



FROM PRESIDENT LINDA MATESEVAC

Another hockey season will soon be ending, along with a very active year for our club. Our membership numbers are strong, our core of volunteers has grown (we still need more!), and we will be making another sizable contribution to our scholarship thanks to the generosity of our members and fans. Thanks to all of you who have been so supportive of our efforts this year. Please consider renewing your membership for next season, so that you may continue to enjoy the benefits of your membership: our away-game watch parties, our bus trips, our annual members-only social, Coach Gadowsky's radio shows, and, best of all, the fellowship of other PSU hockey fans.

What fun we had on our January day trip to New York to watch our team play Michigan at Madison Square Garden! Many of our travelers went to the PSU Pep Rally; others visited the Empire State Building and Times Square and enjoyed all the typical tourist sites. A few even managed to do some shopping. Although the day was long, the victory made it all worthwhile.

Photo courtesy of Linda Matesevac



The FOPSMH is in a New York state of mind.

The Senior Celebration was a special affair in February as we honored our senior players following the last regular season home game. Our club will present an engraved Waterford crystal hockey puck to each of the seniors after the post-season has been completed. The evening also recognized hockey's Administrative Support Assistant Nancy Doyle's upcoming retirement. Our club has been very fortunate to have her serve as a liaison with the hockey program and staff the past several years. Our very best to Nancy.



March saw us take another bus trip, this time to Notre Dame for the weekend. Lots of trivia, prizes, and surprises, as well as hockey movies helped to fill the hours driving to South Bend. Most of our travelers, including some from the Roar Zone, toured the beautiful campus on Saturday, encountering many other PSU families and fans along the way. Saturday's win over Notre Dame sent us home with smiles on our faces and visions of post-season play, including hosting the first series of the Big Ten Tournament. With that victory in hand, everyone was on a cell phone checking the results of the Wisconsin-Michigan contest - and you know how that turned out.

On a more personal note, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as an officer of the FOPSMH for the past few years. Your suggestions, your advice, and your encouragement have all been greatly appreciated. Thanks, especially, to the hockey program, Coach Gadowsky and Nancy Doyle, the fine young men on our teams over the years, the Executive Committee members, and our Board of Directors. Your commitment to the hockey program and our mission as a club, your willingness to help whenever asked, and your friendship have been immeasurable.

My best,

Linda Matesevac

Editor's note: The FOPSMH has thrived under Linda's dedicated and tireless leadership. We cannot thank her enough for her behind-the-scenes efforts for so many activities. Also, as Linda mentioned, special thanks to Nancy Doyle, who really made things work!

ASK COACH GADOWSKY

Question: You often refer to the importance of a team's culture. When you are recruiting players from junior hockey, do you concentrate on looking at players on teams that are recognized for their good culture?

Coach Gadowsky: We certainly look at junior teams that have been successful, there are certain programs that value character, and that always helps us identify the players we'd like at Penn State. For example, we've gotten Brandon Biro and David Glen from the Spruce Grove Saints (Alberta Junior Hockey League). But we are always looking for good players, regardless of the team, and then the guys on our team have a responsibility to see how well these potential recruits fit in with our culture.

Question: Team captains play an important role as leaders on and off the ice. What role do captains and assistant captains play on ice during games?

Coach Gadowsky: There are some referees who strongly prefer to communicate only with captains or assistant captains (and when necessary, if one of our captains is not on the ice, we can send them in from the bench). So aside from being good leaders and good teammates, our captains must be level-headed, intelligent, and have good communication skills. Now there are times, very infrequently, when one of our guys is just having a bad night, and a referee has skated over to the bench and said something like "I'm done with this guy" and so after that he will only talk to the other guys wearing a letter.

Question: Evan Barratt is the first Penn State player who came through the U.S. National Team Development Program, and he is also the first Nittany Lion to play for Team USA in the World Junior Ice Hockey Championship. Will

this change your recruiting strategy over time?

Coach Gadowsky: We've always been looking at the U.S. Development Team when recruiting, there were lots of players we would love to have had here. Honestly, we probably didn't have a program that would have attracted most of these top players when we first started here. Evan deserves a lot of credit for giving us a shot. He loves it here, we hope he winds up being a pioneer, that other guys from the Development Team will now seriously consider coming to Penn State.

