



VERSUS

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AUBURN
TIGERS (2-0)

(2-0) PENN STATE
NITTANY LIONS



WITHOUT A WHITE OUT



WELCOME BACK, WHITE OUT

By **Justin Morganstein**
 THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

There was an empty feeling before every game of the 2020 season for Penn State, but Week 2 seemed to hit a little harder.

Following a nail-biting loss to Indiana in Bloomington, the Nittany Lions were in need of a home victory in the worst way to avoid a dreaded 0-2 start.

It was the home opener, Ohio State was in town and the contest was set to be broadcasted as ABC’s prime-time game of the week.

It had the makings of a usual classic Big Ten showdown, only it was missing perhaps the most critical element of all.

The game was played in front of cold, empty bleachers, as an empty Beaver Stadium provided one of the most unique and awkward settings that college football may ever see.

That contest would have been deemed as the annual Penn State White Out — a tradition that has been a part of the Happy Valley community since the 2004 season.

James Franklin’s team went on to lose that game, but that’s not what the players who took the field remember most.

Many Nittany Lions, including former defensive lineman Shaka Toney, said one of their most memorable experiences was taken from them, and last White Out is something they’ll never be able to get back.

“It hurt. Being a senior you think it’s your last [White Out] game, and knowing we were gonna have Ohio State as the White Out, [the coronavirus] really took that experience from us,” Toney told The Daily Collegian. “I remember talking to Garrett Sickels and Evan Schwan and how they felt about their last White Out and just how much it meant to them. It’s tough.”

Despite the crowdless atmosphere at Beaver Stadium in that Week 2 matchup, Penn State still felt at the time it had a chance to win against the Buckeyes.

But looking back, Toney can confirm it simply wasn’t the same, and it even provided an advantage for Ohio State, which would’ve had to prepare for more than 100,000 screaming fans.

The Nittany Lion faithful saw just how much the noise can factor into the game just one year prior, forcing one of the most unusual timeout calls in college football history.

“The fans and the stadium play a factor,” Toney said. “People get nervous. We saw that the first play in 2019 when Michigan had to call timeout. It’s real in there, it ain’t a joke and it’ll rattle just about anybody’s cage.”

Flashback to another Michigan game, this time in 2017, when Penn State had the likes of Saquon Barkley, Mike Gesicki and do-it-all quarterback Trace McSorley.

Beaver Stadium was about as



Camille Stefani/Collegian file photo

The White Out officially returns to Penn State Saturday when the Nittany Lions take on the Auburn Tigers. “It’s real in there, it ain’t a joke and it’ll rattle just about anybody’s cage,” Shaka Toney said.

loud as it had ever been, and it was taken to the next level on just the second play of the evening.

After a direct snap to Barkley, the future No. 2-overall pick went the distance on a 69-yard scamper to pick up six points.

As he zoomed past Wolverine defenders and headed toward the end zone, the roar from the 110,000-plus in attendance was the loudest that McSorley had ever heard a crowd in Happy Valley, and it turned out to be one of his most memorable moments in a blue and white jersey.

“At the beginning of that game, we did that little quick motion in the backfield, and Saquon took it,” McSorley told the Collegian. “That was probably the loudest I’ve felt that stadium and heard that stadium in my time there — then just the entire night and how that game went.

“We were able to come out with a big win and against a big team that ran it up on us the year before, so to be able to run it up on them — that was my favorite White Out memory.”

Now, the man taking snaps from the center in front of “107k strong” will be redshirt senior quarterback Sean Clifford, who has experienced the White Out as a starter and picked up the win against Michigan in 2019.

To him, it’s one of those things that can’t be described unless

you see it first-hand, and it creates an atmosphere that’s hard to replicate anywhere else.

“You can’t watch the White Out on TV and say you’ve seen the White Out because you’ve got to be here to experience it,” Clifford said. “I truly believe that it’s one of those experiences that’s jaw-dropping, awe-inspiring and just a sense of community that you can’t feel anywhere else.”

Not only will this weekend’s matchup against Auburn be the first White Out for many fans, it will be the first for the freshmen and sophomores on Penn State’s roster.

Players like sophomore wide-out Parker Washington are new to playing in front of Beaver Stadium crowds and have only heard about just how massive the White Out can be.

But like many of the members of the team have said this week, keeping a level head and not letting yourself get caught up in the moment is key if the Nittany Lions want to move to 3-0.

“I’m just excited,” Washington said. “I know it’s a big thing here at Penn State, and it’s what most players talk about and what you want to come here for. You don’t want to make it bigger than what it is, we just want to go 1-0 this week and just be our best selves each day.”

Someone else who has yet to

experience a White Out in Happy Valley: first-year Auburn head coach Bryan Harsin.

Harsin said while he’s prepared for road games before, doing it with a new staff gives him some unique perspective, and there’s still almost no way to truly prepare for what lies ahead.

“For the crowd noise, there’s a lot of different ways [to combat it],” Harsin said. “It’s interesting because when you get on a new staff, everybody’s done things differently. I’ve actually kind of enjoyed hearing the different ways that people have prepared for the noise. But ultimately, we have a speaker system and all that.

“I don’t think that we’re going to get it exactly like it’s going to be on game night, but we have to crank the music up, or the sound and the crowd noise [or] whatever it is that we have to use to make it very loud.”

Chances are, whatever song Harsin and company are blaring on the speaker, it won’t replicate what’s likely to be a crowd of over 110,000 on Saturday.

In fact, in his mid-week press conference on Tuesday, Franklin urged fans to scream and cause chaos like they never have before, even offering an incentive for their efforts.

Visit collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.

PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS FOOTBALL ROSTER

| No. | Name | Position/Elig. | No. | Name | Position/Elig. | No. | Name | Position/Elig. | No. | Name | Position/Elig. |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-----------------------|----------------|-----|----------------------|----------------|
| 0 | Jonathan Sutherland | S/Sr. | 20 | Adisa Isaac | DE/Jr. | 46 | Nick Tarburton | DE/Jr. | 80 | Malick Meiga | WR/Fr. |
| 1 | Jaquan Brisker | S/Sr. | 21 | Noah Cain | RB/Jr. | 47 | Alex Furmanek | DT/So. | 81 | Henry Fessler | WR/Jr. |
| 2 | Ta'Quan Roberson | QB/So. | 21 | Tyler Rudolph | S/So. | 48 | Tyler Duzansky | SN/Fr. | 82 | Liam Clifford | WR/Fr. |
| 2 | Keaton Ellis | S/Jr. | 23 | Curtis Jacobs | LB/So. | 48 | Cody Romano | LB/Jr. | 83 | Justin Weller | WR/Sr. |
| 3 | Johnny Dixon | CB/Jr. | 23 | John Lovett | RB/Sr. | 49 | Michael Wright | SN/Fr. | 84 | Theo Johnson | TE/So. |
| 3 | Parker Washington | WR/So. | 24 | Jeffrey Davis Jr. | CB/Fr. | 50 | Max Chizmar | LB/Sr. | 85 | Harrison Wallace III | WR/Fr. |
| 4 | Kalen King | CB/Fr. | 24 | Keyvone Lee | RB/So. | 50 | Will Knutsson | OL/Jr. | 86 | Brandon Strange | TE/H/So. |
| 5 | Tariq Castro-Fields | CB/Sr. | 25 | Daequan Hardy | CB/Fr. | 51 | Hakeem Beamon | DT/So. | 87 | Ben Knapp | TE/Fr. |
| 5 | Jahan Dotson | WR/Sr. | 26 | Caziah Holmes | RB/So. | 51 | Jimmy Christ | OL/Fr. | 87 | Benjamin Wilson | WR/Sr. |
| 6 | Cam Sullivan-Brown | WR/Sr. | 26 | Jaden Seider | S/So. | 52 | Jordan van den Berg | DT/So. | 88 | Norval Black | WR/Sr. |
| 6 | Zakee Wheatley | CB/Fr. | 27 | Aeneas Hawkins | DT/Jr. | 52 | Blake Zalar | OL/So. | 89 | Winston Eubanks | WR/Sr. |
| 7 | Jaylen Reed | S/Fr. | 27 | Ethan Susen | CB/Fr. | 53 | Fred Hansard | DT/Sr. | 89 | Grayson Kline | TE/H/Jr. |
| 8 | Marquis Wilson | ATH/So. | 27 | Bobby Walchak | S/Fr. | 53 | Rasheed Walker | OL/Jr. | 90 | Rafael Checa | K/Jr. |
| 9 | Joey Porter Jr. | CB/So. | 28 | Devin Ford | RB/Jr. | 54 | Derrick Tangelo | DT/Sr. | 90 | Rodney McGraw | DE/Fr. |
| 9 | Christian Veilleux | QB/Fr. | 29 | Sebastian Constantini | S/So. | 55 | Fatorma Mulbah | DT/Fr. | 91 | Chris Stoll | SN/Sr. |
| 11 | Daniel George | WR/Jr. | 30 | Kaleb Brown | CB/Fr. | 55 | Anthony Whigan | OL/Sr. | 92 | Jake Pinegar | K/Sr. |
| 12 | Brandon Smith | LB/Jr. | 32 | Dylan Farronato | S/So. | 56 | Amin Vanover | DT/Fr. | 92 | Smith Vilbert | DE/So. |
| 13 | Ellis Brooks | LB/Sr. | 33 | Bryce Mostella | DE/Fr. | 57 | Ibrahim Traore | OL/Fr. | 93 | Spencer Perry | DE/Fr. |
| 13 | KeAndre Lambert-Smith | WR/So. | 34 | Dominic DeLuca | LB/Fr. | 58 | Landon Tengwall | OL/Fr. | 93 | Bradley King | P/Sr. |
| 14 | Sean Clifford | QB/Sr. | 36 | Zuriah Fisher | LB/Fr. | 59 | Kaleb Konigus | OL/Jr. | 94 | Jake Wilson | DE/Fr. |
| 14 | A.J. Lytton | CB/Jr. | 37 | Drew Hartlaub | S/Sr. | 66 | Nick Dawkins | OL/Fr. | 95 | Cole Brevard | DT/Fr. |
| 15 | Evan Clark | QB/Fr. | 38 | Tank Smith | RB/So. | 68 | Eric Wilson | OL/Sr. | 95 | Vlad Hilling | K/Jr. |
| 15 | Enzo Jennings | S/Fr. | 39 | Robbie Dwyer | LB/So. | 70 | Juice Scruggs | OL/Jr. | 96 | Barney Amor | P/Sr. |
| 16 | Ji'Ayir Brown | S/Sr. | 40 | Jesse Luketa | LB/Sr. | 72 | Bryce Effner | OL/Jr. | 96 | Mitchell Groh | K/Fr. |
| 16 | Khalil Dinkins | TE/Fr. | 41 | Kobe King | LB/Fr. | 73 | Mike Miranda | OL/Sr. | 97 | PJ Mustipher | DT/Jr. |
| 17 | Arnold Ebiketie | DE/Sr. | 42 | Jamari Buddin | LB/Fr. | 74 | Olumuyiwa Fashanu | OL/Fr. | 98 | Jordan Stout | K/P/Sr. |
| 17 | Mason Stahl | QB/Fr. | 43 | Tyler Elsdon | LB/Fr. | 75 | Des Holmes | OL/Sr. | 98 | Dan Vasey | DE/Jr. |
| 18 | Davon Townley Jr. | DE/Fr. | 44 | Joseph Appiah Darkwa | DT/So. | 77 | Sal Wormley | OL/So. | 99 | Coziah Izzaed | DT/Fr. |
| 19 | Jaden Dottin | WR/Fr. | 44 | Tyler Warren | TE/Fr. | 78 | Golden Israel-Achumba | OL/Fr. | | Gabe Nwosu | P/Fr. |
| 19 | Jace Tutty | CB/Fr. | 45 | Charlie Katshir | LB/Jr. | 79 | Caeden Wallace | OL/So. | | | |

