



Varsity 'S' Newsletter

Alumni respond to Challenge

With less than three months to go in the Penn State Alumni Challenge for Former Student-Athletes, teams are getting ready to make a late-season push to climb into the top two prize-winning spots. The race for the two \$6,000 prizes is coming down to the wire, but it's not too late for teams to make a playoff run and earn additional funds for their former programs.

The competition is especially heating up for the first prize for the highest percentage of former student-athletes who represent their team in supporting Penn State athletics. Football is in first place with 33.9 percent of alumni making gifts to the program, but women's soccer is right behind with 33.8 percent participation. Not far behind are men's hockey (30.4 percent), men's lacrosse (25.2 percent) and women's ice hockey (23.3 percent).

Nearly every Penn State team has seen an increase in alumni support when compared to last year's numbers, putting pressure on the current leaders for the second prize. This \$6,000 prize will go to the team with the highest percentage increase of former student-athlete donors over last year.

Women's Soccer is a little more secure in these standings, holding the top spot with 16.9 percent increase in giving, followed by men's lacrosse (10.6 percent increase), field hockey (7.97 percent increase), women's basketball (6.5 percent increase) and women's gymnastics (5 percent increase).

Varsity 'S' Club Ice Cream Social a success

More than 70 Varsity 'S' Club members braved the cold, football-season style weather after the Blue-White Game to participate in the first Varsity 'S' Club Ice Cream Social at the All-Sports Museum.

The event, which featured refreshments from the Berkey Creamery on campus, provided the opportunity for alumni to interact with fellow alumni, family and friends.

"The Ice Cream Social was a great way to bring our former student-athletes together to connect with former teammates. Having the Ice Cream Social at the All-Sports Museum provided the opportunity for our members to show their family the



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for Former Student-Athletes
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Overall, alumni are still supporting their teams in even greater numbers than last year. More than 2,300 former student-athletes have contributed to Penn State athletics so far this year, more than had supported the program all of last year. New donors continue to make a strong showing in the challenge—more than one-third of this year's donors are

making their first gift to Penn State athletics.

Be sure to support your sport before the challenge ends on June 30, 2013!

To see your team's results, go to the [Alumni Challenge Graph](#)

Men's hockey coach Guy Gadowsky is excited about the challenge and what it means to his coaching staff, his players and alumni.

"The challenge shows what it means to be a Penn Stater. I continue to express to my team what it means to be a part of the Penn State hockey family," Gadowsky said. "Over the past year, it is truly humbling to see the support from our former student-athletes. As seen by the number of former student-athletes that have joined the challenge, this is a great way for our alumni to continue to compete for their team even after their playing days are over. So far, there have been many changes in the leaderboard, and I look forward to the race to the finish."

Make your sport-specific gift today. As a former student-athlete, 100 percent of your donation can go to your program while receiving all Nittany Lion Club benefits.

beginnings of Penn State Sports as well as relive their time here at Penn State," said Clint Eury, Director of the Varsity 'S' Club.

While at the museum, visitors were able to explore the two-level, 10,000 square foot facility that provides a testament to the world-class success and tradition of Penn State student-athletes—both on the field and in the

classroom.

The museum includes the inspirational stories of men's and women's sports achievements through dramatic floor-to-ceiling visuals, rare archival images and athletic



equipment. The museum also includes team national championship trophies, the Heisman Trophy (won by John Cappelletti in 1973) and many other men's and women's trophies.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

From the first team in 1913 to this year's squad led by standout newcomers such as TJ Sanders, Penn State has a rich lacrosse tradition. See story, inside. (Photo at right by Mark Selders)



Centennial event a resounding success for men's lacrosse program

A big day during an important season felt special for all involved—and especially alumni—as the men's lacrosse program celebrated its 100th season with numerous activities before, during and after the April home game against Drexel.

The Varsity 'S' Club coordinated the events that attracted alumni from the 1950s to 2012.

Things started with breakfast for alumni, coaches and student-athletes. It was an event that allowed alumni to verbalize their support for current team members.

"I just told them how proud we are of them," Scott Mc Keon ('87) said. "After I spoke, [coach] Jeff [Tambroni] used the word 'team,' and team doesn't stop at the lacrosse players. It extends to the alumni, family and friends who are here to celebrate this moment and they really look at it as their future. Someday they will be doing what we're doing as alumni."

