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Published independently by students at Penn State

N**VERSUS**

Vol. 126, No. 7

Friday, Oct. 10, 2025

@DailyCollegian

NORTHWESTERN (3-2)
WILDCATS(3-2) PENN STATE
NITTANY LIONSGraphic by Isabella Viteri, Jocelyn Bilker
Photos by Samantha Oropesa, Chris Eutsler, Kate Hildebrand

FIRE FRANKLIN?

By Avery Hill

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

PASADENA, Calif. — A stonefaced James Franklin placed his hands at his side and stared at the confetti raining on the field. Penn State was in California, at the Rose Bowl Stadium but this was no dream nor bowl game.

The Nittany Lions had just lost to UCLA in what's likely considered the worst loss in the James Franklin tenure, arguably the worst in Penn State history. In turn, just as they did last week, fans are calling for Franklin's job. From an outsider's perspective, it's a more reasonable request this week than ever, but is it realistic for Penn State to do so?

The short answer is: whether it's due to his contract details or the state of the Nittany Lions, firing Penn State's head man may be harder than you think.

The buyout

James Franklin signed a 10-year deal in 2021, locking him into the job until 2031 and that's just the beginning of what makes the move complicated.

If Franklin were to be fired Sunday, or at any time before Jan 1, 2026, without cause, Penn State University would owe him \$56 million in buyout money. If done during the offseason, that number goes down to \$48 million.

The buyout's determined by adding Franklin's \$500,000 base salary to his \$6.5 million supplemental pay and \$1 million life insurance loan, multiplied by the amount of years left on his contract.

To do the math for you, even if Penn State waited until his 2029 coaching year, Franklin would be owed \$24 million — that's still a hard bargain. For comparison, former Texas A&M head coach Jimbo Fisher has the highest buyout, topping \$75 million after being fired.

For the current coaches, one who was on the hot seat but beat No. 9 Texas on Saturday, is Florida's Billy Napier. After the season, his buyout sits at \$19.38 million after the season, per CBS Sports. Alabama's Kalen DeBoer is also a name tossed in the hat anytime the Crimson Tide loses, college football writer Matt Hayes reported in August that DeBoer's buyout is \$70 million.

Amid \$700 million renovations that were mostly made possible due to generous donors and an uptick in sponsorships, it's a problem the university likely doesn't want to have at this moment, even if it becomes the only option.

The only feasible plan would be if Franklin voluntarily steps down, is fired with cause, or takes another job elsewhere. Let's be frank, that's not happening.

The plan and potential candidates

So, Penn State decides to get rid of Franklin and start over. This is where it gets more complicated.

Franklin secured his extension and has remained at Penn State due to his ability to be consistent and win, even if it wasn't the big games. Franklin boasts a 104-44 record while at Penn State, has seen postseason play in all but one season and secured top-10 AP Poll finishes in five campaigns — that's not easy to follow up.

If Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Pat Kraft and the governing staff is smart, it would need a high-profile coach who can build on what Franklin has accomplished and surpass his legacy.

Considering the aforementioned AP Poll finishes, that leaves a short list of candidates.

It's safe to include who many consider the college-coaching G.O.A.T in Nick Saban as well as NFL legend Jon Gruden in

conversation. Both have been rumored to want to get back into coaching. If you want to get a current coach to depart their program, Indiana's Curt Cignetti likely enters the conversation and Syracuse's Fran Brown is also a potential candidate given his recruiting pedigree.

The buyout plays part in this issue. To get a top guy, Penn State would need the money to pay that guy.

That means the Nittany Lions could be forced to get a Group of Six head coach or Power Four coordinator, like Franklin's former offensive coordinator, Old Dominion's Ricky Rahne.

That likely doesn't get the job done, and Penn State could be forced to hit the coaching market again in a few years despite having two of its recent head coaches have tenures that span more than a decade.

That's a scary situation for Happy Valley, and it's still going to be hard to please its fanbase and donors in that case.

Other considerations

Firing a head coach has plenty of implications, which is why getting a strong guy to replace him is an impossible necessity for Penn State.

At the top of the list is recruiting.

2027 commit Kemon Spell was just ranked the No. 8 player and No. 1 running back in the country. Franklin recruited him, so if you lose Franklin, you likely lose Spell. That goes for the rest of the team's recruits and plenty of current players.

After this season, Drew Allar, Nick Singleton, Kaytron Allen, Dani Dennis-Sutton, Zakee Wheatley and A.J. Harris are some of many who are expected to take their talents to the NFL. But that also means players with eligibility like wide receiver Devonte Ross, offensive guard Cooper Cousins and linebacker

Amare Campbell could hit the portal.

It's worth mentioning that if it happens during the season, players could depart the program immediately, effectively ending any hopes of postseason play under an interim coach.

Recency bias says the Nittany Lions' coaching staff has struggled with the team, but all of these guys were known as top coaches at their positions before the season.

“On that same accord, highly touted position coaches, like tight ends coach Ty Howle and offensive line coach Phil Trautwein would be out the door, too.”

Looking at the other side of it, financial struggles could be alleviated by generous donors, but that's a big investment that likely puts tons of pressure on Kraft to produce results fast or face issues with the ones who hold the money in the long term.

There's also the fact that not every team is going to win a national championship.

Penn State hasn't gotten that honor since 1986, and it's possible that a title just isn't in the cards for Penn State despite its search for a new head man.

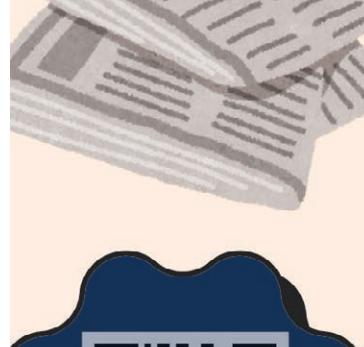
Firing a coach is never easy, but when you consider Franklin's resume and Penn State's history, it gets at least 10-times harder.

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'It starts with me'

Franklin talks offensive line, outside noise, accountability

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

This week is a crucial one for Penn State. If it loses, jobs that were in jeopardy prior to the game are even more under fire, and those sentiments will be hard to ignore.

One of those positions is James Franklin's, who met with the media Wednesday for his usual after-practice media

availability. There, he once again discussed taking accountability as well as tuning out outside noise.

Here's more on what Franklin had to say.

Offensive line rotation

Last weekend's bout against UCLA featured some rotation on the offensive line with T.J. Shanahan Jr. earning his first start at right guard, while

Anthony Donkoh rotated in at right tackle for three snaps in the second half.

Franklin has preached since the beginning of the season that he has seven guys he feels comfortable playing on the offensive line and rotation has been normal, but the defeat was the first time Donkoh had checked in at right tackle this season.

"The plan was to get him some work at right tackle as part of the rotation," Franklin said. "He's had some bumps and bruises that he's been dealing with, so that's just part of the entire plan. We want to be able to get Rucci a few series out and get Donkoh in there, for depth, for durability — for all of it."

Donkoh was listed as questionable before the game against the Bruins, and he only played those three snaps. As the season chugs along, Franklin would like to continue rotating at the right tackle spot barring Penn State "is healthy enough to do it."

Outside animosity

To put it lightly, Penn State fans have not been thrilled throughout the first five games of the 2025 season. But the loss to UCLA was the boiling point, and it's quite likely the team walks out to boos from the Stripe Out crowd.

The players and staff have

heard it all before. There were "Fire Franklin" chats during the White Out against Oregon along with boos. Regardless, Franklin understands the frustration and is trying not to focus on it.

"We try to control the things that we can control. We've had this in the past. I obviously don't want it. Nobody wants it," Franklin said. "I want the players to have a great experience. I want the coaches to have a great experience. I want the fans to feel good and be excited, and I know that we impact their mood for the week and the year. So I get it."

Franklin also acknowledged the program is one of "high expectations," so naturally the fans won't be happy when the Nittany Lions lose back-to-back games, one of which came against the worst team in the conference, and drop out of the AP top-25 for the first time since 2022.

"Am I happy about it? No, but I get it," Franklin said. "It's outside of our control, and we try to pour all of our energy on the things that we can control."

Internal accountability

Franklin preached during his Monday press conference that the struggles Penn State has had this season start with him. He is the head of this program, and that makes him the fall guy and the

one who needs to take the most accountability.

The veteran head coach reiterated the same sentiment after practice Wednesday.

"It starts with me, and that's important, that everybody understands that, and I understand that very, very clearly," Franklin said. "That's hard conversations in the Lasch Football Building with the football staff."

Franklin followed up and said most people inside the program, whether it's the players or staff, have taken it upon themselves to realize what they need to do better and how they can improve and salvage this season.

As for what he's learned about himself throughout the last two weeks of losing football, Franklin said he's had to be honest with himself and those around him in order to try and take steps forward.

"It starts with all of us looking in the mirror and making the adjustments we can make, and owning it, and then moving forward in a positive direction, and reminding the players that we're closer than maybe it feels right now and that it's being reported, right?" Franklin said. "It's never as bad as you think. It's never as good as you think, although it feels bad right now to everybody."



Sawyer Hadlum/Collegian

Penn State football head coach answers questions during a press conference in Beaver Stadium on Monday, Oct. 6, 2025 Pa.

Nittany Lions in the NFL

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After a rough Saturday for Penn State fans, many turned their attention to the NFL on Sunday.

A few former Nittany Lions in the big leagues had solid days, but no one really exploded as some have done in past weeks.

Tyler Warren, tight end, Indianapolis Colts

After a somewhat quiet Week 4, Tyler Warren's name was called consistently once again in the Indianapolis Colts blowout win over the Las Vegas Raiders.

Warren had four catches for 44 yards in the win along with

his first career receiving touchdown. The former Nittany Lions currently leads all tight ends in receiving yards in just his first season in the big leagues.

