



FROM PRESIDENT LINDA MATESEVAC

What a fun-filled hockey season our club and the fans have experienced! Every time we think we have seen it all, our team tops it, especially with those two sweet late-season sweeps of Minnesota. Thanks to the team for all their outstanding performances and to the coaches and staff for helping to make it all possible.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Nittany Lion senior defenseman Trevor Hamilton has been named the 2017-18 Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year. He is the first Penn State player to win a major Conference award. Hamilton was also named to the All-Big Ten 1st Team, he led all Conference defensemen in scoring with 29 points, and for the second consecutive season led the nation in blocked shots (104). Congratulations Trevor, thank you for all you have done for the program, and best wishes to you in the future.

FOPSMH members enjoyed our annual post-game social in December, attended by the players and coaches. Brandon Biro, our scholarship recipient, spoke on behalf of the team and thanked us for his scholarship assistance and for our support of the entire program. We also hosted several 'watch parties,' evenings of food, fun, and friendship as we cheered on the team playing on the road. Most Tuesday evenings, many of us turned up at Coach Gadowsky's Radio Show at Primanti's in State College. We were never disappointed and always entertained by the guests —Russian folk songs performed by Denis and Nikita, Funkey serenading us, grooming tips, tweets from former players, etc.

The FOPSMH sponsored its first "two games/two nights" bus trip to Ann Arbor to support the Nittany Lions this past January (see photos on page 5). The weather cooperated, and we were able to tour the campus and explore downtown. The bus rides went quickly, with trivia games and prizes, a movie ("Miracle"), and lots of early morning sleep. We now have a model for conducting an attractive, affordable multi-day trip that does not cut corners and needs only 20-25 participants to be cost-effective. We will begin planning next year's trip as soon as the 2018-19 hockey schedule is announced. Please consider joining us as we visit the historic hockey venues of the Big Ten.



Our end-of-season Senior Celebration honored Captain James Robinson, Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year Trevor Hamilton, Sportsmanship Award honoree Erik Autio, and Matt Erlichman; each has added something very special to the program and will be missed. The FOPSMH's gift to the seniors is an engraved Waterford crystal hockey puck. We also saluted the team's senior student-managers, who work out of the spotlight but are vital to the program's success.

The mission of the FOPSMH is to support the hockey program and increase fan involvement. We cannot do this without your support. I hope that many of you have been able to participate in some of these activities. Club membership has grown significantly in the past few years; please consider becoming more involved by serving on committees, helping us sell 50/50 and raffle tickets, and/or attending our meetings. Thank you for an outstanding year!

BREAKING NEWS!

Fan favorite Andrew Sturtz will forgo his last season at Penn State and play for the National Hockey League's Ottawa Senators organization next year. Sturtz is the leading goal scorer in Penn State NCAA Division I hockey history, and was an All-Big Ten honorable mention this past season. More than that, he played with a level of excitement and determination that helped define the Nittany Lions. He will leave Hockey Valley with his degree in hand, and the respect and gratitude of Penn State fans.

Stephanie Corcino



Peyton Jones greets a young fan at the annual skate with the team.

ASK COACH GADOWSKY

Question: *Do you have opportunities to discuss “coach stuff” with other Penn State coaches?*

Coach Gadowsky: Yes, quite a few. The coaches here are unbelievable, they have a wealth of knowledge. They’ve helped tremendously with our navigating Penn State and the Big Ten. Coaching has more to do with managing players, it’s not just x’s and o’s. We have the very best coaches here, and it is such a privilege to be here because of this. I also want to note the culture of Athletic Department excellence here – the people are very generous with their time, they are accessible, and we’ve learned a great deal as a result.

Question: *How well can you see the game from the bench?*

Coach Gadowsky: I’ve sometimes wondered why coaches don’t sit upstairs to get a better view of the game. Being on the bench, we miss a lot. We do have a coach upstairs, and so one of us on the bench concentrates on the

defensemen, another on the forwards, and the third coach is in contact with the coach upstairs. In addition to all of this, you have to be alert – there are always pucks flying around.

Question: *How do you decide who takes penalty shots?*

Coach Gadowsky: Many factors are involved. We base a lot on what we see in practice. Also, goalies have an important perspective, and so we ask ours about what they experience during practice. We consider how people have handled these shots in the past. And certainly there are times when you just go with your gut – if a guy’s having a tremendous game, his performance could take precedence over these other considerations. We’re lucky here – we have lots of options to go to, we are not limited to only a few players who are capable of success.