Question: Where has the team improved the most this season, and what has surprised you the most?

Coach Gadowsky: At the end of last year, we felt we had given up far too many goals on the rush. This was surprising, given that we were so much better in most other defensive categories. We made a conscious effort to fix this problem, and I'm thrilled that we have. With that in mind, my biggest surprise is that we are not better in our defensive zone, and I think that a lot of that is on me. However, we also have to recognize that, by doing a better job in stopping our opponents' rushes, we are forcing them to chip the puck into our defensive zone, they are spending more time in our defensive zone, and they are generating offense in many more ways than in previous years.

IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY, BUT...

Of the 6 Big Ten coaches in the inaugural season of Conference play (2013-14), only Guy Gadowsky and Ohio State's Steve Rohlik are still coaching at the same schools.

Question: Big Ten teams historically have been excellent in hockey, do you think they are even better now that they all are in the same conference?



PSU Athletic Communications

Coach Gadowsky: I do. When you consider their previous associations, with the Western Collegiate Hockey Association and the Central Collegiate Hockey Association, the top teams in those conferences usually feasted on the weaker teams, but had far lower winning percentages when facing other top teams. For example, Michigan at one time had qualified for the NCAA Tournament for over 20 consecutive years, because they had such a superior record against lesser opposition. With the formation of the Big Ten, Penn State was supposed to fill the role of a weaker team, but it hasn't worked out that way. So every game is a dogfight, and the teams have had to get better and play more consistently in order to survive, when previously that was not the case. This is why the Conference standings are so tight.

Question: When you were playing hockey, how would you have fared playing the style of hockey that you have Penn State playing now?

Coach Gadowsky: I couldn't play that style of hockey. We recruit players far better now than I was then.

Editor's note: Coach Gadowsky did not play in the NHL. However, he was the MVP of the minor league Fresno Falcons with 52 goals and 29 assists during the 1995-96 season.

ASK THE LIONS

Question: How have you adjusted to being on a large campus after transferring from Merrimack College?

Evan Bell: It was tough, there's such a difference between Penn State and Merrimack College, which is a small Catholic school. I think getting around was challenging for the first few weeks, but my teammates helped me out a lot, and it didn't take long to get the hang of things.

Question: Is it a coincidence that both you and Ludvig Larsson were at Merrimack and are now at Penn State?

Evan Bell: Not entirely. I knew I was transferring to Penn State, then I found out that Ludvig's name was on the transfer portal. I talked to him about how much I liked Penn State, and I know that had an impact.

Question: We know that on-ice communications are important, how easily are you able to do this?

Alex Limoges: The first two things you learn in hockey are to keep your stick on the ice and to communicate with your teammates. From early on, you get used to a loud atmosphere, you learn to know where your teammates are and to let them know where you are.

Liam Folkes: We practice this a lot, even youth coaches emphasize this. So everyone knows how to do it, it becomes second nature. All of us on the team are good friends as well, that makes it even easier, and so it's not that difficult for me.

Sam Sternschein: It's very difficult to do at Pegula, we have to speak very loudly. Believe it or not, it's actually easier to communicate on the ice during road games.

Question: Do you room with any of the players on the team, and, if so, how did this come about?

Kris Myllari: I share an apartment with Blake Gober, we've roomed together for two years. Last year, we were in an apartment with a bunch of guys, this year it's just the two

of us; we're now next door to Marsh, Funkey, Adam Pilewicz, and Ludvig (Larsson). We get to select our roommates and location just as other students do.

Sam Sternschein: Cole Hults is my roommate, we roomed together as freshmen, and it worked out so well that we stuck with it this year. All players on the team must room with 1 or more guys from the team, but it's up to us to make our own living arrangements.

Question: How did you spend your free time in New York City before the Michigan game in Madison Square Garden?

Liam Folkes: We flew out of Ann Arbor after the Thursday night game, had a practice in New York Friday, but then after about 1 p.m. we were free to explore. A lot of guys had friends and family come to the game, my parents and my brother and some neighbors came. I'd never been to New York, neither had my brother.