In just a few games, Warren has cemented himself among some of the best tight ends in pro football, and people on social media are getting increasingly more baffled about the Chicago Bears' decision to draft former Michigan tight end Colston Loveland ahead of Warren at pick No. 10.

Regardless, the Colts got a good one, and he's proven to be as advertised despite concerns about his blocking ability, route-running and speed.

Theo Johnson, tight end,

New York Giants

Penn State's tight end factory had themselves a day on Sunday, as Theo Johnson had one of his most productive games at the professional level.

Although he had just 33 receiving yards, Johnson had six catches and two touchdowns in the New York Giants' loss to the New Orleans Saints. Johnson's scores were the only two of the day for New York.

Overall, Johnson is having a solid season with two more touchdowns this season than he had his rookie year in 2024. His production should continue to see an increase with star wide receiver Malik Nabers sidelined for the rest of the year with a torn ACL.

Saquon Barkley, running back, Philadelphia Eagles

The start of 2025 hasn't been what many envisioned for Saquon Barkley, who is the reigning Offensive Player of the Year and had 2,005 rushing yards last season.

However, he found the end zone for the fourth time this season in the Eagles' first loss of the season. The score marked Barkley's first receiving touchdown of the year.

Outside of the score, Barkley finished with just six rushing attempts for 30 yards, while he tallied three catches for 58 receiving yards.

The usage of Barkley in Sunday's game was a bit interesting, but the former Penn State star now has just 267 rushing

yards through five games on 83 carries — good for 3.2 yards per carry.

Abdul Carter, edge, New York Giants

While Abdul Carter didn't wreak havoc in the Giants' loss to the Saints, he still picked up four tackles, bringing his total to 13 on the season.

Similarly to his time at Penn State, fans on X were pointing out multiple holds on Carter, although that didn't make much of a difference in the end with New York losing by 12 points to New Orleans.

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NORTHWESTERN WILDCATS

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Alijah Jones	DB/Fr.	18	Camp Magee	WR/So.	43	Noah LaPorte	TE/Fr.	73	Deuce McGuire	OL/Jr.
1	Carmine Bastone	DL/Gr.	18	Garner Wallace	DB/Gr.	44	Callen Campbell	DL/Fr.	74	Nick Herzog	OL/Jr.
2	Ryan Boe	QB/Fr.	19	Drew Wagner	WR/So.	45	Jack Sadowsky V	LB/Jr.	75	Martes Lewis	OL/Gr.
2	Fred Davis II	DB/Gr.	20	Chase Farrell	WR/Fr.	46	Lincoln Creager	LB/Fr.	76	Michael O'Connell	OL/Fr.
3	Frank Covey IV	WR/So.	21	Damon Walters	DB/So.	47	Michael Kilbane	DL/Jr.	77	Idrys Cotton	OL/Fr.
4	Cam Porter	RB/Gr.	23	Terriion Curry-Hicks	DB/Fr.	48	Tyler Kielmeyer	TE/Fr.	78	Trey Boyd	OL/Fr.
4	Anto Saka	DL/Jr.	23	Cole Shivers	DB/So.	49	Liam Reardon	LS/Sr.	80	Hayden Eilon II	WR/So.
5	Caleb Komolafe	RB/So.	24	Dashun Reeder	RB/Fr.	50	Talan Chandler	OL/Fr.	81	Chris Petrucci	TE/Jr.
6	Robert Fitzgerald	DB/Jr.	25	Marquet Dorsey Jr.	DB/Fr.	51	Miles Crutchley	LB/Jr.	82	Braden Blueitt	WR/Fr.
6	Joseph Himon II	RB/Jr.	26	Albert Kunickis II	RB/Jr.	52	Richie Hagarty	DL/Gr.	82	Jack Olsen	K/Sr.
7	Ore Adeyi	DB/Gr.	26	Jalen Lewis	DB/So.	53	Tanner Jumpp	DL/Fr.	83	Blake Van Buren	TE/Jr.
8	Preston Stone	QB/Gr.	27	Daniel Anderson	RB/Fr.	54	Tyler Gant	DL/So.	84	Hunter Welcing	TE/Gr.
8	Dillon Tatum	DB/Jr.	27	Jack Oyola	DB/Jr.	55	Dylan Roberts	DL/So.	85	Pstrick Schaller	TE/Fr.
9	Braden Turner	DB/Jr.	28	Timi Oke	DB/Fr.	56	Mason Mayne	DL/Fr.	86	Lawson Albright	TE/Gr.
10	Ricky Ahumaraeze	WR/So.	29	Jon Jon Stevens Jr.	DB/Fr.	57	Hayden Wright	OL/Ft.	87	Carson Grove	WR/Fr.
11	Luke Akers	P/Gr.	31	Sean Martin	DB/Fr.	58	Nathaniel Campbell	LB/Gr.	88	Alex Lines	TE/Gr.
11	Seth Valeri	DB/Fr.	31	Tito Williams Jr.	DB/Fr.	59	Jack Trautmann	DL/Fr.	89	Cam Russell	WR/Gr.
12	Marcus Romain	QB/Fr.	32	Matthew Smith	LB/Fr.	60	Evan Beernsen	OL/Sr.	91	Aidan Hubbard	DL/Gr.
12	Evan Smith	DB/Jr.	33	Braydon Brus	LB/Jr.	61	Mstt Keeler	OL/Sr.	92	Nikola Dugandzic	P/Gr.
13	Gavin Frakes	QB/Jr.	34	Payton Roth	LB/So.	62	Ezomo Oratokhai	OL/Gr.	93	Mason Green	DL/So.
13	Josh Fussell	DB/So.	35	Tate Crane	WR/Gr.	63	Xavior Gray	OL/Sr.	93	Caden O'Rourke	DL/Gr.
14	Dube Enongene	WR/Gr.	36	Ronny Johnson	RB/Gr.	64	Anthony Birs	OL/So.	94	Henry Helms	K/Jr.
14	Yannis Karlaftis	LB/Gr.	37	Mac Uihlein	LB/Sr.	62	Jaxon Dunn	OL/Gr.	94	Migo Jackson	DL/Sr.
15	Brendan Flakes	DL/Jr.	38	Josh Veldman	LB/So.	65	Jackson Carsello	OL/Sr.	95	Najee Story	DL/Sr.
15	Sean Winton	QB/Gr.	39	Jack Florentine	LS/Gr.	67	Jace Borchering	OL/Gr.	96	Jonah Hayes	DL/Gr.
16	J.J. Lewis	DB/So.	40	Jason Reynolds II	LB/Jr.	69	Jack Bailey	OL/Gr.	97	Braxton Strong	DL/Gr.
16	Brennan Saxe	WR/Gr.	41	Robby Preckel	RB/Gr.	71	Dennis Rahouski	OL/Gr.	98	Landon Lauter	DL/Gr.
17	Griffin Wilde	WR/Jr.	42	Nigel Glover	LB/So.	72	Caleb Tiernan	OL/Gr.	99	Troy Regovich	DL/Gr.



PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Dominic DeLuca	LB/Sr.	17	Ethan Grunkemeyer	QB/Gr.	38	Jackson Pryts	LB/Jr.	71	Vega Ioane	OL/Jr.
1	Kyron Hudson	WR/Sr.	17	Kenny Woseley Jr.	CB/Gr.	38	Winston Yates	LB/So.	72	Nolan Rucci	OL/Sr.
2	Liam Clifford	WR/Sr.	18	Joey Schaffer	TE/So.	39	Ty Blanding	DT/So.	73	Caleb Brewer	OL/Fr.
2	Audavion Collins	CB/Jr.	18	Max Granville	DE/Gr.	39	Jashawn Green	S/Jr.	74	J'ven Williams	OL/Sr.
3	Antoine Belgrave-Shorter										

WILDCATS TO WATCH

By Will Horstman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Former SMU backup quarterback Preston Stone is set to get his shot against Penn State.

Stone announced his transfer portal commitment to Northwestern minutes after the Nittany Lions' playoff win over the Mustangs last December, and he headlines the Wildcats, who are 3-2 on the year and 1-1 in Big Ten play this year.

The team is coming off a 42-7 win over UL Monroe last weekend, and James Franklin talked about what Northwestern has shown thus far this season after Wednesday's practice.

Here are a few Wildcats to watch in Saturday's game.

Preston Stone, quarterback

Stone started his season with a four-interception day against Tulane, but his touchdown-to-interception ratio has improved since. Excluding the opener, Stone has seven touchdowns and two picks this year.

Stone's coming off a productive week versus UL Monroe, completing 64.5% of his passes for 262 yards and three scores. He's in his fifth collegiate year after



Matt Marton/AP

Northwestern quarterback Preston Stone throws a pass during a game against Oregon.

transferring in from SMU with 918 passing yards thus far.

The Dallas native doesn't often take off with his legs, tallying 23 attempts through five games, but it's possible he can pick up chunk gains. Stone had a 30-yard rush on a second-and-10 play against the Warhawks that helped set up a touchdown drive.

Caleb Komolafe, running back

Running back Caleb Komolafe has totaled a touchdown in three-

straight games, including a pair of scores last week against UL Monroe. With 75 attempts, the redshirt sophomore is taking the majority of carries out of Northwestern's backfield during his first season as the starter.

Komolafe is averaging 4.5 yards per carry this season. Versus UCLA, Komolafe took 27 attempts for 119 yards, and he had 13 carries for 75 yards against the Warhawks.

He's flashed power on the ground and is capable of taking on a large workload, so he may

be a test for Jim Knowles' run defense.

Komolafe can run up the middle or off the tackles, but Northwestern's offense doesn't get him involved in the passing game as he has two catches for zero yards this season.

Mac Uihlein, linebacker

Linebacker Mac Uihlein has been a consistent contributor on Northwestern's defense, tallying at least four tackles in every game this season so far. He's

got 34 tackles this year with a season-high nine tackles coming against Tulane.

