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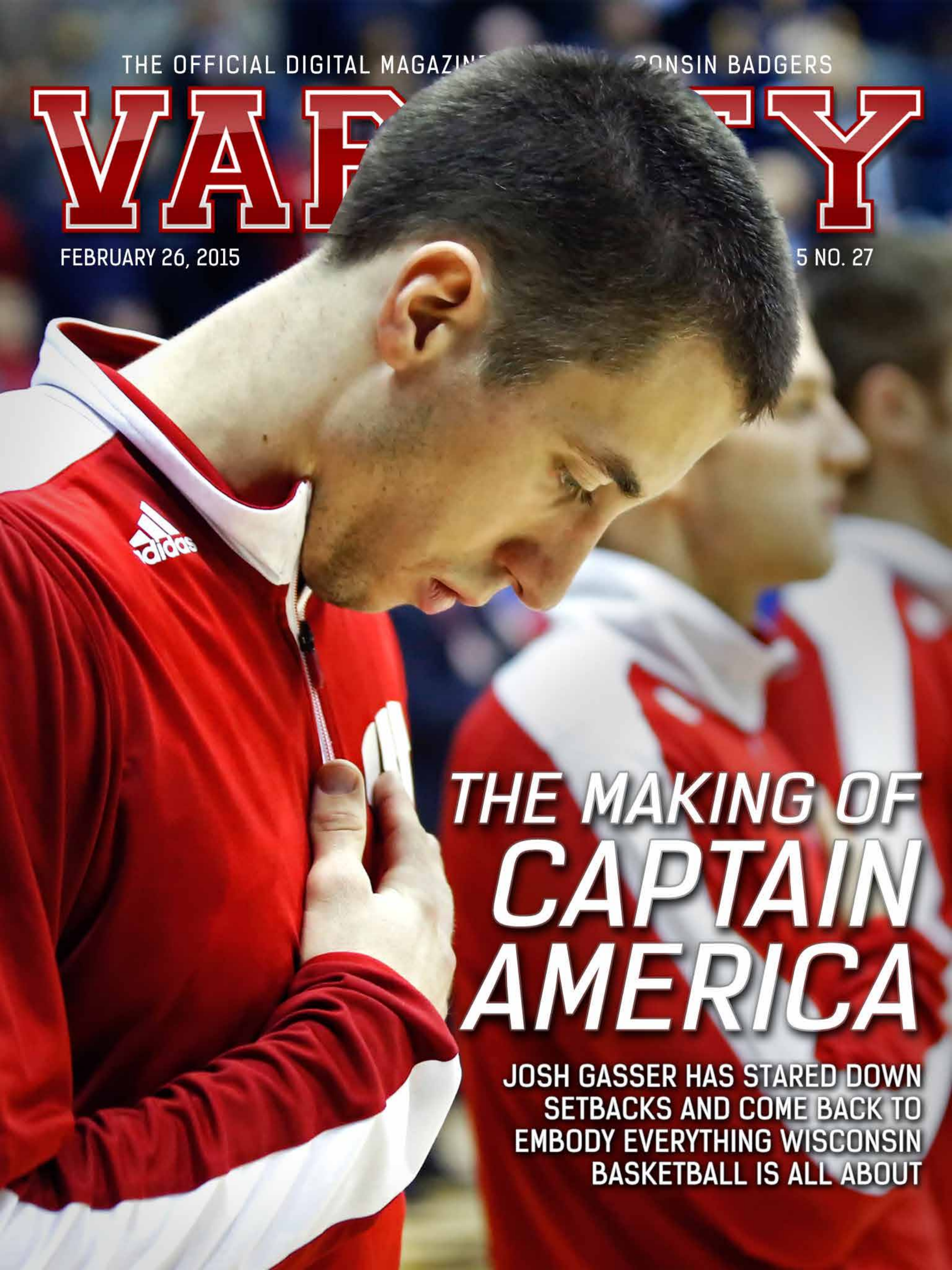
WISCONSIN BADGERS

**VAP**

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# *THE MAKING OF CAPTAIN AMERICA*

JOSH GASSER HAS STARED DOWN  
SETBACKS AND COME BACK TO  
EMBODY EVERYTHING WISCONSIN  
BASKETBALL IS ALL ABOUT

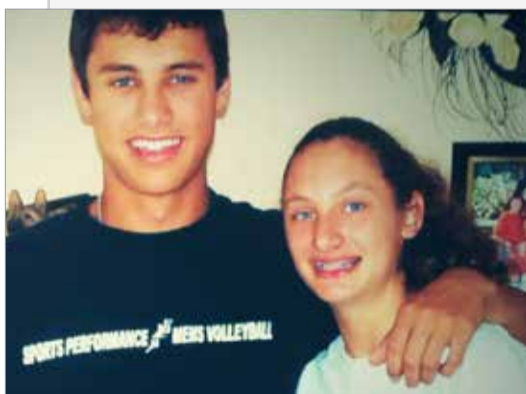


STEVE GOTTER

COVER STORY

# THE LONG ROAD BACK

An injury slowed Josh Gasser, but thanks to his own work ethic and the dedication of his athletic trainer, there was no stopping the player who's become known as 'Captain America.'



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

## LASTING LESSONS

Even though he never saw her play a college game, Jacki Gulcznski's late brother is with the Badgers senior every time she takes the floor.

LUCAS AT LARGE

## MADE FOR MARCH

Strength coach Erik Helland's year-round work with the Badgers has a specific focus — preparing them for the grind of tourney time.



DAVID STLUKA

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# Helland has Badgers ready to rumble

**W**isconsin basketball strength and conditioning coach Erik Helland kept some fast company on a recent flight by “traveling” with Dan Gable, the legendary college and Olympic wrestler and coach; Randy Couture; a former UFC title-holder and Hall of Famer; Marcelo Garcia, a submission specialist and world champion in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu; and Josh Waitzkin, a chess prodigy also skilled in the martial arts.