AUBURN TIGERS FOOTBALL ROSTER

| No. | Name | Position/Elig. | No. | Name | Position/Elig. | No. | Name | Position/Elig. | No. | Name | Position/Elig. |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------------|----------------|-----|---------------------|----------------|-----|---------------------|----------------|
| 0 | Owen Pappoe | LB/Jr. | 22 | Trey Elston | CB/Sr. | 42 | Kyle Vaccarella | LS/Fr. | 69 | Colby Smith | OL/Fr. |
| 0 | Demetris Robertson | WR/Sr. | 22 | Jay Sharp | RB/Fr. | 43 | Kameron Brown | LB/So. | 70 | David Shannon | OL/Sr. |
| 1 | T.J. Finley | QB/So. | 23 | Roger McCreary | CB/Sr. | 44 | Lee Hunter | DT/Fr. | 71 | Brandon Council | OL/Sr. |
| 1 | Donovan Kaufman | S/Fr. | 24 | Jordon Ingram | RB/Fr. | 44 | Sean Jackson | RB/Fr. | 72 | Brady Ward | OL/Fr. |
| 3 | Tar'Varish Dawson Jr. | WR/Fr. | 24 | Eric Reed Jr. | S/Fr. | 45 | Caleb Johnson | DE/Jr. | 73 | Thomas Kirkham | OL/Fr. |
| 3 | Zykeivous Walker | DT/So. | 25 | Caylin Newton | WR/Sr. | 46 | Jacob Jasinski | RB/Sr. | 74 | Garner Langlo | OL/Fr. |
| 4 | Tank Bigsby | RB/So. | 25 | Colby Wooden | DE/So. | 46 | Jake Levant | LB/Fr. | 76 | Jeremiah Wright | DT/So. |
| 5 | Kobe Hudson | WR/So. | 26 | Cayden Bridges | S/Fr. | 47 | John Samuel-Shenker | TE/Sr. | 77 | Kilian Zierer | OL/Jr. |
| 5 | Dreshun Miller | CB/Sr. | 26 | Anders Carlson | K/Sr. | 48 | Marquis Robinson | DL/Fr. | 80 | Ze'Vian Capers | WR/So. |
| 6 | Ja'Varrius Johnson | WR/So. | 27 | Jarquez Hunter | RB/Fr. | 49 | Dre Butler | DT/Jr. | 81 | J.J. Evans | WR/Fr. |
| 8 | Shaun Shivers | RB/Sr. | 28 | Jackson Billings | WR/Fr. | 50 | Marcus Harris | DL/So. | 82 | Hayden Brice | TE/Sr. |
| 9 | Zakoby McClain | LB/Sr. | 28 | Devin Guice | S/Sr. | 50 | Jalil Irvin | OL/Jr. | 83 | Malcolm Russell | WR/Sr. |
| 10 | Bo Nix | QB/Jr. | 29 | Derick Hall | DE/Jr. | 51 | Barton Lester | LB/Sr. | 84 | Jackson McFadden | WR/Sr. |
| 11 | Shedrick Jackson | WR/Sr. | 30 | Tommy Nesmith | WR/So. | 52 | Nick Brahms | OL/Sr. | 85 | Tyler Fromm | TE/So. |
| 11 | Zion Puckett | S/So. | 30 | Desmond Tisdol | LB/So. | 52 | Russ Logan | LB/Sr. | 86 | Luke Deal | TE/So. |
| 12 | Sammy Cohen | S/So. | 31 | Chandler Wooten | LB/Sr. | 54 | Tate Johnson | OL/So. | 87 | Brandon Frazier | TE/So. |
| 12 | Jayshon Jackson | WR/Jr. | 32 | Trent Mason | WR/So. | 55 | Brenden Coffey | OL/Sr. | 89 | J.J. Pegues | DT/So. |
| 13 | Trey Lindsey | QB/So. | 32 | Wesley Steiner | LB/So. | 55 | Eku Leota | DE/Jr. | 90 | Tony Fair | DL/So. |
| 13 | Ladarius Tennison | S/So. | 33 | Joko Willis | LB/Fr. | 56 | Tashawn Manning | OL/Sr. | 91 | Oscar Chapman | P/So. |
| 14 | Grant Loy | QB/Sr. | 35 | Cam Riley | LB/So. | 57 | Avery Jernigan | OL/Fr. | 91 | Ian Matthews | DL/Fr. |
| 14 | Ro Torrence | CB/So. | 36 | Jaylin Simpson | CB/So. | 57 | Brooks Walton | LB/Jr. | 92 | Marquis Burks | DL/Sr. |
| 15 | A.D. Diamond | CB/Fr. | 37 | Romello Height | DE/So. | 58 | Keiondre Jones | OL/So. | 93 | Daniel Foster-Allen | DE/Fr. |
| 16 | Malcolm Askew | DB/Sr. | 38 | Ahmari Harvey | S/Fr. | 58 | Tobechi Okoli | DL/Fr. | 93 | Evan McGuire | K/Fr. |
| 16 | Malcolm Johnson Jr. | WR/So. | 39 | Dylan Brooks | DE/Fr. | 59 | Brodarious Hamm | OL/Sr. | 95 | Nick Curtis | DL/Fr. |
| 17 | Elijah Canion | WR/So. | 39 | Marshall Meyers | P/Fr. | 61 | Reed Hughes | LS/Fr. | 96 | Ben Patton | K/So. |
| 18 | Dematrius Davis | QB/Fr. | 40 | John Reese Bellew | S/Fr. | 62 | Kameron Stutts | OL/Jr. | 96 | Garrison Walker | DL/So. |
| 18 | Nehemiah Pritchett | CB/Jr. | 40 | Landen King | TE/Fr. | 64 | Cort Bradley | OL/Fr. | 97 | Jackson Kelly | DL/Fr. |
| 19 | Bydarrius Knighten | S/Sr. | 41 | Jordan Davis | CB/Fr. | 65 | Alec Jackson | OL/Sr. | | T.D. Moultry | DE/Sr. |
| 20 | Sawyer Pete | QB/Fr. | 41 | Aidan Marshall | P/Sr. | 67 | Jacob Quattlebaum | LS/Jr. | | | |
| 21 | Smoke Monday | S/Sr. | 42 | Joey McGinty | S/Fr. | 68 | Austin Troxell | OL/Sr. | | | |

Cain’s return rallies damaged hometown

By Max Ralph
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Noah Cain’s journey from Penn State’s season opener against Indiana in 2020 to the season opener against Wisconsin in 2021 isn’t a secret.

The Nittany Lions’ promising young tandem of Journey Brown and Cain were poised to be a lethal one-two punch last season, but then Brown medically retired from football before the season began.

Three plays into the Indiana game, Cain came off the field hurt.

