



THE FRIENDS OF PENN STATE MEN'S HOCKEY, Inc. NEWSLETTER

FALL 2017

## 2017 BIG TEN TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS!!!!

### FROM PRESIDENT LINDA MATESEVAC

When I spoke at the "Senior Celly" last March, I mentioned David Goodwin's words about the magic of the very first game in Pegula, a win against Army on October 11, 2013. Little did any of us know about the magic that would follow: the incredible journey to the BIG TEN CHAMPIONSHIP, the excitement at the NCAA Selection Show gathering, and the NCAA tournament games in Cincinnati against Union and ultimate champion Denver. Many of our club members were able to attend these events or our watch parties, and the glow from these victories continued with the unveiling of the banners at this year's home opener versus American International in October (ironically, American International was Penn State's first opponent as a Division I program in 2012). WE ARE so proud of this team, the coaches, the staff and the many loyal fans. A season to remember, a HISTORIC season.

FOPSMH has been very active behind the scenes to help the program in many small and some not-so-small ways. Thanks to your help and generosity, we have been able to completely endow our scholarship in just 2 ½ years! Our membership has grown considerably from last year; applications were mailed with the season tickets so all would know about the club, and we placed announcements in many State College area locations outlining the mission of the club and how to contact us. We continue to offer discounts to motels, stores, and a restaurant thanks to local businesses. We already have hosted our first watch party of the season, and our annual social will be held on December

9, 2017. Additionally, the club is sponsoring a two game/two night trip to Ann Arbor to watch the Lions play Michigan in January; there are only a few tickets left, so check our website if you have any interest in joining us.

Thanks to all those members who have served as officers, on the board and/or on committees, attended our events, and volunteered to help sell 50-50 and raffle tickets. We shall continue to support the hockey program financially, and shall keep the membership informed about that support. And, of course, we continue to be some of the most enthusiastic fans in Pegula! Please join us at any and all of our upcoming events—the radio show, the watch parties, the social, the bus trip, and our periodic business meetings. Encourage your friends to join FOPSMH, and to go to our sites on the web (see p. 8 of this newsletter) to learn about all of our events. We look forward to another outstanding season – from the Team, and from the FOPSMH.



Stephanie Corcino



Joel Sobel



## ASK COACH GADOWSKY

**Question:** *What are the significant rule changes or points of emphasis this coming season?*

**Coach Gadowsky:** There are no rule changes. As for points of emphasis, I am anticipating a continuation of what we experienced last year - the calling of "soft" stick fouls. The NHL likely will look at these more carefully this season, it seems that the NCAA was ahead of the curve on this last year. But we don't have any official word on this.

**Question:** *How heavy is the Big Ten Trophy, and how heavy did it feel?*

**Coach Gadowsky:** (with a huge smile): It feels heavier now when I handle it than when we actually won it. Then it felt great, it felt light, it still feels great now.

**Question:** *Ricky DeRosa was the unsung hero of the team in recent years. Have you spotted anyone who might*

*wind up playing that role as his career progresses?*

**Coach Gadowsky:** I hope we wind up with a number of guys taking Ricky's place in that regard; it will have to be more than one. Ricky was just so consistent, I mean he brought it EVERY game, and so even if early on some players play that hard, they will have to show that they can keep it up over the long haul.

**Question:** *Given the progress over the last five years and last season's success, how has recruiting for Penn State hockey changed?*

**Coach Gadowsky:** When we started, our recruiting strategy was very well defined - we needed "foundation guys." We wanted guys who were not afraid of a challenge, who understood the big picture. There were a number of good players at that time who were interested in Penn State, but they didn't want to build, they didn't want to experience losing. Now things are different - now we're looking for "pieces to the puzzle." It's not necessarily easier, because we are going after more high-profile guys, guys that are attractive to lots of other teams, and the competition for these players is fierce.

**Question:** *Can you teach the style of play that your teams practice, or do you have to look specifically for recruits that already fit the system?*

**Coach Gadowsky:** You definitely can teach and practice the system we use. But Coaches Fisher and Lindsay and I



PSU Athletic Communications

have been together a long time, and we certainly look for players who demonstrate that they can play our style. We have passed on some better players who might not have fit our model. At this point in our program, we can look at what each player can bring to our system.