As he is wont to do, Helland took the time to probe and explore the minds of these aforementioned warriors who were profiled, along with others like extreme ultrarunner David Horton, in a national best-seller authored by Sam Sheridan and entitled *The Fighter’s Mind: Inside the Mental Game*. Helland has taken the book with him on most trips.

“I kind of like the combat sports because I think it’s a pure expression of competition,” said Helland, who’s completing his second season with the Badgers after honing his professional craft for 25 years in the NBA with the Chicago Bulls. “If you go out on the mat or you go into an MMA fight or boxing match, whatever the case may be, it’s just you and the opponent.”

Flying home from Penn State, Helland was rereading the Gable chapter; many of the passages were marked in yellow highlighter. “Gable had a very relentless style,” said Helland, who has two sons wrestling in high school. “He felt that if you got out in front of your opponent, and put pressure on your opponent, you could get into his conditioning to the point where he would really stop competing.”

Helland will take some of more intriguing observations from these world-class competitors and embed them in various messages to the UW players. “If you look at the course of a bas-

ketball season,” he said, “there’s an ebb and flow with the energy level of your team and an ebb and flow in the energy level of your individuals and certainly within the context of the game you see the same things.

“What I wanted to impress upon our guys, and, interestingly, this goes back to running the hill in the offseason, is ‘When you are tired, are you mentally strong enough to overcome that obstacle? Can you maintain your focus and push your opponent to doubt his will to continue to fight?’ Those kinds of things are relevant to the guys at this time of the year.”



DAVID STLUKA



The Badgers are nearing the end of the Big Ten's regular season; only three games are remaining, two on the road. Helland has paid close attention to the cumulative effects of another grueling conference schedule. "Especially," he said, "with our guys who are playing heavier minutes and are starting to accumulate a little bit of mileage. We're very conscious of that."

This is where his extensive NBA background can pay dividends. "Because you're really looking at how the individual is tolerating their situation," he said. "I look at the starters with heavy minutes on a completely individual basis. I don't throw them into any group model. Each tolerates 'stressors' differently. It can be game stress, practice stress, training stress, personal stress."

Nobody has played more minutes than school record-holder Josh Gasser, a believer in Helland's training and motivational techniques. "He has done a great job in every aspect, really," he said. "With recovery, he's focusing on how our bodies are feeling, how our minds are doing. He wants us to be feeling as good as we can for games, whether that means taking a day off or doing a little lighter

work."

There is a reality that strikes every player as the calendar turns to March. "We've been going for months and we've been going hard," Gasser said. "This is the time of the year when your body can start getting achy and sore; no one is really 100 percent at this point because of how hard you're playing and the number of games. So with Erik, we're doing all of the little extra recovery things."

The players will still lift heavy amounts, but Helland will reduce the volume of work. "Recovery is always a cornerstone

that you have to build with," Helland said. "It's the behaviors that you associate with how they're going to tolerate these stressors. As the stress goes up, we try to do some things to accelerate the recovery process. The building blocks are good nutrition and good sleep habits."

Additionally, there will be soft tissue treatment, massage therapy, hot and cold hydrotherapy, extra stretching and NormaTec sessions that reduce swelling and soreness. "We have a nice little battery of modalities that we can use," said Helland, eye-

ing the challenge of playing multiple games over multiple days in the Big Ten and NCAA tournaments. "The recovery and margin of error is very small."

In this timeframe, Helland said, "My feeling is that as the season kind of narrows, our world needs to become a little bit smaller."

And the focus, he stressed, also has to narrow as far as "really locking into what has to be done and maybe casting aside things that are not really necessary."

Overcoming fatigue and imposing your will — a fighter's mind — are intrinsic to March. ■

**HELLAND ON BUILDING TOWARD MARCH:**  
**"ARE YOU MENTALLY STRONG ENOUGH TO OVERCOME THAT OBSTACLE? CAN YOU MAINTAIN YOUR FOCUS AND PUSH YOUR OPPONENT TO DOUBT HIS WILL TO CONTINUE TO FIGHT? THOSE KINDS OF THINGS ARE RELEVANT TO THE GUYS AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR."**





# Let's not rush to curtail the celebrations

Not that anyone with the Badgers wanted to see it, but when the fans poured onto the court following Maryland's 59-53 victory Tuesday night, the players, coaches and everyone else connected to the Wisconsin program made it safely to their locker room.

As court rushes go, it was smooth. The security personnel in College Park, Maryland, knew what they were doing and they executed the plan without incident.

One night earlier in Manhattan, Kansas, such was not the case. After Kansas State pulled off its upset victory against rival Kansas, the court storming got a bit scary. Coaches Bruce Weber and Bill Self were jostled. In fact, for a brief time, Self was pinned against the scorer's table before Weber helped him get out of harm's way.

At the very least, it was embarrassing for K-State. More importantly, it was dangerous. The mishap sparked the latest debate concerning the concept of allowing fans on the floor to celebrate a big win for the home team.

There are those who say let it happen, and there are others who want it stopped forever.

Count me among those who is OK with fans — hopefully mostly students — having the chance to rush the court. To me, it is part of college basketball's appeal.

Be it the Grateful Red in Madison, the Izzone in East Lansing, the Orange Krush in Campaign or anywhere else. A charged-up crowd is an important element of the college atmosphere.

Can it be a bit excessive at times? Sure. Rushing the court after beating the 24th-ranked team in November is a little much, but let's face it, people love being on TV. And TV loves showing fans high-fiving the players. It makes for a cool highlight.

ALL I ASK FOR IS SOME COMMON SENSE. AS LONG AS THE VISITING TEAM CAN GET TO ITS LOCKER ROOM SAFELY, AND AS LONG AS EVERYONE ELSE CAN DO HIS OR HER JOB, GO NUTS. HAVE A BALL.

And as ESPN's Jay Bilas points out, it also makes for a great photo in basketball offices across the country.

All I ask for is some common sense. As long as the visiting team can get to its locker room safely, and as long as everyone else can do his or her job (yes, that includes us broadcast folks), go nuts. Have a ball. Just don't run over somebody in the process.