Before the game, a tailgate provided an opportunity to connect with fellow alumni and friends. Chip Henderson, who played for the Nittany Lions from 1956 to 1959, enjoyed how well the event was planned.

"It's a great idea and it was well orchestrated," Henderson said. "We've reflected on games, the university automobiles, the conditions we had to practice in and how much it has changed."

Likewise, fellow alumnus Vin Tedesco ('64) spent part of the day remembering his

college days and celebrating how far the sport of lacrosse has come over the years.

"It's one of the highlights of my life to be alive for the 100th anniversary and to be back celebrating how lucky we are to play the sport we love for the University we love," Tedesco said. "It just makes you feel good to see all these guys and remember them as young men and see the great lives they've led. You just can't beat that."

Tom Rogers ('75) cherished the opportunity to see teammates he has not seen in years, and to witness a program on the rise.

"Being a part of this is hard to put into words," said, who especially appreciated the chance for alumni and current student-athletes to interact. "It heightens that awareness of longevity of the program. It shows a real tradition, and they're the next generation."

Tony Gerrato, who played from 1983 to 1987, returned for the celebratory weekend not only as a proud alumnus, but also as a parent of a current player, sophomore Bryan Gerrato (Rockville Centre, N.Y.).

"It makes you get pretty emotional that something has been around this long and you've been a part of it and having my son be a part of the next generation," Tony Gerrato said. "My brother also played here, so our families have been extremely connected to the program."



Paul Fisher, who played in the 1990s, returned not only to see his past teammates, but also to celebrate how far the program has come in a short amount of time.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to see old friends, meet their wives and children as

well as enjoy the success of the current lacrosse program," Fisher said. "We all couldn't be prouder of where it is today."

Representing the Class of 2000, Kevin Keenan brought his son with him to share the traditions within the Penn State family.

After the tailgate, the alumni found a spot in the stands with more than 1,000 others to cheer on current team members. Of those student-athletes, senior Drew Roper (Columbus, Ohio) used the celebration as motivation to capitalize and defeat Drexel, 13-6. Defeating Drexel gave all of the players, coaches, parents, alumni, and fans even more reason to celebrate.

The final event of the day provided another opportunity for alumni to see old friends in addition to meeting the current student-athletes and their parents. With nearly 300 alumni, family and friends back in town, everyone gathered in the Multi-Sport Facility for a dinner and listened to speakers who gave the lacrosse family a closer look into the history of the program.

During festivities after dinner, Tedesco

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outlined the early years of men's lacrosse at Penn State, starting with modest beginnings in 1913.

All-American Dave Thiel ('65) followed. He explained the foundation built by his father, who coached at Penn State from 1935 to 1956, and by his successor, Ernie Baer (1957-1961). During those years, coaching was more about teaching than anything else, Thiel said. Also, Nick Thiel's tenure as coach faced the challenges of World War II, when talented student-athletes were drafted for the war effort and when resources were in limited supply.

Dick Pencek (1962, 1965-1977) followed in the coaching lineage. Starting with hand-me-down uniforms, he made it his mission to help improve the program. Glenn Thiel then followed with the longest tenure of any Penn State men's lacrosse coach — 33 years from 1978 to 2010.

Thiel provided an appropriate bridge in the evening's events, and in the program overall, as he discussed the change to his successor, Tambroni, in 2011. And while he's not in charge of the program, Thiel remains a strong supporter of Penn State lacrosse.

Tambroni was the final speaker of the night. He connected the past and present perfectly.

"We sit here to honor the past 100 years and it's amazing to see everything that Penn State has accomplished, but I would also like to recognize the modern players," Tambroni said. "These young men work so hard every day to build upon the great tradition of Penn State lacrosse and I can tell you first hand we have a great deal of respect for everything you've done before us and the camaraderie that you've built."

Although Tambroni is not a Penn State graduate, his wife Michelle was a field hockey standout at the University, and he certainly understand what it means to be "Penn State proud."

"Not having gone to Penn State, but having played against them, you're outside that circle and have little to no experience or understanding of what that actually means," Tambroni said. "You learn quickly, though, that there's a common thread. It really has nothing to do with the 480-something wins, it's about the people. It's about relationships; it's about the journey; and it's about the thread that goes through every one of us."