His dad, Terence, was called down to the locker room to go through tests with Noah. While Terence said they didn’t know the severity of the injury initially, the first thing Noah did was finish the game on the sideline with his teammates.

After the game and as the season progressed, it became increasingly obvious that Noah wouldn’t play another snap in the 2021 season.

He had a long road to recovery ahead of him, but the support system from his family wasn’t going anywhere.

“I’m a believer in prayer and faith and just being right there.

My game plan hadn’t changed. His mom, family — we were still right there,” Terence told The Daily Collegian. “Even on Saturdays when we’re not on the field, I’m still in town. Away games, I’m still right there.”

According to Terence, one of the most important parts of a young athlete’s recovery process is making sure they’re as mentally fit as they are physically fit.

No matter his mental preparedness or the support around him, Noah had an unprecedented task in front of him.

He said the rehabilitation process was a “humbling” experience, but his faith and support system were driving factors for him throughout the process.

“It was the first time for me having to be sidelined for that period of time. I really had to learn how to embrace the process every day,” Noah said. “With going through the rehab and going through a lot of roller coasters with the injury, some weeks [were] good, some weeks [were] bad. It was uncomfortable for a time period.

“Having to get used to that new normal, coming out of surgery and having to adjust mentally and physically, it was very challenging... I’m just thanking God to be where I’m at right now.”



Noah Cain (21) races past a Wisconsin defender in Penn State’s 16-10 win over the Badgers on Sept. 4.

Throughout the process, Terence said Noah had an approach similar to that of any elite athlete.

He treated his rehab the same way he would prepare for a game — he was ready to go to war.

Penn State fans may have seen an occasional video of Noah going through drills or a quick update from James Franklin throughout the offseason, but they didn’t see him going the extra mile each and every day.

“If you wanna do any type of rehab and come out even stronger and better than you were before, you do the things that [are] required, and you find out the little things that you can do when you’re not actually with the trainers,” Terence said. “You look at any great player, of course you’re gonna go to practice and you’re gonna do your workout, but when you leave, you do things outside... It’s always going beyond the extra call of duty.”

When August rolled around, there wasn’t much doubt Noah would suit up against Wisconsin. By game day, he was suited up and ready to go.

The first play of the game was a handoff from Sean Clifford to Noah.

It went for a loss of one yard, but that number didn’t mean much in

the grand scheme of things.

The junior bell cow was officially back to the starting lineup — and back healthy.

Without trying to sound “arrogant,” Terence didn’t have any inkling of nerves to see Noah’s first carry of the season. He’d been by his side through the injury, and he knew what to expect when Noah stepped back on the field.

“I’m there watching the steps, watching the progress. It was no surprise,” Terence said. “It was back to business. You have to be able to fight through adversity. You have to be able to do that. You don’t know any great player or great individual — with any craft — that has not had to deal with adversity.”

The journey back from injury was over when Noah stepped on the field in Madison on Saturday.

There was more weighing on his mind, though.

Noah is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where much of his family still lives, including his dad.

In recent weeks, Hurricane Ida hit areas of Louisiana, leaving the Cains’ hometown largely under water.

Terence said the hurricane affected their family “tremendously,” and had they gotten the same

level of rain as places like New York did, he said he’d likely be moving away from the area.

He was forced to drive to Madison for the game because the New Orleans airport was closed, but he and his family drove to State College for the week afterward because there was still no power in their home.

“We had some damage but nothing major, but we had some family members and friends [whose] homes were completely destroyed or under water. It was tough,” Terence said.

Before making the drive to Madison, Terence said he and members of his church partnered to go around the community and work to rebuild it.

But there’s a long way to go in the recovery process.

“Even doing that for a couple days, it’s gonna take months and months and months. When we leave here on Sunday and go back, we’ll be back in the trenches again,” Terence said. “It’s gonna be something that’s gonna have to be ongoing to get these people back to some stability.”

A long recovery process is familiar for one Baton Rouge resident — Noah.

Visit collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.



Terence Cain (left) poses with his son Noah (right), Penn State’s starting running back

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Arnold Ebiketie (17) pushes through Wisconsin’s offensive line in Penn State’s 16-10 season opening win over the Badgers on Sept. 4.

Arnold Ebiketie shines as newcomer

By Alexis Yoder
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Defensive end Arnold Ebiketie’s recruiting process out of high school never suggested he’d earn a starting spot at Penn State.

He played linebacker in high school, and according to his high school coach Mike Bonavia, colleges thought he was too small to compete for playing time in a Division I defensive front seven.

But he committed to his craft, gained the necessary weight through his first four seasons at Temple and now holds a starting spot with the Nittany Lions.

Ebiketie played his high school ball at Albert Einstein High School in Kensington, Maryland, under Bonavia.

Bonavia noted how much talent and potential the Silver Spring, Maryland, native possessed, saying he was athletic enough to play both sides of the ball, as Ebiketie logged time at the slot-receiver position.

“He was showing some real good signs,” Bonavia told The Daily Collegian. “He was fast off the edge and of course had a great attitude and was very coachable.”

Ebiketie committed to Temple and honored the coaching staff’s request for him to gain roughly 20 pounds before camp.

After playing sparingly throughout his first three years with the Owls, Ebiketie earned a starting spot at defensive end as a redshirt junior, ending the season as the team leader in tackles for loss, sacks and forced fumbles while also earning second-team All-AAC honors.

Following Ebiketie’s successful campaign, Bonavia received a phone call from James Franklin.

The Nittany Lions were interested in Ebiketie.

“They said he was a perfect fit, and he

will make an impact as soon as he comes in,” Bonavia said. “I called [Ebiketie] up and said, ‘Listen, this is the perfect fit for you Arnold. You have to go to this place. They’ve got big dreams for you.’”

After speaking with both Bonavia and his father, Ebiketie took up Franklin’s offer.

“I always knew Penn State as a whole was a great organization,” Ebiketie said. “One of my main focuses in the portal was trying to figure out what place was going to be the best fit for me in terms of what matches the top of my playing style.

“When I look back at it, I made one of the best decisions of my life to come to Penn State.”

Penn State presented new opportunities for personal improvement and tougher competition, which is exactly what Ebiketie said he needed to take his game to the next level.

“I accomplished a lot for Temple,” Ebiketie said. “I’m a big competitor. I’m always looking for more, and I felt like it would be best for me to enter the transfer portal and go to a place where I could compete and expand my game — going against some other guys that will be playing at a high level.”

Coming into a new program with coronavirus restrictions still in place, it took a little bit for Ebiketie to adjust because he couldn’t hang out with many of his teammates all at one time.

But once those restrictions loosened, Ebiketie had no trouble building bonds with his new family.

“I believe I’m a pretty sociable person, so it was just a matter of time getting to spend time with my team,” Ebiketie said. “When we moved toward spring practices and started hanging around the whole team, everything got easier, and I started forming those bonds.”

Visit collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.



GAME INFO

AUBURN
VS
PENN STATE

Place: Beaver Stadium
Time: Saturday 7:30 EST
TV: ABC
Spread: PSU -5.0
Over/Under: 53

PLAYERS TO
WATCH



As a linebacker-defensive end hybrid, Jesse Luketa draws a lot of attention on the defensive side of the ball. Watch Luketa's efforts to defend Auburn's talented running backs.



Jaquan Brisker provides leadership and unrivaled skills at the safety position. Look for him all over the field against Auburn in defense of both the pass and the run game.

BY THE NUMBERS

1

Penn State climbed one spot in the national rankings, landing at No. 10.

4

Penn State scored on four of its five first half possessions against Ball State.

10

Ten Penn State receivers caught a pass against Ball State.

Reliving Auburn matchups

By Seth Engle
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It's been a decade since a non-conference opponent stepped foot in Beaver Stadium for a White Out, but Auburn will snap that streak this Saturday.

While the Nittany Lions and Tigers have only met twice before, the similarities between the two programs are clear.

Over Penn State's and Auburn's history, spanning 128 and 119 years, respectively, the two programs have the same number of claimed national championships — two — and unclaimed — five.

A nearly equal history in terms of achievement, it's no surprise the two programs have a split record in the all-time series against each other.

It's been nearly two decades since these blue-blood programs faced off, but with a White Out crowd, Saturday's event should be well worth the wait.

Current Penn State students were too young to remember the last matchup between the two, while everyone else likely needs a recap.

Here's a look at the last two times these programs squared off.

Outback Bowl, Jan. 2,
1996: Penn State 43,
Auburn 14

The Outback Bowl's first season with that moniker featured two of college football's best in Penn State and Auburn — two 8-3 teams ranked No. 15 and 16 in AP Poll, respectively.

Led by two of the most lethal offensive pieces in the country



James Riccardo/Collegian file photo

The Big Uglies are a long-standing tradition for Penn State football. The Nittany Lions start a new tradition Saturday with their annual White Out being played against a nonconference opponent in Auburn.

in wide receiver Bobby Engram and running back Curtis Enis, Penn State's offense had defined itself as one of the toughest scoring threats of that season at 33.2 points per game.

However, behind quarterback Patrick Nix — father of current Auburn starting quarterback Bo Nix — the Tigers were poised to outscore the Nittany Lions on paper with 36.5 points per game.

With two ferocious offenses facing each other, most likely predicted this matchup would come down to the defenses. That came to fruition, as Penn State halted Nix and the Auburn offense in nearly every facet of the game.