**Question:** *Do you prepare and/or coach differently in conference games (for instance, more or less cautious, more or less aggressive, and so forth), or do you treat all games equally?*

**Coach Gadowsky:** Keep in mind that we are much more familiar with Big Ten teams than out-of-conference teams. We don't like to give our players information about opponents unless we are sure of it - and we are much more confident about the information we have about our Conference rivals. But the real difference between Big Ten games and other games is the atmosphere. There's a different feel to these games - I guess the word is intensity. And you see it in all sports, not just hockey - everything is just ratcheted up.



Joel Sobel

*The Big Ten Tournament Trophy looks good in the Pegula Ice Arena.*

## FORTUNE TELLER

In the ASK THE LIONS feature of the Spring 2015 issue of *FULL STRENGTH*, when asked what was on the horizon for PSU hockey, goalie P. J. Musico replied: "Championship after championship. It's not if, it's when." P. J. seems to have been on to something.



## ASK THE LIONS

**Question:** *Why did you choose Penn State?*

**Trevor Hamilton** (transfer last year from NCAA Division I Miami of Ohio): Obviously the Coach and the facilities had a lot to do with it. I had heard a lot about the culture, and I wanted to be a part of what was going on here. When I visited, I felt like I fit right in.

**Evan Barratt** (incoming freshman): I'm from Philadelphia. As an in-state kid, it really was a no-brainer for me. The program is fantastic, what they've built here is awesome.

**Cole Hults** (incoming freshman): I could go on all day about the reasons. I'm from Wisconsin, playing at Penn State makes it easy for my parents and relatives to see me play in many of the road games. They're planning on coming to University Park at least once as well, and that's very important to me. And just look around – it's amazing here! You've got all the ingredients to allow you to succeed, so it's on me to take advantage of them. I like it that way.

**Question:** *How did you spend the summer?*

**Andrew Sturtz:** I spent the first half of the summer in Pittsburgh with Matt Mendelson. We worked with a skating coach. I also attended the Penguins' development camp, where I learned how to really take care of my body. Then I spent time in Detroit with Trevor Hamilton and his family. I learned a ton from Trevor's father, and from some NHL coaches as well.

**Trevor Hamilton:** The first half I was here at Penn State. Then Andrew Sturtz stayed with me at home; we worked out and had a blast.

**Chris Funkey:** I was at home the first part of the summer, and did a lot of training with my goalie coach. I came back up here, and took two classes beginning at the end of June. I also trained hard 5 days a week. I worked with our strength and conditioning coach, Cam Davidson; he's terrific. The facilities are great here, and so convenient. At home, I'd have to drive an hour to get to an adequate facility, here it's a 15 minute walk. And speaking of home,

my goalie coach at home conducted a regional goalie camp at Pegula, and I got a chance to work on the ice with him.

**Denis Smirnov:** I participated in the Colorado Rockies' development camp. After this camp, I went home to Moscow, where I trained with some NHL guys. I learned about nutrition, I learned about behaving like a professional on and off the ice.

**Peyton Jones:** I took some time off to relax, and stayed at my parents' beach house. My brother is in the Cleveland Indians' farm system (baseball), so I got a chance to watch him play.

**Nate Sucece:** I worked on my skating. I also had physical therapy to improve my flexibility. I got a chance to skate with some NHL veterans – guys like Brian Gionta (Buffalo Sabres), Clarke MacArthur (Ottawa Senators), and Shane Prince (New York Islanders).

### DID YOU KNOW?

Eleven current Nittany Lions attended NHL development camps this past summer:

Erik Autio (*Buffalo Sabres*); Evan Barratt (*Chicago Black Hawks*); Chase Berger (*Pittsburgh Penguins*); Cole Hults (*Los Angeles Kings*); Peyton Jones (*San Jose Sharks*); Alex Limoges (*Anaheim Ducks*); Nikita Pavlychev (*Pittsburgh Penguins*); Denis Smirnov (*Colorado Avalanche*); Andrew Sturtz (*Pittsburgh Penguins*); Nate Sucece (*Nashville Predators*).

**Question:** *Did you get the opportunity to spend time with the Big Ten Trophy (much like NHL players do when they win the Stanley Cup)?*

**Nate Sucece:** We got to go around town with the Trophy, and we took it to some restaurants. It's now in Coach Gadowsky's office; we can come in and see it whenever we have a chance. It's a good reminder of what we have to do this year if we want to keep it.

