



VERSUS

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WISCONSIN (2-1)
BADGERS

(3-0) PENN STATE
NITTANY LIONS





‘TERRY HAS LIVED’

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

For nearly 50 years, Terry Smith has built his life around football.

From playing on Firethorn Drive in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, with childhood friends to playing wide receiver at Penn State, coaching at both the high school and college before eventually taking over as the Nittany Lions’ interim head coach, football has remained the constant in his life.

But even after stepping into the most prominent role of his career as the Nittany Lions’ interim head coach, Smith said he’s more comfortable being behind the scenes coaching his players.

“This is what I’ve done for my entire life, I’ve been coaching,” Smith said on Aug. 7. “There’s no better feeling than to be on the grass. To be on the grass, getting after your guys, coaching them up, and then unleashing them on game day. That’s where I’m most comfortable. I’d rather coach and kind of be hidden.”

That comfort was built long before Smith returned to Penn State as a coach. It started as a kid, where Smith spent his childhood playing football and other sports with a group of friends who would eventually go on to play Division I football.

At Gateway High School, Smith quarterbacked his team to back-to-back WPIAL titles in 1985 and 1986. He was the star in his second championship, scoring the only touchdown in the 7-6 victory.

“Terry’s just a competitive athlete from the very beginning,” Verne Howard, one of Smith’s childhood friends and high school teammates, told The Daily Collegian. “Coming from Aliquippa, PA, that was his roots where he came from and brought that with him to Gateway. That’s where you get that initial toughness from.”

His success at Gateway eventually led him to Penn State, where he established himself as one of the top receivers. Smith played in the NFL, Canadian Football League and Arena League before transitioning to coaching, with his first role coming at Hempfield High School. He spent four years at Duquesne and returned to Gateway as offensive coordinator.

Over the next 12 years, Smith took on the roles of head coach and athletic director at his high school. Howard said Smith was a hard coach who consistently produced high-level athletes, but enjoyed forming relationships with his students.

In addition to the numerous All-Americans athletes and those who played in the Big 33, an all-star game featuring Pennsylvania’s top high school players, Smith was also known for giving opportunities to athletes who weren’t necessarily at the same level as their peers.

Smith would help athletes learn how to study film and aided them in the recruiting process.

“That was stuff he wasn’t getting paid for, he just did on his own,” Howard said.

Smith’s impact extended beyond the football field. He would often give lunch money to students who were struggling financially, and “would never tell a kid no,” according to Howard.

Smith would help athletes learn how to study film and aided them in the recruiting process.

In 2013, Smith returned to the collegiate ranks as Temple’s wide receivers coach. A year later, he returned to his alma mater, this time coaching the cornerbacks and serving as the defensive recruiting coordinator.

Smith quickly became one of the most trusted members of James Franklin’s staff. He was named assistant head coach in 2016 and associate head coach in 2021.

“He exemplifies what Penn

State is,” D’Anton Lynn said on Aug. 25. “He’s a great leader, not just for the players, but for the staff. He puts his ego aside and he cares about Penn State football more than anything else.”

Over his 13 seasons at Penn State, Smith has helped develop a dozen players who went onto play in the NFL, but those accolades were never the point. His focus remained on the daily work of coaching and building relationships with his players.

For a coach who had spent much of his career working behind the scenes, the opportunity put Smith in the center of Penn State football. His approach, however, remained the same.

“I just want to be a really, really good coach,” Smith said. “I want to be a really good role model to these guys and lead by example, and hopefully they can learn some lessons to navigate their waters as they become adults and grow men in their own life. Just live right and do right by people, and then the good Lord takes care of everything else.”

The Nittany Lions won their final three games of the regular season to become bowl eligible, going onto defeat Clemson in the PinStripe Bowl.

Smith said the culture when he was interim reminded him of his own playing days at Penn State, calling it “a little bit of a throwback.”

“We’re building a great culture. We’re building a team. We’re building togetherness,” Smith said on Aug. 7. “We’re building guys that really care about each other and want to play for each other.”

After Penn State hired Matt Campbell on Dec. 5 to be the next head coach despite some players and many fans alike advocating for Smith to get the full-time job, Smith was faced with a decision: Should he stay or should he go?

“It was a dire situation of whether I’m going to stay, I’m going to leave, I’m going to take

other opportunities,” Smith said. “Who’s going to be the next head coach here? Do I fit his style? Do I fit his culture?”

But after speaking with Campbell, Smith knew there was a fit alongside him. He had known Campbell for over a decade, with Campbell even recruiting players from Gateway when Smith was the head coach. Smith knew “he was my kind of guy that I can get behind.”

And Campbell felt the same way, as it was reported just hours after he was hired that Penn State’s new head coach would be staying on staff.

“My gratitude and honor to be able to work forward with Terry and lead forward with Terry means a great deal to myself and it certainly means a great deal to our young men in our football program,” Campbell said.

Since the beginning of the Campbell era, Smith’s influence has continued to shape the program. Nearly half of Penn State’s roster entered the transfer portal after Franklin’s firing, but the cornerback room had the highest retention rate.

According to cornerback Zion Tracy, Smith was a key reason he stayed in Happy Valley, saying, “Terry’s somebody I really trust, so I was so glad he stayed.”

Smith’s impact has also extended beyond football, as he was named an honorary grand marshal for the 2026 Homecoming Parade, signifying his impact on the State College community and what he truly means to Penn State.

“The greatest thing Terry brings is he’s such a wealth of living knowledge of what it means to be a Penn Stater,” Campbell said Tuesday. “I think how Terry has lived and how he’s led as a player and a coach here in this community, it continues to be the essence of what it means to be a great Penn Stater.”

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3 THINGS I THINK, 3 THINGS I KNOW

By Lexie Linderman
 THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State has officially concluded its nonconference slate, throughout which it showcased what kind of team it could be in the first year under Matt Campbell.

Across these last three weeks, the Nittany Lions have risen four spots in the AP Poll, faced some needed adversity and revealed what kind of playmakers it has.

But the nonconference matchups can only show so much about a team, and Big Ten play is going to be way different for this squad.

So here's three things I think and three things I know after Penn State's first three games of 2026.

I think the run game is going to be just fine

Taylor Mouser said it best after Week 2: "To say that I wasn't thrilled with where the run game's at would be an understatement."

At that time, Penn State was averaging 3.9 yards per carry as a team. So it came out against Buffalo with a clear conviction to get the run game going, and that included spreading the ball around more to different running backs.

The result? 304 rushing yards and five rushing touchdowns.

As long as Mouser continues giving all four running backs meaningful carries throughout each game, the ground game is going to be just fine.

I know Rocco Becht can carry Penn State to wins

Rocco Becht has had the best start of his collegiate career with Penn State this season. He has 751 yards, nine touchdowns, zero interceptions and a 70.3% completion percentage, even with backup Alex Manske taking over in the third quarter of two games. Becht's 215 passer rating



Emily Watters/Collegian

Defensive end Yvan Kemajou (19) celebrates with teammates during the Penn State football game against Buffalo at West Shore Home Field at Beaver Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026 in University Park, Pa.

ranks fourth nationally, trailing only Georgia's Gunner Stockton, Indiana's Josh Hoover and Miami's Darian Mensah, and his numbers through three games are just slightly better than they were in 2024 — his best season at Iowa State.

While Becht has had some blunders, such as running out of bounds behind the line of scrimmage multiple times rather than throwing the ball away or missing a few wide-open guys in the end zone, he's otherwise been consistent through the air and has taken great care of the ball.

But arguably most importantly, Becht's leadership capabilities are why he can put Penn State on his back when times get tough and carry them to a victory. He did just that when the Nittany Lions were struggling against Temple.

"The thing that I really appreciate it's like who responded," Campbell said after defeating Temple. "It's the guys you expect, right? Rocco steps up, he makes big plays in big moments to kind of get you back into the football game."

I think the edge rushers need to get more pressure

Penn State's defensive end room was a bit of a question mark this offseason, and almost still is in a sense now that Max Granville is out for the year.

The Nittany Lions have just five sacks this season, three of which have come from the linebackers. Their edge rushers need to step up as Penn State begins conference play, especially with multiple dual-threat quarterbacks on the upcoming schedule.

Sophomore Yvan Kemajou has been the most consistent defensive end this season and had a big game against Buffalo with two tackles for loss and two quarterback hurries. The Nittany Lions need him to keep that up moving forward.

"I think at first it was kind of spotty," D'Anton Lynn said Tuesday. "He'd make flash plays, and then you wouldn't feel him for a little bit. Then he'd make a play, and I think the more he's been in this system, the more consistent he's been."

I know Benjamin Brahmer needs to be involved more

Benjamin Brahmer was Penn State's leading receiver against Temple, putting the offense on his back when it needed him most with a 23-yard touchdown right before the half and another score later in the game.

But besides his five-catch, 79-yard performance in Philadelphia, Brahmer has been quiet in the passing game, with just one reception in each of the Nittany Lions' other two games for 18 yards combined.

Brahmer is one of the best tight ends in the country and was a semifinalist for the John Mackey Award — given annually to the top tight end nationally — last year. He needs to be involved in the passing game more, especially if leading wide receiver Koby Howard is out multiple weeks.

I think a healthy Brett Eskildsen will be a game-changer

Matt Campbell said Tuesday that wide receiver Brett Eskild-

sen has been "dinged up" the last two weeks, which is likely a reason why his production has dipped since having 48 yards and a touchdown against Marshall.

Whenever Eskildsen is back to full health, whether that's this week or the next, he immediately becomes a dangerous threat to opposing defenses because of his speed. The Iowa State transfer is easily the fastest wide receiver Penn State has, and that helps open up the passing game even more.

"Every opportunity he's got, he's made some dynamic things happen," Campbell said Tuesday.

I know the secondary is one of the best in the Big Ten

Through three games, Penn State's secondary has allowed 270 passing yards, good for an average of just 90 per game. It only allowed 60 passing yards to Buffalo, albeit a quarterback starting his first-ever college game, but locked down wide receiver Chance Morrow, who had been incredibly productive in the Bulls' first two matchups.

