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'Northern schools can fish too'

Penn State Bass Fishing Club qualifies for championships

By Emma Naysmith
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Penn State Bass Fishing Club traveled 20 hours down south hauling a boat and trailer, facing a Florida cold front and launching across 50 miles of rough water to make its mark on the Lake Okeechobee College Series tournament.

Representing Penn State, fishermen David Buccafuri and Ryan Small placed 11th out of 220 in the tournament and qualified for the August 2026 Strike King Bassmaster College Championship in Minnesota.

"The first day, we finished 29th with just over 10 pounds of fish, the second day we caught three," Small, a third-year studying wild-life and fisheries science, said. "The last boat to come in knocked us back to 11th place, the very last boat. Even so, we were just ecstatic that we finished so high."

Small said he estimates the group's move from 29th to 11th to be the biggest placement jump in the tournament.

The second day they had caught their qualifying fish at six pounds, six ounces — a fish Buccafuri, a fourth-year studying landscape contracting and design, said they didn't even think was a bass at first.

"It's exhilarating, it's blood pumping, you get filled with adrenaline, but at the same time it's scary," Small said. "When you have that big fish on the line, you don't want to lose it, because losing a fish that big would make or break."

Small said the group fishes well together, and between all of them there's a lot of experience.

"The reason we did well is we



Courtesy of Bassmaster

David Buccafuri and Ryan Small with their qualifying fish at the Lake Okeechobee College Series tournament.

were in the right spot, we were doing the right things," Small said. "We had the experience and the knowledge that it's one thing to catch a fish, but it's the next thing to get it in the boat."

While only those placing in the top ten were financially compensated, Buccafuri and Small also entered themselves into a separate tournament strictly for participants with Johnson Outdoors' equipment, which the group is sponsored by. Upon winning that bracket, they received a \$4,000 set of shallow water anchors for their boat.

"That was huge for us, and it was huge for the company," Small said. "Out of 220 boats, only ten or 11 had their product."

With the support of an estimated 15 sponsors and strong alumni relationships, the club has about

45 members. The top 15 qualify for the tournament team. Locally, it fishes in Bald Eagle State Park, the Susquehanna River and Raystown Lake.

Bass Fishing Club President Brenden Leahy knew he wanted to join the club ever since he was in grade school, when he saw a booth advertising it at an outdoor show in Harrisburg.

"It's a really cool experience," Leahy, a third-year studying community, environment and development, said. "As a club, and even all the other schools, we're able to gather in one place and have a friendly competition, and share all kinds of things with each other and meet a ton of new people."

He said fishing is more intricate than what others often think, and is more than a dock and worms.

"We talk about weather, we talk

about water temperature, times of year, why fish are going to be here and on the other side of the lake," Leahy said. "There's a lot of very specific details that go into fishing that makes it so special, and why we all like to share this passion because there's always something to learn, there's always something to discover."

In going into the Okeechobee tournament, Leahy said the mindset to do whatever it takes was crucial. With careful planning and preparation, the group's decision to take the risk and travel from the lake's north to south end would put them in the best position for fish catching.

"We went across the middle of the lake, and there were like three foot waves out there higher than the sides of the boat," Small said. "If the waves get too rough,

if your boat takes too much water it can get very dangerous very quick."

With other tournaments approaching and the team looking forward to the championships in August, Small said the club will conduct research as to what it will face. The biggest resources are YouTube and other Bassmaster websites with content from prior tournaments, according to Small.

"You want to try to mimic exactly what they were doing, if they were doing well," Leahy said. "Obviously it's not going to be exactly the same, but your goal is to get close enough so that you can replicate it."

While bass fishing is a southern sport, going forward, Small said the club's recent success proves they have the capability, the skill, knowledge and passion to compete.

"A lot of the southern schools do this, they take it seriously ... they just fish every tournament everywhere," Leahy said. "A lot of the northern schools get a bad rep, and I don't really think they get noticed. This is an example that northern schools can fish too."

In addition to bringing in fish, the club also brings members closer together, according to Buccafuri.

"Friendships that I've made just from joining the club, it's been awesome," Buccafuri said. "I'm graduating; I'm just going to fish constantly. I'm grateful to have made the friends that I have, and we're a very close knit group."

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UPUA announces election information

By Kiera Ginn
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Editor's note: This story is developing. More information will be added if other candidates join the race.

The University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) has started to announce executive campaigns for the 21st general assembly alongside information for the upcoming election.

The two tickets currently include Tyler Mann and Caleb Calderon, and Kat Hogan and Maria Lopez.

Mann, running for president, and Calderon, running for vice president, are campaigning on the platform of creating an environment that best represents students.

Hogan, running for president, and Lopez, running for vice president, have set their campaign focus on the goal of empowering

undergraduate students.

Executive ticket candidates were made public today, the first day of campaign registration. All candidates, including executive and at-large representatives, have until 5 p.m. on March 16 to register for the election.

