



VERSUS

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BLUE WHITE



Graphic by: Isabella Viteri
Photos by: Jackson Ranger, Sienna Pinney, Lexie Linderman

Blue-White through the years

By Lyle Alenstien
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State will play the Blue-White Game this year, despite many programs across the country cancelling their spring games. The reasoning for the various cancellations is due to ongoing tampering in college football. Many coaches believe other programs are poaching players through the transfer portal due to spring game film.

Despite this, James Franklin knows the impact the Blue-White Game has on the State College community.

“We will still have the spring game, because I know what it means to this community and the hotels and the bars and the restaurants and the tailgating and all of it,” Franklin said in February. “We’re working on that now. We may do some more events that we’re still working through.”

So, the spring game will be played, and it’s had many noteworthy moments throughout the

years. Here’s a deep dive of the Blue-White Game through the Collegian archives.

1951

Beaver Stadium wasn’t built until 1960, so the first annual spring game took place at the local State College High School Memorial Field.

Assistant coach Al Michaels led the Blue team, while assistant coach Earl Bruce coached the White team. It was Michaels who came out victorious in a 7-0 win.

The alumni-sponsored contest saw its lone scoring from fullback Paul Anders, who bounced off of the left tackle for a 15-yard score in a drive that went for 92 yards in eight plays.

The game was deemed the “Bucket Bowl” by the Collegian, as the White team was presented with an old water bucket trophy from the Collegian for winning the contest.

1979

No squad emerged with a win



Nick Morrish/Collegian file photo

Junior running back Larry Johnson (5) runs with the football during the 2001 Blue-White Game. Johnson went on to rush for 2,087 in 2002, breaking Penn State’s single-season rushing yards record.

in the 1979 tilt, as the scrimmage clock struck zeros with a 22-22 score, which left Joe Paterno realizing that more work needed to be done.

“We’re not anywhere near, at this point, where we were last year,” Paterno said. “We started so much further back; we moved so many offensive people around, but I think we made as much progress as we could have expected to this spring.”

The game was tied 22-22 with less than a minute remaining, as Jon Lebo connected with Scott Hettinger for a touchdown, but Herb Mendhart missed the game-tying extra point.

The crowd was 28,000, and at halftime, offensive tackle Bill Dugan was awarded the Red Worrel award while defensive end Gene Gladys was given the Jim O’Hora award. These awards were given “for exemplary conduct, loyalty, interest, attitude and improvement” during spring practice.

1985

The 1985 spring game brought quarterback competition following the conclusion of spring ball.

Matt Knizner tripled John Shaffer’s yardage with 366 yards, three touchdowns and three interceptions, but Shaffer and the Blue team came out victorious in a 31-26 win.

“A lot of people try to make a big deal out of the competition and every day you’re going against each other, but you’re not really going against each other,” Shaffer said. “You’re going out there to improve yourself and do the best you can each day you’re out there.”

Shaffer would end up leading the Nittany Lions to the national championship, but Penn State couldn’t come out victorious. He would find himself in the same situation in 1986, and this time around, Penn State brought home hardware back to Happy Valley.

2009

The 2009 Blue-White contest offered a tease to returning to the playing field for linebacker Sean Lee following his ACL injury.

He was a captain on the Big Ten championship team the year before, but had to watch from the sidelines as his teammates sweated it out under the sun that shined on Beaver Stadium.

“It was frustrating,” Lee said. “It was nice just to be back in pads, be warming up with the team. Not being in uniform, it was pretty tough for me last year.”

Lee would be selected in the second round, 55th overall, by the Dallas Cowboys in the 2010 NFL Draft. He went on to play 10 seasons for the Cowboys, totaling 521 solo tackles as a consistent presence at linebacker in Dallas.



Kate Hildebrand/Collegian

Quarterback Drew Allar waits for the snap during the Blue-White Game in Beaver Stadium on April 13, 2024 in University Park, Pa.

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ALLAR FLUSHES PLAYOFF PICK

Drew Allar focuses on getting better after costly Orange Bowl interception

By Lyle Alenstein
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It was a long week for Penn State following its Orange Bowl loss to Notre Dame in the College Football Playoff Semifinal. It was a longer week for Drew Allar, who said he was in a “tough state” following his interception that ultimately cost the Nittany Lions the season.