The Nittany Lions having an elite secondary is not necessarily unexpected, as the cornerback and safety rooms feature some of the most veteran talent on the entire roster with Jeremiah Cooper, Audavion Collins, Marcus Neal Jr. and Zion Tracy all having plenty of game experience under their belts. But even the younger players in the secondary, most notably sophomore Daryus Dixon, have shined, and the unit was the highest-graded in the country by Pro Football Focus in Week 1 against Marshall.

Penn State currently ranks second in both total passing yards allowed and passing yards allowed per game, trailing only Kansas State in both categories.

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HOWARD OUT FOR ‘EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME’

By Noah Aberegg
 THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Matt Campbell announced Wednesday that wide receiver Koby Howard is out for an "extended period of time." His injury is not season-ending, however.

"Disappointing for Koby, but he's handled it really well,"

Campbell said. "I think the best interest of him going forward, making sure we do right by him and certainly our football team."

Howard has proved to be an elite talent through three weeks, leading Penn State with 344 receiving yards and two touchdowns.

He was on pace to break the

single-season receiving yards record for the Nittany Lions.

On Tuesday, Matt Campbell said Howard was dinged up on his 70-yard touchdown against Buffalo and would know more about his status at the end of the week.

It is unclear what injury Howard is dealing with, but the wide

receiver posted a picture of Darth Vader's bacta tank on his Instagram story Wednesday afternoon with "10/17/2026," which is the date of Penn State's game at Michigan.

"He's handling it well," wide receiver Brett Eskildsen said Wednesday. "I mean, injuries suck. Being out, like getting off

to the start he has, contributing to the team and being the player that he is, it sucks. But he's a hard worker, so he's just getting in the lab in the in the training room, and we know he'll be back as soon as he can be."

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<div>  <div> WISCONSIN BADGERS </div> </div>											
No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Tyrell Henry	WR/Sr.	17	Niziy Davis	TE/So.	45	Yahya Gaad	LB/Fr.	82	Emmett Bork	TE/So.
0	Justus Boone	LB/Sr.	17	Carsen Eloms	CB/Fr.	47	Evan Van Dyn Hoven	LB/Sr.	84	Ryan Schwendeman	TE/Sr.
1	Eric Fletcher Jr.	CB/Jr.	18	Danny O'Neil	QB/Jr.	49	Ben Wenzel	LB/Fr.	85	Grant Stec	TE/Jr.
1	Colton Joseph	QB/Fr.	18	Donovan Dunmore	CB/Fr.	49	Aydon Fickell	TE/Fr.	86	Jack Sievers	TE/Fr.
2	Chris Brooks Jr.	WR/Sr.	19	Thomas Heiberger	LB/Jr.	50	Ryan Cory	OL/Jr.	87	Jackson McGohan	WR/Sr.
2	Javan Robinson	CB/Sr.	19	Landon Nordgaard	WR/Jr.	50	Sam Lateju	LB/So.	89	Jacob Harris	TE/Sr.
3	Cai Bates	CB/Jr.	20	Luke Emmerich	S/So.	51	Michael Garner	LB/Sr.	90	Djidjou Bah	DL/Fr.
3	Abu Sama III	RB/Sr.	20	Juju Pope	RB/Jr.	51	Austin Kaweck	OL/Sr.	90	Will Kelly	P/Fr.
4	Marvin Burks Jr.	S/Sr.	21	Cairo Skanes	S/So.	52	Hardy Watts	OL/So.	91	Sean West	P/Jr.
4	Malachi Coleman	WR/Sr.	21	Bryan Jackson II	RB/Jr.	53	Cam Clark	OL/So.	91	Hammond Russell IV	DL/Sr.
5	Carter Smith	QB/So.	22	Jaylen Williams	LB/So.	53	Andrew Goodman	LS/Sr.	92	Nolan Vils	DL/Sr.
5	Bryce West	CB/Jr.	22	Dorsett Stecker	WR/Fr.	54	Brady Bekkenhuis	OL/Fr.	93	DeNigel Cooper	DL/Jr.
6	Darrion Dupree	RB/Jr.	23	Landon Gauthier	LB/Jr.	55	Drew Braam	LB/Jr.	94	Xavier Ukpou	DL/So.
6	Jai'mier Scott	CB/So.	24	Zion Legree	WR/Fr.	55	Kevin Heywood	OL/Jr.	94	Brady Melum	K/Fr.
7	Tyreesse Fearbry	LB/Sr.	25	Will Mikonowicz	S/Fr.	56	James Roe	LS/Jr.	95	Jacob Anderson	DL/Sr.
7	Shamar Rigby	WR/Jr.	26	Kah'ni Watts	S/Fr.	58	Michael Roeske	OL/So.	96	Arthur Scott III	DL/Fr.
8	Mason Posa	LB/So.	26	Eli Adams	WR/Jr.	59	Aaron Witt	LB/Sr.	97	Gavin Lahm	K/Sr.
8	Deuce Adams	QB/Jr.	27	Raphael Dunn	S/Jr.	60	Nolan Davenport	OL/So.	97	Junior Poyser	DL/Sr.
9	Jaylon Domingeaux	WR/Sr.	28	Jon Jon Kamara	LB/Jr.	64	Evan Brown	OL/Sr.	98	Will McDonald	LB/Sr.
10	Ryan Hopkins	WR/Fr.	29	Matt Jung	S/Sr.	65	Aiden Dirksen	OL/Fr.	98	Ethan Tranel	P/Sr.
11	Kash Brock	WR/Fr.	30	Charles Perkins	DL/Sr.	70	Barrett Nelson	OL/Sr.			
11	Carson Van Dinter	S/Jr.	31	Dashuan Moss	CB/Fr.	71	PJ Wilkins	OL/Sr.			
12	Nicolas Clayton	LB/So.	32	Harrison Bortolotti	RB/So.	72	Lucas Simmons-Johansson	OL/Sr.			
12	Zion Kearney	WR/Jr.	34	Ashton Fickell	LB/Fr.	73	Blake Cherry	OL/So.			
13	Eugene Hilton Jr.	WR/So.	37	Treve Stoffel	LB/Fr.	75	Emerson Mandell	OL/Jr.			
13	Matthew Traynor	S/Sr.	38	Mason Lane	RB/Jr.	76	Dillan Johnson	DL/Jr.			
14	Liam Danitz	LB/Sr.	39	Jayden Loftin	LB/So.	76	Stylz Blackmon	OL/Jr.			
14	Keeyshawn Tabuteau	WR/Fr.	41	McCoy Smith	FB/Fr.	77	Peyton Lange	OL/Sr.			
15	Sebastian Cheeks	LB/Sr.	42	Tyler Jansey	FB/Sr.	78	Colin Cubberly	OL/Jr.			
15	Nate Palmer	RB/Jr.	43	Taylor Schaefer	LB/Jr.	79	Logan Powell	OL/So.			
16	Grant Dean	S/So.	44	Cooper Catalano	LB/So.	81	Mason Kelley	WR/So.			

<div>  <div>PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS</div> </div>											
No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Chase Sowell	WR/Sr.	15	Joshua Johnson	CB/Fr.	37	Jeremy Washington	RB/Fr.	75	Pete Eglitis	OL/Fr.
0	Jahmir Joseph	CB/Fr.	16	Donte Nastasi	CB/Jr.	38	Nathan Tiyce	P/So.	76	Hunter Albright	OL/Fr.
1	James Peoples	RB/Jr.	17	Josiah Zayas	CB/Fr.	39	Ty Blanding	DT/Jr.	77	Owen Aliciene	OL/Fr.
1	Ikenna Ezeogu	DE/Sr.	18	Max Granville	DE/So.	39	Jashaun Green	S/Sr.	78	Malachi Goodman	OL/Fr.
2	Zay Robinson	WR/Fr.	18	Benjamin Bahmer	WR/Fr.	40	Keian Kaiser	LB/Fr.	79	Donnie Harbour	OL/So.
2	Audavion Collins	CB/Sr.	19	Jack Lambert	QB/Jr.	40	Jake Lukac	TE/Fr.	80	Cooper Alexander	TE/So.
3	Rocco Becht	QB/Sr.	19	Yvan Kemajou	DE/So.	41	Jake Laverde	S/Fr.	81	Ben Whitver	WR/Fr.
3	Jamison Patton	S/Sr.	20	Tyrell Chatman	CB/Fr.	42	Mason Robinson	DE/Jr.	82	Ethan Black	WR/Jr.
4	Brett Eskildsen	WR/Jr.	21	Vaboue Toure	S/So.	43	Dayshaun Burnett	DE/Fr.	83	Brian Kortovich	TE/Fr.
4	Jeremiah Cooper	S/Sr.	21	Carson Hansen	RB/Sr.	45	Josh Banks	LB/Fr.	84	Gabe Burkle	TE/Sr.
5	Daryus Dixon	CB/So.	24	Ibn McDaniels	S/So.	46	Evan Wolff	LB/Fr.	87	Andrew Rappleyea	WR/Jr.
6	Koby Howard	WR/So.	25	Quinton Martin Jr.	RB/So.	47	Aidan Probst	DE/So.	88	Elijah Reeder	DE/Fr.
7	Zion Tracy	CB/Sr.	25	Alex Tatsch	LB/So.	50	Cooper Cousins	OL/Jr.	89	Finn Furmanek	TE/Jr.
7	Alex Manske	QB/Fr.	26	Cam Smith	LB/Fr.	51	Brock Riker	OL/So.	89	Jackson Ford	DE/Fr.
7	Peter Gonzalez	WR/So.	26	Cam Wallace	RB/Jr.	52	Dominic Rulli	OL/Sr.	90	Liam Andrews	DT/Fr.
8	Karon Brookins	WR/Fr.	27	Omarion Davis	S/So.	54	Vaea Ikakoula	OL/Fr.	91	Armstrong Nnodim	DT/So.
8	Kooper Ebel	LB/Sr.	28	Bryson Williams	S/Fr.	55	Chimdy Onoh	OL/Jr.	92	Andrew Dufault	SN/So.
9	Cael Brezina	LB/Jr.	29	D'Antae Sheffey	RB/Fr.	56	Mason Dhonhauer	OL/Fr.	92	Siale Taupaki	DT/Sr.
9	Amarion Jackson	WR/Fr.	29	Hunter Sowell	CB/Fr.	56	Alijah Carnell	DT/So.	93	Bobby Mears	DE/Jr.
10	Caleb Bacon	DE/Sr.	30	Christian Askew	S/Fr.	61	Liam Horan	OL/So.	94	Ryan Barker	K/Jr.
10	Connor Barry	QB/Sr.	31	Logan Cunningham	WR/Jr.	65	Jim Fitzgerald	OL/Sr.	94	De'Andre Cook	DT/So.
11	LaVar Arrington II	DE/So.	31	Marcus Neal Jr.	S/Jr.	66	Will Tompkins	OL/Fr.	95	Cristiano Rosa	K/Sr.
11	Lyrick Samuel	WR/So.	32	John Klosterman	LB/Sr.	67	Henry Boehme	OL/Jr.	96	Lucas Tenbrock	P/Fr.
12	Kase Evans	QB/Fr.	33	Alex McPherson	DE/So.	68	Anthony Donkoh	OL/Jr.	98	Dallas Vakalahi	DT/Jr.
12	Xxavier Thomas	CB/Fr.	34	Chris Fileppo	LB/So.	70	Trevor Buhr	OL/Jr.	98	Matthew Parker	K/Fr.
13	Tony Rojas	LB/Jr.	35	Blaise Sokach-Minnick	SN/Sr.	71	Garrett Sexton	OL/So.	99	Keanu Williams	DT/Sr.
13	Hank Lustig	WR/Fr.	35	Tyler Armstead	CB/So.	72	Tyshon Huff	OL/Jr.			
14	Peyton Falzone	TE/Fr.	36	Amar'e Glover	RB/Fr.	73	Caleb Brewer	DT/So.			
15	Keith Jones Jr.	WR/So.	37	Max Heffner	CB/Fr.	74	Kuol Kuol II	OL/Fr.			