Voting day will fall on April 1. All undergraduate students at University Park are allowed to vote.

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2 fraternities suspended



Emma Lessick/Collegian

Penn State Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity house on Sunday, Dec. 8 2024, in State College, Pa.

By Paloma Munoz
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Delta Chi and Lambda Chi Alpha have been placed on interim suspension for alleged violations of university policies.

Delta Chi was suspended Jan. 27, and Lambda Chi Alpha was suspended Jan. 21, according to the Penn State Student Affairs website. The university has not released any details on which policies were allegedly violated.

Under interim suspension,

fraternities have activities and privileges temporarily halted by either Penn State or their national governing bodies, according to Student Affairs.

Both fraternities will be unable to hold meetings and events or recruit new members until the suspension is investigated and lifted.

Nine fraternities are currently suspended at Penn State.

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University-affiliated travel to Middle East suspended

By Sara O'Connell
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State announced Tuesday that university-affiliated travel to the Middle East will be suspended indefinitely following an advisory issued by the U.S. Department of State.

The suspension affects any official Penn State travel that has not yet left the United States.

Study abroad programs, beginning in January and February, in the Middle East region include Jordan, Abu Dhabi, and Israel.

Students, faculty and staff who are already abroad will receive updates via Penn State Global, according to a Penn State News release.

Countries under the university travel suspension include: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates (including Abu Dhabi and Dubai) and Yemen.

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SPRING BREAK IN HAPPY VALLEY

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

• WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY AHA CHAMPIONSHIP VS. MERCYHURST @ PEGULA ICE ARENA

• BIG WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS @ BRYCE JORDAN CENTER

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

• BIG WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS @ BRYCE JORDAN CENTER

MONDAY, MARCH 9

• BELLEFONTE CASH BINGO @ SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC SCHOOL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

• MEN'S HOCKEY BIG QUARTERFINAL @ PEGULA ICE ARENA

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

• KEYSTONE STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS @ BRYCE JORDAN CENTER

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

• KEYSTONE STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS @ BRYCE JORDAN CENTER

• ST. PATRICK'S CORNED BEEF DINNER @ ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH BELLEFONTE

• TONY TRISCHKA'S EARL JAM @ THE STATE THEATER

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

• KEYSTONE STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS @ BRYCE JORDAN CENTER

Mitchell Mesenbrink's mind

Penn State wrestler's off-mat hobbies helps on-mat success

By Andrew Deal
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It isn't all just about wrestling for Mitchell Mesenbrink. In his redshirt junior season, he's showcased more and more of his personality, which features singing and philosophy.

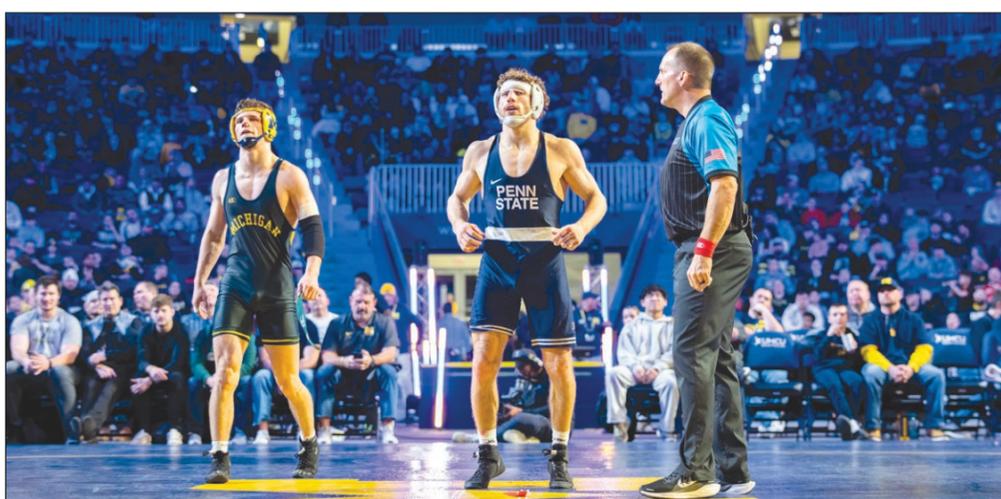
Mesenbrink has connected his off the mat interests into wrestling, which has played a part in the Nittany Lion losing only one match across his collegiate career.

"Every time I listen to music, I want to enjoy listening to music," Mesenbrink said. "I'm not putting on music just to have a background noise, I want to enjoy what I'm listening to. So I think that kind of translates parallels to wrestling. Like when I go out and wrestle, I want to enjoy it. I don't want it to be like a job."

Mesenbrink is one of the most dominant wrestlers in the sport today. However, when he's not on the mat, he's reading up on some of his favorite philosophers, including Socrates, Aristotle and Plato.

One of the favorites for the Hodge Trophy, Mesenbrink has been dominant, winning all 19 of his matches this season by bonus points. When he's on the mat, there's a high likelihood he's intentionally, or unintentionally working his mind like one of his favorite philosophers.