If security is lacking, and it turns into a mess such as what

occurred at Kansas State, then the school should be penalized. Simple as that. Thoughts of a financial hit tends to get anyone's attention. If it is one moron taking a cheap shot at a player, make sure that person never attends another game. Ever. The last thing a disappointed losing team needs to deal with is being trampled or having someone's jaw cracked by a pseudo-tough guy who throws a punch and runs away.

Would it be easier to just ban court rushes? Probably. If I was in charge of game management, the idea might sound great. But I am not. I am a fan of college athletics, in no small part because of the fans' enthusiasm in the arenas. Some of my more memorable moments have been big Badgers victories and the crowd reactions at the final horn.

I would like to believe at most facilities, including the Kohl Center, the security is good and the fans behave like reasonable human beings.

They knew what they were doing at Maryland. They know what they are doing at the Kohl Center. Hopefully, what happened Monday night at K-State serves as a lesson for other schools with big games on tap.

If not, the days of on-court celebrations might be numbered. Let us hope we never get to that point. ■

# WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART OF CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON?



**RYAN TAYLOR**  
Sophomore • Wrestling

“When it comes to championship season, I think my favorite part is that when it comes down to it, this is what we’ve been training for the whole year. When it comes to duals, Midlands and other tournaments, this is what we’re training for. This is the pinnacle of what we can get to. I had a good experience with Big Tens last year but I didn’t have such a good experience with nationals. But I learned from those mistakes and this year is going to be a great year.”



**BRITTANY AMMERMAN**  
Senior • Women's Hockey

“Being able to be so close to obtaining the end goal of a championship is the best part of the season and postseason. It’s amazing to see how far we’ve come since the beginning of the season. It’s also great to enjoy every win with your teammates and see all of that hard work pay off.”



**NICK SCHAFER**  
Senior • Men's Swimming

“My favorite part of the championship season is when the team is nearing the end of the taper/rest period. The energy and excitement the team has is indescribable, and it reflects the benefits of all the hard work we have done as we are finally able to reap the rewards. The confidence and strength we have as a team moving forward towards the championships is fueling and driving us towards greatness. I can't wait to share in the success our team will have in the following weeks.”



**KELSEY CARD**  
Senior • W. Track & Field

“For me, championship season is the culmination of all of the hard work we have put in. Especially in track, we spend months and months leading up to the season and it is amazing to look back at all of the intense mental and physical training we put in and see it all come together in that championship moment.”



## CHASE KINNEY

A sophomore from Canton, Ohio, **Chase Kinney** has had an immediate impact on the Wisconsin swimming and diving program. As a freshman, she was a first-team All-Big Ten honoree and All-American, serving as a member of UW's Big Ten record-setting relay squads. Throw out any concerns over a "sophomore slump" for Kinney, who swam on three of UW's winning relay teams at the 2015 Big Ten Championships. Fueled by Kinney's efforts, the Badgers finished fourth and matched the program's best team finish since 2012.

### What were your goals coming into this season as a sophomore?

"Coming into this season I was more ready and knew more about the program, so I wanted to be able to build on the work I had put in last season and over the summer. My goals were to be consistently stronger in my training and to be faster and more competitive at meets than I was last year."

### With all your success, how was the conference championship experience this year?

"The Big Ten championships is one of the most exciting meets to be a part of. There is so much energy and the whole team gets really pumped up for each event. Championship season is exciting because we start to rest and feel better in the water. Also knowing that we are about to finally be able to show

- SCROLL FOR MORE -

### ALL ABOUT CHASE

**Year:** Sophomore

**Height:** 5-5

**Event:** Free

**Hometown:** Canton, Ohio

**High School:** Jackson

### QUICK Qs FOR CHASE

**Favorite TV show?**

"How I Met Your Mother."

**Favorite place to hang out in Madison?**

"Union Terrace."

**Favorite app on your phone?**

"Snapchat."

**Music of choice before a swim meet?**

"I have all kinds of music on my iPod."

**When not studying or swimming, I'm:**

"Walking down State Street looking for different places to eat and cool shops to look inside."





# THE LONG ROAD

BY MIKE LUCAS • [UWBADGERS.COM](http://UWBADGERS.COM)

Josh Gasser's journey has led the fifth-year senior to log more court time than anyone in Wisconsin basketball history. Thanks to Gasser's will to work and the dedication of his 'middle-aged best friend,' the injury that could have derailed his dream became nothing more than a detour along the way.

It was more about substance than style, grit than glory; it was more about execution than expression, stick-to-itiveness than showmanship; it was more about who Josh Gasser is than what he is not. The basket that got Gasser to the 1,000-point plateau for his Wisconsin career has been a staple of Bo Ryan-coached offenses long known for inverting guards and posting them up.

“That’s exactly the way I would want to score,” Gasser said.

The milestone basket came in the first half last Saturday against Minnesota at the Kohl Center. Matched in the paint against Andre Hollins, a 6-foot-1 senior guard, Gasser used his left forearm for leverage to clear space, spun quickly to his right and powered through contact and Hollins for a bank shot that would not make anybody’s Top Ten list, except Ryan’s and Gasser’s.

“That’s always kind of been my game — mixing it up, doing whatever you can to get a bucket, getting in the post and making a play,” said

Gasser, who joined Michael Finley as the only players in school history to reach 1,000 points, 500 rebounds and 250 assists. Although he has yet to watch the replay of the latest edition of the Border Battle, a 63-53 win, he said, “A lot of people tweeted at me.”

That’s because a lot of people have come to appreciate the way he plays and the “glue” that he represents on a team that is pursuing a Big Ten championship; undaunted by a 59-53 loss Tuesday night at Maryland; undaunted by an emergency landing in Pittsburgh on the flight home. No one plays the undaunted card better than Gasser, who has already established all-time marks for career starts (131) and minutes played (4,304) to go along with all the winning that he has experienced the last five seasons.