Uihlein is used in pass coverage as he has two interceptions on the year. He's been targeted 12 times, allowing 12 catches for 51 yards, getting reps in the slot when he's not in the box.

For Penn State's offense, Uihlein could be the player to beat if it wants to get its tight ends involved.

He's not often asked to pass rush with one pressure this season, but he has made his mark in run defense.

Aiden Hubbard, defensive lineman

Defensive lineman Aiden Hubbard has Northwestern's team-high in sacks this season with 2.5. He primarily lines up as an edge rusher but also has seen some work from the interior.

Hubbard had a tackle and a sack in his most recent outing against the Warhawks.

He's another experienced player on defense as he's in his senior year. Keeping a clean pocket for Allar could start with containing Hubbard.

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Bested by the Bruins

By Lexie Linderman

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

PASADENA, Calif. — Penn State's first road trip of the season came at the perfect time, as the Happy Valley faithful were still mourning the Nittany Lions' loss to Oregon exactly one week ago.

"It's a good time to get out of town," James Franklin said Wednesday.

So they flew 2,500 miles across the country to take on 0-4 UCLA at the iconic Rose Bowl stadium. It was a perfect opportunity to get back on track and give Franklin sole possession of second place all-time in wins at Penn State.

The Nittany Lions instead looked like they were the worst Power 4 team in the nation entering this game, not the No. 7 team in the country, and now the fans have another loss to sit with.

Here are three takeaways from Penn State's 42-37 loss against UCLA.

Defensive line might not be elite

UCLA entered Saturday's contest having allowed nine sacks this season, good for 2.25 a game. Its offensive line by no means has been elite, yet Penn State's defensive line couldn't generate any pressure through 2.5 quarters.

Dani Dennis-Sutton and Zane Durant were anticipated to be All-Americans, Durant especially. They were nowhere to be found at first, but eventually the pair picked it up.

Dennis-Sutton blocked a punt that Liam Clifford scooped up for a touchdown and picked up an important two-yard tackle for loss with the Bruins in the red zone halfway through the fourth quarter.

Durant, meanwhile, recorded his first sack of the season after starting the season with just six total tackles and 0.5 tackles for loss.

It's still hard to ignore the lows for the defensive line. They gave up 281 rushing yards and were missing tackles all over the field. But that was pretty much everyone on the defense outside of Amare Campbell and Zakee Wheatley, who looked like the only competent tacklers.

To make matters worse, the defensive line jumped offsides twice, and the second one was somewhat of a game-changer.

Cartoon by Nate Campbell

Loss of Rojas looming large

As Nico Iamaleava took off for 52 yards late in the third quarter, one thing was abundantly clear — Penn State's defense needs Tony Rojas.

It's nearly impossible to replicate Rojas' speed. He's one of the fastest guys on the team, and it was incredibly important to have him on the field against quarterbacks that are a threat outside of the pocket.

Iamaleava's 128 rushing yards are proof enough. There was no one on the Nittany Lions' defense that could catch Iamaleava, who blew past his previous career-high in rushing of 65 yards, and it's no coincidence this poor defensive performance came the same week Rojas picked up a long-term injury.

Dom DeLuca is a good linebacker, but Rojas' chemistry with Campbell was at a different level, and that showed Saturday. Plainly, the defense just looked out of sorts, and DeLuca was getting ran at nearly every play.

"Couple times we spied him, and when we spied him, he was able to either make the spy miss or run away from the spy," Franklin said postgame. "To your point, obviously, we lost a significant player for us last week. Normally, that would be his responsibility, but at the end of the day, we spied, and he ran away from the spy. We spied. He made the spy miss."

For what it's worth, the Bruins had a new playcaller on the headset this week, Jerry Neuheisel, leaving Penn State's staff no film to work with and no clue what could be coming their way. But that's no excuse for allowing 42 points to a UCLA team that was averaging 14 points per game headed into this contest.

Additionally, the Bruins entered Saturday's game with a 30.8% success rate on third down, which was last in the Big Ten and 125th in the country.

Penn State allowed UCLA to convert 66.7% of its third down attempts.

It's hard to imagine this defense can be one of the best in the country this season without Rojas lining up next to Campbell every Saturday.

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Geraldine Cruz/Collegian

Wide receiver Tyseer Denmark (4) runs a drill during Penn State football practice.

Denmark, Howard draw buzz

By Will Horstman

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

like gold, every drive is like gold, and we got to maximize that."

Denmark first received 17 snaps in the opener against Nevada, but has since only seen two snaps, last appearing versus Villanova. Howard is in a similar situation, getting 22 snaps in the Nevada game and four against the Wildcats.

Howard has yet to log a catch this season while Denmark has a pair of receptions for 17 yards.

Still, Denmark and Howard's work behind the scenes doesn't go unnoticed, and they were even highlighted by Drew Allar.

"They've been getting better, two younger guys in our program, they're definitely into the point where they're understanding the expectations and standards and that sort of thing," Allar said Wednesday via Zoom. "And I think the last handful of weeks, they both have been practicing at the most consistent level they have since they've been here. Really excited about those two guys. Those guys are unselfish."

Since wide receivers coach Marques Hagans took over the position group in 2023, redshirt or true freshmen typically haven't seen much production. The last time Penn State had a freshman who made a considerable impact was Parker Washington in 2020 with 36 catches for 489 yards.

In other words, it's not out of the ordinary for younger receivers like Denmark and Howard to have to wait for their turn despite turning some heads in practice. It might not be known exactly when Denmark and Howard will be called upon, but teammates have faith in the two.

"They'll do whatever the coaches ask them to do, and they'll go make plays when the plays are presented to them," Allar said. "So I'm really excited about their futures."

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ALLAR 'SETS THE TONE'

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Drew Allar is never happy while fielding questions from reporters after a loss. But he especially wasn't thrilled when he was asked if Penn State is still in the hunt for the College Football Playoff after losing to then-0-4 UCLA.

"What do you think?" Allar scoffed.

The answer in his mind was obviously yes — and he followed up in his answer as such — even though the general public wholeheartedly disagrees. At 3-2, it would take winning out, which means snapping an eight-game losing streak to Ohio State and beating No. 7 Indiana.

Clearly, Allar is confident in his team. He said after the loss Saturday the 2025 Nittany Lions will be defined by how they respond to this defeat, and he expected everyone to respond well. Four days later, Allar continued to express that trust when speaking with reporters on Zoom.

"For us as at least in the locker room, as players, (we're) extremely motivated," Allar said. "I mean, not particularly happy. I think more just motivated than ever because of just everything that's transpired. But yeah, I

think we're an extremely motivated group. I think we got a great group of leaders that are going to be able to help us rebound from this. And just go ahead, take it one day at a time, not looking too far into the future or into the past."

Allar is one of Penn State's main leaders since it's his third year as the starter and second as the offensive captain. In some ways, it's his responsibility to help the Nittany Lions move forward.

The senior said he hasn't really changed much within his routine following the two losses — he still arrives at the Lasch Building around 6 a.m. and doesn't leave until 8:30 p.m. But Allar is bringing a more competitive edge during practice in hopes of getting the rest fired up.

Allar's side of the ball has been

"I think for me, it's about going out and setting the tone during practice, whether that's the way I'm carrying myself mentally or physically."

Drew Allar

getting the heat this season, although the offense wasn't necessarily to blame against UCLA.

It did, however, falter on fourth-and-2 with the game on the line, and offensive coordinator Andy Kotelnicki is once again getting plenty of heat.

Allar expressed the utmost trust in his playcaller, as he usually does, on Wednesday, saying the two have a "really good relationship" and Kotelnicki does "a really great job" showing his players the intent behind his play designs.

"I think this Saturday kind of showed it, because there were a couple plays (where) they were driving a couple of our routes, and I made a mention to him, and some of the receivers made a mention to him about an adjustment we can make, and we ended up scoring on the play later, because he listened to us and saw what we were talking about," Allar said. "So he's very open ears to everything, and he just wants us to go out and play the best football that we can."

Penn State needs to get back on track against Northwestern this week. It knows that, and so does Allar.

His focus ahead of Saturday's Stripe Out is to just take every-



Dylan Berkman/For the Collegian

Quarterback Drew Allar (15) prepares to snap the ball during the Penn State Football game against UCLA at the Rose Bowl Stadium on Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025 in Pasadena, Calif. The Bruins beat the Nittany Lions 42-37.

thing one day at a time and honing in on every small detail, which is especially important considering the lack of energy the Nittany Lions displayed in Pasadena, California.

"I think going forward it's just about taking it one day at a time, and pouring everything that we can as players into each day of preparation and asking all the

questions that we need to ask, and taking diligent notes, whatever the case is for each position group, and just moving on from there," Allar said. "We have great leadership between the coaches and players that are going to be able to get that done."

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Stock up, stock down

By Will Horstman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State as a whole is trending down, but there's specifics in this plummet.

The coaching staff should be held most responsible after UCLA's upset over the Nittany Lions, but there were a few bright spots in the team's nightmare.

Here's who's stock is moving up and down after one of the worst losses in program history.

Stock up: Drew Allar

Allar's stock has continued to slide all season, but to his credit, he had a respectable performance against the Bruins.

While he had some misses, Allar completed 73.1% of his passes for 200 yards and two touchdowns, including a 40-yard score to tight end Khalil Dinkins.

Allar made a bunch of plays with his legs as well. He had a team-high 78 rushing yards on 11 carries, picking up some key first downs along the way.

It's tough to blame this loss on Allar, which is an improvement from what he showed against Oregon.

Stock down: James Franklin, Andy Kotelnicki, Jim Knowles

There's no other way to put it: This past weekend was a straight up disaster class by Penn State's top-three staffers in head coach James Franklin, offensive coordinator Andy Kotelnicki and defensive coordinator Jim Knowles.

The Nittany Lions are reportedly paying Knowles \$3.1 million, but that investment really couldn't have looked worse Saturday. Thirty-three-year-old UCLA play caller Jerry Neuheisel installed his game plan just two days before the game, and it generated 42 points and 446 total yards.