One of Aristotle's major philosophies focuses on empirical observation, which is the process of gathering information about the world through the direct use of the senses, per Plato Academy. In wrestling, two of the five senses — touch and sight — are major components to the sport.



Matt Corpp/Organization

At 165 pounds, Mitchell Mesenbrink celebrates a win against Justin Gates, winning by tech fall, during the Penn State wrestling dual against Michigan in the Crisler Arena on Friday, Feb. 6, 2026 in Ann Arbor, Mich.

"I think psych, knowing how people work, and then also how you can make relationships with people is good, and I think is probably a key and a tool that you're always going to be able to use," Mesenbrink said.

For the Hartland, Wisconsin, native that's a highly important technique and skill to use given the fact he doesn't look ahead to his matches. With the Big Ten Championships days away, Mesenbrink doesn't look at seeding, or who his next opponent could or will be.

"I'm gonna be honest, I don't even look at the bracket," Mesenbrink said. "Even after I wrestle, I don't look at the bracket."

Despite this potentially being unusual for wrestlers, who would seemingly want to know who their next opponent is and what

their next opponent tends to do, it hasn't had any consequences for the reigning national champion.

Mesenbrink is 15-1 in the Big Ten and NCAA Championships, with his only loss coming in his redshirt freshman season in the national championship match against Iowa State's David Carr. Even with that loss, Mesenbrink was right in the match and had opportunities to win against a wrestler who's now taken the world championship stage by storm.

This is where that mentality of using those senses really comes into play, as the 165-pound wrestler hasn't lost in almost two years.

"I think there's definitely little things that you can implement in your style, and also, in the nonverbal situations as well," Mesenbrink said. "Wrestling

"You got all different types of things that can be used psychologically to or against your advantage."

Mitchell Mesenbrink
165-pound wrestler

is not close your eyes and feel movements, like you got face-to-face interaction. You got all different types of things that can be used psychologically to or against your advantage."

Penn State has been a dominating force not only on the national stage, but also on the conference stage in the Big Ten

Championships. This year, the conference title will be battled for at the Bryce Jordan Center, home to some of Penn State's bigger duals. Some Nittany Lions might find an advantage in that, but Mesenbrink just sees it as another day in the office.

"What are the advantages of having it here and being in a familiar environment?" Mesenbrink said. "I kind of enjoy being on the road, too. Like it doesn't really matter where it is, either way it's a wrestling match, either way you throw someone up there and we wrestle. So it's kind of a regardless thing. I'll do it regardless of where it is."

In his bracket, he could potentially face Iowa's Mikey Caliendo for the eighth time in their careers, or face Purdue's Joey Blaze for the first time in their collegiate careers.

"I think there's challenges in both, where you're trying to hit new stuff or same stuff on new or old opponents," Mesenbrink said of the pair. "There's a duality between both of it. It can be different and it can be the same."

The Big Ten Championships are ultimately a preparation aspect for the National Championships, which become preparation for the World Championships, as the revolving door of preparation has become a major focal point under Cael Sanderson.

"It helps in constantly getting better at wrestling, but not only that, I think, as an opportunity to kind of keep getting better and seeing the things that I'm working on," Mesenbrink said.

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Cael talks Big Tens

Sanderson met with media ahead of weekend



Matt Corpp/The Daily Collegian

Head Coach Cael Sanderson high fives fans before the Penn State wrestling dual against Michigan in the Crisler Arena on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026 in Ann Arbor, Mich. The Nittany Lions beat the Wolverines 38-3.

By AJ Piazza
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State has a big week coming up. The squad has the Big Ten Championships at the Bryce Jordan Center this weekend and the program has six No. 1 seeds in the tournament.

Ahead of the beginning of postseason wrestling, Cael Sanderson spoke to the media on Wednesday afternoon for the first time since the regular season ended.

Here's what he had to say.

Big Ten seeding

The seedings came out for the Big Ten tournaments, and while Penn State had six No. 1 seeds, there was a key wrestler not listed.

That wrestler would be No. 1 Levi Haines, who is the No. 1 ranked wrestler at 174 pounds in the InterMat rankings and is undefeated. He is seeded No. 2 behind Nebraska's Christopher Minto, who Haines defeated in the head-to-head matchup earlier this year.

"What happened isn't going to work right? There needs to be a common sense application," Sanderson said. "I don't know if it's too late to receive it as coaches, but maybe we should. It's stuff (that) doesn't make sense."

Coaches can challenge if it's within 15 points and there's a chance that this could be the case.

"I think our guys are always in top shape. Conditioning has always been a factor for us and our guys, and I think it gives them a lot of confidence."

"We do need to do the best that we can to make sure these guys get to the the seeds that they earned throughout the season," Sanderson said.

Big Ten Championships

In the Big Ten Championships, wrestlers will be taking the mat for multiple matches a day. It could be anywhere from two to three matches in either day, which could give the wrestlers an advantage.