“The wins are definitely the one (category) that I value the most,” said the 23-year-old Gasser, who’s also on pace to finish as the school leader in games played; at 135, he’s four shy of passing Ryan Evans. “The minutes (played) might be the



coolest. That's pretty special considering all the things that I've been through and considering where I started.

"No one thought I could play at Wisconsin," he said, flashing back to his high school career in Port Washington. "And once I got a scholarship here, no one was saying I could be a great player or even a good player. I just feel like I've done everything I can to put myself in a position to succeed and to get those minutes."

Joan Gasser wasn't sure if her son would get to this point after he tore the ACL in his left knee prior to the start of what would have been his junior season in 2012. At the time — a troubling time for everybody in the close-knit Gasser family, including Josh's three older sisters — she wasn't sure of his future beyond knowing that he would be spending a lot of time with UW athletic trainer Henry Perez-Guerra.

"After it happened, we didn't know what our expectations were anymore," Joan admitted. "We didn't know if he was going to be on the bench or if he would ever play again. We just hoped for the best. But somehow or another he has seen it through ... to have played the minutes and the games that he has played ... that's why this is really, really a dream come true."


Pat and Joan Gasser, and all the kids, have recognized the role that Perez-Guerra has played. "He has been a life-saver for everything he has done for Josh from start to finish," she said. "With the injury and how awful it was for Josh, Henry made it tolerable. Nobody could have done more than Henry has. Honest to God, I love him to death. Our whole family does. He's awesome."

Knowing that her son has been in in such good hands and taken care of, something all mothers tend to obsess about when their children leave home, Joan added, "I always tease Henry that he's Josh's middle-aged best friend because they spend so much time together and Henry went above and beyond in helping him, keeping his spirits up and just seeing him through it all."

• • • •



STEVE GOTTER



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- JOSH GASSER

**J**osh Gasser first got to know Perez-Guerra the summer before his freshman year when all of the new players took their physicals and went through testing before working out with the team. Perez-Guerra, an innovative and caring UW grad and professional, has been with men’s basketball since shortly after Wisconsin’s trip to the 2000 Final Four. His credentials were in order; not that Gasser knew what to expect, not initially, but it didn’t take him long to find out.

“When you come into a (college) program you don’t necessarily think of the athletic trainer,” Gasser said. “You think of the players, the coaches, the campus life and all of that. And then you get here and meet someone like Henry who was so genuine and fun to be around. He kind of took us under his wing that first day and made us feel comfortable. It was great knowing that we had someone who cared that much about us and would do anything he could to help us.”

Perez-Guerra’s first impression of Gasser was spot-on, too. “Pretty tough kid,” he remem-

bered. “He had a fairly significant injury, not in the sense that it would hold him out to play, but it was painful and the kid played through it. Obviously, we made sure it was safe for him. But he played through it and not many people could have played through that type of injury.”

Through his first two seasons, during which he started 66 of 70 games, Gasser said, “I spent a lot of time with Henry; all of our players do, in just getting taped and stretched every day, things like that. He takes a lot of time out of his day, a lot of extra time to make sure we’re feeling good. So we always had a good relationship but it definitely springboarded when the ACL happened.”

After the injury, Perez-Guerra made sure to have some tough talks, hard talks with Gasser. “I was honest with him,” he said. “I told him, ‘There are very few people in basketball that come back under a year.’ In my opinion, it takes that long to get the knee strong again and the muscles around the knee strong again and it takes that long just to get the feel for the speed

of the game again.”

Gasser appreciated the candidness. “Henry always told me, ‘Enjoy the little things, the little victories,’” he recounted. “He always talked about mini-victories, like your first step; like your first time being able to jump; like your first time taking a jump shot; like your first time running.”

Perez-Guerra wanted Gasser to think in terms of wins whenever he made progress in his rehab as a means to appeal to his competitiveness. “I had no idea of what was going to happen and what I was going to have to go through,” Gasser said. “But just knowing that Henry had so much confidence in me — telling me that it was all

going to be worth it in the end — was definitely what I needed.”

Predictably, there was a give-and-take throughout the process.

“We had our moments when we agreed to disagree,” Perez-Guerra said. “That just goes back to the type of competitor that Josh is. It was getting close to him returning and I could sense that he felt he was getting closer and I was kind of holding the reins back a little bit, and he sensed that in me. We probably butted heads a couple of times, but it was nothing serious.”

Perez-Guerra stressed “therapy is not fun; it’s hard, it’s work.” As such, the highs and lows, the good days and bad, only solidified their relationship. “Me and Henry always joke around that we have a love-hate relationship,” Gasser said, spelling it out. “Throughout the whole rehab process, it was like, ‘I love him for doing all

the things that he’s doing for me. But I also hate him because it’s so hard, so grueling, so painful.”

A turning point was Wisconsin’s exhibition tour of Canada before the 2013-14 season. Upon his much-anticipated return to active status, Gasser said, “I just remember being a little nervous playing. I remember getting tangled up in a pile on a rebound and I went down. When I stood up, I was kind of limping a little bit just because I didn’t know (how to feel). It was my first time in that situation in over a year since the injury.

“Henry came over and said, ‘How are you feeling?’ I was like, ‘I’m good.’ He said, ‘Your knee is good. You’re fine, just keep going.’ And he would say the

**GASSER ON WORKING WITH PEREZ-GUERRA:**  
“Throughout the whole rehab process, it was like, ‘I love him for doing all the things that he’s doing for me. But I also hate him because it’s so hard, so grueling, so painful.’”



same thing the first time I would do anything. The first time I would run, he would say, 'You're fine.' The first time I jumped, 'You're fine.' It was just about getting over the hump that first time I did something and once I did, I was good, I was fine."

Perez-Guerra had a plan for Gasser and implemented it knowing that there would be some understandably high anxiety levels. "Part of it is the fear of getting hurt again, which is totally normal," Perez-Guerra said. "You don't want to go through what you just went through. At the same time, it's sort of my job to reassure them that we have done everything on our end to help them do what they need to do on their end."

