



Varsity 'S' Newsletter

Varsity 'S' Day announced for 2014

Popular event returns Sept. 27 with on-field tunnel, much more

Varsity 'S' Day, which has quickly become the biggest event of the year for the Varsity 'S' Club, its members and their families, returns Sept. 27 — coinciding with Homecoming and the Northwestern football game.

The event includes a tailgate and the pre-game tunnel formed by Varsity 'S' Club members and through which the football team runs onto the field at Beaver Stadium.

In just the past few years, the event has grown from several hundred to more than 1,300 attendees last year. The event allows former teammates, Penn State varsity athletes from across generations and their families to meet with current Penn State coaches and administrators.

Each year, the Varsity 'S' Club organizes the event to honor “those who came before us” and to give back to the alumni who have remained steadfast in their efforts of preserving the traditions of being a Penn State student-athlete.

“I love coming back to Penn State to see how everything has changed, I wouldn't miss it,” James Restauri, a three-time boxing champion for the Nittany

Lions in 1976-1979, said last year. “This place is just wonderful.”

Men's hockey coach Guy Gadowsky, who spoke at Varsity 'S' Day last year the day after his team's season-opening victory against Army, believes alumni are the most important part of Penn State's tradition-rich intercollegiate athletics program. “It means more than you know to the student-athletes when they see the alumni come back and support them,” Gadowsky said. “That is what makes Penn State so special.”

Varsity 'S' Day activities will be conducted on the Pepsi Picnic Pavilion Deck of Medlar Field at Lubrano Park, adjacent to Beaver Stadium. The tailgate runs from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

All game tickets and field passes will be distributed only at the tailgate. Participants must have a game ticket and valid ID to obtain a pre-game field pass.

No guests or children are allowed on the field.

Invitations will be sent by email and mail in the next few weeks.



Varsity 'S' Club members and their families enjoy the tailgate buffet and a view of Mount Nittany last year during Varsity 'S' Day.

Big celebration for 50th Anniversary of Women in Sport

Penn State is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Women in Sport during the 2014-15 academic year, highlighted by a three-day weekend celebration.

“We’re honored to announce plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary,” said Kirk Diehl, director of the Varsity ‘S’ Club. “We are proud to be a part of honoring our rich tradition of supporting women’s athletics. We’re even more proud that Penn State is taking the lead in making a celebration like this happen.”

Registration is open for the weekend packed with activities and competitions.

Full weekend packages, which do not include tickets to the football game, cost \$120 per adult (after Aug. 1) and \$50 per child. Attendees can also register a la carte for the weekend’s festivities.

The 50th Anniversary of Women in Sport celebration weekend features home contests for the field hockey, women’s

volleyball and women’s soccer teams. Additionally, there will be a 50th Welcome Reception on Sept. 19. There will also be a 50th Tailgate Celebration at Medlar Field at Lubrano Park prior to the football game against UMass on Sept. 20.

Following the football game, there will be a 50th Ice Cream Social and an All-Sports Museum Tour on Saturday evening.

The 50th Anniversary of Women in Sport weekend will conclude with the 50th Celebration Brunch on Sept. 21.

Donation and sponsorship opportunities are available through the Nittany Lion Club (814-865-9462).

For more information on the 50th Anniversary of Women in Sport, please visit www.GoPSUsports.com/womens50th online.

Former student-athletes who have not received information about the 50th Anniversary of Women in Sport may email varsity@s@athletics.psu.edu or call 814-867-1597 with questions.

ALUMNI Q&A: BARB DORAN

Barb Doran ('75) recently represented the United States as a member of a U.S. national team at the International Hockey Federation Masters World Cup in the Netherlands.

Have you done something similar before?

No. The U.S. has had no masters competitions in field hockey. This was the first international competition that U.S. women’s masters teams entered. We were the first, but we will not be the last.

How do you stay in shape to participate in something like this?

We were sent a comprehensive and aggressive conditioning program that included seven modules to be done six days a week. We received it in early April, allowing just two months to get ready for the seven games in eight days we played in early June. We were plagued with injuries, mostly pulled hamstrings and quads. There was no recovery time, but most of us have jobs so scheduling must be tight.