"I think our guys are always in top shape. Conditioning has always been a factor for us and our guys, and I think it gives them a lot of confidence," Sanderson said. "We put in a lot of work in the last couple of weeks, and we've still got some work to do, but we feel pretty darn good with our conditioning. We're ready."

Not only are the Nittany Lions preparing physically, but they're mentally preparing for this tournament. While wrestling is a team sport, it also can be a solo sport,

and Sanderson emphasized that the program will be prepared in both ways.

"I think it all goes hand-in-hand. It's a year-long plan, the physical training, the mental training, a lot of it's just your perspective and changing regardless of the circumstances," Sanderson said.

Mitchell Mesenbrink

Mitchell Mesenbrink is one of the best wrestlers on the mat. He is undefeated, ranked No. 1, and is looking to become a back-to-back national champion.

But he's more than that, as according to Sanderson, he has some interesting hobbies off the mat.

"He's very creative and he's very ambitious," Sanderson said. "I mean, he loves music. He's a very talented musician. He reads a lot. On off days when he's off the mat, he'll be sitting in the booths reading a book. I think he's a kid who loves life and he lives life to the fullest."

Sanderson highlighted his love of philosophy and music.

"He loves philosophy, he loves discussing all things," Sanderson said. "He sings a lot. I think he plays a lot of instruments. He's talked about playing the piano. I think he could play more than one instrument, but I don't know for sure, but I know he's passionate about everything he does."

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Big Ten pre-seeds

By Andrew Deal
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After a dominant season, the Big Ten Championships pre-seedings have been released.

Six Penn State wrestlers earned top spots in their respective weight classes — Luke Lilledahl at 125 pounds, Shayne Van Ness at 149 pounds, Mitchell Mesenbrink at 165 pounds, Rocco Welsh at 184 pounds and Josh Barr at 197 pounds.

At 133 pounds, Marcus Blaze, who was the regular season No. 2 in the InterMat rankings, earned the top spot over reigning national champion Lucas Byrd of Illinois. Byrd was ranked No. 1 ahead of Blaze during the year. The two didn't face off during the regular season.

Despite being No. 1 in the InterMat rankings, Levi Haines at 174 pounds received a No. 2 label behind Christopher Minto of Nebraska. Haines beat Minto 8-6 when the pair faced off this year.

Braeden Davis was given the No. 7 seed. Davis will have to finish right around his seeding, as the Big Ten earned seven-automatic qualifiers. He

could still earn an at-large bid if he were to falter at the Big Ten Tournament.

At 157 pounds, PJ Duke received the No. 2 seed for the Big Ten. Nebraska's Antrell Taylor is seeded above him.

Cole Mirasola was also given the No. 4 seed in a deep Big Ten bracket. Mirasola sits behind Taye Ghadiali of Michigan, AJ Ferrari of Nebraska and Nick Feldman of Ohio State at heavy-weight. Mirasola lost to Ghadiali and Ferrari during the regular season but did beat Feldman.

Seedings are not finalized and can change up until Friday.

All 10 Penn State wrestlers will compete for the individual and team Big Ten title, with the first round starting at 10 a.m. Saturday in the Bryce Jordan Center. Consolations will start at 5 p.m. Saturday, with semifinals taking place at 7 p.m. that day. Consolation semifinals and seventh-place matches beginning at noon Sunday.

Championship, third place and fifth-place matches will begin at 4:30 p.m. Sunday in the Bryce Jordan Center.

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Jacob DeLuca/The Daily Collegian

Penn State's Luke Lilledahl raises the team trophy after the Big Ten championships at Welsh-Ryan Arena.

Hey doc, listen up!

“Wait a minute, back up. How long has this been going on?”



I blink at the doctor as she stops me. I’m mid-listing (and simultaneously dismissing) a symptom that, over the years, I’ve had doctors blame on everything under the sun: my stress, my workload, my (alleged) anxiety, my age, my attitude, me.

“Um, about three years,” I say, trying to cover my complete and utter shock at the idea that she might find this important. “I have a document...”

Her eyebrows knit together as I tell her every instance. Then she says, “Why would they say that was normal? That’s not normal at all.” I leave that day with not only a treatment plan for the issue I came in for, but with orders for various tests and an arsenal of knowledge on what might happen next. The doctor gives me reassurance, too: I believe you. I’m glad you’re asking questions. You shouldn’t have to tolerate this.

Later, my dad asks me how it

went, how she was and if I “got a nice one this time.”

“Worth every penny,” I squeeze out, and burst into tears.

I haven’t always been so lucky, and I’m far from alone in that. 52% of patients in the United States feel their symptoms have been dismissed by healthcare professionals, according to the 2022 MITRE-Harris Poll on Patient Experience.

This number rises alarmingly. This may not be surprising for some, but the number rises alarmingly when you factor in things such as race and sexual orientation.