"Obviously in that year we spent together, he and I, every day doing therapy, you get to know somebody pretty well. He worked so hard. Every day he would bring it; even when he wasn't feeling good or it was hurting, he would bring it every day. It was just like he is on the court, and everybody knows how Josh plays, he approached therapy the same way."

Upon further reflection, Perez-Guerra pointed out his responsibility, "I look at it this way: as an athletic trainer, I want to point him in the right direction and try to give him the best advice possible in conjunction with working with our strength and conditioning coach, Erik (Helland), and here in the athletic training room with our team physicians also."

"And I'm just really proud of Josh. He's a special kid. He's probably the greatest competitor I've ever met — and I've had a lot of competitors here and that's no disrespect to any of those guys. But this kid is in a different class. You know the old saying, 'He'd run through a wall?'"

Perez-Guerra paused before saying in a matter-of-fact tone, "He'd run through a wall."

Joan Gasser has always known that about her

son.

"He doesn't feel pain like a normal person, he never has," she said.

With as many times as Gasser hits the floor — and he has been given the nickname of Captain America — he has worn a pained expression from time to time. That was the case Tuesday night at Maryland after he was flattened taking a charge. Except he didn't get a whistle, he didn't get the call and the Terps scored in transition. Moments later, he was sporting a scratch under his right eye, yet another battle scar.

"But after what I went through with my knee, nothing will be as hard as that, nothing will be



as painful as that, mentally and physically,” he said. “Everything that happens now is microscopic compared to what I’ve been through. In the heat of competition, I would say I don’t feel pain at all — when I’m into it, when I’m really competing.”

The players can play with aggressiveness knowing that Perez-Guerra is their security blanket. “Exactly, and that’s what you want,” Gasser confirmed. “Every time you come to the sideline, and you could have just gotten poked in the eye or gotten a charley horse, he’s there wanting to do anything he can to help. He’s also texting us at night and the next morning asking us, ‘How are you doing? How are you feeling?’ Little stuff like that makes you feel good, makes you feel better.”

Outsiders have no idea how much time Perez-Guerra has invested in his job. “No idea,” Gasser said for emphasis. “He’ll be here two to three hours before practice and two to three hours after. The amount of time he spends here (the training room) is more than we spend as


student-athletes and we’re here a lot. That just shows how hardworking and loyal he is to the program.”

The commitment comes with a price. “The tough thing is being away from my family,” said the 53-year-old Perez-Guerra. “And I’m very close to my family; they’ve sacrificed a lot to let me do this job and I appreciate it. I love what I’m

doing, that’s the bottom line. To work with people at this level, with this type of talent, is special to me. I wouldn’t trade it for anything in the world right now. This is a big part of my life and

it has been almost for 27-plus years. I wouldn’t do anything else.”

When Gasser’s senior video is shown Sunday at the Kohl Center, it’s a safe bet that he will single out Perez-Guerra. “I try to give him a shout-out whenever I can,” Gasser acknowledged. “No matter what words I could say about him, though, it doesn’t do justice for what he has done for me.”

That Gasser will make it to the finish line is gratitude enough for his middle-aged best friend. 

**“WITH THE INJURY AND HOW AWFUL IT WAS FOR JOSH, HENRY MADE IT TOLERABLE,” JOAN GASSER SAID. “NOBODY COULD HAVE DONE MORE THAN HENRY HAS.”**





# ADMIRING FROM AFAR

LENNY GULCZYNSKI NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO WATCH HIS SISTER PLAY COLLEGE BASKETBALL, BUT HIS TRAGIC LOSS PRESENTED JACKI GULCZYNSKI WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE LIFE DIFFERENTLY — AND APPRECIATE EVERY MOMENT.

BY MIKE LUCAS • [UWBADGERS.COM](http://UWBADGERS.COM)



**M**ike and Jackie Gulczynski have traveled countless times from their home in Carol Stream, Illinois, to the Kohl Center to watch their daughter play basketball for the Badgers. But Sunday's trip was different, noticeably different, because it was the last home game for Jacki Gulczynski, one of Wisconsin's seniors.

Mom saw everything Sunday from a different perspective, too.

"This is sad," she said softly. "When I was walking in here, it was freezing and normally I have my head down. I didn't have my head down today. It was like, 'I've got to take it all in.' These four years have gone so fast; I can't get over how fast it's gone."

Or how fast their "baby girl" has grown up. "She comes in literally a girl and leaves a woman with a plan of how she wants to live the rest of her life," Mike Gulczynski said with enormous pride, the pride that he shares with his wife, who pointed to the seats that they've occupied for every home game.

Agreeing on the physical transformation of their daughter over the last four years, Jackie Gulczynski wanted the record to also read, "Mentally and emotionally, she was just as strong as a freshman. She had the same morals and values and kept them. I'm in awe of her."

It's reciprocal.

"I've always looked up to my parents," said 21-year-old Jacki Gulczynski, "and I've always looked up to both of my brothers. My older brother was in the Army and my younger brother is going to West Point next year. I look up to them because they're doing something so much bigger than themselves and I can't really think of a greater thing that you can do with your life than give your life to your country."

She meant that literally. Her older brother, Lenny Gulczynski, was killed in a Humvee accident while serving the Army in Iraq. He was 19 on that September day in 2008; she was 15 and a sophomore in high school. She thinks about her brother every day.

"There's really nothing that I'm doing that he's



**JACKI GULCZYNSKI:**

**“Time is the only gift that we can never get back. What you do with your time kind of reflects who you are.”**

she replied. “I take the relationships that I have to a higher standard. I understand the importance of spending time with my family and my younger brother and the people that I’m close with and I cherish.

“Time is the only gift that we can never get back,” she reasoned. “What you do with your time kind of reflects who you are. So spending time with people that you love and that you care about is the greatest gift that you can get.” Or give.