D’Anton Lynn talks depth

DC shares importance of versatility ahead of Wisconsin

By Andrew Mercer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Power issues forced Penn State’s weekly press conference to Zoom, where D’Anton Lynn addressed the media on Tuesday following the Nittany Lions’ Week 3 victory over Buffalo.

Lynn discussed how his depth pieces give the defense versatility, linebacker Alex Tatsch’s growth and gave insight on Wisconsin ahead of Penn State’s conference opener.

Here’s what Lynn said.

Depth offers versatility

Lynn said the return of defensive tackles Armstrong Nnodim and Alijah Carnell has benefited the defensive tackle room’s ability to keep players fresh.

Through the first three weeks, he felt as though the starters were on the field too much, and were more fatigued than he would’ve liked. He noted that with the upcoming Big Ten slate on the horizon, the Nittany Lions are going to need depth, and he wants to be able to play four to five players in the rotation.

“(Having them back) just gives us more depth,” Lynn said. “It helps keep the guys in front of them fresh. When they’re on the field, we look at them like starters. They have the ability to play just like the guys in front of them.”

At defensive end, Lynn said freshman Jackson Ford is



Lucas Yendrzejewski/Collegian

Defensive coordinator D’Anton Lynn speaks to the media at Beaver Stadium on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026, in University Park, Pa. He emphasized the return of Alex Tatsch post-injury.

showing growth from week-to-week, and he’s going to continue giving him the reps he’s earning. In Max Granville’s absence, Ford is one of the players “in the rotation.”

“He just needs to keep on showing it in practice on a daily basis, so that we can keep entrusting him with those reps on Saturday,” Lynn said.

Additionally, Lynn said there’s a pipeline for standout players on special teams to get meaningful playing time on defense, with Tyler Armstead as one example. Lynn noted players work hard to gain trust on special

teams and he wants to reward that.

“It starts on teams,” Lynn said. “Since I’ve been here, (Armstead’s) been one of the most trusted guys on teams. A lot of times when guys start finding consistency on teams, you see it carry over to defense.”

Alex Tatsch

Tatsch returned in the Week 2 matchup against Temple from an undisclosed injury suffered before the Pinstripe Bowl, and Lynn said he was giddy to get back on the field.

“You can kind of tell he hadn’t

played in a year,” Lynn said. “He was a little bit all over the place, and then this week, you saw it kind of slow down for him. He made less mistakes, was playing a little bit faster, more under control, and I just think you know he’s a starter in the Big Ten. We really feel like that.”

However, against Buffalo, Lynn noted that Tatsch showed poise and played a much cleaner game with four tackles and a tackle for loss against the Bulls.

Going forward, Lynn wants to continue getting Tatsch reps to build up his confidence throughout the season. But

overall, he feels Tatsch is in a good spot.

“I think he’s going to get better and better each week,” Lynn said.

Scouting Wisconsin

Looking ahead to Penn State’s Big Ten opener against Wisconsin on Saturday, Lynn said the Badgers are going to try to “punch us in the mouth.”

He noted Wisconsin is a physical team in the run game and explosive in the pass game, as quarterback Colton Joseph will look to launch the ball downfield. Lynn praised Joseph for his success at Old Dominion and the experience he brings to the Badgers.

Additionally, Lynn said he’ll have to keep an eye on Joseph’s scrambling ability.

“He can run, so anytime you have to deal with the quarterback run game, that always adds a different element to it,” Lynn said. “They’re going to take their shots downfield, and they do a good job protecting him in the pocket. They do a good job on sprint outs and boots and play action max. He has a strong arm, and he gives his guys a chance downfield.”

Overall, Lynn said the Badgers’ offense is strong on pre-snap motion and shifting things around to keep defenses guessing.

“It’ll be a good challenge for us,” Lynn said.

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‘Next man up mentality’

WRs confident after Howard injury

By Andrew Deal
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s wide receiver room took a hit when Matt Campbell announced Wednesday that Koby Howard will be out for an “extended period of time.”

The confidence in the unit hasn’t wavered despite the loss of Howard, especially with the return of Brett Eskildsen, who’s now at 100% after being dinged up the last two weeks, according to Campbell.

“I think again, that rest of that room has got to continue to step up and make plays,” Campbell said. “I think when they’ve had the opportunity, they’ve shown to make plays too. So we’ll just continue to navigate that. The next man up will be ready to roll.”

Howard’s loss, no matter the confidence in the room, is detrimental to the offensive production. Through three games, Howard leads the team in receiving yards with 344 and yards per reception with 28.7, both of which rank top 10 nationally.

“He’s handling it well,” Eskildsen said. “I mean, injuries suck. Being out, like getting off to the start he has, contributing to the team and being the player that he is, it sucks. But he’s a hard worker, so he’s just getting in the lab in the training room, and we know he’ll be back as soon as he can be.”

With the recency of the injury for Howard, the receiver room has helped him keep his spirits up. The closeness of the team and receiver room, which was developed in the offseason, will once again be put to work to help Howard recover.

“Just picking him up, telling

him we got him, and he knows that,” Eskildsen said. “Just helping him out in any way we can to get him back as fast as possible.”

Eskildsen and the former Iowa State players have experience with preparing for games without players due to injury. That teaching and preparation has transitioned to Penn State to help with a team that’s already dealt with a few injuries early in the year.

“I think something that is always preached to us is prepare

“I think when they’ve had the opportunity, they’ve shown to make plays too. So we’ll just continue to navigate that. The next man up will be ready to roll.”

Matt Campbell

like you’re the starter because you never know,” Eskildsen said. “Like everybody’s one play away from being the starter if you’re a backup, and I think that’s something that we learned and have brought over here, and everybody’s kind of adapted to is like, injuries are going to happen. That’s part of the sport of football.

While Howard is out for an extended period of time, with the wide receiver implying on his Instagram story he’s targeting a return for Oct. 17 against Michigan, Eskildsen and the rest of the receivers have taken the “next man up mentality.”

In that role could be Zay Rob-

inson, who’s been the fourth receiver on the depth chart. He’s made the most of his limited time and could be a player who produces even more given bigger opportunities.

“He’s come a long way, but obviously, Zay’s always been a great playmaker, and so I think that’s Zay’s best ability,” Eskildsen said. “He’s just a playmaker. He’s able to make something out of nothing, so it’s been really cool to see him develop on his route running.”

Additionally, freshman wide receiver Amarion Jackson is a player Campbell could see playing more given the circumstances. Jackson hasn’t seen offensive snaps with the top unit yet, but without Howard, he could be in line to see the field this weekend.

“Just his preparation, how he goes about that, knowing what he’s doing, and just how he’s always come to work every single day since the day he’s got here, gives me confidence and everybody on the team confidence that he’s ready to go,” Eskildsen said.

Howard’s out for the foreseeable future, so multiple players are likely to see added time compared to what they have in the past three weeks. The confidence in those players to take that step is there.

“Being able to bounce back, be ready for your moment is something that a lot of guys in here are ready for, and so it gives us confidence even when something unfortunate happens and you have a guy down,” Eskildsen said.

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Rocco Becht has a win-first approach

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Through three weeks, Rocco Becht has proven to be one of the best quarterbacks in the nation.

On Saturday, Becht surpassed 10,000 career passing yards, a record held by only two other active quarterbacks. However, the milestone doesn’t mean much to him.

“Wins, that’s all I care about,” Becht said on Tuesday. “I’m just trying to go out there and do everything that I possibly can to go win the game.”

Becht entered the season as the winningest returning quarterback in college football and has continued to improve his play, throwing for 751 yards and nine touchdowns with 70.3% accuracy this season.

Despite his success through the air, he acknowledged the need to become more of a threat with his legs to win in the Big Ten. He tallied negative rushing yards through the nonconference slate, including multiple instances when he ran out of bounds behind the line of scrimmage.

“I consider myself a pocket passer, and if nothing is there, I’m able to move around and scramble and get yards for the team,” Becht said. “To win games, the quarterback’s gonna have to scramble and make some plays with his legs.”

While he hasn’t done much of that this season, he knows his responsibility with the biggest games of the season looming.

That slate begins this weekend, as Becht will make his Big Ten debut against Wisconsin. Despite the tougher opponent, he’s approaching this weekend the same.