Before being replaced, Nix completed just five of 25 passes with two interceptions.

Nix did throw Auburn's only touchdown pass of the game on a 25-yarder to Robert Baker to give the Tigers a second-quarter lead before Penn State stormed

back in the third quarter.

On the other side of the ball, Engram exploded for 113 yards and two touchdowns on only four receptions for the Nittany Lions — enough to grant him the game's MVP trophy.

When it was all said and done, the Nittany Lions were too much for the Tigers in their first matchup, winning 43-14.

Capital One Bowl, Jan. 1,
2003: Auburn 13, Penn
State 9

The Nittany Lions and Tigers met yet again in the first installment of a newly named bowl game, as they faced off in the 2003 Capital One Bowl.

As the 14th-ranked scoring offense and 12th-ranked defense in the country entering its Bowl Game, the No. 10 Nittany Lions

were viewed as heavy favorites against the No. 19 Tigers, who had struggled offensively all season.

If there was one key to defeating Penn State, Auburn knew it wouldn't be offensively. It had to stop Penn State's Heisman-finalist running back Larry Johnson.

With 2436 all-purpose yards and 23 touchdowns, it easily could've been argued that Johnson was the best player in college football before he finished third in Heisman voting.

Nonetheless, Auburn held Johnson to only 72 yards on 20 carries, thus silencing Penn State's offense to just nine points from Robbie Gould field goals.

Penn State's defense was stout itself, only giving up 13 points to the Tigers, but it wasn't enough to stop Auburn from tying the all-time series at one win a piece.

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PSU ready for SEC challenge

By Justin Morganstein
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Among plenty of storylines surrounding Penn State this week, the team has moved into the top 10 in the latest AP poll, it's White Out week and James Franklin is a part of yet another job rumor at USC.

But while the USC whispers were addressed, Franklin kept it short and sweet, saying his focus is on Auburn and that "he can't stand any form of distraction."

Speculation will continue to swirl, but the eighth-year Nittany Lion head coach will need to dial in on a talented Auburn team.

He presented the challenges his program faces against the No. 22 team in the country on

Tuesday, saying its experience and skills are among the best in the business.

"You're talking about 16 returning starters on [Auburn]," Franklin said. "Talented club, what you'd expect to see when you turn on an SEC football team."

Franklin also got into details regarding some of the Tigers' offensive personnel, which is averaging the second-most points in the country two weeks into the season.

He said Auburn's pair of running backs in Tank Bigsby and Jarquez Hunter and wide receiver Shedrick Jackson are among some of the top names to watch in the potent offensive attack his team will face this week.

Tiger quarterback Bo Nix got

some love, too, as Franklin said he's been "impressed" by Nix.

Franklin's praise for some of Auburn's players didn't stop there, as he was sure to recognize that despite the Tigers' offensive explosion as of late, the defense has also stepped up and played a clean two games.

"I have some history with [defensive coordinator] Derek Mason. Derek is one of the most respected defensive coordinators in all of college football," Franklin said of the former Vanderbilt head coach.

Franklin then went on to highlight some of the top names on the defensive side of the ball for Auburn, including someone who the Nittany Lions missed out on as a recruit.

"Guys that we've been

impressed with on tape are Owen Pappoe, a young man who we recruited out of high school, he really jumps off the tape and flashes to you," Franklin said. "The other linebacker is Zakoby McClain and then defensive end Derick Hall and corner Roger McCreary. Those are the guys that jump out and back it up from a statistical standpoint."

While the head coach recognizes that this is a matchup that will test the limits of his team, that message has trickled down to the players, too.

Sophomore wide receiver Parker Washington said he's taken note of the Tigers' defensive backfield this week, and they're a talented group that can cause problems for the opposition.

"I know that they are a physical group," Washington said. "I know they're gonna play fast and just like every other team, they're gonna want to win just like us. So I know it'll be a tough game. We've just got to execute and be as sharp as possible."

Despite the gaudy 58 points per game Auburn has been able to put up over its first two contests, Nittany Lion safety Jonathan Sutherland said the mentality shouldn't change from what the Nittany Lions have done in their own pair of dominant defensive performances.

Considering Brent Pry's defense has allowed just 11.5 points per game in its first two, that's probably a fair assessment.

"Our expectations remain the same throughout each week because the standard is the standard," Sutherland said.

Visit collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.



Lily LaRegina/Collegian

James Franklin blows his whistle during warmups in Penn State's home-opener versus Ball State. The Nittany Lions will host Auburn Saturday for the annual White Out.

Max Ralph



Ralph

What to watch for: Auburn has pair of bruising running backs that should test Penn State's defensive front. The Nittany Lions' secondary contains Bo Nix

and Auburn's pass game. A balanced attack from Mike Yurcich's offense will carry Penn State to a White Out win.

Score: Penn State 27, Auburn 20

Seth Engle



Engle

What to watch for: The only thing holding Penn State back from dismantling Auburn offensively is Penn State's offense. Auburn's offense should be the

greatest test for Penn State's defense this season. This game will come down to the wire, but the Nittany Lions should get it done in White Out fashion.

Score: Penn State 23, Auburn 20

Justin Morganstein



Morganstein

What to watch for: Penn State will have to play to the crowd early on to get an advantage in this one. Sean Clifford will need to continue to show

that he can protect the football as he's avoided critical mistakes so far this season. The defense shouldn't change a thing as it has done nothing but continue to gain momentum.

Score: Penn State 29 Auburn 23

Alexis Yoder



Yoder

What to watch for: A White Out crowd will serve as the twelfth man against Auburn. Both teams must establish their run

games early in order to lead successful offensive campaigns. Consistency on both sides of the ball will lead Penn State to victory, but it'll be a close game.

Score: Penn State 38, Auburn 7

Guest Picker:
Andrew Porterfield



Porterfield

What to watch for: Who in their right mind would pick against Penn State in a White

Out? Auburn, with a new head coach and inconsistent quarterback in Bo Nix, is going to have the toughest time of its season in Beaver Stadium on Saturday night.

Score: Penn State 34, Auburn 24

MOMENT ON

MENTAL HEALTH

Graphic by Ben McClary

*Penn State students discuss mental, physical impacts of coronavirus pandemic*By Jeremiah Hassel
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When Taylor Hall started her first year of classes at Penn State, she said it was an opportunity to start anew after her senior year of high school was “taken” from her by the coronavirus pandemic.

In-person classes, live events, football games — Hall (freshman-biomedical engineering) experienced none of these over the past year, as concerns over the spread of the coronavirus prompted many high schools to transition to remote learning. She said she had no official prom, no normal graduation and none of the staples of an ordinary senior year.

With Penn State resuming in-person activities this fall, Hall said she’s optimistic about her mental health, which she said took a downturn during the height of the pandemic.

And Hall isn’t alone in that sentiment. Seven of 11 students surveyed — more than 63% — said the pandemic had a negative effect on their mental health.

Emmaline Fogal, president of Lift the Mask Club at Penn State — an organization dedicated to eradicating the stigma behind mental health through conversations and creating “comfortable” environments — said losing a year of the in-person college experience “hurt.”

“We all have had different losses during the time,” Fogal (junior-psychology) said. “During those losses, we were kind of separated from everybody and didn’t really have the place to talk about it or get it off our minds or deal with it in the best way.”

For student Sanai Wallace, loss came in the form of routine — something she said used to greatly aid her mental health.

“[The pandemic] kind of threw me off,” Wallace (freshman-nursing) said. “I was not as productive as I could be because I didn’t have a strict routine.”

In-person classes, Wallace said, were an integral part of her circadian rhythm, but she didn’t get to experience them during the height of the pandemic.

“I am not an online learner,” Wallace said. “I have to be in the classroom.”

Wallace wasn’t the only student who said they missed in-person activities like classes. Amelia Sokoloski is involved in several campus organizations, including the Mock Trial Association, and while

she said she was able to maintain connections with members of her organizations, her generic social interactions were limited.

The culprit, according to Sokoloski (junior-political science and history), isn’t the coronavirus, however — it’s Penn State itself.

“I think it would have been better if the university had provided for the students who were on campus,” Sokoloski said. “There was nothing to do. There were ways for people to meet each other and be safe on campus, and [the university] didn’t take advantage of [them].”

Being on campus, Sokoloski said, was “more isolating” than being off campus, contradictory to the university’s superficial portrayal of student life and the “big deal about the community on campus” Sokoloski said the university makes.

Sokoloski said she believes action by the university to improve the social situation on campus “would have had a lot more positive impact on the students on campus” during the height of the pandemic.

Having experienced a mostly virtual freshman year, Kyle Skrapits shared many of Sokoloski’s experiences and sentiments.

“My first semester was rough,” Skrapits (sophomore-landscape architecture) said. “It was very hard to meet people. I felt like I was alone.”

Meeting people is an integral aspect of the college experience, Skrapits said, and because he didn’t get to experience the full extent of Penn State’s social potential, Skrapits said he believes students “deserve a refund” for “getting ripped off” by tuition prices.

But Skrapits said he doesn’t blame the university for his lack of experience — he blames students who refused to follow Penn State and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention mitigation guidelines.

“I followed the guidelines pretty closely but not everybody did,” Skrapits said. “To go on social media and see those people having a great experience and me having the complete opposite, it’s defeating.”