Cole Hultz: I'd never been to New York before, I'd been to Chicago, but New York's a whole different animal. Some of my teammates had been to New York before, they took me around, we walked a lot, did some shopping, had a great time.

Evan Bell: This was my first time in New York. We went to Times Square, experienced all of the hustle and bustle. I hung out with my friends on the team, we saw the 9/11 Memorial, Radio City, went into some cool stores. The best part was playing in Madison Square Garden in front of all the Penn State fans there, it was like playing in Pegula.

Nikita Pavlychev: I was in New York before, when I was about 13, I don't recall very much about the visit. When we were there for the Michigan game, I walked around a lot, did some shopping, and went to several pizza places.

Alex Limoges: My parents and my girlfriend were there with me. We went shopping, had a nice dinner, and saw "Frozen."

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 IIHF 2019 WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Editor's note: In 2019, for the first time, the IIHF Junior World Championship included a Penn State player – 2 to be precise. Nittany Lion freshman Aarne Talvitie not only starred in the Tournament, he also captained the Team Finland Tournament Champions. He scored in 5 of Finland's 6 games, amassed 4 goals and 3 assists, and made one of highlight plays of the Tournament by setting-up the winning overtime goal against the home-team Canadians in the quarterfinal round. Talvitie suffered a lower-body injury in the 2nd period of the 2-1 championship game victory over the United States, and has since undergone season-ending surgery.

Joining Talvitie at the Tournament was sophomore Evan Barratt, who at the time led the nation in goals and points for Penn State. Barratt was named the star of the game for Team USA in its opening 2-1 victory over Slovakia. In that contest, he set a key screen on the game-tying goal midway through the 3rd period, and a few minutes later scored the game-winner on a nifty backhand shot. Then, against the Swedes, he saw significant ice time as the U.S. roared back from a 4-0 deficit in the final 10 minutes to tie the game before losing in overtime. In the Tournament finals, Barratt faced PSU teammate Aarne Talvitie as the Finns bested the U.S. 3-2 on a goal in the final 2 minutes of the game.

Both players were honored during the 2nd period of the January 12th game vs. Michigan State at the Pegula Ice Arena. We spoke briefly to Talvitie, Barratt, and other Nittany Lions after the holiday break.

Question: You were invited to try out for Team USA in December for the World Junior Ice Hockey Championship, how difficult was it to make the team?

Evan Barratt: There were 29 guys invited to the tryouts, and eventually 24 were selected, the odds were in my favor but I still had to earn my way on to the team.

Question: Had you previously played on a team with any of your Team USA members?

Evan Barratt: Yes, with several, I was in the U.S. National Team Development Program, and got to know and play with a number of guys from this year's team.

Question: Trailing Sweden by 4 goals with under 10 minutes to play, Team USA tied the game in the closing seconds – how did this happen?

Evan Barratt: We knew we had to get that first goal to get them to open up, to put them on their heels. All of us have played against Sweden before, we knew that once we got that first goal, we could come back.

Question: As a member of Team Finland, were you able to communicate with PSU teammate Evan Barratt (Team USA) at the Junior World Championship?

Aarne Talvitie: Certainly we could communicate on social media, but Evan and I both knew and understood that there was a lot at stake, we had to concentrate, and we had to hang out with our teammates.

Question: Given all the nations represented by players and on-ice officials at the World Junior Hockey Championship, what language is spoken between players and officials during the game?

Aarne Talvitie: English. You know, one of the officials was from Finland, he would not have been assigned to any of Team Finland's games. You know what, if he had been, I might have spoken in Finnish to him.

Question: Aside from Evan and Aarne, have you been teammates with any of the players many of us watched at the World Junior Hockey Championship?

Brandon Biro: Yes. Ian Mitchell (Team Canada) and I were teammates with the Spruce Grove Saints of the Alberta Junior Hockey League. He was, and is, a good friend of mine – it was exciting to see him play, and play so well.