How do you find time in your schedule for such a trip?

With ubiquitous communications and

connectivity options these days, it is far easier to stay in touch with work responsibilities. Far more challenging was committing to the two-plus hours a day minimum to train before the trip. When you’re young, you can play like you’re fit, even when you are not. Now, forget it. Training required.



What was the level of competition like?

It was very challenging, as every team we played has had masters teams for some time, and have come from well developed, year-round programs of selection, training and competition. We never met each other until our first practices.

Was it about competing or winning?

It is about both, and depends on the team itself. In this case, we were a team pulled together pretty quickly with little time to forge an identity, and expectations for performance – at least mine – were low. Planting our flag as the first U.S. women’s teams to play in international masters competition was

much more important.

Highlights of the trip?

The play itself was terrifically challenging. We were proud to be wearing the U.S. jersey, and most had trained seriously beforehand to make sure they represented themselves and the U.S. well. Off-the-field was wonderfully fun. The club that hosted us made sure we were well entertained during the day with food, music, drink, and, on more than one evening, DJ’s and dancing. We all managed to squeeze in a bit of sightseeing, too. There was also a mad trading frenzy that peaked on the final day with teams swapping shirts, jackets, anything with a country logo on it to get something from another country. As the U.S. goods were in high demand given our maiden outing, many of my teammates made out handsomely, and were proudly showing off their two-for-one trades, and all their loot.

Plan to remain available/ready for similar future trips?

No question! Training to get competition-fit was tough but worthwhile, and I want a reason to keep that up.

Baseball team creates bond for alums

Once a Penn Stater, always a Penn Stater.

It's a bond that former student-athletes hold in their hearts and minds — an intangible connection built on pride and success that bridges generations.

During his first year in charge of the Penn State baseball program, coach Rob Cooper has worked hard at building the team on the field, and at increasing the connection between generations of blue-and-white baseball alumni.

He's done that by focusing on others, putting current student-athletes in a position to succeed or grow and by reaching out to alumni to understand where the baseball program fits.

"I'm kind of sensitive to calling the program mine," Cooper said. "This is the players' program. This is the alum's program. This is Penn State's program."



As part of an effort to better connect alumni and the program, Cooper created a coin, similar to what some military units bestow after missions and similar to what Cooper received while working with USA Baseball. One side of the coin has "We Are ... Penn State" and "Founded 1855" with an "S" inset in a keystone that also includes "Alumni" and "Baseball." The other side has the Penn State athletics logo and "5 Time College World Series Participant" and "Penn State Baseball Alumni."

He distributes the coin to alumni of the program, making it an exclusive and special way to honor alumni and bond the generations together.

SAVE THE DATE!

Varsity 'S' Day and the 50th Anniversary of Women in Sport highlight the fall schedule for alumni activities, but they're not the only events on the schedule for former student-athletes.

Specifically, activities Sept. 5-6 include the men's soccer reunion, which will feature special recognition for the 1954 team.

The 1994 national championship football team will be honored before the Sept. 6 game against Akron.

The fall schedule of team events and reunions provides many options for former student-athletes to return to campus.

Complete Schedule

Aug. 23	Cheerleading
Sept. 6	1994 Football
Sept. 5-6	Men's Soccer
Sept. 12-23	Men's Lacrosse
Sept. 19-21	Women in Sport 50th
Sept. 27	Varsity 'S' Day
Oct. 11-12	Women's Ice Hockey

Ice hockey programs earn top honors in Alumni Challenge

The 2014 Penn State Alumni Challenge has ended with an overwhelming number of 2,371 former student-athletes supporting our programs this year.

Through donor support all of the programs reaped benefits and two programs emerged as winners of the Alumni Challenge.

Former student-athletes competed through their giving to support their former teams to possibly win one of the two \$6,000 grand prizes.

The first grand prize was awarded to the team with the highest percentage of support for 2014.

The second grand prize was for the highest percentage increase in support

Click here to full Challenge results.

from 2013. We are pleased to announce this year's winners were men's ice hockey, with the highest percentage of support, and women's ice hockey, with the highest percentage increase from 2013. Here's a look at the top-five finishing programs in each category.