Kotelnicki's play calling, on the other hand, was questionable at times. Particularly on

wfourth-and-2 near the end of the game, where calling a power read between quarterback Drew Allar and wide receiver Trebor Peña is certainly a choice.

And then there's Franklin, who simply didn't have his team moved on from the Oregon loss and prepared for UCLA. One of the positives about Franklin used to be he'd win the games he's supposed to win, but after losing as the favorite in back-to-back weeks, that is slowly shifting.

Stock up: Kaytron Allen

Running back Kaytron Allen scored two touchdowns Saturday and is averaging 7 yards per carry this season. While he only saw eight carries versus UCLA, it feels like his importance is exemplified when he's not on the field.

Allen has been producing as Penn State's best offensive player. Saturday, he looked like his usual self, averaging 6.3 yards per attempt, including a 13-yard touchdown run in the first quarter.

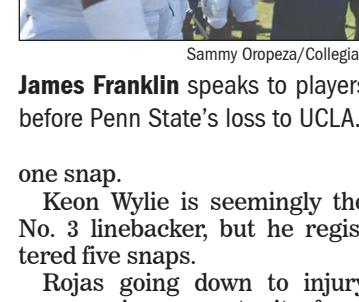
But then when the game is on the line on fourth-and-2, Allen isn't on the field. For a team that needs two yards to stay alive, not riding the hot hand in Allen hurts.

Allen not being on the field was a bit of a trend as well — he had 22 snaps. For comparison, fellow running back Nick Singleton was given 37 snaps and 11 carries while averaging 3.5 yards per attempt.

Stock down: Linebacker depth

Without Tony Rojas, Penn State's linebackers are practically just Amare Campbell and Dom DeLuca, who accounted for 95% of the reps given to players at the position Saturday.

Cam Smith made his collegiate debut against UCLA, but it was only for one play as it was when DeLuca was off the field due to injury. Alex Tatsch is another freshman who has received praise and was rewarded more playing time versus Villanova, but he also had



Sammy Oropesa/Collegian

James Franklin speaks to players before Penn State's loss to UCLA.

one snap.

Keon Wylie is seemingly the No. 3 linebacker, but he registered five snaps.

Rojas going down to injury was a prime opportunity for a depth piece to step up. While there's still time for one to do so, it didn't necessarily look close to happening against the Bruins.

Stock up: TJ Shanahan Jr.; Stock down: Anthony Donkoh

Heading into the weekend, Anthony Donkoh had been the usual starter at right guard. While he was listed as "questionable" on the availability report, he still played, but not as much as TJ Shanahan Jr.

Shanahan was the starter, logging 58 snaps compared to Donkoh's 14. He registered an 86.9 PFF pass blocking grade and didn't allow a single pressure on Allar.

Donkoh also rotated in for Nolan Rucci at right tackle, playing three snaps there in the second half before Rucci returned for the rest of the bout.

It'll be interesting to watch if this continues even when Donkoh isn't a part of the pre-game availability report, but in the meantime, Shanahan could be the new starter moving forward.

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Turning it up

By Lyle Alenstein
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

"lock in, like everybody gotta just do their job, just focus," corner back Audavion Collins said. "That's the only thing we really can do right now, not worry about too much outside the locker room or anywhere outside the facility."

The players are doing everything in their power to not let something like the loss to UCLA happen again. Rappleyea has stayed up till 4 a.m. watching film to assess what he's done wrong. Mack, Collins and various defensive backs started sitting in on defensive staff meetings.

The "1-0" mentality is as prevalent as ever. It's instilled in the players, coaches and everybody else in between.

With the season currently on a downward spiral, a win against Northwestern is a must for the Nittany Lions to steer the ship in the right direction and gain back the support of an unhappy fan base — it starts at practice.

"My confidence out this roof right here," Mack said as he pointed toward the ceiling of Holuba Hall. "I know we're gonna bounce back and. Like I said, the vibes, the brotherhood we have, we all lock arms together. We know that we love each other over anybody."

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Take a look

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COLLEGIAN FOOTBALL STAFF PREDICTIONS

AVERY HILL



PENN STATE: 30



NORTHWESTERN: 12

LEXIE LINDERMAN



PENN STATE: 28



NORTHWESTERN: 10

LYLE ALENSTEIN



PENN STATE: 37



NORTHWESTERN: 17

WILL HORSTMAN



PENN STATE: 23



NORTHWESTERN: 14



Vol. 126, No. 7

Friday, Oct. 10, 2025

psu-collegian.com

'HE WAS LET DOWN... AGAIN'

Exoneree Subu Vedam's ICE arrest sparks protest

News Staff
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Protesters gathered at the Allen Street Gates on Sunday afternoon in support of Subramanyam "Subu" Vedam, who was taken to Moshannon Valley Processing Center in Philipsburg on Oct. 3 due to an ICE detainer issued in 1988.

Vedam, 64, was detained just a day after Centre County District Attorney Bernie Cantorna announced he will dismiss his charges for the 1981 murder of Thomas Kinser after spending more than 40 decades in Huntingdon State Prison.

"We are disappointed that Subu has been taken into ICE custody," his sister Saraswathi Vedam said. "This immigration matter is a remnant of Subu's original murder conviction which has now been overturned. Since that wrongful conviction has been officially vacated, and the charges against Subu have been dismissed, we have asked the immigration court to re-open the case and account for the fact that Subu has been exonerated."

Vedam was granted a new trial in August by Judge Jonathan Grine after new forensic evidence pointed to a different gun and bullet than the one originally believed to have killed Kinser. A retrial date had not yet been scheduled.

Cantorna said his office will not pursue a retrial due to the challenges of prosecuting a case more than four decades old. Several witnesses have died, and evidence has been lost since Vedam's conviction, Cantorna said in a press release.

Although he described the forensic evidence suggesting Kinser was killed with a .25 caliber round as "compelling," he said the chances of securing a con-



Community members hold a banner in support of Subu Vedam at an emergency protest outside the Allen Street Gates on Sunday, Oct. 5, 2025 in State College, Pa.

viction have become unlikely. He added that Vedam, who was 19 at the time, has already served 44 years in prison without raising public safety concerns.

Kinser was last seen on Dec. 13, 1980, though his body wasn't found until September 1981 by hikers in Bear Meadows. His death was ruled a homicide by the State College Police Department days after his body was found based on a bullet wound in the back of his skull.

Vedam was charged with first-degree murder on June 28, 1982, after testimonies from Kinser's father and friend stated Vedam was the last person to see Kinser, according to court documents.

He was retried in February of

1988 after filing a Writ of Habeas Corpus and was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

"Given the implications of Judge Grine's opinion, the real-life difficulties of a retrial, and the reality that 44 years is a sufficient sentence for a murder committed by someone who was nineteen years old, the Commonwealth has (Oct. 2) filed a request for the case to be dismissed," Cantorna said in the release. "It is not a decision made lightly. Nevertheless, given everything that has happened thus far, I believe it is the just decision to make."

The protest, which was held by the People's Defense Front and the Student Committee for Defense and Solidarity, drew quick

support from students and community members.

Christian Miller said he heard about the protest through Students for Justice in Palestine.

Miller, a third-year studying anthropology, said the organization sparked his interest in Vedam's case and inspired him to speak out against ICE.

"If we allow one group, like immigrants or Palestinians to be affected, then we consent for all other groups to be affected," he said.

Miller said he hopes to show solidarity with immigrants during a time where he feels they're subject to abuse more than ever before.

"All struggles are connected,"

Miller said. "And the struggle for other people to achieve liberation, helps the struggle here at home."

Several men began chanting "MAGA," the campaign slogan of President Donald Trump, causing some shoving.

Police were present near the end of the protest, but there were no altercations between them and protesters.

Over time, the protest garnered attention from passersby, like Chloe Puza, who said she decided to join after was driving by.

"I'm extremely against ICE," Puza, a third-year studying actuarial science, said. "I live in Pittsburgh, and before I moved up here, there were a lot of raids happening, which was really detrimental to our community."

She said she knows that "undocumented immigrants are not here to cause crimes," and is moved to protest in favor of them.

"They deserve a chance to live just like I do and everybody else," Puza said.

Longtime State College resident Abbie Loviscky said she is distraught by Vedam's case.

Loviscky said she's been following the case with her parents over the years, who were living in the borough when Vedam was initially charged over 40 years ago.

She said she will continue to protest against mass deportation, as she believes ICE isn't allowing due process under the Trump administration.

"It could have been a really great day, and it just turned into something that made me feel like he was let down by the community again," Loviscky said.

Information regarding Vedam's release is still unknown.

This story was reported by **Kiera Ginn**, **Vida Lashgari** and **Sara O'Connell**.

A TIMELINE OF SUBU VEDAM'S TRIALS

Police charge Vedam with first-degree murder of his former roommate Kinser.

Thomas Kinser, 19, was reported missing. He was last seen on Dec. 13, 1980, at Lions Gate Apartments. Kinser's father testifies Vedam offered his son an unspecified amount of LSD to drive him to Lewistown. In September a judge denies Vedam writ of habeas corpus.

Two hikers found Kinser's

decomposed body near a pond in

Bear Meadows, which is below

Tussey Mountain. Kinser died as a

result of a gunshot wound to the

back of the head. Police immediately

ruled out suicide. Two days later, his

death was officially ruled a

homicide.

Vedam's request for a retrial is approved. After seven hours of deliberation the jury delivers a second guilty verdict.

Documents revealed that a witness in the trial committed perjury. Gopal Balachandran, assistant professor of clinical law, files the Post-Conviction Relief Act petition for Vedam.

After spending more than 40

years behind bars, Subu is

released after the Centre County

DA announces he will dismiss

the charges. On Oct. 3, Subu is

taken into custody by ICE due to

a detainer issued in 1988.