Anecdotal evidence will tell you much of the same thing. When I interviewed sources for my article on endometriosis, I was told about providers dismissing patients due to age, weight, reproductive choices and perceptions of the patient’s lifestyle.

I myself have had doctors accuse me of all sorts of things, from being “hyperfocused” on my symptoms to feeling “impossible” pains, only for another doctor to say, “No, that’s a real issue.”

And if they can’t blame your

symptoms on you, there’s a chance the provider will blame them on a mental health condition, whether you have one or not.

That attitude only further stigmatizes mental health conditions, characterizing people who have them as liars and driving individuals away from a diagnosis, for fear that future providers won’t be able to see past it.

And real mental health concerns are, unfortunately thanks to stigma, treated by the world at large as character flaws. So the final diagnosis becomes: personal failing.

Even if they do treat you, in my experience, many have been so mean about it that I left the appointment wondering why I’d bothered.

I feel the need to clarify that I do have a profound respect for healthcare providers, especially in our post-pandemic world. Many are compassionate, innovative and dedicated to their field and patients.

And I understand the old adage, “When you hear hoofbeats, think horses, not zebras.”

More often than not, it’s something simple. And in our healthcare system, you don’t

want to order an MRI for the common cold and have the patient foot the bill.

But where in that saying does it tell you to not stick your head out the window and check? Especially when nothing else makes sense?

Put another way: should blame and dismissal really be the default?

As college students, the general assumption about our demographic is that we’re spry, healthy and simultaneously anxious and unmotivated.

But for many, if not most of us, one or more of those things just isn’t true. Sure, it’s a reasonable generalization, but every individual is worth the effort it takes to check — because even if some of those assumptions are true for someone, there are nuances to it.

Someone can be anxious and have something wrong with their heart, for example. They can be athletic and motivated, and still regularly be debilitated by pain.

Things don’t necessarily cancel each other out, and the thing is, healthcare providers should know this. But in a world where so many sometimes act like they don’t, I want you, read-

ing this column, to know that.

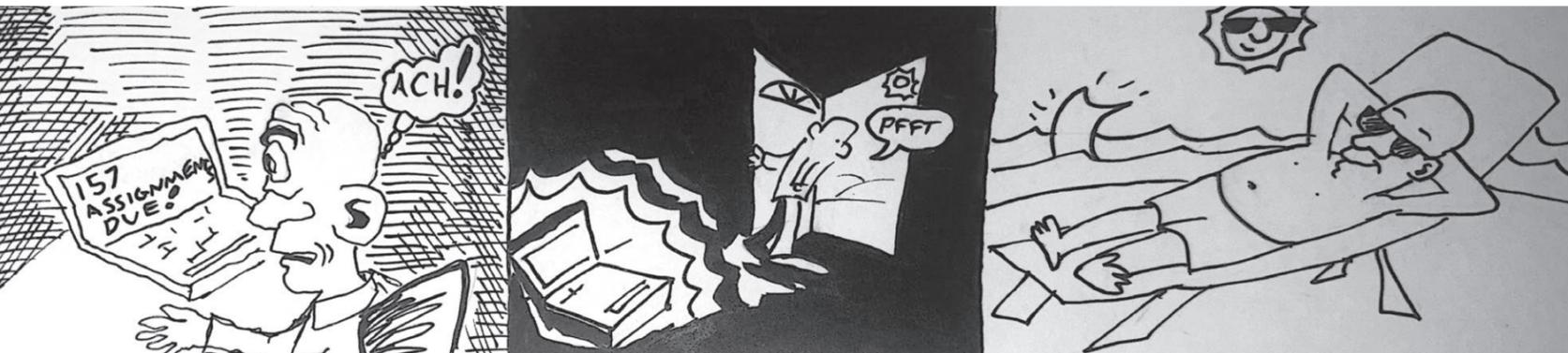
No matter who you are or what your life looks like, you deserve a doctor who’ll chase down every possibility, who’ll be happy to see you out of their office because you’re progressing, not because they’ve shut you up.

If you’re dealing with a physical or mental health issue, I want you to know that your symptoms are more than likely real. You live in your body and mind, and you can be trusted to know when something’s wrong.

I encourage you to advocate for yourself, even when it’s hard. Because above all, you deserve to achieve whatever health goal you have. Know your rights, ask questions and don’t let anyone lead you away from the truth.

I hope that one day, things look up for you, and you can say exactly what I said to my doctor when she told me something was wrong: “Oh my god, I knew it.”

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Cartoon by Nate Campbell

MY VIEW | Miss Behave

Off the record | In defense of the spring break hookup

Dearest reader,



It’s officially that time of year when suitcases crawl out from under the bed, group chats resurrect themselves from academic despair and everyone suddenly becomes an expert in finding cheap flights rather than self-respect.

We enter spring break with extravagant plans or absolutely no plans at all. Just vibes, a duffel bag and a dangerously optimistic bank account.