ALUMNI Q&A: NATE BUMP

Pitcher Nate Bump, a native of Towanda, Pa., was a four-time letterman for the baseball team who went on to play professional baseball for nearly eight years. He is one of only eight pitchers in Penn State baseball history to throw a no-hitter and he ranks among program leaders in wins (29), innings pitched (349.1) and strikeouts (352). He earned a World Series ring as a member of the Florida Marlins in 2003, was hampered by injury and eventually retired in 2012 after working himself back to AAA baseball.



Resides: Westtown, Pa.

Family: Wife Cheryl and children Natalie, 8, and Brody, 6

How often do you get back to campus? Not enough. I think the last time was 2004, when I was recognized for being in the World Series. That was nice, and it was a great experience. It's always nice to be on campus. I can't believe it's been that long.

Career highlight at Penn State? The biggest thing I remember is coming in during a close game and we won the Big Ten championship. Then there was that whole dog pile on the field. That's pretty memorable. It's always about the guys on the team, the camaraderie. It's amazing how many people I've met playing baseball, so many good people.

Career highlight as a pro? Of course the World Series, but my career had highlights and lowlights. It started with a lowlight, getting drafted in the 23rd round by the Red Sox. So I came back to school and developed in to a first-round pick by the Giants. Getting called up with the Marlins and sharing the World Series with my family and friends, though, that was special. And right there with that would be playing in Yankee Stadium. Nothing

beats running across the field there. It's like you're running on a cloud you're so hyped.

Was Penn State a big part of your pro career? Yes and no. As far as players,

most guys don't worry about colleges. Most are from Latin America, down south or out west, actually. Occasionally, though, you find a guy from a Big Ten Conference school or the Northeast. The coolest part was actually the fans. It seemed like no matter where we were there'd always be somebody who would yell out, "We are ..."

You retired twice? I had retired in 2007 just because of back-to-back arm surgeries. I was kind of forced out of the game. Then I ran into a guy who got me healthy and gave me my career back. I played four more years, found that love of the game again, and exhausted everything I had in my shoulder. I was content with the way it finished.

Do you still follow the game? I always kind of pay attention to the Giants, because they were my first organization. I root for them and the Marlins, too.

What are you doing now? I'm working in medical device sales and finishing up my degree at Penn State Brandywine. I'm doing my internship through my medical device sales job and a biomechanical start-up company that actually works with Major League Baseball teams. We capture biomechanics — it's markerless, you can do it without those black suits — and it's very cool. It's going to lead to some important things.

So after class and work, how do you spend your time? It's about my family, my wife and kids. Natalie and Brody are both playing soccer and Brody might do T-ball.

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First-ever jacket ceremony honors accomplishments, boosts tradition

Penn State's tradition-rich athletic program added another chapter with its first-ever Varsity Letter Jacket Ceremony this spring.

In the past, coaches or individual teams distributed the iconic jackets during separate events, often with little fanfare. This year, though, the Varsity 'S' Club coordinated a group program that honored 60 student-athletes from seven fall teams on the same evening at the Bryce Jordan Center.

The event resonated with alumni and current student-athletes alike.

"It just feels like it tightens the bond between alumni and the current student-athletes," said Michelle Tambroni, a former field hockey All-American who was one of the ambassadors for the event.

She and former football Academic All-America selection Justin Kurpeikis provided a link to the past that the current student-athletes appreciated as well.

"For me, receiving the jacket means I've been added to a tradition of elite student-athletes who have represented Penn State to the best of their ability," said freshman field hockey standout Haley Kerstetter (Selinsgrove, Pa.). "I feel as though I've been put into a new network of people who look to stand for courage, honor and success."



For some that network was especially personal. Kendall Pierce (Eden, N.Y.) from the women's volleyball team joined her parents as a letterwinner at Penn State.

By sport, there were six honorees from women's cross country, four from men's cross country, three from field hockey, 25 from football, nine from men's soccer, 10 from women's soccer and three from women's volleyball. Still, what team any single student-athlete represented hardly mattered—as Pierce clearly pointed out. "What's cool about the jacket is that it doesn't have your specific sport or name on it. It's just the big 'S,' and having almost every student-athlete have that matching 'S' on them really represents our One Team motto well."

Varsity 'S' Club honors two teams at banquet

A record total of 356 awards were presented to Penn State student-athletes during the 26th Annual SAAB Academic Achievement Awards Banquet in April.