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## ))) ON THE AIR WITH BRIAN TRIPP (((



Broadcasting a double-overtime hockey game is mentally and physically exhausting. I can't imagine what the players and coaches were going through last March. Penn State needed a win against Minnesota in the Big Ten Tournament semi-finals to essentially secure its first-ever NCAA Tournament berth. As the

third period elapsed into overtime and eventually a second-overtime period, my heart was pounding and my voice was disappearing. Each time a Penn State player shot the puck, I rose out of my seat in anticipation of the program's signature moment. When the Gophers controlled the puck, I hunched over in fear that the end would be near.

Having covered the team all season, I was invested professionally and personally in the performance and emotions of the players and coaches we get to work with every week. Finally,

after more than 93 minutes, Erik Autio took a centering pass from freshman phenom Denis Smirnov and sent Penn State to the Big Ten Tournament finals and a likely NCAA Tournament invitation for the first time in program history. As a broadcaster, you hope to do the moment justice by capturing the emotion and significance of the event. At the end of the night, I couldn't believe what we witnessed in Detroit's historic Joe Louis Arena in just the program's fifth Division 1 season.

The next night, another double-overtime game, this time for the Big Ten Championship! After the first overtime, I walked through the press box at the top of the seating bowl to grab a snack and everyone was in disbelief, a mixture of frustrated deadline-driven writers and emotionally-drained team/staff members from both Penn State and Wisconsin. What happened next, I'll never forget. From my seat, I saw Liam Folkes break behind the defense and hoped (prayed?) that someone could feed him the puck. Someone did, and the rest is history! Folkes scored and our end of the press box erupted. The long-standing rule of no cheering in the press box was broken. Oh well, WE ARE ... Big Ten Tournament Champions!

## THE VOICE OF PEGULA, RODNEY MARTIN

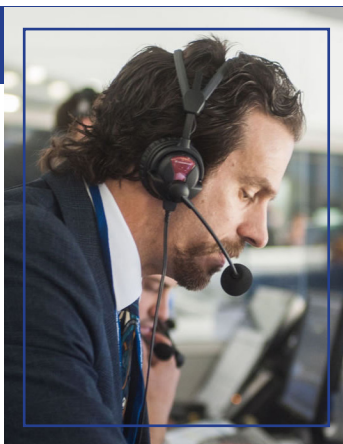
When we started the varsity chapter of the Penn State hockey story five years ago, I pictured the level of excitement for the program in two parts - the creation of a varsity sport along with a beautiful arena on campus, and the talent on the ice itself. The novelty of the arena and introduction of the game to a larger audience would carry the program through what many thought would be a rough first few years until the talent could catch up with the rest of the Big Ten. In my last column, I noted that there were some in the college hockey world who thought we wouldn't win a game in the Big Ten let alone a Tournament Championship for several years. What the team accomplished last year shattered that notion.

As we opened the home season with the first banner ceremony in Pegula, I was reminded of other banner ceremonies I was privileged to help plan and announce. In the fall of 2000, to celebrate our second ACHA Championship in three years, I was all-in on dimming the lights, using smoke machines, rigging a pulley system to raise the banner and have the team "skate the (Murdoch) Cup" around the ice in front of the Greenberg faithful. When the full grandeur of the plan was rejected, I argued that "unless you plan to do this every year, we *should* make a big deal about it." Well, the team did go on to win the next three consecutive years. And I did get my dimmed lights - a risky proposition for those that remember the yellow-tinged glory of the old Ice Pavilion.

It is often said in sports that it is easier to get to the top than to stay on top. Maybe that's why Joe Battista didn't want the full spectacle of a celebration that I envisioned (either that, or he figured we are already starting at 9 pm on a Friday and he would like to get home before 1 am). Celebra-

tions, while warranted, do not guarantee future success. To continue to raise banners, you have to continue to raise your expectations as a program. In the team's locker room, there is a whiteboard where milestones are listed with a place to put the date of their completion. There are a lot fewer empty spaces there than some may have anticipated this early in our development, but there still are empty spaces.

There is another coach on campus known for saying "we'll celebrate this win for about another hour and then get ready for next week." I have no doubt that Coach Gadowsky and his team have similar feelings about the banners hanging in the rafters. There are still "empty spaces" and I look forward to watching the Nittany Lions try to fill them in the years to come.





## BEHIND THE SCENES: STUDENT FOPSMH BOARD MEMBER ANNA WHITAKER

How many of you have ever had perfect attendance — in anything?