Jacki Gulczynski still remembers the anniversary, the one-year anniversary of her brother’s death. “We had over 20 soldiers that he served with come to our house,” she said, “and they couldn’t rave enough about him and how he was so hard-working and dedicated to his job.

“It was a very emotional experience for me and my family,” she went on. “The service members came to my school and took me out of class. It was like I had 20 brothers — brothers I barely knew, but we were connected and we’re eternally connected by them knowing my brother. It was amazing.”

Jacki Gulczynski still remembers the smile, the Lenny Gulczynski smile. “It’s the first thing I remember about him — his smile — he had such an infectious smile,” she said. “He was a strong guy, inside and out. He had a tough exterior, but if you got to know him, he was just a teddy bear.”

Jacki Gulczynski still remembers the letters, the letters her mom encouraged her to write to her brother. “I’d tell her, ‘No, I don’t want to write him a letter, that takes too much time,’” she recalled. “Now when I look back, I’m glad that I have a couple of notes and letters written

not with me in some way,” she said.

Her parents had some metal bracelets made up in his memory, and she wears one on her right wrist. “For games, I have this wristband on my left wrist; so I’ve got him there, too,” she said, adding that her father wears Lenny’s dog tags and there’s another pair on their mantle in the living room of their home.

Jacki Gulczynski still remembers the day, the day she got the news of her brother’s death. “It was right in the middle of adolescence; I wasn’t really a kid, I wasn’t really an adult yet,” she said. “And there’s no doubt in my mind that I’ve been changed through that, I see life differently.”

How so? “I care about people in a deeper way,”

back and forth.”

While she keeps whatever correspondence that she had with him “so dear” to her heart, she confided, “I haven’t read those letters yet, I don’t think I’m ready to.” In the next breath, she said, “I just really wish that he could have had the opportunity to see me play college basketball.”

He would have been impressed. Gulczynski has been a four-year fixture in the Wisconsin lineup, a starter in 85 of the last 86 games. She has been more steady than spectacular during her career. But she’s had special moments. Like the 32 points that she scored against Ohio State in 2013.

“He (Lenny) had to sit through all of my tournaments when I was younger, but he never got to see me at this level,” she reiterated. “He only saw one of my high school games. Sometimes, I wonder if he would be wearing a Wisconsin hat over there (in Iraq) and smiling?”

She knows the answer to that last question, of course.

Now that her younger brother, Mike, Jr., is planning on attending West Point, she has some other questions about his commitment. “Of course, I do,” she said. “But it’s a little farther out of our minds right now because he still has four more years of school before he goes into the actual military.”

Mike Gulczynski had questions of his own about his youngest son’s

decision. “I said, ‘You’re putting me and your mom in a tough position because we would be proud that you would want to honor your brother in that way — yet, we’re scared because we’ve lost your brother,’” he related.

But just like they did with Lenny, they’re backing him 100 percent.

Like they have backed Jacki as a student-athlete at Wisconsin.

“Being an engineering student,” Dad said, “I don’t know how she does it to be honest.”

“She’s a classy kid,” Mom said. “She has adapted to everything with poise and energy.”

Jacki isn’t quite sure, though, what the next year will bring on campus, sans hoops.

“I’ve never been a normal student,” said Gulczynski, who will graduate in May of 2016

**“I HAVEN’T READ THOSE LETTERS YET, I DON’T THINK I’M READY TO.”**  
IN THE NEXT BREATH, SHE SAID,  
**“I JUST REALLY WISH THAT HE COULD HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE ME PLAY COLLEGE BASKETBALL.”**



in civil and environmental engineering. “Even throughout high school, I played three sports year round. I don’t think I can stay away from the game of basketball too long without coming back and playing.

“My plan is to work up in the (women’s basketball) office and still be around our coaching staff. If they ever need an extra practice player, I’d love to help out in any way if I can. It’s going to be sad when I’m done because I don’t know what I’m going to do with my time. I’ll get my basketball fix somehow.”

Reflecting on her four years and 111 career games, Gulczynski said, “I feel my legacy is hard work; somebody who’s dedicated to the program. I’ve given all I can to this team and to this school and athletic department. I can’t say that I have any regrets. I don’t think I do.

“It has been an amazing experience throughout — wins, losses, however it has gone. I’ve been surrounded by great people, amazing teammates, and a great coaching staff. No, I have no regrets. It has taught me a lot of life lessons.


“It has taught me dedication and a work ethic that you don’t know unless you’ve been through something like this or to this caliber as a student-athlete. I don’t know if people realize how much time goes into this.”

Gulczynski can sum up her motivation with one of her favorite quotations.

Confucius says, “Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

It was quote that she recited accurately and without hesitation when prompted out of the blue.

“I feel like I had such an experience where I fell — really far,” she said. “It has been an uphill battle climbing back. But after going through such a traumatic experience, there’s nothing that I know of that I can’t overcome; nothing that’s ever going to beat that standard of difficulty of losing someone that I loved. So anything is attainable with the right attitude.”

You wonder now if she’s visualizing Lenny wearing that cap with the Motion W and smiling when she’s saying, “I think he’d be proud of the woman that I have become.” 

**“IT HAS BEEN AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE THROUGHOUT... I HAVE NO REGRETS.”**





## Taking two steps forward, one step back

Two-game win streak shows Badgers' progress

**W**hen the horn sounded at the Kohl Center last Friday night and the scoreboard read — Wisconsin 2, Michigan State 1 — the Badgers owned consecutive victories for the first time this season. It was a long time coming.

It involved the season's first road victory and first Friday victory. It also involved good goaltending by senior netminder Joel Rumpel, as well as solid defensive-zone coverage, one of UW's major weak points this season.

The words "progress" and "improvement" have been used many times over the season, but an improvement in results has been difficult to come by. That is the reason the two victories mean so much.

They help build confidence.

Unfortunately, Michigan State got the upper hand on Wisconsin last Saturday, scoring a 3-0 shutout. The Badgers lapsed back into some defensive coverage problems. Once Michigan State scored the first goal, it became a tall task to come back as the Spartans lead the Big Ten in scoring defense.