“I’m going to prepare for it

the same like I have the past four years and keep everything level-headed,” Becht said. “I’m going into another week playing another good team and that’s my thought in my mind going into this week and that’s going to be my headspace going into the next eight weeks.”

Linebacker Kooper Ebel said Tuesday the Big Ten is more of an “NFL style of play.” Fortunately for Becht, he has former Iowa State quarterback Brock Purdy to lean on, who now plays for the San Francisco 49ers.

Purdy was one of the reasons that Becht went to play for Campbell, knowing his offense was tailored to someone with a similar build and playstyle of Becht. Purdy has also been a mentor and resource to Becht throughout his journey.

“He’s always a person I can go out and reach out to if I have any information that I need or any knowledge that I want and need for a big game, things like that,” Becht said. “He’s definitely a resource that I have that I’m able to use that I’m super grateful for.”

As Becht plays through his final season of collegiate eligibility, he’s been pleased as various parts of Penn State’s offense have come together.

However, he knows there’s still room to grow and make improvements as he makes the most of his last year.

“Just on my end, continuing to be better with decisions, with my detail and precision on all the plays,” Becht said postgame on Saturday. “I got to continue to be better on my part for the offense, and we’re going to go out of this week and be prepared for conference games.”

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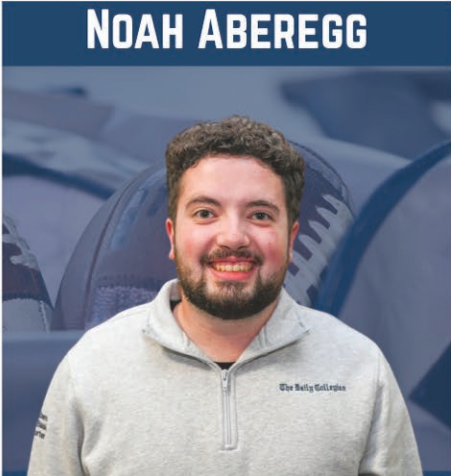
COLLEGIAN FOOTBALL STAFF PREDICTIONS



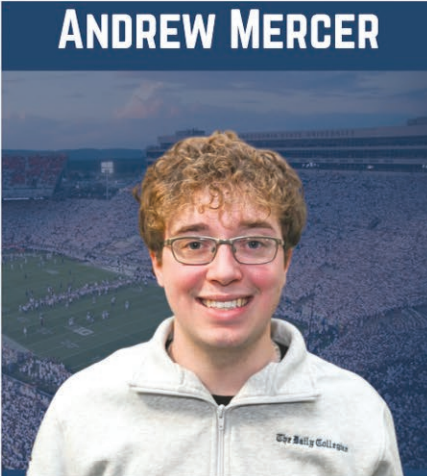
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WISCONSIN: 17



PENN STATE: 24
WISCONSIN: 13



PENN STATE: 30
WISCONSIN: 13



PENN STATE: 21
WISCONSIN: 14

Campbell's updates

Scouting Wisconsin, new injuries, receiver depth

By **Andrew Deal**
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Matt Campbell's first Big Ten game is days away, with Penn State set to take on Wisconsin at 5 p.m. Saturday.

Campbell met with the media to discuss Wisconsin, the wide receiver room and evaluating injuries.

Here's what Campbell had to say on Tuesday.

Assessing Wisconsin

Campbell gets his first taste of Big Ten football as the coach of Penn State against Wisconsin on Saturday, a team who has a tendency to run the ball well with the addition of one of Campbell's former players.

"I think the other piece of it is what their running backs do best," Campbell said. "I think you look at that running back room, and obviously it starts with the young man we're familiar with in Abu Sama III, who is dynamic. He's got the ability to make you pay in space."

Joining the running back room in the backfield is Colton Joseph, who's proven himself as a dual-threat quarterback. Joseph already has garnered attention from Campbell and his staff because of everything he can do on the field, both in the air and on the ground.

"He's got elite athletic ability to stress you in the quarterback run game and really the running game in general, and yet he's also a young man that's dynamic out of

the pocket," Campbell said. "He's got the ability to make all the throws, and I think what you've seen is offensively they've tailor made it around his skill set."

Injury evaluation

Both tight end Andrew Rappleyea and center Brock Riker played minimal time in Saturday's game against Buffalo due to injury.

Campbell said Riker "is in a really good spot" to begin the week, while Rappleyea is still "a little bit of a question mark" as the week progresses.

During the game, wide receiver Koby Howard got "dinged up" on his 70-yard touchdown reception, which leaves him up in the air for the rest of the week.

"I think right now we probably don't know exactly where he'll be by the end of the week," Campbell said. "Probably have a better idea. Kind of went through a couple things yesterday and just trying to gauge exactly where is he as we kind of get ourselves ready for the end of the week."

While the injuries linger, Campbell and the training staff's focus is on getting the players as healthy as they can be before they fully step back onto the field.

"When those guys are healthy enough to be their best, when you feel confident that they can't re-injure themselves, I think that is the key of when you want to put those guys, or at least try to make the the best guess to put those guys in position to to be able to play," Campbell said.

Wide receiver room

Penn State's wide receiver room as a whole has seen development through three weeks, including the outbreak of Howard. But Campbell recognized the play of all four of the main receivers.

"Chase Sowell has been better maybe than I would even expected to be where he's been," Campbell said. "I think we talked about it in preseason camp is consistency, and I think he's given you dynamic playmaking ability."

While the room has dealt with players being "dinged up," including Howard and Brett Eskildsen, who Campbell said hasn't been 100% the last two weeks, the room hasn't taken a step back.

In Campbell's eyes, the player who stepped up with guys on the sidelines to stay fresh for the rest of the season was Zay Robinson.

Robinson has proven to be a dynamic returner and also a reliable target for Rocco Becht in the pass game as the fourth receiver on the team, which came as no surprise to Campbell.

"I got to work with him because I tried to spend a lot of time with the scout offense during practice, and he was an absolute menace last year down there because of his competitive excellence," Campbell said.

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Emily Watters/Collegian

Wide receiver Koby Howard (6) runs the ball during the Penn State football game against Buffalo at West Shore Home Field at Beaver Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026 in University Park, Pennsylvania.

IOWA STATE REUNION

By **Andrew Mercer**
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State's victories in the nonconference slate was only the prelude to a Big Ten schedule that will determine the program's success in the first season under Matt Campbell.

It all begins with Wisconsin, which will be many Nittany Lions' first taste of Big Ten action. Linebacker Kooper Ebel said the Big Ten is "closer to NFL style of play," and the increased physicality of the conference presents a unique challenge.

Despite that, Penn State feels ready for the moment. While Rocco Becht said he's not preparing any differently than he would for any other game, the defense has yet to dig into its bag of tricks.

"We have a ton of confidence going to Big Ten play," Ebel said Tuesday. "I think we're just scratching the surface of our defensive schemes. I'm super excited to just attack it with the team."

Adding to the many layers of the upcoming contest, the transfers from Iowa State are set to face their former teammates and coach who are all now in key roles in their first season as Badgers. Running back Abu Sama III, safety Carson Van Dinter and cornerbacks coach Robert Steeples will be on the

opposite sideline of Matt Campbell after time with the Cyclones.

Although he was listed as healthy in Week 2, the Badgers didn't play Sama against Eastern Michigan to avoid aggravating a shoulder injury. However, he'll be back in action against the Nittany Lions and will offer Penn State's run defense a significant challenge.

Safety Jeremiah Cooper battled with Sama at practice throughout their three years together as Cyclones, so he knows a lot about his style and can use those experiences to his advantage.

"Just knowing him, knowing his tendencies, we all know that there's so many coaches here that coached him," Cooper said Wednesday. "So, I'm picking on him. He's a great player, though, very athletic, very strong, fast. I can't wait to play him because I kind of know what he's gonna do."

Becht also had high praise for Sama, saying he's "one of the best athletes I've ever seen." He added the Iowa State transfers on defense have been relaying what they know about Sama to the defensive staff.

Van Dinter was one of wide receiver Brett Eskildsen's roommates at Iowa State. In Ames, Van Dinter was a role player who played 180 snaps, with 88 of them coming in his final two

games of the 2025 season. He redshirted in 2024 after appearing in two games.

Eskildsen voiced his excitement to see his former roommate play in an expanded role.

"He's a great kid and a great football player," Eskildsen said. "So it'll be cool to see him out there. We've gone against him like when we were at Iowa State, but it'll be cool to see who he is now and how he's developed as a football player."

Wisconsin had a tough matchup against No. 3 Notre Dame in Week 1, falling 41-13. That game gave the Badgers experience against a highly-ranked opponent, something that Penn State lacks at this point.

Regardless of Week 1's results, Big Ten action causes teams to play with heightened intensity. Penn State's defense knows this all too well and are preparing for a ferocious start to the conference stretch.

"They're going to try to punch us in the mouth," defensive coordinator D'Anton Lynn said. "They're a physical team, they run the ball downhill, they do a good job of creating explosive plays in the passing game. They're going to take shots and test us downfield."

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Jacob DeLuca/The Daily Collegian

Wide receiver Brett Eskildsen (4) runs with the football during the Penn State football game against Marshall at West Shore Home Field at Beaver Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 5, 2026 in University Park, Pa.

CROSSWORD

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Across

1 Fair share, maybe

5 "The Haj" author

9 Skier's aid

13 Humdinger

14 Chinese zodiac animal

15 Big name in oil

16 Nevada city

17 Unchaste

19 Open horse-drawn carriage

21 Quartz variety

22 Proof goof

23 Building facings

25 Diet choice

29 Cronus or Oceanus

30 Red Cross and the like, in brief

31 Plum part

34 John Irving's "A Prayer for _____ Meany"

35 Fragrance

37 Kind of list

38 Publicize

39 Simpleton

40 "Get ____ of yourself!"