Ashley Lebron said seeing others on social media living their lives and having a great time made her question herself and what she was choosing to do with her time — not only out of jealousy but also out of concern for

how those not abiding by CDC regulations were impacting her experience as a senior in high school.

“Everybody was either starting a new business or doing whatever,” Lebron (freshman-secondary education) said, “and I was just trying to survive my last year of high school.”

And as they enter the fourth week of the fall semester, surviving is what Lebron and Hall both said is their current goal. For Hall, that begins with protecting herself from contracting the coronavirus, she said.

“I’ve definitely felt very overwhelmed in my classes,” Hall said. “I could not imagine what would happen if I were to catch COVID.”

Imagining wasn’t so hard for Hall’s friend, Shenandoah Winn. She said she’s at risk for the virus, so the thought of contracting it stresses her out, she said.

“You don’t know what’s going to be happening to your body and how you’re going to react to the disease,” Winn (freshman-biomedical engineering) said. “Everything together makes me very anxious.”

Winn said catching the coronavirus is the source of “a

lot” of her mental health problems and anxieties, which begin with the prospect of her missing class from contracting it.

Both Winn and Hall are currently enrolled in a chemistry lab, which they said is in person because of the experiments they must complete. While there is a make-up day, according to Winn, Hall said missing more than one or two lab days would force her to drop the course and retake it, as there would be no way to make up for missed work.

Neither Hall nor Winn said they had reached out to their professor out of a fear of unresponsiveness due to the large class size.

Hall said she wishes “there could be more options presented” if students were to contract the coronavirus and be forced to quarantine for up to two weeks or for students who don’t feel safe attending in-person classes and other activities. And Winn agreed.

“The school could be doing better with helping this [anxiety],” Winn said. “I feel like I have to be so much safer because I’m high risk, and I don’t want to [have] academic penalties [for] having COVID.”

University spokesperson Lisa

Powers said via email the university offers several resources to aid mental health, including Counseling and Psychological Services, WellTrack, Life Hacks with CAPS, CAPS Chat, drop-in CAPS groups, the Penn State Health Promotion and Wellness, free wellness sessions, the Penn State Collegiate Recovery Community and the Penn State Crisis Line and Crisis Text Line — reachable at 877-229-6400 and by texting “LIONS” to 741741. CAPS resources are available at any time, including the resources in its virtual library, Powers said.

CAPS also offers training to students that teaches how to deal with distressing situations and crises, and a similar program called the Red Folder initiative exists to provide the same training to faculty and staff, according to Powers.

Students in distress may also be referenced to the Office of Student Care and Advocacy, Powers said, which works across the university on a number of wellness subjects, such as physical and mental health and food insecurity.

Visit collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.



Samantha Hendrzak/Collegian file photo

While attending Penn State amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, many students said it affects their mental health. “I’ve definitely felt very overwhelmed in my classes,” student Taylor Hall said.

‘IT’S NOT JUST SHYNESS’

Students share how pandemic affected social anxiety

By Olivia Estright
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When Penn State student Casey Diehl was a child, he said his parents noticed he would rarely look others in the eyes, and he struggled to hold a conversation.

As Diehl (senior-material science and engineering) grew up, he said the fear of engaging in conversation turned into constant worry of what people were saying or thinking about him.

During his freshman year of college, Diehl said he was diagnosed with social anxiety.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, social anxiety disorder causes a person to fear either specific or all social interactions.

Similarly to how Diehl felt, social anxiety comes with possible feelings of humiliation, judgment and rejection, according to the NIMH.

“You can’t really turn it off,” Diehl said. “What I’ve been working on the past couple of months is just exposing myself to those situations and trying to tolerate the discomfort.”

Although social anxiety is common, it doesn’t have an exact proven cause, according to the NIMH, though it is thought to be caused by differing brain structures, inherited traits and environmental impacts.

When Diehl was first diagnosed with social anxiety, he said he didn’t know what it was until he started researching it.

“It’s not just shyness,” Diehl said. “There’s a lot more to it than that.”

Diehl said when the discomfort of social situations becomes too much, he experiences symptoms, such as blushing and increased heart rate.

Some other common symptoms include sweating, nausea, rigid posture, staying away from areas with people and constantly feeling self-conscious.

If someone were to notice another person struggling with a social interaction, Diehl said he urges students to take a step back and let the person find comfort in the interaction.

“Don’t point things out. Let them take their time talking to you,” Diehl said. “If they’re pacing around, let them pace around. If they are having trouble



Jeremiah Hassel/Collegian

Students work diligently spaced away from each other due to the pandemic. “I want to make sure that I’m not trying to be someone that I’m not — that way I can connect with other people better,” Olivia Cavallaro said.

looking you in the eye, don’t force them to do anything.”

As Olivia Cavallaro transitioned into college life, she said it wasn’t her first time finding ways to cope with her anxiety.

Cavallaro (freshman-psychology) said because students normally live with only one roommate, putting yourself out there is necessary but hard.

“You have to create this whole new identity because you’re not with the people you were with for four years,” Cavallaro said.

Cavallaro said she’s been focusing on reinventing herself to ensure she’s authentic when she meets new people.

When Cavallaro goes to meet someone new, she said she notices her anxiety acting up when her hands start to shake, but it doesn’t stop her from being herself.

“I want to make sure that I’m not trying to be someone that I’m not — that way I can connect with other people better,” Cavallaro said.

Cavallaro said she relies on her small friend group and her therapist to help “guide the way” to coping with her anxiety.

“There are outlets everywhere,” Cavallaro said. “People just need to branch out and try to find the help they need.”

During her first in-person classes, Summer Clausen said she noticed one phrase triggering

her anxiety — “turn to the person sitting next to you.”

When instructors tell Clausen (sophomore-health policy and administration) to participate in group work, she said her anxiety begins to act up because she hopes she doesn’t say the wrong thing to her classmate.

“The forced interaction is not fun,” Clausen said. “Sometimes, I just have to force myself to participate and go to classes.”

Clausen said she wishes people would be “more open” with each other because she understands everyone is struggling in their own ways.

As a freshman, Chloe Kondracki said social interaction feels “weird,” and because of the pandemic, it’s gotten harder for students.

Kondracki (freshman-pharmacology and toxicology) said she’s from Maryland and knew no one when she arrived at Penn State.

“I know I’m not the only out-of-state student who doesn’t know anyone here, but for me, it’s so much harder to go out and meet people,” Kondracki said. “I look at all my friends from back home who go to the same university, and they don’t need to worry about this.”

Kondracki said she tries to avoid thinking about her family and friends because she becomes overwhelmed with homesickness.

“I constantly worry that if I don’t meet people, I will have to be by myself all the time,” Kondracki said. “I have to make myself go out — otherwise I won’t meet anybody.”

Since Penn State’s fall semester has been in session for less than a month, Kondracki said she isn’t worried about not finding many close friends yet because she was told in a normal year, it may take a few months to meet the right people.

Kondracki said she knows she’s not alone in struggling to socialize with others.

Because of the pandemic, Kondracki said students are coping with a “loss of social skills,” making it harder to interact with others.

After the first home football game on Saturday, Kondracki said her friends wanted to celebrate the win, but her “social battery was running low.”

Kondracki said she ended up staying in while her friends went out.

“Forcing yourself to be social when you don’t feel like being social will just make you feel worse,” Kondracki said.

Kondracki said she wants social anxiety to be normalized because it’s not something people can get rid of.

“It’s not your fault,” Kondracki said.

“That’s how your mind is work-

ing, and you didn’t choose it.”

After traveling almost 8,000 miles from home, Shafa Siddiqua said she knew there would be a lot of adjustments, but her first fear was that everyone knew at least one other person.

Siddiqua (freshman-management information systems) said as an international student coming from Bangladesh, she was “mentally prepared” for being “underestimated” and “misunderstood.”

Siddiqua said there’s a certain “label” placed on international students — people are nice to her but rarely approach her.

Since talking to some of her international friends who attend West Virginia University, Siddiqua said they haven’t made a single friend there.

“My one friend was told, ‘F--- brown people. I f---ing hate brown people,’ and it scared me,” Siddiqua said. “In my country, I’m not a minority, but here, I am.”

Siddiqua said no one at Penn State has treated her like this, but there still seems to be some barriers when it comes to social interaction.

“I’ve met people to talk to and do things — like go to the gym with — I don’t feel alone all the time,” Siddiqua said. “I can blend in.”

When it comes to being an international student, Siddiqua said many feel “left out.”

“People are normally nice and respectful, but you can see on their faces that they don’t want to talk to you,” Siddiqua said.

Siddiqua said she doesn’t see it as students being “racist,” but she said she believes American students avoid communicating with international students.

“Everyone is very within themselves,” Siddiqua said. “Sometimes, even just a ‘hi’ would be great, but no one is interacting with anyone.”

If students feel as though no one is approaching them, Siddiqua said she would encourage the student to make the first move.

“People need to let go of their assumptions, so we can approach everyone — American or not,” Siddiqua said.

“If people let go of their inherent bias, I think [we] would be better off.”

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How to practice self-care for free

By Victoria Gough
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

While the first week or two of every semester tends to be smooth sailing, the workload always picks up around week three or four.

And as the semester picks up, I notice I tend to neglect myself in exchange for focusing on school work, my internship and all my extracurriculars — and most people I know do the same.