Question: *Given the weather extremes and variability, how has the ice surface at Pegula held up?*



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Coach Gadowsky: You know that’s a good question. What we’ve experienced in January would have been a major problem in many rinks back in the day, and even today. I haven’t noticed any problems here, and I haven’t heard of any problems from the guys. The surface is great, and the staff put in a lot of time and effort to keep it that way. In a lot of rinks I’ve been in, you never know what you’re going to get – soft ice, and fog, oh yeah, lots of fog.

Question: *Three goals down to Michigan at Yost with two minutes to go – then the guys score two goals in 30 seconds. How are you reacting on the bench, what are you thinking?*

Coach Gadowsky: The longer and longer I do this, the more I understand that my demeanor is important. Most successful coaches these days don’t run around screaming. I try to be calm and let the players play. I have to stay aware of match-ups, I still have to put people in a position to be successful. But in the situation you described, once the puck drops, my actions take a back seat to the players. I can’t panic, or get too excited, I’ve got to maintain my composure.



Stephanie Corcino

Coach Gadowsky and his staff welcome Roar Zone students back from their semester break.

ASK THE LIONS

Question: *After a Penn State score in Pegula, the place goes wild – but the game goes on almost immediately. How do you keep your concentration?*

Alec Marsh: It’s awesome to hear, and it gives us a lot of momentum. I just try not to get too high or too low during the game. It gets easier the more you experience it.

Kris Myllari: It’s definitely a thing you have to learn. Pegula takes this to a whole new level, but when the puck drops you have to be focused, and you learn that pretty quickly.

James Robinson: I’ve been here for four years, and it’s a lot easier for me to move on than it was when I arrived. The atmosphere makes it tough to hear, but you love it, it is not a bad thing at all.

Trevor Hamilton: I try to enjoy it, but once the puck drops, I focus on the ice. The shift after a goal is really important, and you try to take advantage and get another goal to really put the pressure on your opponent.

Evan Barratt: It motivates you to do even better, so at least for me there’s no issue about losing focus, but rather continuing to do what I’ve been doing.

Adam Pilewicz: You don’t want to get caught up in it. Hockey is a game of momentum, and while we want to ride the wave, we have to limit distractions. Our coaches do a good job of keeping us calm.

Question: *What sports do you play recreationally?*

James Robinson: Golf, and golf. That’s it.

Chase Berger: Growing up, I liked playing soccer and basketball. Now I play tennis, I still play soccer, I still play basketball (although I’m not very good). I also like to swim. I just like going outside and playing – almost anything.

Sam Sternschein: I played baseball and hockey when I was growing up. Golf during the summer – does that count?

Question: *What can you tell us about those awesome Big Ten Tournament Championship rings?*

Nate Suceze: It was a surreal moment when we got them. We were surprised by the presentation when we got back in the fall. Everyone was in awe. I wear mine to every home game.

Peyton Jones: We were told to come to the rink for a meeting. Once in the rink, the lights went out, we looked at the screen, they put a video on, it showed the ring. Then they opened the garage, and we were presented with them. It was a fantastic moment.

Question: *Do you have any post-game routines after home games, and are Fridays different from Saturdays?*

Andrew Sturtz: Always some chocolate milk. And then see team staff to get checked out for injuries. On Fridays I’ll then go to dinner with my family, and on Saturdays I’ll hang out with my teammates and hopefully we’ll be enjoying a win.

Sam Sternschein: I’m more careful about what I eat after Friday games, because of having to play the next night. I also get to hang out with my parents.

James Gobetz: I don’t really have any special routines. I have dinner with family members both nights.

Question: *How do you spend Saturdays on the road?*

Alex Limoges: Each guy has his own routine. We have various mandatory activities on game day. Outside of these, some of the guys like to go to the gym, or to run, some just take a walk.

Kris Myllari: I eat, and then I stretch, and then take a long nap. Then I eat again, and go to the rink. I don’t do a whole lot else.

Brandon Biro: I room with Pav (Nikita Pavlychev), he and I watch “The Office” and then maybe I nap, and then if there’s time we watch some more of “The Office.”

Chase Berger: I usually just hang out with the guys. We’re a loose group, we love to be with each other. As one of the team leaders, I try to interact as much as I can with as many of the guys as I can.

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FOPSMH ON THE ROAD


Photo courtesy of Mark Stephens



The FOPSMH is ready for some hockey in.....



Joel Sobel

Yost Ice Arena, home of the Michigan Wolverines.