Sam Sternschein: I played against a number of the players in this year's Tournament. I played with some of the guys in last year's Tournament, but not this year's.

Kris Myllari: I played against some of the guys, but none of my teammates from juniors were in this year's Tournament.

Kevin Kerr: I am older than the current Tournament players, I never played with any of them (the age limit for participating in the Tournament is 20 years).

Evan Bell: I'm younger than this year's players, I never had one as a teammate.



))) ON THE AIR WITH BRIAN TRIPP ((

I've had a lot of fans ask throughout the season what I do to prepare for our radio broadcasts. I take great pride in being knowledgeable about both Penn State and that night's opponent, and follow a weekly routine. It's my goal to anticipate any potential situation and be prepared for rare occurrences.

Although I've now come to expect Liam Folkes' post-season heroics.

Play-by-play broadcasters each have their own variation of what is known as a "spotting chart." Mine is a custom-made, legal-sized printout of a team's roster, statistics, and schedule, taped to an oversized manila folder. On the Sunday prior to a weekend series, I'll spend a few hours on my computer updating the numerical player listing for each team, each player's individual stats and biographical information, team stats, team records, and anything else I

find relevant. Then, Monday, I'll be at Penn State's practice and attend the media session to listen to Coach Gadowsky's comments and chat with the players. On Tuesday, I'll start memorizing the names and numbers of the opposing team's players so I can keep up with the frantic action during the game without constantly referring to my chart. By Wednesday, most opposing teams will have held their weekly media availability event, and I'll scour the internet for stories and comments from other players and coaches. On Thursday, both schools release their pregame media packets, so I page through those and add handwritten notes to my printed charts.

By Friday, I can't wait to get to the arena. I typically arrive 90 minutes before puck drop to ensure all equipment is functioning properly, record my pregame interview with Coach Gadowsky, confirm all name pronunciations, check line charts, and chat with the rest of our broadcast team about the upcoming game. The game itself essentially serves as an exam for all the studying and hard work throughout the week. This is the one test I enjoy taking!



THE VOICE OF PEGULA, RODNEY MARTIN



The challenge to keep things fresh is real. However, just because something has been done before should not preclude it from being used again. There are great ideas that, when given a new twist, are just as effective as when they were first used. When you can combine several ideas of this caliber, it's even better.

When I watch a hockey game, I'm paying as much attention to the game's production as to the game itself - perhaps even more so. There have been many times when I've said, "Oh, that would be awesome to do at Pegula." Some of those ideas never had a chance - I mean, I don't have the money to buy a set of on-ice projectors for Pegula (which would be mid-to-high six figures, if you were curious). But, there are some that have made the cut and I have been able to fold into my own "style." Here are a few of my favorites and a bit of back story to go with them.

"Hockey Valley"

I first used the term back on 2006 when I was running the website for the Icers. The Ottawa Senators had a promotional banner that read "Welcome to Hockey Country" and

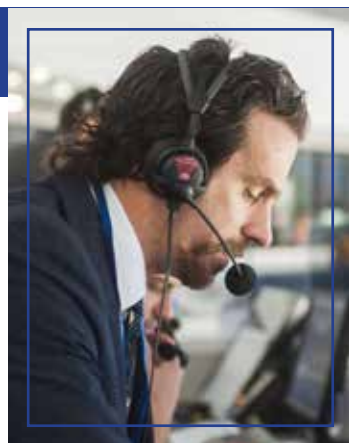
Detroit was known as "Hockeytown." In trying to make something that was unique to Penn State, replacing "Happy" with "Hockey" and keeping "Valley" was a perfect choice.

"Are you ready for some hockey!"

There are many variants of this at all levels of hockey. Minnesota (NHL) does a great promotion where they get celebrities and former players to do their "Let's Play Hockey" call before each home game. But, while the wording is slightly different, the influence comes from Lou Nolan's call before each Flyers game.

"A Nittany Lion goal..." (With the "A" drawn out)

This is a hybrid of the goal call at Penguins games ("A Pittsburgh goal...") and the "growl" from Colorado Avalanche



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GAME ACTION

photos by Stephanie Corcino



Alex Limoges (9) puts Penn State ahead against Notre Dame in the last home game before the holiday break.