This week, the Badgers travel to skate against the co-Big Ten-leading Michigan Wolverines, the nation's leading offense

**-SCROLL FOR MORE-**

### SCHEDULE (4-20-4, 2-10-2-2)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

#### RECENTLY

Feb. 13	at Ohio State	L, 2-1
Feb. 14	at Ohio State	W, 3-2
Feb. 20	<b>Michigan State</b>	W, 2-1
Feb. 21	<b>Michigan State</b>	L, 3-0

#### COMING UP

Feb. 27	at Michigan	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 28	at Michigan	3 p.m.
March 6	at Michigan State	6 p.m.
March 7	at Michigan State	6 p.m.
March 13	<b>Ohio State</b>	7 p.m.
March 14	<b>Ohio State</b>	6 p.m.

[> Complete Schedule](#) | [Buy Tickets](#)

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# Badgers open postseason against Huskies

UW faces SCSU for second-straight weekend

It will be déjà-vu on two fronts for Wisconsin this weekend as the No. 4 Badgers begin postseason play with a WCHA first round playoff series against St. Cloud State.

The Badgers and Huskies will meet in Madison for a second-straight weekend, after the two teams ended the regular season last weekend at LaBahn Arena. The Huskies took the first game, 2-1, before the Badgers came back with a 5-0 triumph which featured five different players lighting the lamp for UW.

“The difference between Friday’s game and Sunday’s game was, as I call it, we got the fish in the boat,” head coach Mark Johnson said. “So we had a nice dinner afterwards. We got some pucks behind their goaltender and certainly some of the players that you want to walk away from that game with a little bit more confidence in scoring.”

It also marks the second-consecutive season Wisconsin has ended the regular season with the same team it matches up with in the first round of the WCHA Playoffs.

Last year, Wisconsin travelled to Minnesota State to wrap up regular season action before hosting the Mavericks in Madison

## SCHEDULE (24-6-4, 19-6-3)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

### RECENTLY

Feb. 13	Ohio State	W, 2-0
Feb. 14	Ohio State	L, 4-3
Feb. 20	<b>St. Cloud State</b>	L, 2-1
Feb. 22	<b>St. Cloud State</b>	W, 5-0

### COMING UP

Feb. 27	<b>WCHA Playoff</b>	7 p.m.
Feb. 28	<b>WCHA Playoff</b>	7 p.m.
March 1	<b>WCHA Playoff</b>	7 p.m.*
March 7	WCHA Final Face-Off	
March 8	WCHA Final Face-Off	

\* If necessary

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-SCROLL FOR MORE-



DAVID STILKA

# Men take turn at Big Ten championships

Championship season begins for UW men

**A**fter an impressive showing by the women's swimming and diving team, the men's side is ready to make a statement of its own at the 2015 Men's Big Ten Championships in Iowa City, Iowa, which started Wednesday.

Finishing in seventh place, the men recorded a number of school records at last year's Big Ten championships. Highlighting the meet were sophomores Cannon Clifton and Matt Hutchins, senior Nick Caldwell and alum Tyler Hines, who raced to a runner-up finish in the 800-yard freestyle relay and demolished the school record in the process. Drew teDuits, Nick Schaffer, Clifton and Brett Pinfold also teamed up to set a UW record and finish fifth in the 400-yard medley relay.

Thanks to a challenging regular season schedule, many of the Badgers have already proven their potential heading into the final and most important month of the season.

teDuits, the 2013 NCAA champion in the 200-yard backstroke, will look to finish his career on top, starting with the Big Ten championships. Last year, teDuits finished second in the 200 backstroke and fifth in the 100. After winning the 200 at the Texas Invitational, teDuits holds the third-fastest time in the NCAA

## MEN'S SCHEDULE

Home meets in **bold**. All times CT.

### RECENTLY

Feb. 16-17	<b>Indiana</b>	L
Feb. 16-17	<b>Notre Dame</b>	W
Feb. 6	<b>Milwaukee</b>	W
Feb. 7	Green Bay	W

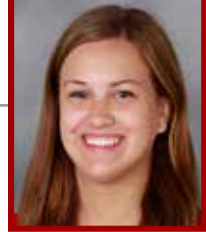
### COMING UP

Feb. 25-28	Big Ten Championships <i>Iowa City, Iowa</i>
Mar. 27-29	NCAA Championships <i>Iowa City, Iowa</i>

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-SCROLL FOR MORE-



JACK MCLAUGHLIN

# Badgers prep for Big Ten Championships

UW looks ahead to March 7-8 tournament

**T**he Wisconsin wrestling team wrapped up the regular dual season last weekend with a trip to Ames, Iowa where it suffered a 30-16 loss to eighth-ranked Iowa State. Despite the Cyclones the loss, there were some bright spots for the Badgers.

No. 7 Ryan Taylor closed out his dual season with a huge upset over the Cyclones' No. 3 Earl Taylor. The sophomore was down 2-0 starting the second period but managed back-to-back escapes and a takedown to clinch a 4-3 decision. With the victory, Taylor has defeated three-straight ranked opponents and four total this season. He heads into the Big Ten Championships with a perfect 9-0 conference dual record. He finished with a 12-1 dual record and is now 21-3 overall.

In a surprising change, TJ Ruschell filled in at 157 lbs. and overpowered Iowa State's Luke Goettl with a 14-6 major decision for his first and only dual match win of the season. The redshirt sophomore, who holds a 15-7 overall record this year, will be Wisconsin's starter at 157 lbs. heading into championships season.

Connor Medbery, Wisconsin's 27-time starter at heavyweight

**-SCROLL FOR MORE-**

## SCHEDULE (9-3, 7-2)

Home events in **bold**. All times CT.