Photo courtesy of Jen Cowher



Michigan hockey legend Red Berenson graciously spends time with FOPSMH's A. J. Ciccarelli and Jen Cowher.



Chris Flavin

Free time Saturday on State Street.

Joel Sobel



Radio voice Brian Tripp and superfan Rich Seifert chat outside Yost Arena after Saturday night's tough loss.



Joel Sobel

James Gobetz, Liam Folkes, and Derian Hamilton ponder what could have been after a long weekend.



)) ON THE AIR WITH BRIAN TRIPP ((

As a broadcaster, like the players and coaches, I want to thrive in a game’s biggest moments. Besides trying to accurately depict the action on the ice, I am constantly considering how to capture the enormity of a moment and emotion of the crowd while providing context on the relevance of a specific

event. Fortunately, during the Penn State program’s quick ascent to national prominence, our broadcast team has had ample opportunities to document landmark achievements since the launch of this exciting journey.

The greatest challenge in broadcasting live sports is their unpredictable nature. I never go into a game with a script of what I plan to say if such a moment occurs. I feel it ruins the authenticity of a call. Besides, how could one ever foresee a double overtime breakaway game-winner for the program’s first conference championship or four-straight wins over longtime college hockey power Minnesota to essentially secure another NCAA Tournament berth.

As a perfectionist, I’ll argue that no call is perfect. However, I hope, at the very least, the passion of our broadcast team is evident every night and along the way we find the right words on a few occasions to complement these memorable achievements. We are privileged to work with such outstanding coaches, student-athletes, administrators and fans that make Penn State such a special place. As always, thanks for listening!

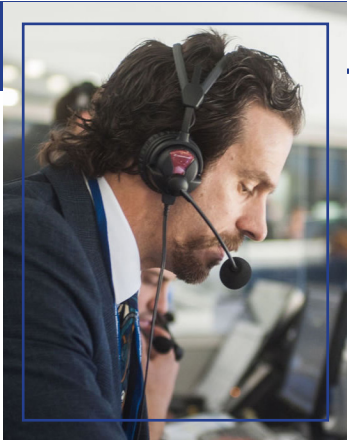
THE VOICE OF PEGULA, RODNEY MARTIN

Back in early February, did it seem as if the Lions were “due for a season like this one” and that last season’s meteoric rise was too good to last? They were in the middle of a losing streak and their national ranking and prospects for the postseason were fading. Penn State hockey is, after all, still a very young program. As I saw the chances of a home playoff game fade, it started to bring me down. Good thing I received a wake-up call when my wife asked me after a Friday night loss to Notre Dame, “Is this going to ruin the rest of your weekend?” It wasn’t in a lighthearted way either, she was very serious. It was an important lesson for me.

Fast forward a few weeks. We’ve seen our Nittany Lions look like world-beaters – case in point, last year’s Big Ten Tournament. But there probably were not many who thought we would dominate a powerhouse Minnesota team. So, when I got to press the horn celebrating the sweep at the end of the regular season, I started to get a bit emotional – something that rarely happens to me. And then, to do it all over again a week later with NCAA Tournament hopes on the line, I was out of control (apologies to everyone I hugged in the control room). Sports are funny that way.

The games with Minnesota are always special to me because I get to catch-up with Bill Peters, one of my best

friends from my time in the service. Bill is a native Minnesotan and avid hockey fan, and we used to spend a lot of time together watching ECHL games and playing roller hockey. Now, each time the Lions and Gophers square off, we spend time chatting and catching up a bit. So, how did I respond after sweeping his beloved Gophers – two weekends in a row? Well, I would *like* to say that I took that lesson I mentioned earlier to heart. I would like to say that, but...



IN MEMORIUM:

Bill Simon, a long-time member of the old Icers Booster Club and a 1959 Penn State graduate, passed away this winter. Bill taught a number of the Icers players while a member of the Penn State faculty, he participated in many club activities over the years, and he was a regular attendee of the ACHA National Championship Tournaments. Those of us who knew Bill remember him as a great friend and fan.

GAME ACTION

photos by Stephanie Corcino



Evan Barratt (17) opens the scoring against Wisconsin on Friday night.



Eric Autio (20) blasts through the neutral zone as Alex Limoges (9) gives him an alley during Saturday's contest against the Badgers.



The Roar Zone erupts as Denis Smirnov (25) lights the lamp in the opener against Ohio State.



Much to Notre Dame's dismay, Andrew Sturtz (16) is just being Andrew Sturtz as the Lions look to bounce back on Saturday afternoon.