Highest Percentage of Support

1. Men's Ice Hockey - 38.12%
2. Women's Ice Hockey - 29.47%
3. Football - 28.81%
4. Men's Lacrosse - 25.14%
5. Men's Fencing - 19.30%

Highest Percentage Increase

1. Women's Ice Hockey - 8.42%
2. Women's Fencing - 8.05%
3. Men's Fencing - 6.43%
4. Men's Golf - 2.50%
5. Men's Ice Hockey - 2.49%

With donor support, our student-athletes are be able to compete and learn at the highest level. Thank you for participating! Your support enables future Nittany Lions to succeed in the classroom, during competition and as future leaders.

Alumni connection, nudge lead Burdis to 'Ninja Warrior'

Sometimes one Penn Stater helps another without even knowing, and sometimes that leads to an exciting opportunity.

It certainly did for Jen Burdis.

A former varsity women's volleyball player who teaches fourth grade in Carlsbad, Calif., Burdis was home in Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania, last November completing a workout in a local gym, when someone asked her about the focus of her training regime.

"It got me thinking I should work out with a goal in mind," Burdis said. "I didn't know it at the time but that guy was Matt Stankiewitch. With very similar backgrounds — growing up in the same town, attending the same high school, being student-athletes at Penn State — we became friends. The next day he took me through a workout, and the day after that I took him through a workout."

Stankiewitch was the center for the Penn State football team from 2008 to 2012. He's now in the NFL with the Jacksonville Jaguars. Burdis played at Penn State from 1994 to 1998. The two of them even started a book club when Stankiewitch gave Burdis a copy of "The Alchemist."

"I read the book and thought a little bit about my personal journey," Burdis said. "He mentioned the show 'American Ninja Warrior' but I didn't think much about it."

Still, after Stankiewitch's nudge, watching the show with her boyfriend in California and some encouragement from her former women's volleyball teammates during a trip to campus, Burdis decided to submit an audition tape for the obstacle course competition show that airs Monday nights on NBC.

"A few things happened. I watched a few episodes with my boyfriend and I liked the show," Burdis said. "Then I came back for the women's volleyball reunion. It was there that Teri Wroblewski Schall said, 'Bird, you play volleyball like a ninja. I think



Jen Burdis appreciates the connections she made and values she learned at Penn State. (Photo provided)

Former Academic All-Big Ten honoree, elementary teacher draws motivation from fellow Penn Staters.

you should be a ninja warrior. My boys love that show.' I went back to California and then applied."

Burdis had never before auditioned for a television show (although she did once write a letter to Dr. Dre that Ed Lover of "Yo MTV Raps" read on the air), but she put together an audition tape about herself that noted her athletic experiences and even her teaching, with help of a few of her students.

She remains active with activities like beach volleyball, boxing, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, biking, rock climbing and yoga. From that background she began a slightly more rigorous training regime, while trying

not to over-train. "I pulled a hip flexor playing volleyball in a charity event for Huntington's Disease a couple of weeks before filming the show," she said. "That was the first challenge."

Burdis competed in the Venice Beach qualifier for the show that airs from May 26 to Sept. 15. This season marks its sixth on the air.

Competitors include men and women from all walks of life, including current and former members of the military, doctors, firemen, school teachers and even a few Olympic gold medalists. They're all competing for a \$500,000 grand prize.

When Burdis was selected for

“American Ninja Warrior,” her students were some of the first to know. She told them after she received the call from Hollywood confirming her spot on the show.

Her students have been part of a support system that also includes many Penn Staters.

“Former men’s basketball player Brian Allen told me ‘those obstacles are no joke,’ and he’s right,” Burdis said. “The obstacles were some of the most physically demanding things I’ve done. I was sore from running the course and I train daily. You need a strategy for attacking the course and a smorgasbord of skills — speed, power, agility, balance, flexibility and mental toughness.”

She credits her Penn State experience for providing those skills, which she believes translate well to athletic competitions as well as her fourth-grade classroom. She earned Academic All-Big Ten honors every semester while completing her bachelor’s degree in elementary education. On the court, she was a defensive specialist whose job it was to get digs and provide a spark of energy to the team.