Vedam's first trial begins.

After a five hour

deliberation, the jury comes

back with a guilty verdict.

He's sentenced to life in

prison without parole.

Vedam requested another

retrial, which was eventually

refused by the Pennsylvania

Supreme Court.

A new hearing date is set

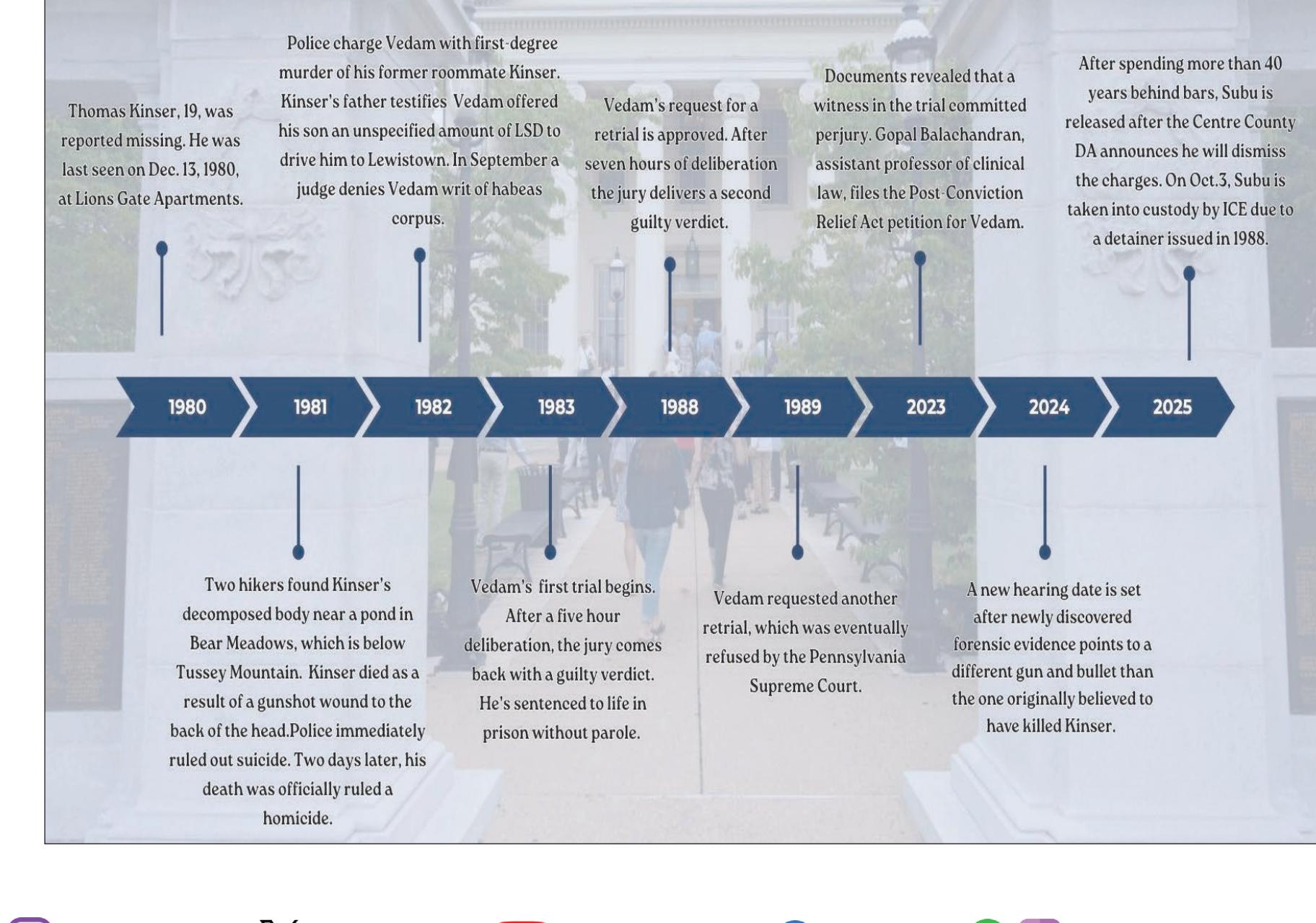
after newly discovered

forensic evidence points to a

different gun and bullet than

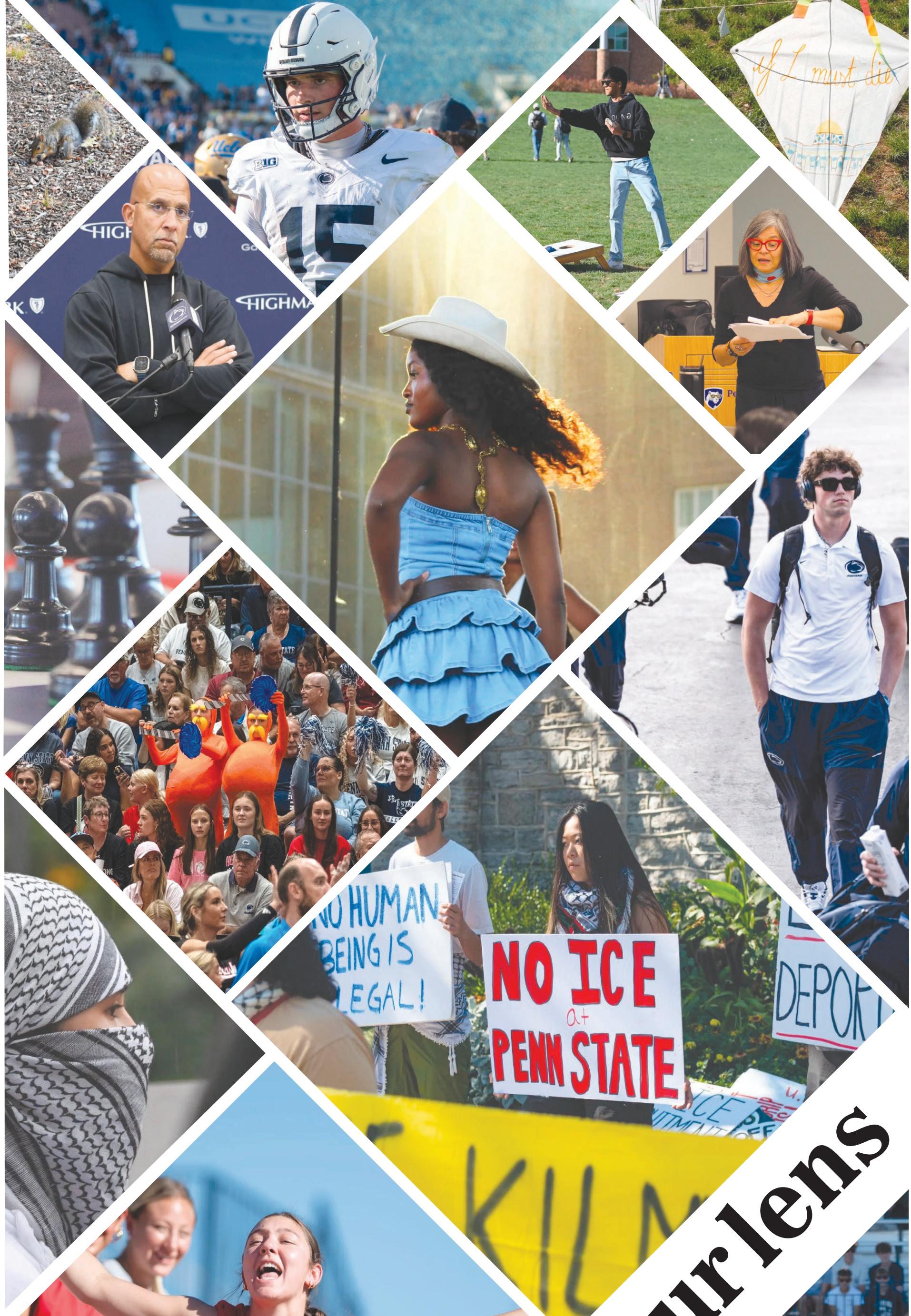
the one originally believed to

have killed Kinser.



A week through our lens

Photos by the Collegian Photo Staff



'Cultural phenomenon'

Penn State students discuss 'Hamilton,' decade of fame



Lexie Linderman/Collegian

The Penn State School of Theatre Building sign on Feb. 3, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

By Katie Herron
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

"Hamilton," Lin-Manuel Miranda's hit Broadway musical, celebrated its 10 year anniversary in August, and history still has its eyes on the modern classic. The multi-award winning musical celebrated its decade of success with a special performance at Richard Rodgers Theatre with appearances from members of the original Broadway cast.

"Hamilton" was the first musical Nova Figurelle ever listened to front to back. He remembers the musical rising to popularity when he was in middle school, and he was drawn to it by the historical aspect and music style. Figurelle credits "Hamilton" for opening the door to his love for musicals.

"It was a stepping stone for people in my generation going toward theater, especially with the rap style of music," Figurelle, a first-year studying information sciences and technology, said. "It was much more engaging for a younger audience than a typical golden age show tune."

He believes audiences resonated with "Hamilton" because of the diversity of the cast and the underdog nature of the story.

"Culturally, it was very important," Figurelle said. "Also the message of being able to build yourself from the ground up."

Figurelle had the opportunity to see "Hamilton" performed in the summer of 2018. He described the show as "living up to the hype" and a "cultural phenomenon."

"The staging is exciting and it's very upbeat, which you wouldn't really expect much of with the tone and subject matter of the show, but it really draws you in," he said.

Christian Ferrandina signs up every summer for the "HAM-4HAM Lottery," which gives fans the chance to win "Hamilton" tickets for \$10. Despite not having luck in the lottery, Ferrandina

saw the show on Broadway in June for his birthday.

He enjoyed being able to hear a new cast's portrayal of the show, despite the original cast recording being so popular.

