

Lacrosse’s win streak snapped by Pace

By Julian Markese
Sports Editor

The lacrosse team’s six-game win streak came to an end in Pleasantville, New York on Saturday, April 4 against Pace University. With the loss, the team is 9-2 overall and 3-1 in the conference.

A blitzing seven-goal opening quarter from Pace left the Owls in an insurmountable hole. The final score was 16-8.

“In the first quarter, they completely destroyed us,” Head Coach Kevin Siedlecki said. “The rest of the game was a very good game.”

It only took the Setters 30 seconds to score. By the time the first quarter was halfway over, Pace had already netted six goals.

The Setters, who won the 2023 National Championship, are a notoriously tough team. The Owls have never beaten Pace in lacrosse.

Siedlecki said the team spent much of their time in practice last week trying to replicate Pace’s swarming defense.

“Trying to replicate what they do defensively is really hard. They’re a gritty team. They go after you. They make plays, knock balls down and pick up ground balls,” Siedlecki said.

Despite the score, the performance was encouraging. Siedlecki said he sees improvement over last year’s game against Pace.

Goalkeeper Caelan Connors, a senior, was a big part of slowing the Setters down. She faced a season-high 41 shots, saving 16, including several from point blank range.

On the back of Connors’ effort, the team stayed competitive for the

next three quarters. The game was its closest in the second quarter when midfielder Anna Meserve, a junior, cut the lead to three.

Meserve finished with two goals on three shots taken. She battled on the draw all day while Pace’s quick midfielders made every loose ball a scrap.

“They liked ground balls more than we did. They had a lot more shots. They had the ball longer,” Siedlecki said.

But the Owls never quit. Midfielders Allie Welder, a junior, and Brea Montague, a sophomore, led the team in ground balls with three apiece.

Midfielder Bailey McDermott, a senior, hustled particularly hard on the day, hawking down Pace midfielders on a few potential fast breaks.

The Owls ceded much of the possession to Pace but still showed some lethality when the ball reached their attackers.

Attacker Macy Vail, a senior, scored again. She has scored in 30 consecutive games. The streak reaches all the way back to when Vail was playing for Akron University as a sophomore. She has scored in every game she has played for the Owls.

Midfielder Rebecca Sibley, a sophomore, scored a solo goal. Siedlecki said he hopes it can be a catalyst for her going forward.

“Becky Sibley is playing with so much confidence,” Siedlecki said. “When she scored, she had this look on her face like ‘Oh my god, I did it!’ If she can bring that confidence to the rest of her career, she can be a huge difference maker for us.”

The team is still on track for their best sea-



Midfielder Rebecca Sibley, a sophomore, carries the ball and runs past a Pace defender.

PHOTO | JULIAN MARKESE

son. Despite the score, and excluding the first quarter, the Owls did not look outclassed by the team who won a National Championship only two years ago.

“We need to recognize that we played really well and go in with some momentum for the rest of the season,” Siedlecki said.

With five games remaining, the team is on

track to meet the expectations set for the team by Siedlecki in the beginning of the season.

“We’re talking about playing at a championship level,” Siedlecki said. “Our goal at the beginning of the season was to be a top four seed in the NE10, host a playoff game and make the NCAAs. We have to be 3-2 in the next five to do that.”

Contributions in this uncharted territory must come from all over the field, Siedlecki said. The Owls’ next game is against American International College at home on Wednesday, April 8.

“We are a team. We are not a collection of individuals. So, if you ask me who I’m counting on, I don’t know,” Siedlecki said.

Column:
Realites of DII recruiting



By Draven Dabrowski
Sports Writer

For years, Division II and Division III athletic programs have focused on development.

At Division II schools like ours, recruiting has not been about landing five-star prospects or making national headlines. It has been about finding underrated players and building them up, turning them into something more over time.

But in today’s college athletics landscape, the old model is being tested like never before.

With the rise of Name, Image and Likeness opportunities and the transfer portal, smaller programs are increasingly finding themselves on the wrong end of a system they help sustain.

That reality hits close to home at the university.

Women’s basketball standout forward Tish Blackwood, a freshman, recently entered her name into the transfer portal after a strong rookie season.