And yes, it’s also that special time of year when membership to the Mile-High Club is running a seasonal promotion. After all, nothing says spontaneity quite like deciding that at 30,000 feet in the air, inside a bathroom roughly the size of a carry-on, is the ideal setting to test both your flexibility and your judgement.

The flights are full. The bikinis are ambitious, often resembling dental floss more than an actual swimsuit. And the men are wearing tank tops showing off their flexing muscles, complete with the sexy Ray-Ban sunglasses that look like they’re straight out of the “Top Gun: Maverick” movie. Spring break, my loves, is all

about losing track of time, flirting with questionable decisions and discovering that SPF is just a suggestion when it comes to the skin you really want kissed.

It’s a sacred time and place where dancing on tables is considered cardio and tequila is legally recognized as its own food group.

Now, let’s address the delicious elephant in the room: the spring break hookup. The odds of it following you all the way back to State College are slim. Plus, your friends will be too busy losing their own dignity to keep track of yours.

The evidence dissolves in salt-water. The tan fades. The name? Well, you’ll probably already forget it by the time you reach baggage claim.

Spring break is a lawless land of neon wristbands and temporary tramp tattoos that just scream “YOLO.” You will see things. You will do things. You will wake up wondering why there’s sand in places that sand should never, ever be. Or wonder why there’s a mysterious pool float in your hotel room. Consider it all

experimental learning and character growth, like academia outside the classroom.

It’s a world where breakfast is tequila, lunch is a frozen strawberry daiquiri and dinner is whatever your Instagram aesthetic requires.

And here’s the truth. Being a little wild, even a little more on the feral side, is perfectly fine. A playful, harmless hookup can be surprisingly empowering. It can boost your confidence, remind you that you’re desirable and maybe even cure those “winter uglies” you swore were permanent back in Pennsylvania.

But be warned dear reader, feral doesn’t mean foolish. Drink water. Share locations. Know where your shoes are. A little bit of chaos can be cute. A missing passport and no memory of what happened the night before isn’t.

We’re here for scandal, not to be the main characters in the next Netflix documentary series.

Spring break, my sweet sinners, isn’t about finding your soulmate. It’s about finding out how many margaritas you can responsibly consume while

lounging on an all-inclusive beach resort chair. It’s about kissing someone whose last name you’ll never learn. It’s about realizing that sometimes, the hottest thing you can do is to choose the story you want to create and own it.

So go forth, my spicy little readers, be bold. Be loud. Be responsibly feral. Let yourself flirt outrageously and decide deliberately. If you’re adventurous enough to make a spring break memory, make sure it’s one worth telling. Preferably without legal repercussions.

Yours truly,
Miss Behave

Editor’s Note: Off the record is a weekly column written by a third-year Collegian staffer writing under an alias. It aims to promote a space for honest conversations about love, sex and relationships. Those interested in sharing their experiences or submitting a topic are invited to do so through this anonymous form.



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Daily Collegian

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Reflecting, preparing

Softball coach Clarisa Crowell talks weekend invitationals

By Gianna Dowling
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

No. 24 Penn State is gearing up for its final non-conference weekend before booking a flight to the West Coast to face Oregon State and open Big Ten play against No. 17 Oregon. The Nittany Lions will play four games at the Hokie Invite in Salem, Virginia. The blue and white is coming off a 3-2 weekend at the Tennessee Invitational, with its losses coming against No. 1 Tennessee.

Coach Clarisa Crowell discussed Penn State's performance last weekend, as well as its upcoming competition, during Wednesday's media session.

Britton stands tall

Sophomore right-hander Abigail Britton was the lone returner from the Nittany Lions' pitching staff last season. In 2025, the LaVale, Maryland, native's strong suit was her work in relief, posting five saves on the year.

However, in the blue and white's first meeting with the Lady Volunteers on Friday night, Britton got the starting nod and stood tall against the nation's best.

"I think (Britton) had one of the best pitching performances against Tennessee that I've seen (Britton) have since she's been here," Crowell said. "If you just look at her development, I've been very pleased and I'm proud of how much she has developed in the course of the year. She's a much better pitcher this year at this point in time than she was last year."



Samantha Oropeza/The Daily Collegian

Head coach Clarisa Crowell stands in the dugout during the Penn state softball game against Bucknell at Beard Field at Nittany Lion Softball Park.

"We went to Tennessee because we wanted our student-athletes to play in an electric environment."

Clarisa Crowell
Head coach

The sophomore pitched four innings, allowing zero runs, three hits and three walks, while posting six strikeouts. Britton's strikeout total was the second most tossed against Tennessee this season.

"(Britton) had command over

itches that night, I thought her offspeed was working well and keeping them off time." Crowell said. "She did exactly what we needed her to do and she executed our game plan at a very high level against Tennessee."

Weekend takeaways

Penn State combined for just two runs and four hits in its two games against the Lady Volunteers; granted, Tennessee has the nation's best ERA at 0.53.

Aside from the Lady Volunteers, the Nittany Lions earned two wins over NC Central and one against Appalachian State. In these matchups, the blue and white combined for 30 runs, while allowing just five.