"I thought it was interesting seeing it being portrayed because even in the media and TikTok, you don't even see any other person performing as Hamilton besides Lin-Manuel Miranda," Ferrandina, a first-year studying cybersecurity, said.

Ferrandina thinks the vast methods of storytelling using different styles of music impacts people emotionally and makes it hard to get bored of the musical. He enjoys the complexity of the music and plot, especially with all the foreshadowing throughout the show.

"The female-led songs in the musical play with your mind on an emotional level because you're going from rap and super fast talking to this deep, emotional song," Ferrandina said.

He first discovered his love for the show when he streamed the "Hamilton" movie on Disney+ in 2021. Despite being a long time fan of the show, Ferrandina still gets emotional while listening to the music.

"I still cry every time I hear 'Dear Theodosia,' that's one of my favorite songs," he said. "The theme of relationships in the show is something I could really connect to."

Nalia Ahmed, the treasurer and fundraiser for the School of Theatre's Student Diversity Committee, believes it's hard in a performing arts career to not have a diverse body of students, and it can feel like the industry forces people of color into boxes.

She believes that even just a decade ago, roles for people of color were limited or given to performers who were white. Ahmed enjoys the diversity built within "Hamilton."

"I really love how 'Hamilton' incorporates minorities," Ahmed, a second-year studying musi-

cal theatre, said. "Lin-Manuel Miranda has made it very clear that he wants it to be predominantly people of color."

Ahmed thinks "Hamilton" has established itself as a staple in the theater community, especially because of its ability to evolve with current times. Through the use of small details shifted between shows, Ahmed believes "Hamilton" is able to commentate on the political state of the world.

"Hamilton" is able to adapt to the present day political times or social issues and bring that to light," Ahmed said.

Olivia Allen, the president of the School of Theatre's Student Diversity Committee, did not understand the popularity of "Hamilton" when her friends first tried to introduce her to it in middle school. The more she listened, the more she grew to appreciate the show, and in eighth grade, Allen ended up seeing "Hamilton" on tour in her hometown.

"The first time I wasn't in love with it, but I was really intrigued," Allen, a third-year studying musical theatre, said. "Then I fell in love with it over time."

Allen appreciated that the leading roles in "Hamilton" are all played by people of color. She also found it intriguing that a show about white historical figures was portrayed by music genres pioneered by people of color.

"I do think that the incorporation of the rap, spoken word and hip-hop style brought a new element to the musical theater world, and opened it up to be more widely accepted," Allen said.

The message of "Hamilton" and the diversity of the main cast and music showed Allen that anything is possible for her.

"If you don't make limits for yourself, there aren't limits," Allen said.

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Penn Steaks sells out after College GameDay spotlight

By Lexi Cannan
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When ESPN's College GameDay arrived in State College for White Out weekend, downtown restaurant Penn Steaks found itself in the national spotlight.

The cheesesteak establishment submitted a video to ESPN, landing Penn Steaks with a feature on the broadcast.

Owner of Penn Steaks Brad Dillman said the moment was unforgettable.

"It was surreal to see our name on GameDay," Dillman said. "I felt proud of all the hard work everyone puts in. I'm a huge sports fan and a die-hard alumni, so owning Penn Steaks has always been about making an impact on the community."

The feature brought overwhelming crowds to Pugh Street as lines stretched outside the door. Students, alumni and visitors packed the sidewalks, some waiting close to an hour to get a cheesesteak.

"It was madness," Dillman said. "By Saturday night, around 11, I knew we were going to run out of food. By 1:30 a.m., we were turning people away."

Inside, the sound of sizzling meat and conversation filled the restaurant. The staff worked nonstop from open to close, keeping up with orders while trying to enjoy the excitement of the weekend.

Students like Justin Thais noticed the rush.

"Everyone on campus was talking about it," Thais, a third-year studying accounting, said. "When I stopped by, it was packed, and you could feel the energy. It felt like the kind of place that's part of

Penn State, not just downtown."

JJ Bowman, one of the five local owners of Penn Steaks, said the staff worked hard to stay composed through the rush.

"White Out weekend is crazy enough, but add GameDay and it's on another level," Bowman said. "Even when things are overwhelming, the staff stayed levelheaded and kept the energy positive. That's not easy to do."

Customers were disappointed when the food ran out, but Dillman said his team adjusted quickly and handled the pressure well.

"Our chefs knew what to do, and they shifted gears when we ran low," Dillman said. "At one point we only had enough steak for 20 sandwiches, so we were telling people we could serve them chicken tenders. People were a little bummed, but most just wanted to be part of the experience."

The weekend also gave Dillman a chance to show off the restaurant's new rebrand.

"Before, it was all Philly-themed. Now we wanted to make it more about Penn State," Dillman said. "We changed the menu — ribeye on a seeded roll — and the design to highlight Penn State pride."

The new look, designed by alumna Jenni Kahler, has gotten positive feedback.

"People love the redesign," Bowman said. "It feels like vintage varsity, and it matches what we want Penn Steaks to be."

The updated interior features deep blue tones, classic fonts and Penn State-inspired décor. Vintage-style signs and framed photos of campus landmarks fill the walls, giving the restaurant

a nostalgic yet modern feel of Happy Valley.

For Dillman, the feature and crowds capped off a huge moment for the restaurant, which reopened on Aug. 28.

"White Out was the busiest week we've ever had," he said. "Friday alone was probably our biggest day since reopening."

From early-morning catering — including its 38 inch cheesesteak — to nonstop orders through the weekend, Dillman said it all felt worth it.

"All the hard work really paid off," he said. "It was one of those moments where you realize everything you've built is connecting with people."

According to Bowman, it wasn't just about food or sales — it was about being part of something that united the community.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of weekend," Bowman said. "Seeing people lined up out the door, wearing Penn State gear, smiling and supporting us — that's what it's all about."

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Crossword

Across

1 Mrs. Kramden
6 Play thing
10 Grimm villain
14 "The _____ of Wakefield"
15 Old money in Milano
16 Coal carrier
17 Swamp in southern Florida
19 Mata _____ (spy)
20 Cabernet, e.g.
21 Top guns
22 Ward off
23 Leslie Caron role
25 "Your majesty"
26 Like some committees
29 Numbskulls
32 To's partner
35 Flower children's wear
37 Climbing gear
38 Bandicoot
39 Feathery scarves
40 African antelope
42 Legal action
43 Recipe word
44 Mine entrance
45 Characteristic of wolves
47 "Undoubtedly"
48 recluse
50 Nymph chaser
51 Take out of the freezer
53 Goes back out
55 Pandemonium
57 He played Mowgli in "Jungle Book"
59 _____ generis (unique)
62 München mister
63 Cabin cruisers
66 Cultural doings
67 Countess's husband
68 Broadway backer
69 Nosegay

Down

1 State confidently
2 Not prerecorded
3 Take out of the freezer
4 Garage contents
5 Fraction of a joule
6 Lake _____, NY
7 Hitchhiker's quest
8 Metallurgist's materials
9 _____ seal (dance solo)
10 Survey choice
11 Citrus juice maker
12 Lightly cooked
13 Runner Zatopek
18 Time delay
22 Greet the judge
23 Mount Olympus dwellers
24 Slick
25 Flower part
26 Cornered
27 Part of L.E.D.
28 Advantages gained by beginning early
29 Speak from a soapbox
31 Neighbor of Ger.
33 Wet, weatherwise
34 Playful aquatic animal
36 Furnish with a fund
41 Yang's opposite
42 Luxury home features
44 Exclamation of grief
46 Computer post, for short
49 Renegades
51 Merry-go-round figure, to a child
54 Flower starter
55 Fellow
56 Medal recipient
57 Pair of oxen
58 Sleekly designed
59 Palm starch
60 Western tribe
61 Castaway's place
63 Get the picture
64 Prohibit
65 Sean _____ Lennon

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WORD SEARCH

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Hit the Streets

Y	A	W	R	E	D	L	A	C	Y	S	S	J	V	C	P	M
C	R	E	R	E	M	M	E	K	L	N	A	V	R	M	P	G
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F	Q	K	T	E	P	H	A	M	I	L	T	O	N	A	L	T
V	N	F	U	D	M	P	O	L	L	O	C	K	D	P	V	F

Kakuro (Cross Sums)

The rules are easy to learn: 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.

Irony isn't working for you

Picture this: It's fall 2022/spring 2023/summer 2024/last month. I'm 18/19/20/21, and I'm sitting on a dorm floor/in a classroom/at a party/in a café, talking about an interest/passion/activity of mine to a friend/

Santiago partner/coworker/acquaintance.

No matter who, what, when or where, the situation is the same: they're looking at me like I'm the least intelligent person they've ever met. But why?

Let's take it back a bit. I've said this before, but one of the main things Gen Z has been critiqued for is our allergy to anything genuine or spontaneous, anything not carefully curated and perfected.

Hate to say it, but it's true to an extent. It feels like every choice we make must pass a mental litmus test. We ask ourselves, Is this how attractive/cool people act? Is this what they do? Overall, how do I look?

In a world where everyone has a camera at their disposal, we don't need them anymore — we've become them, constantly

watching each other and being watched.

But what about when we inevitably slip, show an imperfection, fail to be nonchalant about anything and everything? Well, it's ironic, of course.

That's right, the whole thing is a big joke, a bit I'm committed to. That outfit choice, that interest or passion, even my too-big brown eyes are just a joke.

I don't really believe this, this isn't who I am, trust me, I'm aware that it's not cool or whatever so I don't REALLY-

This has been said ad nauseam, mostly as a critique of Internet culture, which Gen Z

seems to dominate. And it's been discussed how this has made us a deeply socially anxious generation ... but not so much what we do with that anxiety.

The answer is simple: we're jerks. When we're faced with the sheer terror of being perceived as outside the standard, we self-police. Therefore, when someone else does it in our vicinity, we feel the need to police them, too.

