

January 25, 2008

Messer tabbed as D-II chair

By Andrew Donofrio
Rocket Contributor

The Rock's head baseball coach, Jeff Messer, says he feels reborn this year.

On Jan. 7, he was selected by his peers at the American Baseball Coaches Association to serve a three-year term as chairman of its 10-man Division II board of directors.

Messer, who was appointed during an ABCA convention in Philadelphia, now acts as the primary liaison and representative for the association's Division II NCAA Baseball Committee.

He will also oversee all legislative proposals from coaches throughout the division.

Dave Keilitz, executive director of the association, said he was pleased to have Messer as a member of the board.

"He's obviously extremely well-respected," Keilitz said. "This is a very prestigious position for Coach Messer and for Slippery Rock. It's certainly an enormous honor. And, we know that



Jeff Messer

he'll do a great job."

"It was somewhat of a surprise," Messer said. "I really didn't know until they actually announced it at the convention."

Messer added that the two other coaches nominated—Gary Vaught from the University of Indianapolis and Mike Sansing of Kennesaw State University in Georgia—were also long-time and heavily involved members of the association.

In addition, Messer recently became the first full-time baseball coach at SRU.

"This was one of a small number of schools in the area that didn't have at least one full-time baseball coach," Messer said. "We've been looking at it for years. And we were finally able to make it happen."

"I'm ecstatic," he said. "It's like starting a new job."

Messer said he has retired as assistant professor in SRU's physical education and sport management department to focus completely on baseball.

"I taught for more than 20 years at Slippery Rock," he said. "Classroom teaching was fabulous. But I think I do more teaching in baseball than I ever did in the classroom."

Tallying more than 700 wins during his 23 years at SRU, Messer is the winningest active coach in Pennsylvania.

He also said he believes his new position affords him a chance to build upon SRU's tradition of winning baseball.



The Rock's Darnell Johnson dribbles past an Edinboro defender in a game earlier this year. Johnson, a junior guard, is currently averaging 10.3 points and 4.9 steals per game this year.

Men's basketball snaps nine-game losing streak in win over Lock Haven

By Phil Swartzlander
Rocket Contributor

The Slippery Rock men's basketball team snapped its nine-game losing streak against Lock Haven, but then lost its concentration in a loss to rival IUP.

In the 61-53 loss, the Rock, whose record dropped to 3-14, held the lead for the majority of the second half until the five-minute mark, when six consecutive turnovers helped the Crimson Hawks (10-7, 2-0) score 11 straight

points.

"The turnovers were key coming down to the wire. They really killed us," junior Jamar Scales said.

The Rock finally stopped the bleeding when Itay Levi drilled a 3-pointer with eight seconds left when the game was out of reach.

Rock Head Coach Jamal Palmer was not pleased with the effort of his team in the closing moments of the game.

"We became rattled in the last four and a half minutes and couldn't handle the pressure," Palmer said. "We

hurt ourselves with eight bad possessions."

The Rock had a chance to steal the win from IUP, dominating the Hawks in every statistical category other than turnovers and fouls.

"We actually outrebounded someone, but the turnovers killed us," Palmer said.

Junior Erroll Robinson led the team in rebounds with six, while Scales paced the offense with 14 points. Senior Ken Ottrix scored 12

SEE GREEN PAGE C-3

Rock falls short in upset bid against fifth-ranked IUP

By Josh Rizzo
Rocket Contributor

As the Slippery Rock women's basketball (7-11, 1-2) team has found out this season, winning on the road is no easy task.

Heading into Wednesday night's contest with Indiana University of Pennsylvania (17-1, 2-0), the Green & White was 1-5 away from home. On top of that, entering the game, the Crimson Hawks were ranked No. 5 nationally and had yet to lose at home. And to make things worse, the Rock had to go at the swarming IUP trap defense with no "natural" point guard in the lineup.

Despite all that, the Rock was able to stay with the heavily favored Crimson Hawks until the very end, and in doing so may have stumbled onto something or someone special.

Rock junior guard

Amanda Nero, who came into the game averaging just more than 11 points per game, nearly tripled that Wednesday night. Nero poured in a career-high 30 points while also pulling down seven rebounds and dishing out five assists.

"Amanda played an amazing game," said senior KellyAnn Staudinger. "It was the best game I have seen her play and we hope it is a sign of things to come for her."

In order to try to prepare her team for the pressure, Coach Laurel Heilman tried a few different strategies in practice.

"This week I had eight people on the court playing defense at all times," Heilman said. "We had two or three people trapping...our players need to have composure and find the open shooters."

SEE NERO PAGE C-3

Women's PSAC West Standings as of 1/23

	PSAC West	Overall
1. IUP	2-0	17-1
2. California	2-0	15-2
3. Shippensburg	2-0	14-4
4. Edinboro	1-1	11-5
5. Clarion	1-2	11-6
6. Slippery Rock	1-2	7-11
7. Lock Haven	0-3	5-12

Pens will be fine without help from Sid the Kid



BRANDON FOX

From The Cheap Seats

When Penguins all-world center Sidney Crosby crashed into the boards last Friday in Pittsburgh's loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning, the hearts of many skipped a beat. But Tuesday morning, those same hearts didn't just skip a beat—they stopped beating altogether.

That's because the 20-year-old phenomenon was placed on injured reserve and will miss six to eight weeks with a high ankle sprain.

And with the news of Crosby's injury also came the news that the Penguins were giving up on the season and going someplace warm, much to

the delight of their Atlantic Division rivals.

Wait, what?

The Penguins didn't exactly pack it in, but if you've been listening to the media since Tuesday, it would seem as if the Pens should consider it.

That's because the Penguins, who are 10-1-2 in their last 13 games and one point out of first place in the Atlantic, are never going to win another game without the NHL's reigning scoring champion and MVP.

Well, at least that's what everyone is essentially saying.

Yes, the team is only 1-2-3 in the six games he has missed in his young career, but it's not like the other guys out there can't play.

Let's get real here. Yes, they are going to miss Sid the Kid, who is fifth in the league in scoring, but I don't understand how they can be written off so quickly.

SEE CROSBY'S PAGE C-4

Men's PSAC West Standings as of 1/23

	PSAC West	Overall
1. Edinboro	2-0	12-4
2. California	2-0	12-4
3. IUP	2-0	10-7
4. Clarion	1-2	9-8
5. Slippery Rock	1-2	3-14
6. Lock Haven	1-2	1-16
7. Shippensburg	0-3	6-12

Rock Scoring Leaders as of 1/23

Name	PPG
1. Robinson	12.3
2. Scales	10.2
3. Johnson	9.9
4. Ottrix	9.4
5. Somerville	7.1
6. Vines	6.8
7. Burka	5.2