“I am so grateful to coach Russ Rose for instilling the core values of what it takes to be successful in whatever you choose to do. There is no easy way to achieve success. It takes continued effort, never letting-up, and always being open to learning new things,” Burdis said. “I can easily relate to the fourth graders. I’m a life-long learner, who strives to be a role model, and inspire greatness on a bigger level.”

And, completing a wide Penn State circle of influence, Burdis, who returns to campus every year for things such as the Central Pa. Festival of the Arts or team reunions, was the fifth-grade teacher for Lacey Fuller, a senior defensive specialist for the women’s volleyball team.

With the show having ignited her competitive fire, Burdis has already discovered a way to get her adrenaline and competitive rush in motion. She found a training center in Southern California that provides a myriad athletic challenges.

“It’s pretty much an adult playground,” Burdis said. “And it’s great!”

ALUMNI NOTES



Mark Rubin ('08, '10), a former Penn State football player, won the RBC Decathlon in June, retaining his title as the Best Athlete on Wall Street for the third year in a row.

An assistant vice president of future sales trading at Barclay’s, Rubin (above, center) competed against some 150 others in the various events. The decathlon raises money for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Rubin broke his personal goal of \$5,000 and raised \$13,000 for the event.

Casmir Loxsom ('13), a former track standout, finished second in the 800-meter run at the U.S. Track and Field Championships in a time of 1:45.97

Drew Adams ('09) and **Greg Gurenlian ('06)** were named to the U.S. men’s lacrosse team and were part of the squad that earned a silver medal at the world championships earlier this month. It was the first time two Penn Staters were named to the 23-man U.S. roster. Penn State coach Jeff Tambroni served as an assistant coach for the U.S. team.

Jonathan Cochrane ('11), a former Penn State swimmer, married Jessica Gibson on June 21. They live in Washington, D.C. Their wedding (below) included numerous former Penn State swimmers. (Photo by Dyanna Joy Photography)



Three Varsity 'S' members honored by field hockey hall

A trio of former Penn State field hockey student-athletes was among those inducted into the U.S. Field Hockey Hall of Fame as members of the 1984 Olympic Team on June 28.

Current Penn State coach Charlene Morett and fellow teammates Chris Larson and Brenda Stauffer were all members of the 1984 Olympic Team that earned the bronze medal in the Olympic Games held in Los Angeles.

This was the second Hall of Fame selection for both Morett and Larson, who have also been inducted as individuals. Morett and Larson were members of the 1989 Hall of Fame class.

The bronze medal won by the 1984 field hockey team is the only women's medal in the history of United States in field hockey at the Olympics. After defeating Australia in a penalty shoot-out, the U.S. team captured the bronze medal. USA Field Hockey is honoring its first team in the Hall of Fame on the 30th anniversary of its triumphant victory.



Two-time Hall of Fame inductee Char Morett. (Photo by Mark Selders)

A 1979 graduate of Penn State, Morett was an outstanding field hockey player and the program's only three-time first team All-American. At the national level, the Aldan, Pennsylvania, native was a two-time Olympian (1980, 1984), playing in more than 100 international matches for the U.S. The culmination

of her individual playing career came in 1982, when Morett was named the USFHA's Co-Athlete of the Year. Morett returned to Happy Valley in 1987 to take over as the coach of the Penn State field hockey program. She has completed 28 seasons at the helm, compiling a record of 437-167-8 at Penn State.

Larson was a first team NFHCA All-American as a senior in 1979 and was on the US National Field Hockey team from 1978-84. In addition to her selection to the 1984 U.S. national team, Larson was a member of the 1980 Olympic Team that boycotted the Olympic Games in Moscow.

Stauffer was the National Player of the Year as a senior in 1982 and was a two-time NFHCA All-American (1981, 1982). She

ranks second on Penn State's all-time assists lists with 52 and is ninth in points with 138. Her 31 assists in 1981 are still the Penn State single-season record. Additionally, she was on the AIAW All-Tournament team in 1981 and the NCAA All-Tournament team in 1982.