### RECENTLY

Jan. 11	<b>Purdue</b>	W, 22-13
Jan. 23	at Michigan	L, 24-12
Jan. 25	at Michigan St.	W, 34-6
Feb. 6	<b>Rutgers</b>	W, 19-18
Feb. 8	at Illinois	L, 20-15

### COMING UP

Feb. 22	at Iowa State	2 p.m.
March 7	Big Ten Championships	
March 8	Big Ten Championships	

[> View complete schedule](#)

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WALT MIDDLETON

# Lihрман leads Badgers into Big Ten battle

Senior continues to smash records in Madison

**A**fter breaking his own NCAA Division I record in the weight throw last weekend at the Red & White Open, senior Michael Lihрман looks to continue his 10-event winning streak this weekend at the 2015 Big Ten Indoor Track & Field Championships at the SPIRE Institute in Geneva, Ohio.

Lihрман won all six weight throw events he competed in last season, capping his junior campaign with an NCAA title, becoming the first UW athlete to win an individual NCAA crown since 2007. This season, it has been more of the same, as Lihрман has won all four events he's competed at, including last week when he threw 81 feet, 8 3/4 inches to shatter his NCAA record.

"The past couple of weeks we've been cutting back on practice and I'm feeling fresher every day," Lihрман said. "My goal this weekend is to of course break the collegiate record. If I achieve that I'd also break the championship record as well as the SPIRE facility record."

"When you're leading the nation you have to have a bit of an attitude," UW director of track & field and cross country Mick Byrne said. "Everyone is coming for you, gunning for you, and Michael has a swagger about him. He will certainly need to car-

**-SCROLL FOR MORE-**

## SCHEDULE

Home meets in **bold**.

### RECENTLY

- Feb. 13-14 Iowa State Classic
- Feb. 20 **Red & White Open**

### COMING UP

- Feb. 27-28 Big Ten Championships
- March 13-14 NCAA Indoor Championships
- April 3-5 Stanford Invitational
- April 3-4 Sam Adams Invitational

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# No. 11 Badgers look to carry momentum

UW ready to challenge for Big Ten crown

**A**fter the Wisconsin men’s track and field team won its second-straight Big Ten indoor crown last year at the SPIRE Institute, Wisconsin director of track & field and cross country Mick Byrne invited the women’s team over to take part in the celebration.

“When we invited them into the circle with the men, I think they felt that power and knew it was an all-inclusive program,” Byrne said. “They wanted to be part of a winning program.”

A year later, the No. 11 women’s track and field team is in contention for a Big Ten title of its own, as UW enters the 2015 Big Ten Indoor Track & Field Championships at the SPIRE Institute in Geneva, Ohio, as the only ranked team in the Conference.

“We challenged them to be better,” Byrne said. “The growth over the last year has been remarkable, and you have great leadership in Deanna Latham, Angie Boushea, they have been around at the Big Ten Championships for a long time and competed well at the Big Ten.

“When you have athletes like that, Sarah Disanza leading the nation in the 5,000 meters and can run a pretty good 3,000 meters, and they see that leadership up on top and it’s paying off

**-SCROLL FOR MORE-**

## SCHEDULE

Home meets in **bold**.

### RECENTLY

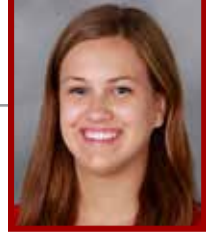
- Feb. 13-14 Iowa State Classic
- Feb. 20 **Red & White Open**

### COMING UP

- Feb. 27-28 Big Ten Championships
- March 13-14 NCAA Indoor Championships
- April 3-5 Stanford Invitational
- April 3-4 Sam Adams Invitational

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# Coach Healy aims to instill fight in players

Team looks to build on losses moving forward

**H**ere's what people are saying about the Wisconsin softball team.

They're the underdog. They're a young team. They lost four senior starters. They're rebuilding.

Here's what they should be saying.

This team is scrappy. This team has some fight. This team is more than capable of producing some great wins this year and they already have.

The Badgers (5-6 overall) head to Las Vegas this weekend for the Alexis Park Resort Classic where they will face some tough opponents in Idaho State, New Mexico State, University of Louisiana-Monroe and DePaul. The team is ready to return to action after a week off that followed their first two tournaments.

After going 4-2 at the Islander Invitational, dropping their last two games to UAB, the Badgers had a bye week to get some good practices in and refocus as a team. They had a little help with the refocusing part. Wisconsin Director of Athletics Barry Alvarez joined the young squad for practice one day to give his insights about building programs and creating winning legacies.

**-SCROLL FOR MORE-**

## SCHEDULE (5-6, 0-0)

Home events in **bold**. All times CT.

### ISLANDER INVITATIONAL

Feb. 13	South Dakota	W, 6-1
Feb. 13	South Dakota	W, 4-1
Feb. 14	UAB	L, 8-7
Feb. 15	UAB	L, 3-2

### ALEXIS PARK RESORT CLASSIC

Feb. 27	Idaho State	11 a.m.
	NMSU	3:30 p.m.
Feb. 28	NMSU	11 a.m.
	La.-Monroe	3:30 p.m.
March 1	DePaul	11 a.m.

[> View complete schedule](#)

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DAVID STILVA

## BACK ON TOP

**FEBRUARY 27, 2002:** The men's basketball team clinched a share of its first Big Ten Conference title since 1947 with a 74-54 win over Michigan in the Kohl Center. Devin Harris and Kirk Penney each scored 21 points to lead the Badgers.

### -MORE THIS WEEK-



### BRACKET BREAKERS

**MARCH 1, 2002:**

The women's basketball team advances to the semifinals of the Big Ten tournament for the first time in program history. The Badgers downed Minnesota 74-64 to move on.



### EIGHT IS GREAT

**MARCH 2, 2008:**

The men's track and field team won a record eighth-straight Big Ten indoor championship at home. The Badgers won with 127 points, beating second-place Purdue by 25 points.



### AIN'T IT GRAND?

**FEBRUARY 28, 1998:**

Junior Becca Gilgen slugged the first grand slam in Wisconsin softball history during an 11-0 victory over Austin Peay at the Bama Bash in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.