"Tennessee is one of the best pitching staffs in the entire country, they have only one time

given up more than one run, so we knew going into that series it was going to be tough," Crowell said. "But I love the way the offense responded in the other three games against Appalachian State and NC Central."

So far this season it hasn't just been the offense guiding Penn State, but pitching has been firing on all cylinders as well. The Nittany Lions' 1.98 ERA ranks 10th nationally and the staff has accumulated 119 strikeouts on the year.

In Sunday's weekend finale, junior right-hander McKenna Young posted the 16th no-hitter in program history with five strikeouts as the blue and white defeated NC Central 14-0 in five innings.

"We came into this year saying we're going to be a very

well-balanced team, meaning we can hit, we're going to pitch strong and we're going to play solid defense, and I think we've seen that," Crowell said.

Going 1-0

With a 16-4 record, Penn State has had a lot of its success building off its previous performances. Before falling to Tennessee last Friday, the Nittany Lions posted a win streak that spanned 10 games.

The blue and white have had its fair share of tough opponents and will continue to face more in the future.

"We went to Tennessee because we wanted our student-athletes to play in an electric environment, which really that was," Crowell said. "They need to be ready when we go to Oregon to play in their stadium in front of thousands of people."

Penn State will have a few tune-up games before it faces the Ducks to start Big Ten play; one of these teams is No. 11 Virginia Tech. The Nittany Lions face the Hokies at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday to close out its upcoming weekend.

However, Crowell's squad isn't immediately focused on Virginia Tech, but rather taking things one game at a time, to keep the team's 1-0 mentality.

"For us, it's really about one game at a time, one team at a time, doesn't matter who we're playing," Crowell said. "The Virginia Tech game on paper is a really big game, but our kids are locked and loaded right now to go 1-0 against Radford in game one."

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Coach Jeff Tambroni talks Cornell



Megan Miller/The Daily Collegian

Defender Alex Ross (6) prepares to pass the ball during the Penn State men's lacrosse game against Navy at Panzer Stadium.

By AJ Piazza
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State dominated Yale last week and is looking for its first back-to-back win for the first time this season. Penn State has struggled with maintaining momentum this year and this could be the squad's first opportunity of showcasing that has changed.

Jeff Tambroni spoke to the media and here's what he had to say.

Preparing for Cornell

The Nittany Lions have the chance to avenge their loss last season in the NCAA Final Four. The blue and white lost 11-9, and are preparing for a different Cornell team than last season.

"It's probably impossible to replace a guy like CJ Kirst, but they've done a really good job stockpiling a group of young men who fit really well into what they're trying to do and they really haven't seemed to take too much of a step back from last year to this year," Tambroni said.

Kirst had 82 goals and 115 points last season, yet Penn State held Kirst scoreless in the game in the Final Four. The Nittany Lions also spoiled the Big Red from going undefeated in the regular season. This season the offense has been spread out between Willem Firth and Ryan Goldstein, the nephew of Dennis Goldstein who was National Player of the Year in 1991 for North Carolina.

"Both are extremely skilled,

extremely talented, they play off of each other extremely well and they've continued that trend,"

"Alex has certainly grown throughout his year here. I would even say significantly throughout his senior year, and he does not get too emotionally high or low."

Jeff Tambroni
Head coach

Tambroni said. "Both of them have done a terrific job of filling in the gap of Kirst and others that they've lost."

The Nittany Lion defense will need to be on high alert on Saturday.

Offense

Penn State's offense has been a big key to its success so far and a big part of that is the showing from freshman attacker Jack Iannatuono who's been a difference maker this season. Against Yale, the freshman put up a career high six points in the game and continues to be a big part of the offense.

"As a quarterback not just an attackmen, but a guy that plays below the goal line and manages the ball for us," Tambroni said. "He does a great job of just

working hard every day recognizing there's a whole lot more left for his game to improve, for our team to improve, and I think he's remained focused on that."

The blue and white have been at it strongest when it can find the back of the net. Penn State has the No. 9 best scoring offense in the country.

"I do think it's depth. I think we have 10 to 11 guys that have played a regular clip for us. We have four attackmen that play consistently throughout the course of each game and you know really seven middies that have played, when everyone's healthy," Tambroni said. "So I think the depth of that group has really helped."

While Penn State has lost guys like Matt Traynor and TJ Malone, the squad has been able to have more depth this season.

Alex Ross

Alex Ross isn't just Penn State's top defensemen he's also one of the top defensemen in the country. The senior was just selected to the USILA Team of the Week and has won Big Ten Defensemen of the Week earlier this season.

"Alex has certainly grown throughout his years here. I would even say significantly throughout his senior year, and he does not get too emotionally high or low. I think that's a big piece of why he has been so successful for so long," Tambroni said.

He's also been a leader on the team and has helped other players on the back end. With a player like Patrick Keenan having his first full season as a full time starter, Ross has been someone he could lean on for advice.

