear cut vision of what we want [the defense] to look like,” Toner said. “Execution’s not always there, but I do think they have a pretty good idea of what we want to look like, how we want to play.”

That sense of “buying in” starts at the top.

Cardile and Wright, two of Penn

State’s four captains, have taken it upon themselves to create a brotherhood within the defense.

“Nick Cardile’s leadership, Tommy Wright’s leadership should not be overlooked,” head coach Jeff Tambroni said.

“Those guys come out every day and set a really good tone, and everyone else follows in between.”

Cardile and Wright have been key contributors on the field as well.

Cardile leads the team with eight caused turnovers.

He’s also had his time to shine on the offensive side, showing his transition abilities while converting his two shot attempts into two goals for the Nittany Lions.

Wright trails only faceoff specialist Gerard Arceri for ground balls this season with 12, and he has forced three turnovers this season.

Penn State has also seen some younger talent emerge this season. Toner points to two freshmen -- long-stick midfielder Sam Sweeney and short-stick defensive midfielder Grant Haus -- as well as sophomore defenseman Brett Funk, as the ones who have impressed him with their quick adaptation.

Wright echoed that sentiment, also giving props to junior

short-stick defensive midfielder John Nostrant.

“Those younger guys have been really helping us older guys,” Wright said. “It’s been making it easier [on us].”

And when shots have been getting past these defenders, Penn State has had faith in the man between the pipes.

“The collaboration between our goalie and defense is better than it’s been in years past in terms of overall connection,” Toner said.

“It’s been fun to watch.”

Senior goalie Colby Kneese is on pace for a career year.

After a slow start to the year by his standards -- he recorded save percentages of .500 and .474 against Lafayette and Villanova respectively -- Kneese has recorded double-digit saves in his last three starts, increasing in amount each time.

His most recent outing in which he recorded 18 saves to help fend off then-No. 6 Penn tied his career-high.

Kneese currently boasts a .562 save percentage, which is 13 percentage points higher than his previous best set in 2018.

“I think [the] biggest thing for him is, one, confidence just as an individual in the cage, and, two, ... after seeing shots like Mac O’Keefe on the left side, if he’s shooting on you every day in practice, I feel like you’re going to get better eventually,” Peck said.

Kneese’s growth has, in turn, made the jobs of Cardile, Peck, sophomore Brett Funk and the rest of the defensive unit more comfortable.

“We’re able to give up the 13-yard shot now ... and expect Colby to save that ball,” Peck said. “It’s allowing guys to really just play more confident, play more free, and just give us the best opportunity to win games.”

With cohesion higher than it has been in years past, the defense expects to continue this hot start and improve upon the standard Penn State set in 2019.

“Everyone’s really bought in this year,” Wright said.

“We have the superstars on the offensive end, so everyone has one common goal ... everyone knows we want to get back to the Final Four weekend and get past that semifinals and make the championship because we know how awesome that is and what that feels like.”

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Collegian file photo

Infielder Gavin Homer (40) blinks as the ball goes by his face during the first game of a double header against Minnesota.

Penn State’s versatile offense leading to success

By Matt Knaub
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Coach Rob Cooper has been digging deep into his team’s roster, and it has been paying dividends.

BASEBALL

The Nittany Lions have used their depth to propel them to a 9-2 start to the season, their best 11-game start since 1980. Penn State has scored 85 runs this year, which leads the Big Ten.

A total of 17 Nittany Lions have stepped in the batter’s box, seven of which have a batting average over .300.

Second baseman Gavin Homer has arguably been the most impressive so far, posting a .467 batting average in 30 plate appearances.

Last weekend, Penn State completed a four-game sweep of Princeton, scoring 39 runs in the series.

Fifteen different Nittany Lions had plate appearances, displaying the depth in their lineup.

“It’s trying to get them experience and at-bats to find out who are the guys that will be there at the end,” Cooper said leading into the series. “The nice thing is, this is the time of the year to do it.”

Cooper adjusts Penn State’s lineup based on many different factors, including the matchup between his hitters and a right-handed or left-handed opposing pitcher.

Amidst the changes, he believes the Nittany Lions have

not sacrificed steady defense performance.

Penn State has committed 16 errors so far, which ranks in the middle of the conference.

“I like being able to move guys around and have that flexibility with our lineup,” Cooper said.

The outfield has seen the biggest shake up, mostly due to an injury to shortstop Kris Kremer. With Kremer missing the last nine contests, Cooper has moved Mac Hippenhammer -- who started the season as an outfielder -- to shortstop.

The move has caused a shuffle in the outfield, as six players manned the trio of positions against the Tigers.

However, the starting roles seemed to be defined, as left fielder Ryan Ford, center fielder Johnny Piacentino and right fielder Curtis Robison started all four matchups.

“There are only three spots, so we have to figure out of those guys, where they can play,” Cooper said.

“You get a good feel for it in the fall and in January, but then you got to get out there and actually do it and see it.”

With seven nonconference games remaining before the Big Ten opener on March 20, Cooper will look to find a balance between the flexibility and continuity within the Nittany Lions’ lineup.

“You want to get the best nine guys that can help you win that day out on the field, consistently,” Cooper said.

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Ken Minamoto/Collegian

Nick Cardile (43) dives into the crease during the men’s lacrosse game against Johns Hopkins at Panzer Stadium on April 21, 2019.