“I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of Southern Connecticut State University women’s basketball,” Blackwood said. “I will always value the memories, lessons and relationships I’ve gained during my time here.”

Her departure reflects a growing trend.

After developing into impact players, athletes at the Division II level are now more visible than ever and more accessible.

The transfer portal has made it easy for higher-level programs to identify and pursue proven talent rather than taking risks on unproven recruits.

Men’s basketball guard Makai Coleman, a sophomore, has also entered his name into the portal following a standout season.

“Being a part of this program has been instrumental in my growth as a player and person,” Coleman said. “I will always cherish the memories, relationships and opportunities I’ve been fortunate enough to experience.”

The university’s athletic department is doing exactly what they are built to do: develop players. But instead of seeing long-term results from that development, they are often left restarting the process.

Coaches invest time into players, build them into contributors, and just as they reach their peak, they move on.

Meanwhile, Division I programs benefit from athletes who are already experienced, tested and ready to perform.

The opportunity to move up, gain exposure and potentially earn money through NIL is something many athletes have worked toward for years.

Without the same financial backing, exposure or NIL opportunities, Division II and III programs are left trying to keep pace in a system that continues to evolve around them.

And yet, they continue to compete. They continue to develop. Because that is what Division II athletics is all about.

Softball splits double header, record sits at 12-12



PHOTO | WADE BARILLARO

Catcher Sophia Angiolini, a sophomore, at bat.

By Draven Dabrowski
Sports Writer

The Owls were unable to come away with the victory, falling 4-2 to American International College on March 31 in the second game of an NE10 doubleheader after a strong outing in the first game.

Despite the loss, Head Coach Kate Bowen said how proud she was of the way her team continued to battle throughout the game, especially in the later innings.

“Those are the moments you talk about,” Bowen said. “I’m really proud of the fight we had.”

After riding the momentum of a 7-0 shutout win in the first game, the university looked

to carry that energy into the second matchup but struggled early before mounting a late push that came up just short.

American International was able to get on the board first, scoring a run in the opening inning to take an early 1-0 lead.

The Owls responded in the bottom of the third. Infielder Izzy Ingersoll, a sophomore, started the inning with a single up the middle before Infielder Gianna Iaquinto, a sophomore, reached on a bunt single.

Outfielder Brianna Pearson, a graduate, followed with a line drive to left field, bringing Ingersoll home to tie the game at 1-1.

The Yellow Jackets regained control in the fifth inning, capitalizing on

their opportunities to score two runs and take a 3-1 lead which left the university having to play from behind.

The Owls answered in the bottom half of the inning. Catcher Karley Austin, a junior, worked a walk before catcher Sophia Angiolini, a sophomore, delivered a double between center and right field, bringing Austin home and cutting the deficit to 3-2.

Angiolini’s hit provided a much-needed spark for the Owls, shifting momentum and setting the stage for a nail biting final inning.

“When you get up to bat, you think ‘Alright, let’s do my job. Let’s not do too much.’ I just need to get this runner in scoring position, and it went

my way,” Angiolini said.

American International added one last run in the top of the seventh inning, extending its lead to 4-2 and putting the university in a must-score situation.

Pearson drew a lead-off walk before Austin hit a single to center field, putting the tying runs on base with no outs.

With a groundout moving both runners into scoring position, outfielder Cheyenne LaTouche, a sophomore, was walked, and with her on first base, all bases were loaded with just two outs.

The Owls now had the chance to take the lead.

With the game on the line, pitcher Olivia Young, a junior, stepped up to bat and made solid con-

tact on a 2-1 pitch, but the ball was tracked down for the final out, ending the comeback attempt and sealing the 4-2 victory for the Yellow Jackets.

Pitcher Giselle DeLutri, a sophomore, got the start in the circle and had a strong performance, pitching for six innings while allowing four runs on five hits and striking out eight.

DeLutri battled through some tough calls throughout her time in the circle.

Ingersoll and Young each recorded two hits to lead the Owls offensively, while Pearson and Angiolini drove in the team’s two runs.

“Having a consistent pitch count and strike zone is what works best for me,” DeLutri said.