Peyton Jones stones Minnesota's Jack Sadek to protect an early Nittany Lion lead in the crucial regular season finale.



Denis Smirnov slips it through the Gopher defense for the Lion's second goal.

GAME ACTION

Continued from Page 6



Nate Sucece (14) slams it home to give Penn State its first lead of the Big Ten Tournament opener.



Andrew Sturtz scores what would prove to be the game-winner with 15 seconds left in the 2nd period.



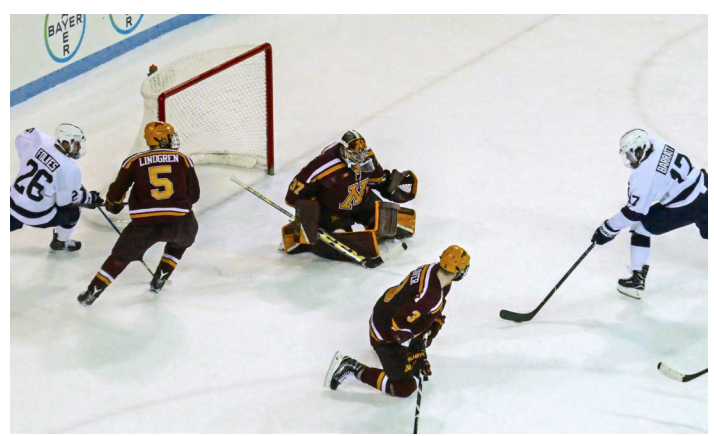
Liam Folkes (26) waits for the rebound on a shot by Evan Barratt and puts the Lions up 2-0 in Game 2.



With the Lions trailing 5-4 early in the 3rd period, Andrew Sturtz is roughed on an attempted breakaway. And on the ensuing power play ...



Brandon Biro gets it past Gopher goalie Eric Schierhorn with just over 12 minutes left in regulation to tie it once again.



With the tension mounting, Evan Barratt fires on-net, then puts in the rebound to score the series-clinching goal.



Editor's note: We profiled FOPSMH Board member Anna Whitaker in our Fall 2017 edition, so you have an idea of her passion for hockey and her non-academic activities here at Penn State. But her academic accomplishments are just as noteworthy. Anna is a geobiology major and a member of the Schreyer Honors College. In the summer of 2014, she and her father discovered a 450 million year old starfish fossil; her interest in this discovery led to being awarded an Erickson Discovery Grant by Penn State for 2017 so she could continue her research. Anna is currently deciding among several prestigious schools that have accepted her into their post-graduate programs. Good luck, Anna, and thank you for all of your contributions to Penn State Hockey and the FOPSMH.

This will be my last time writing for the FOPSMH newsletter as a Roar Zone member, but for now, I'm going to try hard not to think about that!

The final stretch of the regular season had some great moments. During the first game against Minnesota, the Roar Zone unveiled the season's first Tifo (a large, hand-painted tarp - see picture below). It featured the Nittany Lion on a Zamboni, aimed at the helpless Minnesota Gopher, and



Stephanie Corcino

a parody of the Minnesota catchphrase "Ski-U-Mah" (we called it "Ski-U-Meh"). Roar Zone Vice President Matt Moran explained that "the Tifo went extremely well, and while

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it was a lot of work, it was worth it. The biggest reason is because we actually won and broke the 'Tifo Curse' (previous Tifo's did not bring victories). Plus, unveiling it at the end of the National Anthem forced the Minnesota players to look at it."

Our last home games in Pegula were bittersweet for me, because I have watched this building rise from a muddy pit in the ground and the team emerge from the yellow-lit rink in Greenberg. But I wouldn't trade those four games against Minnesota for the world. We hope everyone has enjoyed, laughed at, and maybe even slightly regretted our



Stephanie Corcino

The Roar Zone releases streamers to conclude another successful season.

antics over the years. We did it all for the team and the fans. About Coach Gadowsky and the team – they go above and beyond to support the student section when it should be the other way around. And Coach really doesn't need to thank us in interviews, he earned our lifelong allegiance long ago with food (seriously, there were a few times when we starving college students were saved by pizza from him).

Growing up in Hockey Valley has given me the unique perspective of watching the program emerge and change, and I will miss Penn State hockey dearly. It has given me a family, and wherever I end up they will always be my home team. Matt (Moran) has said that "Penn State hockey and the Roar Zone have provided me with a great opportunity to get comfortable here and become part of something bigger than me as an individual." I wholeheartedly agree with him.

Thanks for reading, and I hope to see everyone again at the games when I visit home. - Anna Whitaker