41 Easily frightened

44 Surfing stop

46 Mars (Prefix)

49 Adage

50 Actresses on the way up

54 Robust, like some wines

57 Auditory

58 Advantage

59 Phileas Fogg's creator

60 Hearty party

Down

1 ____ d'oeuvre

2 Dill seed

3 Siberian river

4 Figurehead for a scam

5 Camera support

6 Dash

7 Old White House nickname

8 Cambodian coin

9 Northern subarctic forests

10 Vast

11 Critical

12 Kentucky Derby prize

14 Incline

18 Carpet fasteners

20 Song of praise

23 Not soft

24 Pond dweller

25 Ancient gathering place

26 Fuzzy fruit

27 Roman road

28 Sullen

31 Needy

32 Inactive

33 Mrs. Lincoln's maiden name

35 Hopped off

36 Function

37 Study of religion

39 Scale

40 Allege as fact

42 Underlying

43 Decree of the former Sultan of Turkey

44 Thin biscuit

45 Give off

46 Ship part

47 Undersides

50 "Your majesty"

51 Greek letters

52 Scrabble piece

53 Mark left by Zorro?

55 Egg cells

56 Cotillion girl

WORD SEARCH

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Shrubs

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Gorse

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Holly

Hydranga

Jasmine

Juniper

Laurel

Lavender

Lilac

Magnolia

Mesquite

Mimosa

Myrtle

Oleander

Tamarisk

Witch Hazel

Yew

Zinnia

KAKURO

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How to play:

A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it.

A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it.

You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit can only be used once in any sequence.

SUDOKU

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How to play:

Only use digits 1 through 12. Digits can not repeat within a grid.

The Daily Collegian

For the students. For the glory. Since 1887.

Vol. 127, No. 5

Friday, Sept. 25, 2026

psu.collegian.com

PENN STATE CELEBRATES 106 YEARS OF HOMECOMING

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LION GRIDMEN WILL MEET SYRACUSE BEFORE ALUMNI HOMECOMING CROWD

Parade delights thousands

By Julia Chapman
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER | jec5024@psu.edu

Thousands of students, alumni and
community members lined the streets
of downtown State College Friday
night to cheer on Penn State's 2006
homecoming parade.

The parade, which reached down-
town at 6:30, featured a diverse
mix of more than
160 groups,
including campus
organizations,
community

groups, greek organizations, four
marching bands, politicians and this
year's homecoming court.

The floats that brought color to Col-
lege Avenue had themes ranging from
children's movies, such as *Ice Age*, to
television shows such as *The Price is
Right* and *American Gladiator*, and
tourist destinations such as Las Vegas
and Paris.

See PARADE, Page 2.

Read more on the overall homecoming
festivities | LOCAL, Page 4.

FIRST ALUMNI HOME-COMING DAY IS MEMORABLE IN PENN STATE HISTORY

Large Representation of Alumni and Governor Sproul Present for Greatest Event in History of
College's Alumni---Blue and White Sends Dartmouth Eleven Down to Defeat in Thrilling
Contest---Poverty Day Adds Merriment to Occasion---Events Close With Smoker

Tradition keeps shrine protected

By Kelsey Glick
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER | kng5046@psu.edu

The tradition of guarding the Lion
Shrine has been around for 43 football
seasons and has evolved from just
protecting the lion to having perform-
ances and competitions around it.

Inspired by Homecoming's theme
of tradition, the annual "Guard the
Lion Shrine," held by the Lion
Ambassadors, will begin right after
the Homecoming parade tonight and
will continue until midnight
Saturday.

About 1,000 to 2,000 fans, students
and alumni will go to the Lion Shrine
today to enjoy free food and a taste
of tradition, said JP Rossi, commit-
tee director for Guard the Lion Shrine.

The event will feature entertain-
ment from the Penn State cheerlead-
ers, the Blue Band, the Blue Sapphire
and others, he said.

Two special guests will also attend
the event, he said. Musician Mike
Antosh will play an acoustic perform-
ance, and former director of the All-
Sports Museum and author of the
Penn State Football Encyclopedia,
Lou Prato, will talk about his time
guarding the Nittany Lion Shrine and
his experience with the tradition as a
freshman in the 1950s.

"It's all about people coming back to
the university, remembering the tradi-
tion and how we got here," Rossi said.
"That's what makes Penn State spe-
cial."

During the guarding, a trivia competi-
tion will take place, he said. The
last Guard Standing Competition will

If you go

What: Guard the Lion Shrine
When: 9 tonight until midnight
Saturday
Where: The Lion Shrine at the cor-
ner of Burrows and Curtin roads
Details: Free food, entertainment,
games and trivia

test about 60 competitors on their
Penn State trivia and knowledge of the
university's history.

One female and one male will be
named "The Last Guard Standing"
and will each receive a number of
prizes, including an autographed
Penn State football jersey, T-shirts and
other Penn State memorabilia, Rossi
said.

People think that the tradition of
guarding the Lion Shrine began
when Sue Paterno painted it, but it
actually began long before that, Prato
said.

"There's a lot of unknowns about
the tradition," he said, which he will
elaborate on tonight.

In the 1940s, the lion was defaced
frequently by opposing teams, Prato
said.

"Pranks were a lot different back
then than they are now," he said. "It
was a big deal for teams to hit the icon
of the opposing team."

During the 1940s and 1950s, the
shrine was located outside what was
then Beaver Field, Rossi said. Before
home games, the fans of rival teams
often defaced the lion.



A member of the ROTC stands near the shrine during the 2007 Homecoming weekend.

The importance of "guarding" the
lion became less important when
Penn State joined the Big Ten, he said.
The rival teams were further away
and the safety of the beloved mascot
was no longer at stake.

But students continued to gather at
the shrine before home games, Rossi
said. Now it is more of a celebration of
tradition, and the important thing is to
keep that story going, he said.

"No one attacks the lion anymore,"
Prato said, "so now it's become a tra-
dition of Homecoming."



FINAL PLANS FOR ALUMNI DAY HAVE BEEN COMPLETED

Celebration of Homecoming Will Begin
With Parade by College Band
Saturday Morning

Alumni Day promises to be excep-
tionally well conducted this year. Two
important get-togethers have been
planned for the visiting grads over the
week-end. The first of these will be
announced by the College band, which
will parade through the streets on Sat-
urday morning, beginning at nine-
fifteen, and will lead the procession to
the Auditorium where a rousing booster
meeting will get under way at ten o'-
clock; and to which all members of the
Faculty, as well as seniors and juniors
are cordially invited.

"Proxy" to Address Gathering
A speech by President Thomas, out-
lining the campaign and pointing out
just what is needed and expected of the
alumni, to make it successful, will be
the main address of the morning. In
response to this the chairmen of the
various districts will make reports on
the progress of the campaign in their
respective territories. In this way the

progress of the campaign throughout
the state should be fairly well sum-
marized at the conclusion of the meet-
ing.

This booster meeting will be presid-
ed over by Geogro H. Delke '03, President
General of the Alumni Association, who
is acting as campaign manager for Al-
legheny County in the drive. James A.
Leyden, a former Penn State track star
of the class of 1914, and a perpetual
booster for the welfare of the Alma
Mater is expected to be on hand to lead
the alumni in cheering and singing.

Smoker at Armory
The second meeting is to be an in-
formal smoker in the Armory at eight-
fifteen p. m. An orchestra has been
engaged to furnish music, and elder and
pretzels will be used to ease the throats
of those who become hoarse after the
football game. After this meeting num-
erous fraternity houses will conduct
similar meetings for their returning al-
umni.

ALUMNI PLAN FOR HOMECOMING DAY

Many Expect to Arrive on Fri-
day, October Twentieth, for
Third Annual Celebration

SMOKER SCHEDULED FOR EVENING IN THE ARMORY

Alumni Homecoming will be a bigger
and better affair than ever according
to the plans that are now being con-
sidered by the Alumni Association.
The whole occasion is to be stag and
every effort will be made to insure the
Alumni a "real weekend" on October
twenty-first.

The Alumni will begin to arrive in
State College on Friday afternoon and
on that night open house will be held
everywhere for the returning grads. On
Saturday morning, a short snappy
meeting to boost the campaign for the
two million dollar Building Fund,
will be held in the Auditorium at ten
o'clock. The meeting, presided over by
George H. Dicke, President of the Al-
umni Association, will be addressed by
President Thomas. Saturday after-
noon the game with Middlebury will
be an attraction that everyone will at-
tend. Immediately after the game
fraternity and club dinners will be held.

The day will be brought to a close by a
smoker held in the Armory at a quarter
after eight. In addition to the usual
"smokes," there will be plenty of pret-
zels and cider. A feature of the smoker
is that there will be no speeches of so-
licitation for the Building Fund, and the
time will be spent in a real get-to-
gether of the Alumni.

At the same time a reception and
entertainment for the Alumnae will be
held in the Women's Building. Enter-
tainment will be provided by the wo-
men students.



The Nittany Lion's ear was broken off by vandals just before term break and will be repaired by University Maintenance workers.

By BOB WARE
Daily Collegian Staff Writer
Vandalism caused about \$250 in damage
to the Nittany Lion Shrine near Rec Hall
by smashing its right ear and spray
painting yellow letters on the statue.

The vandalism was discovered Nov. 17
about 1:30 p.m. by Steven Williams, a
photo technician at Mitchell Building.
However, University Police Services
said the incident probably occurred the
night before.

University Police said they have no
suspects nor leads. Also, there was no
indication of how the ear was broken.
"It was probably done with a hammer
or something pretty substantial," a
Police Services spokesman said.

The eight-inch yellow letters which
spelled either "SU" or "SUJ" were
removed by University Maintenance.
University Maintenance is responsible
for repairing the ear.

George Schimmel, of the Office of
Physical Plant and Maintenance said,
"To the casual observer, you won't be
able to tell the difference. But if you
examine it real close, you'll probably be
able to see a difference. There's no way
to be perfect when you have one piece of
stone."

In the past, the lion shrine has been
painted several times, being especially
prone to the "Orangemen" of Syracuse
University, but it has never been
physically damaged. Before home
games with Syracuse, an all-night vigil
is held to ward off any ambitious
painters.

The lion shrine was a gift of the class
of 1940 and was carved by Heinz War-
neke during the summer of 1942. War-
neke first made a 600 pound plaster
model of the lion and then carved the lion
from a 13-ton block of limestone on the
site where it now crouches.

Pledges had to pass ‘steady hand test’ in fraternity-led cocaine-ring

By Grace Levy
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Newly released court documents revealed details about how Delta Upsilon pledges allegedly helped package and distribute cocaine in Penn State’s alleged cocaine trafficking ring.