Sponsored by the Milton and Lois Morgan Academic Support Center for Student-Athletes and the Student-Athlete Advisory Board (SAAB), a record 269 awards were presented to student-athletes for their academic accomplishments in 2011-12.

Presentations were made to a record total of 96 seniors who had a 3.0 or higher cumulative grade-point average through the 2012 fall semester. The previous records were 334 total awards (2008-09), 262 individual student-athlete awards (2006-07) and 88 awards to seniors with a 3.0 cumulative GPA (2003-04 and 2008-09).

The members of Penn State's 29 varsity programs in 2011-12 (men's and women's hockey became varsity sports in 2012-13) combined to earn an overall 3.05 GPA. The 14 women's programs posted a combined 3.24 GPA and 19 teams overall earned a 3.0 GPA or higher.

There are more than 750 Penn State student-

athletes on varsity teams.

Coaches Beth Alford-Sullivan (women's cross country) and Jeff Zinn (men's tennis) took home this year's Varsity 'S' Awards, which were presented to the men's and women's teams with the highest team GPAs. The women's cross country team earned the Milt Morgan Jr. Highest Team GPA Award as well.

The Nittany Lion Club honored two student-athletes with the prestigious True Grit Award, presented annually for overcoming adversities while continuing to succeed in the classroom and on the athletic field during their careers. The honorees were Nittany Lion wrestler James English (York, Pa.) and women's track and field athlete Rachel Casiano (Wyomissing, Pa.). Casiano has overcome a battle with thyroid cancer and English has missed two full seasons with injuries.

The SAAB Awards (Student-Athletes Above and Beyond) were presented to Maddy Evans (Glenside, Pa.; women's soccer) and Gizelle Studevent (LaJolla, Calif.; women's basketball), and the recipients were voted on by fellow student-athletes.

Richardson named to lead Letterman's Club

Record-setting Nittany Lion quarterback Wally Richardson is returning to Penn State as director of the Football Letterman's Club, starting in early June.

Richardson ('96, '03g Ed.) will be responsible for oversight of the Football Letterman's Club, which has more than 1,500 former Penn State football players and student managers. He also will serve as the primary liaison with the State College Quarterback Club.

After playing in the NFL and XFL, he served as an academic counselor in the Morgan Academic Support Center for Student-Athletes until 2007.

From 2007-11, he was the associate director of the Rankin Smith Student-Athlete Service Center at the University of Georgia. Most recently, he was associate director of football academic support at the University of North Carolina.

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Clint's Corner: Traditions, old and new



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Varsity 'S' Club

Dear Varsity 'S' Club members,

I hope you are all doing well and are enjoying the spring weather.

It was great to see some of you at our Ice Cream Social during Blue-White Weekend. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet you and your families as well as reminisce some of your memories while at Penn State.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend the 26th Annual SAAB Academic Achievement Awards Banquet. This year, 356 awards were presented to our Penn State student-athletes.

In 2011-2012, our varsity programs combined to post a 3.05 GPA. What a great accomplishment!

During this evening, I was pleased to honor this year's Team GPA Awards, which were presented to the men's tennis team and the women's cross country team.

This past winter, in addition to the success in the classroom, our student-athletes have made us Penn State proud through their success in their respective sport.

Congratulations to our three-time NCAA champion wrestling team led by coach Cael Sanderson. On the heels of that great achievement and other team successes, Penn State finished No. 3 in the final win-



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ter standings for the Learfield Sports Directors' Cup. We earned our eighth consecutive Top 5 finish in the final winter standings, finishing in the Top 5 for the 15th time in the 20 years the Directors' Cup has been tabulated.

At the same time, our women's programs are currently leading the country in the Women's Capital One Cup standings.

Our student-athletes are truly representing Penn State both in the classroom and in their sport at the highest level.

As the semester comes to an end, I can't help but look back at the previous year and the successes of our student-athletes. Over this past year, I have had the chance to interact with our student-athletes on a daily basis and am truly inspired by passion to exceed both in the classroom and in their sport in order

to continue the traditions that their alums have established before them.

I am proud to say: WE ARE ... PENN STATE!

Clint Eury



RECENT REUNIONS

On campus events brought together former team members from (clockwise from top) men's volleyball, women's basketball, women's ice hockey and men's ice hockey.

Find the Penn State Varsity 'S' Club on Facebook and LinkedIn, and visit www.GoPSUSports.com/varsity online.