He walked off of the field teary-eyed alongside position coach Danny O’Brien. He walked with his head down into postgame media. Nobody was harder on themselves following the loss than Allar, and it took him until winter workouts to move on.

“Once I stepped back in the weight room for this season, whenever the two or three weeks after that game, I was really able to flush it at that point, because that’s something to really look forward to and build off of,” Allar said.

There was time removed from the interception before Allar looked at it again. It was a week removed before he sat down next to O’Brien to replay the moment.

The duo watched it. Then they watched it again. And again. It was a moment of learning from the mistake and diving into the tape for the gun-slinger, as he dissected the pass thrown toward former Penn State wide receiver Omari Evans that ended up in the hands of Notre Dame cornerback Christian Gray.

“I think once all the noise dies down, the emotion, you can see

“I think once all the noise dies down, the emotion, you can see it a little clearer.”

Danny O’Brien

Quarterbacks coach



Sienna Pinney/Collegian file photo

Quarterback Drew Allar (15) hugs head coach James Franklin after the College Football Playoff semifinal game between Penn State and Notre Dame at the Orange Bowl on Thursday, Jan. 9, 2024 in Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Fla. The Fighting Irish beat the Nittany Lions 27-24.

it a little clearer,” O’Brien said. “Like, ‘OK,’ and then hopefully we can earn our way back there one game at a time.”

Allar’s a man of routine. It’s hard for him to be removed from the schedule that’s in place for a quarterback at a program like Penn State.

To alleviate gaps in his time after the season, he forced himself to spend some time outside of the facility.

“Time off for me is, I mean, it’s good,” Allar said. “I have to force

myself to leave the facility sometimes and really take down time. I guess I’ve always been wired, like, when I get extensive off time, I just don’t know what to do. I’m a person of routine, and when I get out of a routine, it’s hard for me to find different things to do.”

Allar is now entering Year 4 at Penn State, his third year at the helm of the offense. The talent from the former 5-star is undeniable with flashes he’s shown, but he’s been labeled with a narrative that brings negative connotations.

He didn’t win the big games in 2023 against Ohio State and Michigan, which resulted in him having postgame meltdowns during his press conferences. In 2024,

he threw costly interceptions against the Buckeyes, Oregon and Notre Dame that played a crucial part in the defeats.

Now for Allar it’s about fine-tuning his game and continuing to be a leader, following a season where he was named captain.

“Trying to continue to build my leadership vocally, and do everything that I can to put myself in uncomfortable spots to allow me to grow more,” Allar said. “I think I’ve done a good job with that so far. It’s something that’s always good to keep grinding at, just because it doesn’t come naturally to me at times. So just trying to better myself with that sort of thing.”

The interception is in the past for Allar, and he’s ready for next

year. He’s a veteran presence with a chip on his shoulder, and he’s determined to keep getting better in order to lead the Nittany Lions to a national championship, but right now he’s taking it a day at a time.

“It’s all about the process and finding different ways to get better,” Allar said. “I think at this point in my career, I’m very self reflective and very honest with myself, and I think that the coaches do a great job with us giving us goals for each practice. 1% goals for each practice, and that has really helped me a ton.”

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DT Xavier Gilliam is ‘definitely ready’

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s defensive tackle room was one of experience and veteran presence. Fast-forward one year — Dvon J-Thomas and Coziah Izzard are off to the NFL draft, and all of a sudden, the unit is filled with unseasoned young guys.

With Alonzo Ford Jr. currently hurt, one of the inexperienced defensive tackles has had to step up for the Nittany Lions. So far, it’s been Xavier Gilliam who’s stood out among the pack.

The redshirt freshman won three of the six “Competitor of the Day” workouts for the defensive line this winter and has compiled an impressive start to spring ball.

“Xavier Gilliam has been a guy that’s, as you guys saw in the winter workouts, really flashed,” James Franklin said. “He’s doing it here as well.”

Gilliam appeared in five games as a true freshman last season, tallying his first career tackle against Maryland in Penn State’s regular-season finale. Throughout that first season, the Maryland native learned how to remain patient as he attempted to work his way up the Nittany Lions’ depth chart.

“Learning how to work a depth



Samantha Oropeza/Collegian

Defensive tackle Xavier Gilliam (54) walks during Penn State football practice in Holuba Hall on Tuesday, April 15, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

chart is really just giving your best in practice,” Gilliam said in February. “So I learned the importance of practice and how much that goes into a coach’s decision of whether he wants to put you on the field or not.”