Well, Anna Whitaker does — she's attended EVERY Penn State men's hockey home game at Pegula since the inaugural game victory over Army. The Friends of Penn State Men's Hockey is fortunate that Anna serves as a student representative on our Board of Directors. In this capacity, Anna has served on the Special Events Committee, and written the ROAR ZONE column for our newsletter. Many of you have bought 50-50 tickets from her near the student entrance to Pegula, or have seen her in the front row of the Roar Zone (that's her in a blue PSU hockey sweater on the far left on page 7, picture 3 of this issue).

When Anna's younger brother, Andrew, started playing hockey at the age of 6, she attended his games, and her interest and involvement in all levels of hockey increased while attending State College High School. At Penn State,

she has been a very active member of the Roar Zone, and also worked women's hockey games on and off the ice for the Hockey Management Association (HMA) for two years. Outside of hockey, Anna recently joined the Fly Fishing Club to become even more well-rounded (if that's possible). A geobiology major with a minor in anthropology, Anna intends to pursue an advanced degree in museum studies upon graduation from Penn State in May 2018 (more on that in the Spring 2018 issue of *FULL STRENGTH*).

Besides her beloved Nittany Lions, Anna follows many of the Minnesota-based teams and the Philadelphia Flyers; one of her favorite players is Eddie Lack, a backup goalie with the Calgary Flames, who she describes as a real character. One of her favorite hockey memories is being in Cincinnati for Penn State's huge win over Union and the game with Denver in the NCAA tournament. The students who attended those games made it back to PSU for class on Monday morning. Success With Honor! -Linda Matesevac

### ASK THE LIONS

*continued from page 3*

**Question:** *Last year there were seven incoming freshmen; this year there are six. Did last year's experience help make welcoming this year's large class easier?*

**Erik Autio** (Assistant Captain): It did for a lot of us. Even more importantly, last year's freshmen are among this year's leaders, and they know how to set the right example for this year's freshmen.

**Nate Sucece:** Those of us who were freshmen now have a year under our belts. It's now our job to help the new guys, help them with school, with getting around campus, all of those things.

#### FUN FACT

Penn State has beaten both Michigan and Wisconsin twice in the Big Ten Tournament, and has an overall record of 5-3 in this event.

**Question:** *At last year's Big Ten Tournament, having played on three consecutive nights, having won in double overtime the previous evening, what was your approach going into the second overtime of the championship game?*

**James Robinson (Captain):** The team was very relaxed. We had fun the whole time in Detroit. We trusted each other, we knew what would happen if we played our game.

**Andrew Sturtz:** I concentrated on playing really good hockey. I wasn't going to try to stretch a zone (as I had sometimes done) to get behind a defender. I knew that if we played good, sound hockey, someone would score for us.

**Denis Smirnov:** I wanted to play my game, and not make any mistakes. There was a lot of pressure, but we play well together, and that's why we won.

**Alec Marsh:** I wanted to make sure I did all the little things, to make sure I did what I was supposed to do and not make a mistake.

**Kris Myllari:** Just keep doing our thing. Fatigue was not a factor. We knew that if we kept playing the way we are capable, something would crack and we'd win. We knew we had the skill to win.

**Trevor Hamilton:** I'm a defenseman. My first job is to keep the puck out of the net. If you do that well enough, sometimes the hockey gods give you a chance to do something on offense. But you can't do anything out of the ordinary on defense, you have got to keep that puck out.

#### FUN FACT

The Nittany Lions led the nation in both goals (4.1) and shots (44) per game for the 2016-17 season.



# GAME ACTION

photos by Stephanie Corcino



*Andrew Sturtz wheels around an American International defender in game 1 against the Yellow Jackets.*



*FOPSMH scholarship recipient Brandon Biro intercepts and scores against the Yellow Jackets.*