The excuses for neglecting self-care are always the same: “I don’t have the time,” and “I don’t have the money,” — but these are common misconceptions. There are a number of easy ways to treat yourself without spending a dime.

Here are top picks for the best ways to treat yourself for no cost at all.

Experience the outdoors

I’ve said many times we are so lucky to attend a university with such a beautiful campus and countless ways to spend time in nature.

From having a picnic by the duck pond in the Hintz Alumni Garden to checking out the new Pollinator and Bird Garden in The Arboretum at Penn State (highly recommend), it’s easy to take a few minutes to yourself every day to breathe fresh air and watch the bees pollinate flowers.



Regan Gross/Collegian

The Arboretum at Penn State provides scenic views of their gardens for students to be able to admire and unwind.

If you have a car and a little more time to spare, try taking a hike through Walnut Springs Park, the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center or even Mount Nittany, all of which offer trails and wildlife watching just a short drive from campus.

No matter where you choose to go, bring a couple of friends along and enjoy all the nature Happy Valley has to offer.

Purge your social media feed

If you find yourself feeling stressed, angry or jealous when looking through Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat, do yourself a favor and unfollow any accounts that don’t add anything worthwhile to your feed.

I did a social media purge over the summer, and I find that I’m happier now that my feed is full of things that make me happy rather than a constant flow of bad news.

For those daring enough to do it, delete your apps altogether for a day or two — don’t scroll through Instagram during your commute or while you’re waiting in line at the dining hall. Instead, use the time to people-watch or take some deep breaths before your next class.

Try something new

Personally, I find my day-to-day life quickly falls into a routine while I’m at school. An easy way to remedy this is to try something new. After all, variety is the spice of life.

Take a couple of hours to stop by the Palmer Museum of Art and wander its halls, or check out a new book or movie at the library.

For the more adventurous people, go to a club meeting for an organization you’ve never been to before but have always wanted to join — I find that meeting new people and learning new things is a wonderful way to break the routine and enjoy all this university has to offer.

Rearrange your living

space

If cabin fever sets in quickly after sitting in your dorm or apartment for a while, it may be time for a change of scenery.

At home, I like to rearrange my room a little every six months or so to spice things up — it can be as simple as hanging up a poster or as drastic as moving my bed, desk and dresser to a different spot in the room.

While you’re at it, keeping your room tidy ensures a stress-free environment to come home to at night.

While it isn’t free, I find that buying a \$6 bundle of fresh flowers from the downtown farmer’s market or from Trader Joe’s is an inexpensive way to liven up a room — and make it smell good.

Take a night for yourself

If you’re like me, the vast majority of evenings during the semester are spent with others — friends, group projects, meetings. And if you’re like me, this gets draining after a while.

Every once in a while — every couple weeks or so — I like to take a night just for myself. I’ll watch a movie or play a video game, listen to music and even order food in for myself.

I think of it as kind of a “reset button” for my mental health, and I suggest it to anyone who’s beginning to feel burnt out with the stresses of college life.

Self-care doesn’t have to be about taking spa days or buying yourself expensive gifts. It’s simply about taking time to focus on yourself and allowing yourself to live.

It’s also not something that needs to be earned — the “Once I finish this paper, I’ll relax,” trap we all fall victim to. Rather, self-care is something that needs to be done regularly just like taking care of your schoolwork, your relationships or the plant on your windowsill.

And once you take care of your mind and body, the rest will fall into place.

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Jeremiah Hassel/Collegian

The transition to college can leave students feeling isolated.

Students reflect on college transition

By Kate Irwin
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Living at college for the first time may be one of the biggest life transitions for many Penn State students, and it can often cause a whirlwind of emotions and effects on mental health.

Madeline Peckheiser said transitioning to Penn State during the summer helped alleviate some of her stress prior to the fall semester.

“I did summer session, so that really helped me out,” Peckheiser (freshman-secondary education and English) said. “It made the move-in for fall so much easier because I was already adjusted to campus, I knew some people [and] I got a couple credits out of the way. So, doing summer session really helped my fall transition.”

Despite easing into her college experience and “meeting new friends,” Peckheiser said she still struggles with her mental health sometimes.

“In the summer, I was very nervous and scared. It was overwhelming,” she said.

“College has given me waves of loneliness. I know I have friends here, but it’s just such a big transition that I do feel alone sometimes. I’ve been talking about that with my friends recently, and they feel the same way, too. It makes me feel a little better that it’s not just me that feels that.”

Peckheiser said she remains optimistic these feelings will not stick with her forever — she makes an effort to mitigate the less-than-pleasant sensations.

“I try to distract myself, do something that makes me happy, like go hang out with my friends, go take a walk, call my mom — just something to distract myself from those feelings,” she said. “I hope eventually I’m fully adjusted and those feelings of loneliness do go away. I mean, they might not ever go fully away, but I’m hoping that they lessen.”

Olivia Manack said she agreed her time on campus this summer was helpful to an extent, although this fall is still “a bit of a toll” as she continues to adjust.

“I did the [Learning Edge Academic] Program in the summer, so I had a little bit more of an idea of what I was doing when I came here,” Manack (freshman-biochemistry and molecular biology) said.

“But it’s still definitely tough because it’s a lot more work to do now — the workload is different. In the summer, I had my car so I could go see my family, but now it’s more like I’m stuck here.”

The increased workload and structure of college courses is a source of stress for other students as well, such as Natalia Anseeuw, who said she is having to adjust the way she approaches her work.

Visit collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.



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MIND AND BODY

Performance psychology focuses on Penn State athletes' mental health

By Jack Flanagan
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The life of a Penn State athlete can be stressful.

The expectations they deal with on the field and in the classroom are enough to weaken their mental strength, which can lead to poor performance in both.

In Penn State's athletic department, the mental strength of its athletes is treated with an incredible amount of importance. The performance psychology department, led by Carl Ohlson and Adrianna Napoletano, works tirelessly to teach Nittany Lion athletes and coaches the skills necessary to be successful in all aspects of life.

Working in unison with Penn State's Counseling and Psychological Services, Ohlson and Napoletano's mission is to instill an attitude and belief system that allows athletes to form championship habits.

"We want to proactively build mental skills," Ohlson told The Daily Collegian. "Then, in response to certain situations, build the coping strategies, the reset skills, the ability to very intentionally walk yourself out of a negative situation into a neutral situation, and then from neutral into positive."

Ohlson's path to being at the forefront of performance psychology at Penn State wasn't exactly a traditional one.

After attending the United States Military Academy West Point, Ohlson served as an Airborne Infantry Ranger officer.

It was at that time he was presented with the opportunity to explore something different.

"I was a company commander at Fort Benning, Georgia, with 202 soldiers under my command at the time, and things were going really well," Ohlson said. "Then, the army offered me a three-year assignment at West Point at the center for enhanced performance."

"They said, 'The only thing is you have to go get yourself a

master's degree in sports psychology, whatever that is.'"

To secure that master's degree, Ohlson headed to the University of Virginia where he would learn from Bob Rotella, one of the most renowned sports psychologists in the world.

It was in the classrooms of Virginia that Ohlson realized sports psychology was becoming his passion.

"I sat there listening to what mental skills really are and how it's connected to everything I've experienced in the army," Ohlson said. "So there were these 'aha' moments with flashes going off in my brain the whole time, and in that moment in the classroom in 1994 I fell in love with sports psychology."

Fast forward to today, and Ohlson is using the skills he learned from his time in the Army and under Rotella's tutelage to positively impact Penn State Athletics.

"I proposed that if I partner with coaches, it changes the way that coaches are coaching," Ohlson said. "So we can multiply the influence across an entire organization with one relationship."

Teaching coaches the skills they need to benefit the mental strength of Penn State athletes allows Ohlson and Napoletano to widen their influence over every team on campus without needing to be physically present at all times.

Christina Diaz, who currently works as the special assistant to the vice president of intercollegiate athletics, acknowledges how vital it is for performance psychology to be present throughout the entire athletic department.

"We can serve our students as much as we want, but if our staff and our coaches aren't at the best that they can be, then we're not giving our student athletes as much as possible," Diaz told the Collegian.

For Ohlson, the key to successfully implementing

performance psychology in Penn State Athletics has always been about personal connections.

"It all starts with relationships," Ohlson said. "And that's why it's so essential that we're out in the environment with the teams and coaches. Everybody knows us because we will stand in the rain or in the snow. Whatever it is, they trust us."

While Ohlson and Napoletano's personal relationships are essential to providing athletes with the psychological resources they need, they are not alone.

Nicole DeFerrari of Penn State's Counseling and Psychological Services helps to treat the clinical and subclinical mental health concerns of athletes.

That partnership has created a highly organized and well-structured system that ensures athletes have the care they need.

"We are unbelievably collaborative," Ohlson said. "This is the most collaborative unit I've ever been a part of anywhere and a lot of that has to do with who has been selected for the job and the leadership."

As a former volleyball player at the University of Florida, Diaz lived the life of a student athlete and intimately understands how meaningful the work of the performance psychology department is.

"What they do best is they come see our student athletes and coaches in their environment, not just games, but practices, team meetings, strength and conditioning sessions, and leadership councils," Diaz said. "They're gathering all of this type of information to be able to develop relationships."

Current Nittany Lion fifth-year senior Sam Coffey might know that better than anyone.

Throughout her career on Penn State's women's soccer team, Coffey had multiple interactions with the performance psychology staff, both individually and through the team.