Based on his spring practice performances, the lesson clearly stuck with Gilliam while his philosophy hasn’t changed. Offensive lineman Vega Ioane has been going up against the young defen-

sive tackle in practice and noticed Gilliam has taken “a big step.”

Zane Durant has also seen Gilliam improve throughout the off-season.

The senior was an example that Gilliam followed as a true freshman, as he took note of simply how Durant “plays the game,” and that’s resulted in the possibility of the two playing beside each other in 2025.

“He asks questions, always

looking to get better. Don’t make the same mistake twice or three times, get it fixed quickly,” Durant said. “So I think that just shows how reliable he is ... He’s very coachable. So that’s one of the guys that coach was leaning on a little bit more.”

Durant isn’t the only veteran who sees the potential in Gilliam, as J-Thomas saw flashes in his last season wearing the blue and white. He’s also been around the

Nittany Lions this spring, often watching practice, and the NFL hopeful is expecting a big year from the redshirt freshman.


“I really saw Xavier Gilliam come into his own this past off-season, especially in winter workouts,” J-Thomas said at Penn State Pro Day. “In the first couple of practices that I watched, he’s really starting to figure it out from a defensive tackle standpoint. It’s pretty hard playing on the inside, especially as a young kid, especially from a technical standpoint, so I commend him.”

It isn’t a given, however, that Gilliam’s name will flash across the Beaver Stadium jumbotron when the starters are announced Week 1. Once Ford returns from injury, Gilliam will have to earn a starting spot over the sixth-year senior.

Regardless, Gilliam is excited for the challenge, and has never been more ready to make an impact for Penn State’s defensive line.

“I’m definitely excited. I’m definitely ready,” Gilliam said. “This is something that I’ve really been waiting for my whole life. Just an opportunity to show what I can do.”

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PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