The pledges were recruited by Thomas M. Robinson, one of the ring’s alleged leaders, during the spring and fall 2024 semesters. At this time, Robinson held various leadership roles at Delta Upsilon, including new member educator and president of academics.

Pledge involvement

According to testimony in the grand jury presentment, Robinson had “senior status” in the fraternity, giving him greater influence over pledges. Pledges testified that he was “calling the shots,” and working with the pledgemasters rather than acting as a mediator like the new member educator role intended.

Pledge Daniel Price testified to being recruited by Robinson to deliver cocaine to the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity during the spring 2024 semester. Price allegedly delivered cocaine 10 times for Robinson. Afterwards, Price was asked to recruit another pledge, Kyle Ridpath, to work with Robinson.

Price and Ridpath were both charged with misdemeanors on Aug. 17 in connection to the case.

Price and Ridpath then joined Robinson in his room in the fraternity house where Robinson instructed them to purchase items intended for preparing and packaging cocaine.

After purchasing the items, Price and Ridpath returned to the house where Robinson showed a “semi solid brick” of what appeared to be cocaine. Robinson then demonstrated breaking the cocaine and cutting it with creatine. Price and Ridpath then measured the cocaine mix into half-gram bags, as instructed by Robinson.

Price estimated that they prepared between 200 to 300 half-gram bags of cocaine, according to the presentment.

Detective Donald Paul testified that Ridpath’s statements to police mirrored Price’s.

“He (Ridpath) eventually learned that Adderall, cocaine and marijuana were present at



Aayan Hamdani/Collegian

“DELTA U” lettering is seen on a wall in the backyard of the Delta Upsilon fraternity house.

the DU house and anyone who lived there or spent time there was aware of the drugs,” the presentment read.

In spring 2025, Price learned of additional Delta Upsilon pledges who similarly assisted Robinson in preparing and distributing cocaine. Those pledges were Seth Beardsley, Charlie Weisman and Luke Lengel. Beardsley and Weisman have been charged with misdemeanors in connection to the case, while Lengel has not.

Weisman testified in the presentment that while pledging Delta Upsilon during the fall 2024 semester, Robinson contacted him and asked him to recruit two other pledges who were “trustworthy.”

Weisman recruited Beardsley and an unnamed pledge. Robinson allegedly instructed them to hold out their hands, and if they were steady enough, they would assist Robinson with an undisclosed task. Weisman and Beardsley passed the “steady hand test,” while the other pledge did not. Another pledge, Lengel, was then recruited to assist.

The three pledges were then allegedly instructed to print and sign copies of a non-disclosure form, which Robinson then tore up and threw away, according to the presentment.

Beardsley, Weisman and Lengel then allegedly assisted Robinson in preparing cocaine in Delta Upsilon’s boiler room, testifying that they packaged between 100 to 200 half-gram bags. This preparation occurred again on two

other occasions.

Another unnamed pledge testified that he delivered cocaine outside of the fraternity on three separate occasions for Robinson.

Knowledge among Delta Upsilon brothers

Price testified that Delta Upsilon brother Ryan Matson and three unnamed pledge masters came in and out of Robinson’s room while the packaging occurred and “no one seemed surprised.”

Matson testified during the preliminary hearing of Robinson’s father, Paul Robinson, on Sept. 3. Matson has not been charged in connection to the case.

Matson also testified in the grand jury presentment.

“Everyone in the fraternity knew Robinson supplied Adderall, marijuana and cocaine if anyone wanted to purchase it,” Matson was reported saying in the presentment.

Matson testified that he assisted Robinson in preparing cocaine for distribution and that Robinson brought up the idea of having pledges prepare the cocaine. He said that he and other Delta Upsilon brothers helped deliver and sell cocaine inside and outside the fraternity.

He also shared that people in the fraternity had told Robinson they were worried his operation was getting too big and was exposing himself and others to being arrested. Robinson allegedly ignored this and expanded his

customer base to non-fraternity members.

Various brothers and pledges testified to the expectation that to “stay with the fraternity, they stay loyal to the fraternity.”

This includes the “unspoken rule” that no one talks about what goes on at the fraternity and no one reports what happens to law enforcement or PSU regardless of the situation.

They testified that this mentality existed for the dealing and usage of drugs at Delta Upsilon, which was not disclosed to anyone outside the fraternity, especially law enforcement or PSU administration.

Delta Upsilon brothers also testified in the presentment that the day after Robinson’s arrest, the incoming and outgoing Delta Upsilon presidents held a meeting for fraternity members. At the meeting, they shared Robinson’s arrest and that anyone involved with Robinson “should get a lawyer and not talk to police.” They also instructed fraternity members to share with them if contacted by law enforcement.

Fraternities mentioned

Two additional fraternities were mentioned in the documents: Phi Kappa Tau and Alpha Gamma Rho. Prior to this, three current fraternities — Delta Upsilon, Sigma Chi, Acacia — and one former fraternity — Sigma Alpha Mu — were mentioned.

Robinson testified to the grand jury that as he began dealing drugs at Delta Upsilon, an un-

named friend and member of Phi Kappa Tau shared information about where to get better marijuana at a cheaper price.

The friend shared details of a Native American reservation in Salamanca, New York, and accompanied Robinson to the reservation in spring 2023. There, Robinson purchased marijuana for himself, as well as to sell to others. He testified in the presentment that he could make a profit of between \$1,500 and \$1,800 per pound.

Robinson’s friend later introduced him to the app “Telegram” where he could get marijuana shipped from California directly to the fraternity house. With this, they avoided the risks associated with transporting the marijuana to Penn State themselves.

During one trip to New York, Robinson told his friend that someone selling cocaine was turning the business over to him and asked him to be his partner. The friend declined and said “he was in way over his head,” according to the presentment.

Robinson shared with the friend that he sold to members of other fraternities. Later in the presentment, Delta Upsilon pledge Price testified that Robinson directed him to deliver cocaine to an unnamed friend at the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, receiving \$40.

Both Phi Kappa Tau and Alpha Gamma Rho are members of the Penn State Interfraternity Council, meaning they are recognized by Penn State and are affiliated with the university.

Alpha Gamma Rho was previously placed on organizational suspension from Jan. 2024 to Aug. 2024 for hosting an unauthorized event. They have not been suspended since.

Delta Upsilon pledge Price testified that Robinson directed him to deliver cocaine to an unnamed friend at the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, receiving \$40. The documents also allege an unnamed Phi Kappa Tau brother travelled with Robinson to purchase marijuana in Salamanca, New York. Robinson testified in the presentment that he could make a profit of between \$1,500 and \$1,800 per pound.

To email reporter: gkl5261@psu.edu

Agostino Abbatiello seeks ‘speedy trial’



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

Agostino Abbatiello arrives at the Centre County Courthouse on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2026 in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

By Grace Levy
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Agostino S. Abbatiello, one of the alleged ring-leaders in the fraternity-led cocaine-trafficking ring at Penn State has requested a “speedy trial,” according to a court filing from Sept. 16.

Abbatiello, 24, of Westbury, New York, was charged with distributing cocaine through his involvement in the off-campus Sigma Chi fraternity at Penn State, according to authorities. He was charged on Aug. 17, along with 13 other defendants.

Abbatiello’s preliminary hearing occurred on Sept. 2, where he was represented by Attorney Philip M. Masorti.

In the new filing, Masorti requested for Abbatiello’s case to proceed to trial in December 2026. Jury selection for the trial is slated to occur on Dec. 7, 2026.

Masorti said that the charges have “imposed substantial stress and hardship” on Abbatiello and his family, aggravated by what he described as “extensive, and at times, excessive media attention.”

“Time is of the essence,” Masorti said. “The Defendant intends to fully exercise and

insist upon his constitutional right to a prompt and speedy trial.”

Additionally, Masorti argued that the Commonwealth has had “substantial opportunity” to gather and analyze evidence, and requested the discovery period for evidence begin now.

The filing states the Commonwealth has had over two years to prepare its case, with co-defendant Thomas M. Robinson first being charged in December 2024.

Masorti said he preemptively objects to any request to delay or continue the trial from prosecutors.

At the Sept. 2 hearing, Masorti requested a bail modification of \$200,000 unsecured, but Abbatiello was granted \$250,000 secured bail. Abbatiello posted bail on Sept. 22, according to court documents.

Sigma Chi was previously suspended for a hazing incident that occurred during 2023-24, the university reported. In 2025, Sigma Chi became a founding member of the State College Interfraternity Council.

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Clearfield Commissioners vote to extend Moshannon-ICE contract

By Fabiola González-Cruz
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Clearfield County Board of Commissioners voted 2-1 on Tuesday to extend its contract involving the Moshannon Valley Processing Center, one of the largest immigration detention facilities in the Northeast, for another six months, according to Spotlight PA.

Under the agreement, which began in September 2021, Clearfield County acts as an intermediary between the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and GEO Group, the private company that owns and operates the facility. The county receives \$200,000 annually through the arrangement.

Commissioners Tim Winters and John Sobel voted in favor of the extension, while Commissioner Dave Glass voted against.

The facility has faced allegations concerning conditions for detainees. According to previous reporting by Spotlight PA, detainees and advocates have alleged inadequate medical and dental care, rotten or insect-infested food, and lack of access to toilet paper or hand soap inside Moshannon.



Emily Watters/Collegian

Community member holds sign that reads “Shut Down Moshannon” during protest in front of Allen Street Gates.

GEO Group has disputed allegations of inadequate conditions and has said its operations are monitored by ICE and comply with federal detention standards.

The contract extension comes amid increased scrutiny of Moshannon’s operations. Seven Democrats of Pennsylvania’s congressional delegation allegedly sought financial records and communications from ICE, GEO Group and Clearfield County

regarding the facility and federal taxpayer dollars.

The facility’s future after the six-month extension remains uncertain. ICE has sought proposals for detention services that identify Moshannon as a historical location, while federal officials have also considered different arrangements for detention facilities.

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Man arrested after allegedly biting EMS worker

By Grace Levy
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

A Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, man was arrested after allegedly biting an EMS worker during the Penn State football game on Saturday.