Generally, I've noticed that this comes out of a protective desire. Sometimes, we want to protect the other person from further breaking social rules, but a lot of the time, it's out of a desire to protect ourselves.

When we see someone doing something we wouldn't allow ourselves to do, we want to distance ourselves, because we fear the invisible camera looming over our lives. We think, If I'm near someone who isn't perfectly curated, what will people think that says about me?

Or, even worse, we fear that their self-expression will have some sort of effect on us — almost like we'd become "cringe" (I unpack that word in the previously-mentioned column) by osmosis.

"Your anxiety is palpable underneath the ripped jeans and tasteful jewelry, the easygoing demeanor and the thrifited tee."

Jadzia Santiago

Oh no, what if being around people who accept themselves makes us do the same? We just can't have that! You've gotta be joking ... right? This is ironic?

We use irony to protect ourselves and make things hurt less, because we can't be criticized if it's not serious.

And we cling to our curated aesthetics because we desperately want to control how people perceive us, especially in a world where it feels like we have no control.

This isn't to say that I'm above my fellow Zoomers, because I can act like this, too. I mean, whatever would I do without my terrible pop music (that I soooooo just listen to for a laugh) in my off-white headphones, or my canvas tote bag full of trashy books (which I'm tooooooo just reading for critique purposes)?

And yes, you can genuinely do something ironically, like wear a shirt for a band you hate or use as many adverbs as I just did.

But as I've started dismantling my inner CCTV system, I've learned one thing: irony doesn't work as a defense mechanism. When you treat everything genuine like a joke, you start treating genuine people like they're jokes.

And when you become mean and judgmental, it's obvious that your tactics are failing you. Like, I can see it.

That's right, I can tell that you're being mean to me, looking at me like I'm seven years old and won't stop talking about rainbows and glitter, because you think it will round out your aesthetic.

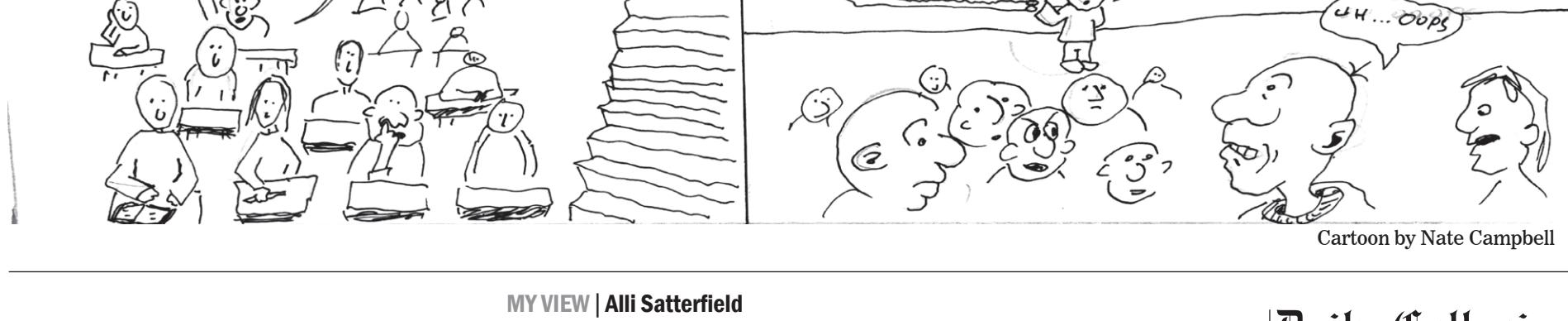
Your anxiety is palpable underneath the ripped jeans and tasteful jewelry, the easygoing demeanor and the thrifited tee.

Your irony isn't keeping you safe; it's making you downright cruel.

So, no, you don't need a disclaimer for every action. Not everything has to be done, worn, or enjoyed in some sort of satirical, self-aware way.

Even the oddest things are allowed to matter to you. And wouldn't you know it — people are allowed to matter to you, too.

Jadzia Santiago is a columnist and social media team member for The Daily Collegian. She is a fourth-year studying English and Communication Arts & Sciences. Email her at jas9280@psu.edu or follow her on X @JadziaASantiago



Cartoon by Nate Campbell

MY VIEW | Alli Satterfield

What did you say? Calling home while abroad

I hate calling my parents. If you know me, that's a shocking revelation because I absolutely adore my parents. Being an only child meant that my parents were my

parents

Satterfield

pals on roadtrips, accomplices at concerts and supporters at every single dance competition while I was growing up.

My dad is one of my best friends and my mom is my most trustworthy confidant.

Living in State College, I would call each of my parents, and probably my Grandma Cheryl, too, once a day on average. I always had something new to share or something I wanted advice on.

Even though we were apart, when I was starting my day, my dad was too. When I was finishing up my classes, my mom was leaving school. Our communication worked smoothly.

Now that I'm abroad and have a five-hour time difference between my life and that of my parents, it's so inconvenient to find a time to call them. My morning is their middle of the night, my evening is their working hours and when they're finally free, it's my bedtime.

Yes, this conundrum is heightened by the fact that I

wake up and go to bed early, but that's not something I'm willing to change.

When we finally find a time to get on the phone, I'm usually so exhausted from my day or muddle-brained from being in the middle of my classes, that I don't even know what to say. Our conversations end up being rather dull and, generally, not that enjoyable.

So, even though I love talking to my parents under normal circumstances, I've hated trying to make it happen while abroad, and my distaste for our phone calls has made navigating homesickness more difficult.

Since my abroad program didn't start until mid-September, I had a pretty long summer. I spent most of that time at home

I'm not homesick to an extreme. I'm not walking the streets of London and breaking into tears the moment I see a Starbucks or KFC.

When I'm walking through Borough Market or running over the River Thames, I see families walking together, taking pictures of their adventures, I start to miss home. They remind me of the adventures I've taken with my parents, especially our 2015 family vacation to London.

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Gadowsky talks game

Injury updates, a search for third-string goaltender, Gavin McKenna's debut

By: Chase Fisher
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State coach Guy Gadowsky took the podium on Tuesday and fielded questions from the media after a Nittany Lions sweep over the weekend against No. 15 Arizona State in Tempe, Ariz.

Gadowsky and his team have the highly-anticipated home opener in Pegula Ice Arena looming on Thursday against Clarkson. It'll be a two-game set against the Golden Knights and the first game freshman phenom Gavin McKenna skates in front of the Penn State faithful.

It's safe to say Gadowsky is pumped to get back in front of the Roar Zone.

"Every game that we play here in Pegula Ice Arena gives me a little bit of butterflies," Gadowsky said. "From the first time that we were able to step out on the ice, however many years ago now it is, every time I look forward to getting the privilege of playing in front of this crowd."

Gadowsky gave injury updates, discussed the future of the team's third goaltender and spoke on McKenna's first series in a Penn State uniform.

Injury updates

Smith, who missed the opening series against the Sun Devils with an apparent illness, is looking much better this week, but his status is still to be decided heading into the home opener, according to Gadowsky.

The freshman, who was the first Penn State first-round pick



Men's ice hockey head coach Guy Gadowsky responds to a question during a press conference in Pegula Ice Arena

Sawyer Hadlum/The Daily Collegian

in program history in June, was one of the most highly anticipated skaters to hit the ice for the Nittany Lions this season.

As for fellow defenseman and alternate captain Jarod Crespo, who slid into the boards in Game 1 and was unable to leave the ice on his own power against Arizona State, and then played in Game 2, Gadowsky said he'll have a couple days off this week.

"It looked really bad. I was very, very happy [and] our staff was very happy to see him available on Saturday," Gadowsky said. "I think he deserved a lot of credit. He gritted it out. Certainly wasn't his best (game), but it wasn't a situation where he hurt it more."

Search for third goalie

Last year's third-string goal-

tender John Seifarth, who was key in the Nittany Lions run for a playoff berth, is no longer with the team, Gadowsky confirmed on Tuesday.

Seifarth appeared in six games and started five last year for Penn State. He totaled a 2.49 goals-against average and a .918 save percentage en route to three pivotal wins. Gadowsky raved about Seifarth last year, saying the Frozen Four run couldn't have happened without him.

"He's been away all semester to focus on academics, and then just this week, decided that he's going to step away permanently this year. He wants to graduate on time and do well academically," Gadowsky said.

Due to Seifarth's departure, the team is searching for a third

goaltender. However, Gadowsky said it's too early in the process to disclose names he's talked to. All signs point to earning a commitment via a netminder in the CHL.

Gavin McKenna's debut

McKenna, the most sought-after recruit in NCAA history, started his Nittany Lions career off with a bang, which included the game-winning goal in Game 2 against Arizona State to complete the sweep. While many are amazed by his offense, he was used on the penalty kill several times over the weekend.

McKenna was part of a penalty kill that went 12-for-13, good for 87.5%.

"He's extremely quick, extremely fast. And he has a really good stick," Gadowsky said.

"He's (a) very smart hockey player, so he can do that. I want them to get a little bit of experience doing it, and in the future, I'm not sure that they will kill as much as they did this past weekend. You put Gavin McKenna and Aiden Fink on a PK and it all of a sudden changes at least a little bit of the vision of the power play."

They have to be aware of them."

When the conversation switched to McKenna's offensive abilities and poise with the puck, Gadowsky chuckled and said, "Yeah, that's all coaching by the way."

The freshman totaled three points over the weekend, including a two-assist performance in Game 1. Notably the first Nittany Lions goal of the game on Friday, featured McKenna faking a shot and passing it to Fink, for a wide-open net, was raved about by many across the country.

"You can't teach that. It's just fun to watch it. I think I've heard comments on (McKenna's game-winning power-play goal) more than any other, because if you played the game, you realize how insane that is," Gadowsky said. "He really does manipulate time and space differently than anybody I've ever seen. That's a great example of when he has no time and space, how he creates something out of nothing. And then there's times where he has a ton of time and space, and he will just make a one-touch pass through a tiny little opening."