Sam Sternschein fires away as the Lions routed the Irish 9-1.



The Michigan State defense tries to put Denis Smirnov on ice, but the Lions triumphed 4-2 in the series opener in Pegula.



Brandon Biro (farthest right) is fearless, but the Spartan defense rose to this occasion during their Friday night loss.



The rush is on as Sam Sternschein leads the charge in the opener against Ohio State in Pegula.



The Roar Zone explodes as Nikita Pavlychev celebrates a Ludvig Larsson goal that tied it at 1, but the Buckeyes prevailed, 4-1.

GAME ACTION

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The Lions grab the lead as Liam Folkes goes far-side past the Bucks' goaltender early in the second period on "Snowmageddon Saturday."



Evan Barratt split the Ohio State defense throughout the afternoon, but the Buckeyes held on for a 6-4 victory.



Denis Smirnov considers his options during the opener against Minnesota.



Here's a front-row look as the Lions head toward the Minnesota zone. Penn State led throughout in a 7-2 victory over the Gophers.



Alex Limoges (foreground) fights for position in the closer against the Gophers.



Brandon Biro turns on the jets as the Lions got their first Big Ten weekend sweep with a 6-2 victory over Minnesota.

THE ROAR ZONE

Penn State has had no shortage of historic moments over the past few years, and the Lions have shown a flair for the dramatic in these instances.



Ever the gracious host, the Roar Zone welcomes Wisconsin.

Two seasons ago, the team entered the Big Ten Tournament knowing that they had to at least advance to the Conference championship game in order to earn their first- ever NCAA Tournament bid. History was not on their side – Penn State had never made it to the Big Ten championship game and every previous Conference champion had started the Tournament with a first round “bye.” But the Lions prevailed with a double-overtime victory in the semi-finals and then another double-overtime win the following night on Liam Folkes’ breakaway goal. Penn State earned the automatic Conference bid to its first NCAA Tournament.

Last year, Penn State was in a similar situation entering the last week of the regular season, needing to sweep Minnesota in Pegula just to host the first round of the Big Ten

Tournament. History again stood in their way, as Penn State had never managed a weekend sweep against Minnesota. But, as many Minnesota fans are quick to point out, Penn State doesn’t care much about history. Once again, Penn State came through, sweeping the Gophers that weekend and then again the next weekend in the Conference Tournament, eventually earning an at-large bid to the NCAA regionals in Allentown.

Just a few weeks ago, Penn State’s chances of hosting the opening round of the Conference Tournament looked bleak. The Lions needed at least one win at Notre Dame and a little help from their friends. Somehow, some way, they persisted, and after a third period game-winning goal by Even Barratt in the final game of the regular season, coupled with a Wisconsin victory over Michigan in overtime, Penn State was coming home to host the first round of the Big Ten Tournament. More history - the Lions dropped the opening game of the Conference Tournament to Wisconsin on a late goal, the first home team to lose a Conference Tournament game. But back they came to tie the series the next night, and then in arguably the most thrilling game in Pegula history, defeated the Badgers in overtime in the series finale on a goal by, once again, Liam Folkes.

So as I write this, Penn State is headed to Columbus for a one game showdown with Ohio State in the Tournament semifinal, hoping to become the first visiting team to advance under the new Conference Tournament structure. All we can hope for is a little more of that history-breaking magic that seems to define this team at this time of the year.

Editor’s note: Good guys 5, Buckeyes 1. Mitchell loves his Lions and knows his history!

THE VOICE OF PEGULA

goal calls (“Aaaaaavalanche goal...”). I had originally toyed with the idea of saying “A Penn State Goal...” but thought that might be too close to the Penguins call.

“We are...” (After goal read)

This has to be my favorite. The Boston Bruins (among others) have a Ric Flair “Wooo!” after their goal reads. While I would love to do that, I believe “We Are” is much more fitting. And to hear you as part of 6000 replying with “Penn State!” is such an absolute rush.

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I’m always looking for more. If you come across something that you think would be cool to do at Pegula, don’t hesitate to let me know. We Are...

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