Wrestling standout Kerry McCoy reaches hall as Distinguished Member

Two-time NCAA champion Kerry McCoy was among four people honored as Distinguished Members when the National Wrestling Hall of Fame & Museum conducted its induction ceremonies in June in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Distinguished Members selected for the Class of 2014 were Eric Guerrero, Dean Lahr, Mickey Martin and McCoy.

A Distinguished Member is defined as a wrestler who has achieved extraordinary success in national and/or international competition, a coach who has demonstrated great leadership in the profession and has compiled an outstanding record, a contributor whose long-term activities have substantially enhanced the development and advancement of the sport, or a combination of the above qualifications.

McCoy won two NCAA heavyweight titles for Penn State in 1994 and 1997. A three-time All-American, he finished his collegiate career with a record of 150-18.

He also won five straight U.S. Open Freestyle Championships from 2000 to 2004, earned a silver medal in the 2003 World Championships, and twice represented the United States in the Olympic Games — finishing fifth in 2000 and seventh in 2004. He won a gold medal at the 2003 Pan-Am Games and was honored as the tournament's outstanding wrestler. McCoy served as an assistant coach for the Nittany Lions and an assistant coach at Lehigh. He was the head coach at Stanford from 2005 to 2008. Since 2008, he has been the coach at Maryland.



Kerry McCoy

Here's the Diehl: Varsity 'S' Club leader has strong ties

Greetings from Dear Old State!

We are busy preparing for a new academic year at Penn State, which brings the opportunity to once again join our many loyal fans and alumni across the globe in cheering on our student-athletes. I would like to take a quick moment to introduce myself to you as your Varsity 'S' Director. My name is Kirk Diehl, and I recently accepted this position within the Nittany Lion Club.

I came to campus in July 1992 and was an undergraduate student manager with the football program from 1992 to 1996. I earned my undergraduate degree in broadcast journalism in 1996 and completed my master's degree in higher education in 2005. Prior to joining the Nittany Lion Club I served in several different roles for the football program in Intercollegiate Athletics, including assistant equipment manager from 1997 to 1999, coordinator of practice facilities from 1999 to 2011, and director of football operations from 2012 to 2014. Needless to say



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I have been very fortunate and honored to serve Penn State for so many years, and I look forward to being your connection to our great University.

As a member of the Varsity 'S' Club, you had a great part in establishing the pride, honor and tradition that is displayed every day through our current student-athletes. Our current and former student-athletes display many traits and characteristics that set them apart on the athletic field, the classroom, and the workplace — and I am proud to have a part in further connecting former student-athletes to their sport.

If you are back to Happy Valley, please stop by the office and visit with me or Alex Wetzell, or any other members of our great Nittany Lion Club staff in 157 Bryce Jordan Center. I would enjoy the opportunity to meet you and help you stay connected to Penn State, Intercollegiate Athletics

and your program. Feel free to contact me anytime.

We Are...and FOREVER will be!

Varsity 'S' Goes Social

Have you heard? We are on four social media platforms! That's right, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

We understand that your lives are busy and constantly on the move, so we wanted to make sure that Varsity 'S' news can travel with you wherever you go. Follow us, like us and join us on our social media platforms to stay informed on the latest with our former and current student athletes.

Our goal for our social media platforms is to increase alumni engagement to connect and build relationships outside the walls of the university. We are always interested in hearing from our alumni, so if you have a story or a photo that you feel should be posted on our social media, feel free to share it with us. Email your photos and stories to varsitys@athletics.psu.edu to be featured on one of our platforms. We hope that you follow us, spread the word and stay connected!

Nominations open for speaker series

The Penn State All Sports Museum and the Varsity 'S' Club are pleased to announce their partnership to bring you a speaker series highlighting former student-athletes.



We are seeking interested participants and nominations for the 2014-2015 academic year. If you or fellow alumni has a story to tell, both on or off the field, we want to hear from you!

For more information, please email Aimee Brown-Shadduck at asb193@psu.edu.

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Varsity 'S' Club

**Have you been honored, earned an award, gotten married, had a child?
Let us know and we'll share the news with other Varsity 'S' Club members!**