"I think when our younger guys in particular like a Patrick Keenan or Brad Piffath or a Dillon Torggler guys that are filling in now around him and the close defense, see the way that he manages things emotionally, I think it's become a huge boost for us," Tambroni said.

Ross has been a leader on and off the field and has been a game changer this season.

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AHA finals

PSU hosts Mercyhurst for title

By Dominic Megats
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After a successful sweep over Syracuse in the semifinal round of the AHA tournament, Penn State has found itself in the championship game for the fourth-straight time.

Similar to last season, the Nittany Lions will play in front of their fans at Pegula Ice Arena against No. 12 Mercyhurst at 2 p.m. on Saturday.

"It's awesome. If we take care of business, we don't have to travel the rest of the way," coach Jeff Kampersal said. "We have it really good here, so we prefer to stay home and play in front of Hockey Valley."

The Lakers' path

Mercyhurst earned itself a bye week after finishing second in the AHA with a conference record of 17-5-2. The Lakers went on to sweep Lindenwood in two games with a double overtime victory in Game 2.

However, the Lions battled in both games against Mercyhurst, at one point leading the final game by two goals. After a strong display of offense from Lindenwood in the first two periods, the Lakers battled back by scoring two unanswered goals as the final buzzer sounded. An opportunity was left for a player to become an overtime hero for their team.

Ultimately, it was Julia Perjus for Mercyhurst who put the dagger into Lindenwood's season after Madison Bowtell failed to cover the puck in her crease, leading to an open net for Perjus.

The Stockholm, Sweden, native was the only goalscorer for the Lakers in Game 1 of the series and leads her team in points with 38.

Mercyhurst sits atop the conference in championship wins with 13 and reached its fourth-straight AHA championship after the semifinal sweep.

Storied rivalry

A new chapter renews in the Penn State and Mercyhurst conference rivalry as the squads enter yet another championship game. The Nittany Lions currently hold a three-game win streak over the Lakers in the championship game.



Sawyer Hadlum/The Daily Collegian

Forward Tessa Janecke (15) takes a face-off during the Penn State women's hockey game against Mercyhurst in Pegula Ice Arena

Additionally, the blue and white controlled the regular season series for the most part, posting a shutout in two out of the four games played.

However, in the regular season finale Mercyhurst handed Penn State its first conference loss of the season after an upset win in overtime. Payten Evans scored the game-winning goal for the Lakers after finding the net with four seconds left in overtime.

"Mercyhurst is always well-coached," Kampersal said. "They're very physical. They're going to be hungry this time around, but every game is always like they have good habits and we have good habits. It's just a matter of making the plays and cashing in on the opportunities when we have them. Using our speed and using our transition speed."

A returning Tessa Janecke has been nothing short of cashing in on opportunities ever since her first game back from the Olympics. The gold medalist finished the semifinal round with four goals and earned her first hat-trick of the season. Due to this performance, the Orangeville, Illinois, native leads the conference in points heading into the final game.

The stage is set. One team will earn the right to call itself champions.

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WEEKLY SHUTTER



Matt Cropp/Collegian

Offensive linemen Malachi Goodman speaks during the Penn State football players media in Beaver Stadium on Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026 in University Park, Pa.



Zach Gleiter/Collegian

Penn State students celebrate State Patty's Day on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, in State College, Pa.



Lucas Yendrzewski/Collegian

Members of Nittany Dance Project perform during the Penn State Dance Competition at Schwab Auditorium on Wednesday, March 4, 2026.



Owen Bellard/Collegian

Midfielder Michael Faraone (34) stares before the Penn State men's lacrosse game against the Yale Bulldogs at Panzer Stadium on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026 in University Park, Pa.



Mack Leach/Collegian

Opposite hitter Tristian Hassel serves in Rec Hall.



Zach Gleiter/Collegian

Brother's Bar and Grill is packed as Penn State students celebrate State Patty's Day on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, in State College, Pa.



Emma Lessick/Collegian

Two gymnasts celebrate together at Rec Hall.



Sawyer Hadlum/Collegian

All-American gymnast Kellen Ryan faces off during the men's gymnastics meet at Rec Hall on Sunday, Mar. 1, 2026 in University Park, Pa.



Sawyer Hadlum/Collegian

Students communicate with one another during the Diversity in Healthcare Conference in Heritage Hall in University Park, Pa.



Emma Lessick/Collegian

Head Basketball Coach Carolyn Kieger celebrates the victory during the Penn State women's basketball game on Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026.



Zach Gleiter/Collegian

Penn State students celebrate State Patty's Day on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, in State College, Pa.



Lucas Yendrzewski/Collegian

Members of Island Fever dance during the Penn State Dance Competition at Schwab Auditorium on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, in University Park, Pa.



Caleb Craig/Collegian

Penn States Allie Meyer (36) during Penn State Women's Lacrosse game against Colgate at Holuba Hall in University Park, Pa.