*Nikita Pavlychev gives up his body to get to the puck.*



*The Nittany Lions are on the power play in game 2 against AIC.*



*Nate Sucece races around the net ahead of two AIC players.*

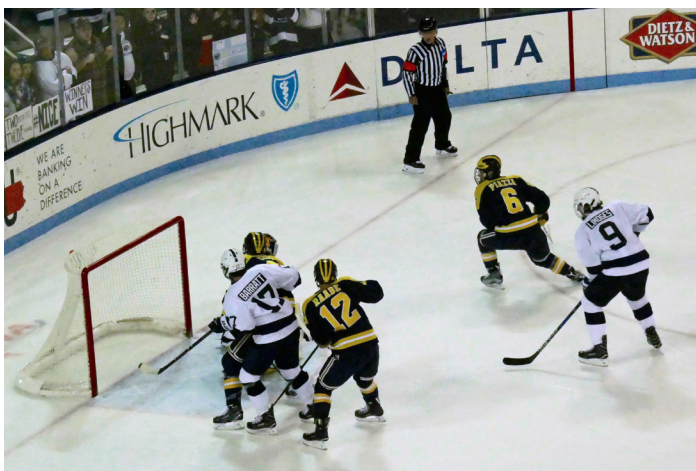


*Liam Folkes is all alone in front of the Yellow Jackets' goaltender.*



## GAME ACTION

Continued from Page 6



Alex Limoges (9) ties it up against Michigan in the 3<sup>rd</sup> period on Friday night with his 1<sup>st</sup> goal as a Nittany Lion.



Captain James "Jimmy Pucks" Robinson blows by the Wolverine defense on the rush that set up the overtime winner.



Brett Murray (18) and the Michigan defense are locked in on Saturday night.



Derian Hamilton (19) spots Chase Berger (8) as a Wolverine defender tries to catch up.



Evan Barratt attacks Michigan.



Nikita Pavlychev muscles a Wolverine defender out of his way.





Last year was unforgettable for Penn State hockey and for us in the Roar Zone! During the Big Ten Tournament, we held watch parties at Primanti Bros. and Letterman's, who graciously let us stay late to watch the multiple overtimes. After the exciting semi-final win on Friday against Minnesota, several students immediately packed a bag and drove through the night to arrive in Detroit in time to watch the final game against Wisconsin. Treasurer Mitchell Hutula was one of those dedicated fans, he says the best part of the series was "winning the tournament in that arena, 'The Joe' had such a long history and we were part of it."

The NCAA tournament in Cincinnati had another strong Roar Zone crowd, as over 20 members journeyed to the US Bank Arena, which definitely had a distinctive atmosphere (did anyone else see the pigeon flying around inside?). As we watched the first game (Michigan Tech vs. Denver), we befriended Tech's student section, "Mitch's Misfits." While we had bantered with each other on Twitter before, this was the first time we met them in person, and the friendly rivalry was put aside to cheer against our opponents. Our first tournament game against Union exceeded all of our expectations, and after winning by a touchdown we celebrated accordingly! Current secretary Abby Bower said "Attending the NCAA Tournament was one of my favorite moments from last year. It felt really special to have a large group of the Roar Zone cheering and supporting the team."

This past September, the NHL preseason game (Sabres vs. Penguins) in Pegula generated a lot of enthusiasm, since many of the students here are Pittsburgh fans and were thrilled to see their Stanley Cup champions. Current web team coordinator Anna Lewis said "It was an amazing experience to watch the Penguins on our home ice and lead some Roar Zone chants for them. I think managing to bring the Penguins here really emphasizes how much Penn State



Joel Sobel

hockey has grown and made an impact on hockey here in Pennsylvania."

Looking forward to this season, we have several plans to bring the student section on the road. From all of us in the Roar Zone, see you in Pegula! -Anna Whittaker

## FROM THE EDITOR

Our regular contributors have shared their thoughts and experiences regarding the Lions' first Big Ten Tournament Championship in this issue of *FULL STRENGTH*. I'd like to share mine as well – they are somewhat unique (I think).

Like most of you, I watched at home as Penn State scored an improbable double overtime victory against Minnesota in the Tournament semi-finals. The next night was quite different; I found myself ensconced in a motel room near

**Looking for The Friends of Penn State Men's Hockey on the web?**

**WEBSITE:** <http://fopsmh.org>

**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/mhbc>

**TWITTER:** [@mhbcctweet](https://twitter.com/mhbcctweet)

**GOOGLE+:** <https://plus.google.com/+FopsmhOrg>

Dulles airport, in preparation for our trip to Hawaii the next day. Virginia hotels are not likely to offer the Big Ten Network, and mine was no exception, so that while I intently watched Penn State win its bazillionth wrestling national championship (Vincenzo Joseph, you are the man!), I had to resort to my phone for hockey updates.

Well, wrestling wins, my wife wants lights out, and hockey is going to OT. Finding myself unable to sleep, I quietly slip into the bathroom and check the phone – drats, going into a second overtime! Back to bed, still sleepless, back to the bathroom. My phone says they're still in OT; but wait, there's a new message – Folkes on the breakaway – YAHOO (silently to myself).

It was a good plane ride the next day.