Lily LaRegina/Collegian

Midfielder Sam Coffey (17) dribbles the ball down the field during the Penn State women's soccer game against Minnesota on March 18.

The most notable of those interactions came during the height of the pandemic when some college athletes were struggling to find a clear sense of direction.

"With the tools that they gave us, and the training and the hours of dedication with our programs, we're set up to respond well in those moments of adversity," Coffey told the Collegian.

Coffey attributes much of her personal success, and the success of the women's soccer program, to the importance Ohlson and Penn State Athletics put on the mental health of athletes.

"I think the mental side of athletics, mental health, mental strength, resiliency is arguably the most important part of any sport," Coffey said. "I think if you don't have that element of the game in check, then everything else is set up to fail."

The resiliency of athletes is something Ohlson has preached ever since he arrived in Happy Valley.

Rather than treating athletes for mental problems they might be dealing with, Ohlson's entire philosophy has been predicated

on teaching individuals the skills they need to increase mental strength.

"Everybody is going to have a bad moment, or a bad day, or score a negative experience," Ohlson said. "If you have already built these mental toughness skills, these championship thinking skills, you have more skills to use to navigate tough times now."

The work Ohlson has done has gone a long way in ensuring Penn State's athletes are equipped with these skills, which is directly reflected in the success various athletic teams have had.

Since Ohlson first learned the in's and out's of performance psychology from Rotella, the field has expanded immensely.

However, much like many other industries are discovering, there's still so much more that can be done to improve the mental health, of not only athletes, but of everybody, Ohlson said.

"So now in the 21st century, we're talking about people celebrating the fact that athletes are going to get some assistance with mental health..." Ohlson said.

Visit the collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.

Jeff Cook focuses on mental health

By Morgan Boll
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As full-time athletes — as well as full-time students — Penn State athletes manage both their physical and mental health, on and off the field.

MEN'S SOCCER

Coach Jeff Cook said he believes his athletes' mental health is something that needs to be paid attention to and managing pressure is an essential part of the life of a student athlete.

"I think mental health is an absolutely critical component of preparing student athletes for success in the classroom, in life and on the field," Cook said.

The blue and white has enjoyed winning games and competing with other teams this season, however, the players' wellbeing is a fundamental aspect of its program.

"If we're not paying attention to our mental health, then I would indicate to myself, and all the coaches, that there's something bigger going on here than just the score of the game," Cook said.

Many Nittany Lions feel pressure to be successful going into games, and this is heightened due to the challenges they face from new opponents.



Ken Minamoto/Collegian file photo

Forward Liam Butts (7) looks toward the play during the men's soccer game against Maryland.

Each game comes with new competition and new challenges — meaning it can be difficult for the team to prepare — but Cook trusts his team to manage that aspect of playing the game.

"I think we have confidence in our group to handle a lot of different situations, a lot of different environments and focus on what we need to improve on," Cook said.

One of the more difficult situations to handle for the Nittany

Lions are away games.

Junior forward Liam Butts said he thinks some of the crowds at away games can be a mentally straining environment — especially at the West Virginia game where the blue and white was forced to play a man down.

Butts also stated that away matches can vary in terms of how mentally taxing they are depending on how animated an environment the home crowd creates.

Cook tells his players to be careful not to fall into the trap of thinking that if one game develops in a certain way that the next one is going to follow suit. Every game comes with a unique set of obstacles for the blue and white.

Butts said he believes that the coaches do a great job preparing the Nittany Lions — both physically and mentally — before a game. The coaching staff lays out where the players need to be on the field and tells them where they might need to put offensive pressure on the opponent.

"Just outlining the things we need to do before the game really takes the pressure off in the games," Butts said. "When you're under pressure, you might forget and just having the coaches reinforce that before is really helpful when you're in the heat of battle."

And, Cook said Penn State does a lot of work behind the scenes with its performance and with its coaching staff.

"We make sure that the whole team knows that whatever happens, we have each other's backs and that the relationships, individuals' mental health and wellbeing is absolutely the first thing," Cook said.

Junior goalkeeper Kris Shakes is more familiar with the pressure than perhaps any blue and white player as the netminder's

performance can often decide the success of the team on any given day.

Shakes had a successful season last spring and is continuing to shine in the net this season. He totaled 44 saves in the 2020 season and has 17 saves in four games in 2021.

"[Shakes] is athletic in terms of his capabilities, his explosiveness and jumping ability, his power, but what sets him apart is his recognition of how to come up big in really difficult situations," Cook said.

Shakes, a vocal and assertive leader on the pitch, uses his presence and performances to bring mental stability to the rest of the team in moments where the Nittany Lions face those "difficult situations."

A challenge for the blue and white is having to play frequently and not having much of a break in between matches to relax and rest.

Cook said he is confident his squad can handle the fast-paced season and the mental strain it can bring.

"We feel we have the depth, the experience and the quality in our team to handle it," Cook said.

The team is focusing on improving its performance and becoming the best versions of itself for this season.

Penn State is finding out what its strengths are and what some of its vulnerabilities are to be able to prepare for its fast-approaching conference schedule.

As the blue and white prepares to take on a host of top-leveled opponents, Cook said he prefers for the team to lean into the psychological stability of remaining as consistent as possible despite facing a unique challenge in each team it faces.

"We stay as consistent as we can with our beliefs," Cook said. "I would say we do slight adjustments rather than wholesale changes of playing philosophy or strategy."



Gianna Galli/Collegian

Goalie Kris Shakes (1) completes a throw in from the goal line during the Penn State men's soccer game against Ohio State on Jeffrey Field on Tuesday, March 23. Penn State 1-0.

Systemic change needed to improve mental health

College in itself is already an anxious time that takes a toll on the mental health of students. But when coupled with rising tuition prices, isolation from the pandemic and toxic productivity, said mental health has marred worse than ever.

According to a survey from BestColleges, 95% of students surveyed experienced some form of negative mental health symptoms as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. 48% of those said the effects of their mental health were impacting their education.

Yet, mental health as a whole has become a prevalent topic of discussion outside of the pandemic — with an aim to end the stigma surrounding those who suffer from it. To add to it, there's a negative stigma surrounding the lifestyle of college students, too.

Whether it be poor diet habits or pulling all-nighters to complete work, the predetermined notion of what college is sets the wrong expectation for incoming freshmen who are already

OUR VIEW

Student well-being must be a priority at Penn State

adjusting to the new structure of education. It should not be a bragging contest to see who can eat the least amount of food or how little you slept last night.

This plays into the aforementioned toxic productivity that plagues the daily lives of many where, unless every waking moment of time is devoted to work, then it's futile. As important as it is to work hard in classes and extracurriculars, that doesn't mean it's OK to neglect your mental and physical being. Students shouldn't have to feel guilty for dedicating parts of their day to activities not related to school.

While learning to balance day-to-day activities and a social

life is a part of the college experience, there seems to be no opportunity to take time for oneself. Either you allocate the majority of your time to work or get behind a day and end up playing catch-up — both of which affect the mental health of students negatively.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, Penn State began implementing wellness days to give students a break from classes to focus on their emotional and social wellness. While it sounds great as a concept, this did not stop professors from assigning work to compensate for the "day off." This also did not excuse the rest of work due that day for other classes, making wellness

days a time to get caught up on assignments — not for mental health.

The transition to virtual learning also dealt a blow to the mental health of students, as the coupling of being boxed in a room while staring at a screen all day with the uptick in assigned work didn't result in a positive impact on overall well-being.

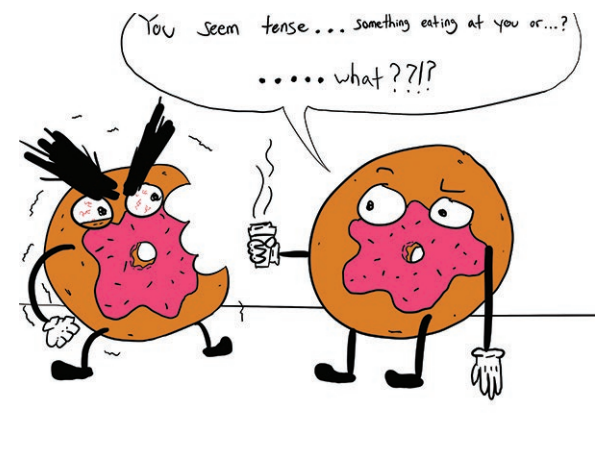

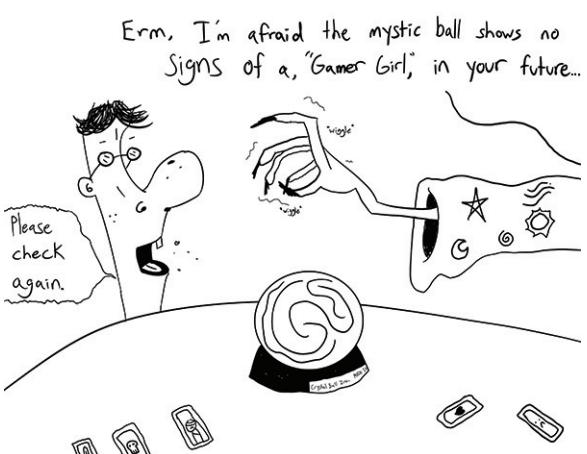
To see an improvement in the mental health of students, a change is needed in the educational system. It is of great importance for the higher ups at Penn State to encourage students to value their mental health and prioritize it when necessary. There are already professors who

emphasize this, setting a standard for more to follow suit.