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Bounce back match



Samantha DiCamillo/The Daily Collegian

The Penn State women's volleyball team celebrates during the game against Nebraska in Rec Hall on Friday, Oct. 3, 2025

By: AJ Piazza
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State women's volleyball got dominated by Nebraska at Rec Hall. The big question was how it would respond, and the Nittany Lions got a much needed win and looked like a completely different team.

It was a homecoming for a couple of Nittany Lions. Alexis Ewing and Emmi Sellman are from a similar area in Maryland.

Ewing got the start today and was tied for first in kills with five while Sellman had two.

The Terrapins started to find their groove and went on a 3-0 run to cut the lead 15-8.

The Nittany Lions answered back and extended their lead to 21-14. A big difference in this match was the amount of digs they got. Penn State had 17 digs in this first set. Against Nebraska the team had a total of 20 digs.

through three sets.

The blue and white took the first set 25-16 and had a hitting percentage of .333, the Terrapins had a .000 hitting percentage.

After Maryland opened the scoring, Penn State scored five straight to make it a 5-1 game.

Ewing continued to show out and put the Nittany Lions back on another 3-0 scoring run to extend the lead to 8-2.

Anytime it seemed that the Terrapins got something going, Penn State had an answer.

Aj Jack Malual was the main source of offense for the Terrapins. She had four kills in the second set.

A few miscommunications and missed digs allowed Maryland to get back in the game cutting the lead to 24-20.

Maggie Mendelson continued her solid day with a match point block to put the squad up 2-0. Both middle blockers stepped up in this match. Mendelson had 13 kills with a .333 hitting percentage and two blocks.

Jordan Hopp had four kills with a .200 hitting percentage. She also tallied four blocks.

The Terrapins started to solve Martin after Eva Rohrbach

registered back-to-back blocks to give her squad a 10-6 lead.

The Nittany Lions continued to crawl its way back into the set, going on a 3-0 run and cutting the lead to 13-11.

Despite Martin's takeover in the third set, Maryland continued to hit the ball more efficiently. The Terrapins took the third set 25-19.

Malual started the scoring in the fourth set, that point matched by a Mendelson kill. Martin had back-to-back aces that allowed the Nittany Lions to take the lead 6-3.

Maryland answered that with a 6-1 scoring run, while Penn State couldn't do anything offensively. Midway through the fourth set the blue and white had a .059 hitting percentage.

Malual continued her dominance as she tallied her 18th kill of the day to give her squad a 14-10 lead.

However, the blue and white started to heat up. After a kill from Sellman the squad scored four of the last five points and tallied the game at 17.

Both teams were firing points back and forth, and both squads were notched at 20. The Terrapins took the fourth set 25-23.

Mendelson put the team on her back to start the final set with back-to-back kills. Gillian Grimes joined with back-to-back aces to put the Nittany Lions up 7-2.

The Nittany Lions built off the momentum garnering a 6-0 run and a 9-2 lead.

Penn State took the fifth set and had a .583 hitting percentage as Martin led the way with 21 kills and a .326 hitting percentage.

Up Next

Penn State returns to Rec Hall to face Wisconsin at 7 p.m. Friday.

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Forward Christian Dionne (8) fights for the ball during the Penn State men's soccer game against King's College at Jeffrey Field on Sunday, Oct. 5, 2025.

Best stretch of season

By: Ryan Stevenson
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State went undefeated last week, winning each of their three matches, pushing the team over .500

for the first time since the season opener, as well as earning their first conference win.

The blue and white now sit at 5-4-2 on the campaign and 1-2-1 in the conference after wins over Robert Morris, Michigan State and King's College. The three game win streak is the team's longest of the year.

Penn State defeated Robert Morris 2-0 at home, Michigan State 2-1 on the road and King's College 7-1 in University Park.

Goalkeeping dominance

Throughout the winning streak, the defense and goalkeeping has stepped up in a large way, as the team only allowed two goals in the three combined matches. Jonathan Evans played the first two games in net, accumulating eight saves and allowing only one goal against the Spartans.

Evans has played in eight of the team's 11 matches this season and has a 1.13 GAA, among the top in the conference. Redshirt sophomore Fredrick Grunden started against King's College, surrendering one goal in the dominant victory.

The Nittany Lions are churning in every facet of the game at this point in the season, and the offense has finally found rhythm after a slow start. The team posted multiple goals in each victory last week, including seven against King's College. That number marked the most goals in a game by the blue and white since defeating Bucknell 7-1 in 1998.

Standout performances

Van Danielson was the standout throughout the winning streak for Penn State, tallying seven points. Against Michigan State, the forward scored a game-tying goal in the waning

moments of the first half.

A couple days later, against King's College, Danielson netted two goals and an assist. The Columbia, Maryland, product now has the team lead in points, while also being tied for the most goals with four on the season.

Perhaps the strongest individual performance of the week came from midfielder Ben Madore, who scored three goals against King's College, tallying his first career hat trick. The redshirt sophomore netted all three of his goals in the second half, tying Danielson for the most goals on the team with four.

The win against Michigan State was the best of the season for the blue and white, as the Spartans were coming off two top five victories. The game was won on a clutch goal in the 73rd minute by midfielder Malick Daouda, who tallied his second goal of the season.

Christian Dionne received credit for the assist. Dionne also contributed to the blowout win against King's College with a goal of his own.

Caden Grabfelder, who has been one of the most integral parts of the team this season, added two more assists to his total, one coming against the Spartans and one against the Colonials. The Northampton, Pennsylvania, native is tied with Madore for second in points with nine.

Ben Liscum, Kai Phillip and Nziza Siibo all also contributed to the victories with goals. Phillip scored his second of the year with a goal against Robert Morris, and Liscum and Siibo tallied their first of 2025, against Robert Morris and King's College, respectively. For Siibo, it was his first career goal.

Coming off a busy three game week, the Nittany Lions will hope to stay red hot and pick up another Big Ten win as they travel to Los Angeles to take on UCLA at 10 p.m. Friday.

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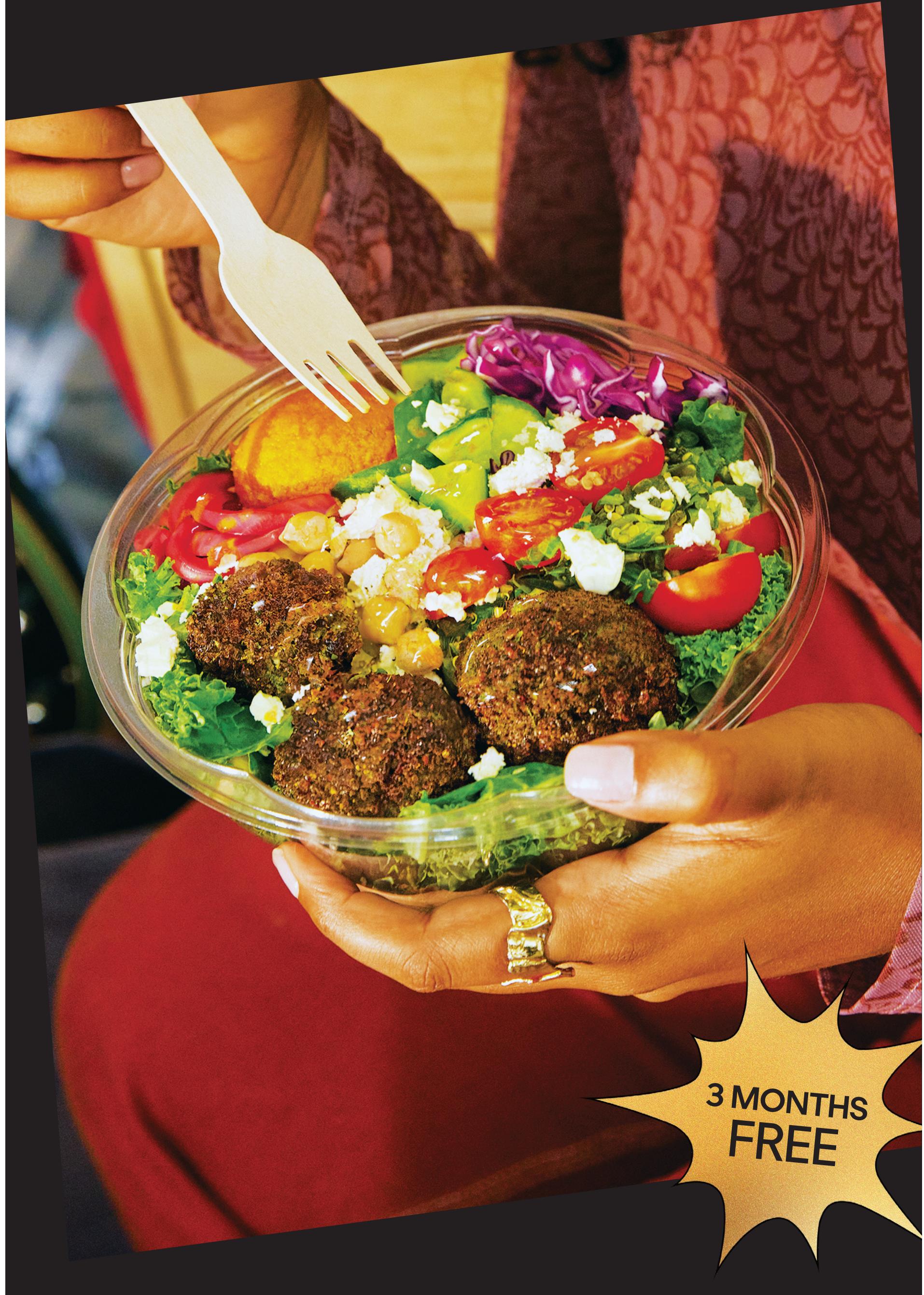
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