Christian A. Swartwood, 19, was arrested around 1 p.m. at Beaver Stadium in section EH during the game against the Buffalo Bison. According to the criminal complaint, police found him showing signs of being “highly intoxicated,” including smelling of alcohol, having “bloodshot watery eyes”

and being unable to maintain his balance.

When police officers and medical responders tried to remove Swartwood from his seat and put him in an EMS chair, he became “agitated and combative,” according to the complaint.

Swartwood then allegedly bit the right hand of one of the EMS workers, leading to injury. According to the complaint, he resisted arrest when officers tried to place him in handcuffs, swinging his arms “in an attempt to make contact with officers” and “kicking continuously.”

Swartwood allegedly behaved

in this manner until he was sedated by EMS at the Beaver Stadium EMS station.

From the incident, Swartwood was charged with felony aggravated assault, misdemeanor or simple assault, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct, along with additional four summary charges.

Swartwood was arraigned by Judge Casey McClain on Saturday night, who set unsecured bail at \$15,000. His preliminary hearing is scheduled for Wednesday.

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‘Lord of the Rings’ shows how ‘We Are’ is a Fellowship

Penn State has had a dark 15 years, enough to stop a “We Are” chant dead in its tracks.

Now is no exception. Amid a burgeoning investigation of an alleged cocaine-trafficking ring run by Penn State fraternities, sex offender and former Penn State defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky seeking a federal appeal and the sale of two out of seven branch campuses scheduled to close coming underway, Penn State is struggling for a PR and morale win.

Finding community while we’re surrounded by scandal, tragedy and darkness is a tall order at times. For the Fellowship of the Ring in J. R. R. Tolkien’s series, “The Lord of the Rings,” corruption and despair cloud their pursuit of goodness, too.

The series, published from 1954 to 1955, with the movie series being released from 2001 to 2003, has easily held its ground as the best foundational fantasy series of all time.

The Fellowship consists of

four hobbits (short, hedonistic people), an elf, a dwarf, a wizard and two men. They’re tasked with destroying the One Ring, a cursed artifact with the immense power to corrupt its wearer and onlookers, before its evil creator, Lord Sauron, finds it. The volunteer carrying the ring to its demise? An unassuming hobbit named Frodo Baggins.

Frodo and the rest of the hobbits are from the Shire, an evergreen land where trouble never seems to fall and the people remain satisfied, complacent and averse to discomfort of any kind. This peacetime lasts until Sauron’s followers come to get the Ring from Frodo, spreading darkness and death across Middle Earth. Thus, Frodo is forced to begin his journey to destroy the Ring — but not without his friends Sam, Merry and Pippin, who refuse to let him make the treacherous journey alone.

Penn State and State College act as a kind of Shire for students and alumni alike on the surface. Traditions of eating grilled stickies, taking pictures at the Nittany Lion shrine, even signing each other’s T-shirts during bar crawls are all welcoming symbols of the

mountain ridge that cradles our university. Like a blissful hobbit, joy seems to be the defining characteristic of Happy Valley.

Penn State, at the height of this joy, has been repeatedly thrown into chaos with its community left in the lurch on how to react. In the summer, as everyone was winding down from the school year or starting up their internships, Penn State student Billy Schmidt was shot dead in Philadelphia. All the while, resurfacing wounds from 2011 and 2023 appear at the Bellefonte courthouse.

It feels like the eye of Sauron is on us, too, without giving us a chance to feel like a community. Frodo, on his trek to Mount Doom while feeling the burden of the Ring on his mind, says to Sam: “I don’t like anything here at all. Step or stone, breath or bone. Earth, air and water all seem accursed. But so our path is laid.”

Part of what makes both the Fellowship and Penn State such strongly bonded communities is, ironically, their respective weaknesses.

Everyone in the Fellowship is susceptible to the corruption of the Ring and the power it holds, including Frodo, and reacts to it in different ways. The wizard,

Gandalf, refuses to touch the Ring because he knows his power along with the Ring’s would be disastrous. One of the men, Aragorn, tries to protect Frodo from harm to right the wrongs of his ancestors that caused the Ring to still exist. The dwarf, Gimli, attempts to smash the One Ring with his hammer upon seeing it (to no avail, of course).

At Penn State, the attachment to tradition and the rosy-colored perfection of it can cloud judgment. At times, commentary on current and past scandals feel like attacks on everything this institution does rather than just the harm it has the ability to wield.

But, like in “Lord of the Rings,” even the purest person in the room fails to rise above darkness without the support of the community around them to help move forward. Frodo doesn’t succeed in destroying the One Ring on his own and only ends the tyranny of Sauron when the Fellowship, however strong or small the member, fights to keep the darkness at bay. In doing so, they keep each other accountable and protected from the Ring’s corruption.

Along with Frodo, we Penn Staters often fail to check our-

selves. The spirit of “We Are” can almost feel like armor against the onslaught of bad publicity, like a club (or cult) no one else can get into. But that’s exactly the opposite of what “We Are” should mean.

In the second installment of the movie series, Frodo asks Sam what they’re holding on to in the face of immense suffering and the threat of death and evil at every turn.

Sam tearfully tells Frodo: “That there’s some good in this world, Mr. Frodo. And it’s worth fighting for.”

A friend told me they didn’t think I was the “school spirit” type for this column, but that’s not true. I love being a Penn Stater, and I think, like Sam Gamgee, it’s a community worth fighting for and improving, even when it feels like all I can offer is heavy-handed criticism.

“We Are” isn’t armor, or a Ring, to abuse when bad things happen, but rather a promise to support and hold our community accountable, which we all have the burden to keep when crisis strikes.

Kippi Hall is a columnist for the Daily Collegian. Email her at mfh5992@psu.edu or follow her on X @kippi_hall



Penn State Homecoming through Collegian Archives

Follow alongside the Collegian’s archives as we outline over 100 years of



Phelan

back alumni for fraternity meet-and-greets and a performance by the New York Symphony.

Students and alumni paraded through the streets to the stadium on Oct. 9, which kickstarted the traditions of floats and a featured football game.

1938
The Penn State Collegian reported that the Nittany Lions would face the Bucknell Bison in their 29th meeting of the universities. The game at New Beaver Field started at 2:30 pm, and the Bison would go on to win 14-0.

Fraternity and business dinners took place in the Old Main Sandwich Shop during the day, with a nighttime Cider party concluding the weekend.

1948
To boost alumni attendance, a “Homecoming Special Train” traveled throughout Pennsylvania and the surrounding areas, picking up people and bringing them back to State College. Alumni were able to buy a ticket that would

take them from their home to Bellefonte.

The tickets included meals on board, Pullman reservations, use of a club car en route and on campus and tickets to the football game against Michigan State.

1972
For the first time in a decade, the homecoming committee didn’t elect a homecoming queen; instead, five “outstanding women” were honored. The Undergraduate Student Government Executive Council, Association of Women Students and the Interfraternity Council’s president representative heavily protested the elimination of the contest altogether.

The University’s Union Board said that “general appearance” and “poise” were the main qualifications for an outstanding woman.

1983
In a jam-packed week, there were concerns about the goalposts at Beaver Stadium being taken down, regardless of whether or not the team beat West Virginia. Two weeks prior, the goalposts were carried away by students after a victory against Alabama, which cost the university over \$4,000 to replace.

Damage to the campus wasn’t only predicated on the football field; there were concerns about the Lion Shrine being defaced, which required immense cleaning and sandblasting. This pro-

cess began to soften the corners of the sculpture and resulted in a wax substance being used to prevent paint from seeping into the cracks.

1996
Much to the confusion of students and alumni, homecoming took place two weeks earlier than it had occurred in the past. Homecoming took place on Oct. 12 against the Purdue Boilermakers.

Despite the changes, Greek life and the homecoming committee reported no immediate issues and everything went off without a hitch. Although homecoming dates are set years in advance, the home football schedule, ticket allotment, and television schedule are all factors considered, and athletics works with the Alumni Association to find a suitable date.

2006
Registration for homecoming was moved to a digital format. Online registration allowed more accessibility for people than signing in and out of the “other paper book.” This was a year of change, as there were only two categories of registration: overall competitors and event competitors, eliminating the noncompeting organization category.

Homecoming also partnered with Centre Volunteers in Medicine, who covered cover charges for Homecoming Night Out and day of service events. The philanthropic partnership

intended to get more community involvement, while maintaining organization.

2010
Heidi Kloster and Elias Warren became Penn State Homecoming’s first-ever emcees after videos of their auditions were shared with the student body and were voted the favorites. They hosted the pep rally and parade and served as the face of the week.

Warren, a University Park Undergraduate Association representative, and Kloster, a PSN co-host, used their theatre experience to elevate the week with their humor and performance qualities, giving students a “show.”

“I’m looking forward to the pep rally the most because it’s when the alumni come back, the band plays and the lion is there,” Kloster told the Collegian.

2020
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, homecoming was moved to a virtual format. A pre-recorded special was broadcasted and uploaded to their social media platforms. Organizations’ pre-filmed videos were compiled and paired with videos from alumni and community members who weren’t able to be on campus.

Teresa Phelan is the opinion editor. Email her at tpp5354@psu.edu or follow her on X @tphelan32

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Letters should be about 400-600 words. Student letters should include class year, major and campus. Letters from alumni should include graduation year. All writers should provide their email address and phone number

for verification. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Members of organizations must include their titles if the topic they write about is connected with the aim of their groups. The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters. The Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all letters. Letters chosen run on The Daily Collegian website and may be selected for publication in the print edition. All letters become property of Collegian Inc.

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Mitten State matchups

The blue and white travel to Michigan for upcoming stretch

By Elliot Inscho
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Autumn has arrived, and so has Penn State's conference slate. After compiling an 8-2 **VOLLEYBALL** record to begin the campaign, the Nittany Lions will take a trip to the Mitten State for their first pair of Big Ten matchups against Michigan on Friday and Michigan State on Sunday.

Penn State's schedule so far this season has only consisted of one true road game, against DePaul in Chicago, which ended in a sweep. Besides that, Penn State faced Kentucky at Wrigley Field for its only other match away from Happy Valley for the Nittany Lions, which ended in a blue and white defeat over four sets.