Another way to allot more time for students to work on their mental health is a change in deadlines. Rather than have assignments bleed into the weekend, why not have them due on Friday? Granted, weekdays might be more hectic, but students will now have two days to themselves without having to worry about the proverbial "Sunday scaries."

Mental health may not be something tangible everyone can bear witness to, but that doesn't mean it should be taken lightly. While there are programs in place like Penn State's Counseling & Psychological Services combined with the implementation of wellness days, there's still more to be done.

This is not just a Penn State issue, rather a collegiate issue. College shouldn't be viewed as a competition for who can do the most work while sacrificing in other aspects of life. The education system should be one that feels rewarding, not deflating.



Comics by Davis Huth

MY VIEW | Kyle Hutchinson

The power of being there for a friend

When talking about mental health, I often see a focus on what symptoms encompass depression, anxiety and other conditions.



Hutchinson

I also see resources for people to reach out to if they need it, such as suicide prevention hotlines and counseling services.

Perhaps just as important and necessary, I see announcements or Instagram posts urging people to be allies for their friends suffering from mental health conditions.

Saying you're able to be there for someone is different than actually being there.

I know when I struggled with my mental health for years, it felt like a constant weight on my shoulders. Each and every aspect of my daily life was affected by it — from hanging out with friends, to talking to girls and to playing basketball.

With such a stigma around sharing mental health struggles

with others — especially in a culture where men sharing their feelings is looked down upon — I often felt I had nobody to talk to. That feeling of being alone and drowning in your own thoughts is the worst thing in the world.

I remember the medication — the Zoloft, the Wellbutrin — and how it was all supposed to help. I know I never felt better after taking it for years.

While medication may help some, I still felt alone, swallowing pills day after day. Sitting in my room by myself, I always felt lost and abandoned.

You can't walk alone in the battle against mental health, especially in those darkest moments. You need someone to be there for you.

It's natural to turn to counseling. Counselors are different from friends, however. They charge to see you and, regardless of good intentions, have to

make a living at the end of the day.

I always felt that any counselors I've talked to have meant well, but there is no substitute for a close friend reaching out and checking in. Once my friends caught on that I was struggling, I received an outpouring of support. After that, the road to recovering was so much easier.

I'm lucky to have a support system of friends who love and care for me. I'm also even more fortunate that they were able to reach out and comfort me in my times of need. I can't imagine who I would be or where I would be without their support.

Not everyone has that support system. Not everyone has people who will reach out to them and take that initiative.

Far too many suffer on their

own and don't know who to reach out to.

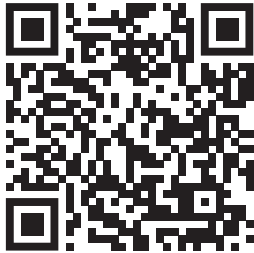
After getting through my own personal struggles with the help of others, I've been able to reach out to those going through similar difficulties. Many people helped me through the most difficult times, and I'm more than happy to be able to be there for others.

Reaching out to those you know may be struggling is hard. You may not want to seem aggressive, or you may be scared it could make things worse. From my experience, whenever someone looked after me and made sure to check in, I always felt appreciated and loved for — even if they weren't a super close friend.

Reaching out is always worth the effort and is really that important. Being that friend for someone is not just helpful but can be life saving for many.

I know it was for me.

Kyle Hutchinson is a junior majoring in criminology and is a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Email him at kkh5359@psu.edu or follow him on Twitter at [@kylehutchhutch](https://twitter.com/kylehutchhutch).



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‘A HAPPY MEDIUM’

Penn State’s busy students share how they manage to be so involved

By Anjelica Rubin
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State is home to countless overachieving and motivated students, but prioritizing mental health amid their activities and school work can become challenging with that level of commitment.

Even with Amanda Mohommad’s abnormal amount of credits and extracurriculars, she said she finds time to balance work with her personal life.

“I thrive when I have a lot to do,” Mohommad (junior-global and international studies, labor and human resources, and Spanish) said. “I’ve gotten used to it over time, but I think it’s also just in my nature to never sit still for too long.”

Among other opportunities, Mohommad is a Lion Ambassador, PIRE Research Fellow, Ronald E. McNair Scholar and co-director of Students Teaching Students, a program founded in 2019 to encourage undergraduate students to teach niche courses to fellow students.

Additionally, she works downtown at a part-time job — around 15 hours each week — and with the 24 credits she is taking during the fall semester, one might wonder how she gets it all done.

“I reflect quite a bit on my involvement and regularly ask myself why it is that I am involved in one thing or the other,” Mohommad said. “If I continue to feel passionate about it, and I can truthfully admit that to myself, I know I will be able to make it work.”

Mohommad said after her first year on campus, she learned to rely on Google Calendar and a day planner to schedule every single part of her day.

“I think one of the reasons I’m not going crazy 24/7 is because I have good time management,” Mohommad said. “I can hyper-focus and get it all done when I need to.”

While Mohommad admitted she does have her moments where she can feel a bit overwhelmed, she said she “would not want it any other way.”

Citing school as her number one priority, Mohommad said she



Namun Ganbold/Collegian

Many Penn State students keep busy with extra credits, extracurriculars and other activities. “Mental health must be the number one priority,” Najee Rodríguez said.

will never shy away from saying no if and when she needs a break.

“I try to rely on my friends as that source of fun in my day,” Mohommad said. “To have an outlet to get everything out to is really important. I can not stress enough how necessary it is to take time off when you feel overwhelmed or not present enough.”

Najee Rodríguez serves as the University Park Undergraduate Association’s vice president, a role that’s “just as fulfilling as it is a full-time job” but also can be seen on campus as part of Lion Ambassadors and the Presidential Leadership Academy.

“Obviously, you are in college to get your education,” Rodríguez (junior-international politics and history) said. “But along the way, my biggest advice is to get involved, find a community bigger than yourself and take advantage of those opportunities.”

Rodríguez, an out-of-state student from Florida, said he did not know anyone prior to arriving on campus and signed up for as much as he could in order to meet people.

“I think where I got it wrong was trying to do too much without worrying about the consequences that that could have on my [mental health],” Rodríguez said. “You

can’t successfully give to others if you don’t give to yourself first.”

Rodríguez said the strain that comes with being super involved did take a toll, and he was referred to a psychiatrist and soon after put on medications.

“I learned the hard way,” Rodríguez said. “Mental health must be the number one priority. Without focusing on our wellbeing, it’s not sustainable to keep going.”

But with a good balance, campus involvement provides important benefits as well, according to Rodríguez.

“To get into a routine and be able to develop professionally while still in college is an amazing opportunity we have at Penn State,” Rodríguez said. “It would be a shame not to take advantage of it.”

Other students like Madison Miller said prioritizing mental health is one of the most important ways to prevent burnout as the fall semester continues.

“Before school began, I originally wanted to have an easier semester,” Miller (sophomore-broadcast journalism) said. “Even though it ended up being just the opposite, I think it also energizes me to make the most out of all the things I get to do.”

Miller said she is working two

internships this semester — one with a talent agency in Los Angeles and another as a digital content intern for Penn State Athletics, covering men’s basketball.

“I have multiple days a week where I have to be working 10 hours straight,” Miller said. “It’s a lot, but it all comes down to how I divide my time up.”

Miller said she always makes sure to give herself time to relax during the day.

“Getting work done efficiently by setting a clock or writing a checklist are my secrets to success,” Miller said. “Nevertheless, I will always call it quits around midnight no matter what because I need my sleep to function.”

Miller said if people spent even half the time they spend on their devices on something more productive, they could become more involved.

But compared to last year’s virtual format for both class and extracurriculars, Miller said it has taken time to adjust to the changes and extra time needed to get from place to place.

Miller, who is also part of Penn State Network Television and Centre News Digest, an initiative meant to highlight community news in the Centre County area,

said she’s had to make some sacrifices.

“A good example was a leadership position I had in a club I was a part of this semester,” Miller said. “I felt I could not mentally give it my all, so I stepped down and put my mental sanity first.”

Miller said evolving the trust within herself to make those kinds of decisions has come as she has matured. But Miller isn’t slowing down any time soon, she said.

She co-founded a new club this semester called the Nittany Lion Red Carpet Network, an entertainment broadcast club and the first of its kind on the University Park campus.

Miller said the relationships, whether with family or professors, are all part of a support system that is needed to balance out all of the “crazy” in her life.

“It can be isolating to think you are alone in these struggles,” Miller said. “College is one of the hardest parts of your life, and sometimes, it can feel like you have no one else to relate to.”

Miller said leaning on upper-classmen and finding students who have been in her position before, whether that be having an internship during the semester, overloading on credits or who have pursued the same clubs as she does are all techniques that help her.

Among many of her roles on campus, Maryah Burney is a World In Conversation dialogue facilitator, social action co-chair and historian of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Bellisario College of Communications Fellow and university relations co-director for the Multicultural Association of Schreyers Scholars.

“I think my drive comes from high school and being really involved then,” Burney (junior-digital and print journalism) said. “But as I’ve matured, I have had to learn it is okay to drop things.”

Burney said in the past, she was not able to have hard boundaries when it came to her involvement and ended up “ruining” her mental health during that time period.

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