As expected, Kennedy Martin led the blue and white with 4.47 in points per set in the nonconference schedule as he entered the year. A vast majority came from former Florida teammate Alexis Stucky, who posted 9.78 assists per set in the ten matches.

Penn State sank to No. 14 in the latest AVCA poll after being upset by No. 16 Tennessee on Sunday, and challenges will start to get even stiffer on Friday. Conference play will see the Nittany Lions take on six top-25 opponents, though neither of this weekend's foes were ranked.

"I've never played in the Big Ten before, but I've played a bunch of Big Ten teams," Stucky said after the loss to Tennessee. "This conference is a gauntlet. It's good to be challenged because I know our conference schedule is going to challenge us."

Michigan went 9-2 in the non-conference, falling to South Caro-



Kippi Hall/Collegian

The Nittany Lions react to winning a long volley during the Penn State women's volleyball match against Tennessee on Sunday, Sept. 20, 2026 at Rec Hall in University Park, Pa. The Lady Volunteers beat the Nittany Lions 3-1.

lina and TCU. The Horned Frogs were the only ranked opponent that the Wolverines faced through their first 11 games.

There haven't been many tests for Michigan so far, as it's swept in six of its wins and never dropped more than a single set in any victory. The maize and blue are riding a high streak of form, with four consecutive losses in a stretch where only one set was lost.

The main offensive threat for Michigan is Ella Demetrician who leads the Wolverines with 4.23 kills per set, a mark that ranks No. 24 nationally. Earlier this season, she posted a career-high 23 kills in Michigan's win over Eastern Michigan on Sept. 17.

The Wolverines sport a high-level attack that ranks No. 7 nationally with 14.51 kills per set and

No. 13 nationally with a hitting percentage. There's less to write home about defensively, as Michigan's 2.26 blocks per set ranks No. 100.

Historically, the Nittany Lions have been flat-out dominant against Michigan, holding a 57-7 all-time record over the Wolverines. In coach Katie Schumacher Cawley's tenure as coach, the blue and white lead 3-1 in a split stretch between Happy Valley and Ann Arbor.

After the trip to Ann Arbor, the blue and white continue with another tall task, despite the Spartans currently sitting as an unranked opponent.

Michigan State received votes in the latest AVCA poll, but not enough to break into the rankings.

The Spartans were unblem-

ished through their nonconference slate, being one of three Big Ten teams to hold an undefeated record, sitting at 10-0. While they haven't played a single ranked squad all season, they've dropped just three sets in the campaign's first ten matches.

Those lost frames came in a 3-2 win over Miami in the season opener and a 3-1 win over Oakland on Sept. 15. Michigan State will face off with Washington, another team that's receiving votes, on Friday before hosting Penn State on Sunday.

Offensively, the Spartans are led by Alanna Bankston with 3.81 kills per set. Middle blocker Carmen Wayne has also been a weapon for the squad, ranking No. 1 in the country with a .542 hitting percentage on 118 swings.

Defensively, Michigan State

also stands firm, with Carmen Wayne and Zora Hardison leading the charge. Both Spartans currently rank in the top 20 in blocks per set in the Big Ten.

Michigan State is a better defensive team than Michigan, ranking No. 3 nationally with a .118 opponent hitting percentage and No. 18 with 2.79 blocks per set. The offense isn't as hot as Michigan's, but it's posted a solid 13.67 kills per set. The real stardom for the Spartans comes at the backline where they post a conference high of 2.36 aces per set.

Malayah Long sits as the leader in most statistical categories, but her numbers pace amongst the middle tier of the Big Ten.

Penn State boasts almost the exact same historic record against the Spartans at 57-8 all-time.

The Nittany Lions have won the last four meetings, and 20 of the last 21 dating back to 2013. Schumacher-Cawley only lost once in her six games against the Spartans, which happened during a five-set thriller in 2023.

First serve against Michigan is set for 7 p.m. Friday in Ann Arbor, and the blue and white will face Michigan State at 2 p.m. Sunday in East Lansing. The matchups will be televised on B1G+ and Big Ten Network, respectively.

After this road trip, the blue and white return home for a four-game homestand, including the Dig Pink Match, before taking a West Coast series.

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Should the Nittany Lions be ranked?

By Sports Editors
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Editors' Note: Sports Editors Weekly is a dueling column written by Sports Editors Gianna Dowling and Myles Hannak. It aims to provide timely debate on Penn State sports performance and news each week.

Penn State women's soccer has had a stellar start to Big Ten play, winning two of its first three conference games, with the lone loss coming against No. 6 Ohio State.

The Nittany Lions now stand at 4-2-2 on the season and remain just short of receiving a ranking in the United Soccer Coaches Poll. So the question that stands is has the blue and white done enough to prove itself as a top-25 team, or is there still work to be done?

Dowling: More to prove

There's an old saying that goes, "To be the best you have to beat the best," which is something that the Nittany Lions haven't done yet, even though they've been presented with the opportunity.

Penn State is 0-2-1 against ranked opponents this season, a mark that typically isn't representative of a team with a national ranking.

In these matchups the blue and white only managed to score more than a single goal once, which was back on Aug. 16 when coach Erica Dambach's squad tied then-No. 2 Notre Dame. The Fighting Irish have since dropped to No. 17 in the national rankings.

The best unranked team that the Nittany Lions have faced is Virginia Tech, who even then, they drew 1-1. The common denominator between all Penn State's performances against top opponents is its ability, or lack thereof, to close out games.

Both goals allowed against Notre Dame came within the last 25 minutes of the match, including one in the final three. Similarly, against West Virginia, the now-No. 9 team in the country, the blue and white



Sarah Price/Collegian

Forward Paige Kalal (19) (left) and defender Clare Nemsick (23) (right) battle for the ball during the Penn State women's soccer game against Bucknell at Jeffery Field on Thursday, Aug. 27, 2026 in University Park, Pa. The Nittany Lions beat the Bison 5-0.

allowed the deal breaker in the tail end of the match.

An inability to close out matches is something that's been poison for Penn State, and may be the very reason they've been kept out of the top-25.

Penn State still has some ranked opponents on its schedule, and if the Nittany Lions can clean some things up then they still have plenty of time to prove themselves as a national contender.

Hannak: How hasn't it happened already?

The résumé this season so far for the blue and white is already top-tier, befitting a team that deserves a national ranking and for Penn State's case, it's already overdue.

With a draw against top-ranked squads, Notre Dame and Virginia Tech, and a loss to West Virginia that honestly should've gone the other way, it's clear the play against others already in the national spotlight is at an impressive level.

Then take the teams the Nittany Lions should've beaten, Brown and Bucknell, which

they did consecutively in 5-0 fashion, and the notion becomes that Penn State is a team at the doorstep of catching eyes with a flashy national ranking.

The blue and white began their Big Ten slate with a narrow loss to No. 6 Ohio State and a pair of shut-out victories, so if form continues, then it's only a game or two away from happening.

With deep goal-scoring options, a stable defensive unit and goalkeeper Mackenzie Gress, who stands among the nation's best, the voters will regret besmirching this unit this early, as there's no reason to suggest otherwise.

Coach Dambach's squad looks destined for big things with the options at her disposal, which is rooted in the snubbing of a ranking which gives them all the bulletin board material needed at their disposal.

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Column | Women in sports still face significant hurdles

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It's been one week since Arch Manning was asked whether he'd seen any viral edits or videos after Texas' incredible comeback win over Ohio State. His response spurred some of the most discourse I've seen in recent months over women in sports media.

"I saw the AI edit of (Steve Sarkisian) slapping Holly Rowe ... That's a good one," Manning said. He and the room of journalists broke out in laughter.

Women have spent decades working to earn the respect of men in the sports industry, and this disrespect of Rowe, who was the subject of the Texas' head coach slap in the AI video, only proves there are still ways to go. Rowe is one of the most respected female sideline reporters out there. She's been with ESPN since 1998 and has never stopped working, literally. She didn't take time off when she was battling metastatic melanoma.

But even she is still subject to intense scrutiny. People online make jokes about her weight. And now a group of men were laughing about a video that wasn't really even circulating until Manning brought it up.

The video came about after Sarkisian didn't let Rowe ask any questions postgame and instead yelled "Texas Fight, Hookem" into the microphone and walked away.

Rowe walked off visibly frustrated. Texas officials told The Athletic there were technical issues on ESPN's side, so Sarkisian was waiting for about a minute. Fellow ESPN sideline reporter Laura Rutledge had said previously that Sarkisian declined the halftime interview due to technical difficulties.

Manning and the journalists in the room received loads of criticism online for making light of the AI-generated video that was clearly disrespectful to Rowe. He wrote an apology on his Instagram story on Wednesday, saying "I know my words and actions were hurtful to a lot

of people."

Rowe reposted his apology, thanking Manning and disclosing the two had a conversation that will "remain private."

But this is only one of many recent instances of disrespect toward women in sports, joining Sydney Sweeney's ad for sports prediction market Novig in which she was fully naked, and Callaway's ad where a woman is pushed to the ground after reaching to touch a man's driver.

Both sparked intense controversy, but Sweeney's ad was more indicative of how sports media and advertisements are painting women recently. For example, the NFL used influencers Alix and Ashtin Earle to advertise its game in Australia at the beginning of the season, where they posed as clueless football players who only care about their appearances.

Painting women this way in sports advertisements has been a recent phenomenon. The girl knows nothing about sports, so the guy helps them out. It's almost like leagues and companies have taken steps backward, not forward, when it comes to integrating women into their marketing campaigns in a way that isn't rooted in misogyny.

As for the Callaway advertisement, that showed clear disrespect to women both in golf and just in general. The ad has since been taken down, but the fact it was ever approved in the first place is shocking.

But the most shocking part of all of this disrespect toward women in sports is simply that it's still happening.

At least Manning apologized, and Callaway took the video down. Sweeney doubled down, though, which is concerning considering she is somewhat of a role model to a number of young adults.

Just because there were apologies doesn't erase the damage that was done. It doesn't erase the discourse online. And it certainly doesn't erase how women feel about these things.

As a woman working in sports, all of this upsets me. I hope it upsets you, too.

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