FOOTBALL ROSTER

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Dominic DeLuca	LB/Sr.	19	Jack Lambert	QB/So.	50	Cooper Cousins	OL/So.	85	Luke Reynolds	TE/So.
2	Liam Clifford	WR/Sr.	20	Mylachi Williams	DE/Fr.	50	Alonzo Ford Jr.	DT/Sr.	86	Aaron Enterline	WR/Fr.
2	Audavion Collins	CB/Jr.	21	Vaboue Toure	S/Fr.	51	Michael Troutman III	OL/Fr.	87	Andrew Rappleyea	WR/So.
3	Antoine Belgrave-Shorter	S/Fr.	23	Tikey Hayes	RB/Fr.	52	Randy Adirika	DT/Fr.	88	Andrew Olesh	TE/Fr.
3	Koby Howard	WR/Fr.	24	Corey Smith	RB/Fr.	52	Dominic Rulli	OL/Jr.	88	Sam Siafa	DT/So.
4	Tyseer Denmark	WR/Fr.	25	Quinton Martin Jr.	RB/Fr..	53	Nick Dawkins	OL/Sr.	89	Finn Furmanek	TE/So.
4	A.J. Harris	CB/Jr..	25	Alex Tatsch	LB/Fr.	54	Xavier Gilliam	DT/Fr.	90	Liam Andrews	DT/Fr.
5	Daryus Dixon	CB/Fr.	26	Cam Wallace	RB/So.	54	TJ Shanahan Jr.	OL/So.	91	Chase Meyer	K/Jr.
5	Devonte Ross	WR/Sr.	27	Lamont Payne Jr.	CB/So.	55	Chimdy Onoh	OL/So.	92	Andrew Dufault	SN/Fr.
6	Zakee Wheatley	S/Sr.	28	Zane Durant	DT/Sr.	57	Donnie Harbour	OL/Fr.	93	Bobby Mears	DE/So.
6	Matt Outten	WR/Fr.	28	Karson Kiesewetter	S/So.	58	Ian Harvie	OL/Jr.	94	Ryan Barker	K/So.
7	Kaden Saunders	WR/Jr.	30	Amiel Davis	RB/Sr.	58	Kaleb Artis	DT/Jr.	94	De'Andre Cook	DT/Fr.
7	Zion Tracy	CB/Jr.	30	Kari Jackson	LB/Fr.	61	Liam Horan	OL/Fr.	95	Jordan Mayer	DE/So.
8	DaKaari Nelson	LB/So.	31	Logan Cunningham	WR/Jr.	63	Alex Birchmeier	OL/So.	95	Riley Thompson	P/Sr.
9	Elliot Washington II	CB/Jr.	31	Kolin Dinkins	CB/Jr.	64	Eagan Boyer	OL/Fr.	98	Matthew Parker	K/Fr.
10	Nick Singleton	RB/Sr.	32	Keon Wylie	LB/Jr.	65	Jim Fitzgerald	OL/Jr.	99	Yvan Kemajou	DE/Fr.
10	Dejuan Lane	S/So.	33	Dani Dennis-Sutton	DE/Sr.	66	Drew Shelton	OL/Sr.	99	Gabriel Nwosu	P/Sr.
11	LaVar Arrington II	LB/Fr.	34	Tyler Holzworth	RB/Sr.	67	Henry Boehme	OL/So.			
11	Kyron Hudson	WR/Sr.	34	Owen Wafle	DT/Fr.	68	Anthony Donkoh	OL/So.			
12	Anthony Ivey	WR/Jr.	35	Blaise Sokach-Minnick	SN/Jr.	70	Garrett Sexton	OL/Fr.			
13	Kaytron Allen	RB/Sr.	35	Tyler Armstead	CB/Fr.	71	Vega Ioane	OL/Jr.			
13	Tony Rojas	LB/Jr.	36	Zuriah Fisher	DE/Sr.	72	Nolan Rucci	OL/Sr.			
14	Braz Thomas	S/Fr.	38	Winston Yates	LB/So.	73	Caleb Brewer	OL/Fr.			
14	Jaxon Smolik	QB/So.	39	Ty Blanding	DT/So.	74	J'ven Williams	OL/So.			
15	Drew Allar	QB/Sr.	39	Jashaun Green	S/Jr.	75	Matt Detisch	OL/Jr.			
16	Khalil Dinkins	TE/Sr	40	Anthony Speca	LB/Fr.	76	Mason Carlan	OL/Sr.			
16	Bekkem Kritza	QB/Fr.	42	Mason Robinson	DE/So.	77	Owen Aliciene	OL/Fr.			
16	King Mack	S/Jr.	43	Dayshaun Burnett	DE/Fr.	79	Addison Penn	OL/Sr.			
17	Ethan Grunkemeyer	QB/Fr.	44	Jaylen Harvey	DE/Fr.	80	Donte Nastasi	WR/So.			
17	Kenny Woseley Jr.	CB/Fr.	45	Jackson Pryts	LB/Jr.	81	Lyrick Samuel	WR/Fr.			
18	Joey Schlaffer	TE/So.	45	Enai White	DE/Jr.	82	Ethan Black	WR/So.			
18	Max Granville	DE/Fr.	47	Aidan Probst	DE/Fr.	83	Brian Kortovich	TE/Fr.			
19	Josiah Brown	WR/Fr.	48	Tyler Duzansky	SN/Sr.	84	Peter Gonzalez	WR/Fr.			

COACH LEONARD RETIRES

By Lyle Alenstein
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Drew Shelton has had the same person sit beside him at all of his team meetings at Penn State. That person would be associate offensive line coach Frank Leonard, the 67-year-old who happens to be the loudest presence on the practice field.

That voice is no longer heard, as Leonard’s retirement from the coaching world was made public in March.

“He was a big impact on the offensive line room; his energy, his passion for the game, the way he taught, it was big for us,” Shelton said.

“Obviously, we were all really sad to see him go, but sometimes, life’s bigger than football, so he’s got some things he’s got to deal with and some things he’s got to do. We’re sad to see him go, and we love him and we miss him every single day.”

Leonard and Shelton both joined the program in 2022, but only Shelton will be sticking around Happy Valley for his Year 4.

Leonard was an impactful presence both on and off the field. The coaching staff and the players all appreciated what he brought

as both a coach and a person. “Frank has a unique way to get after the guys and coach them hard, but he loves them, and they love him,” James Franklin said in October.

“I think that’s been a real positive for us, and also just an experienced coach who’s coached in the NFL, coached major college football.”

Leonard played a role in the turnaround that the Penn State offensive line has had in recent years, as the unit went from one of the worst on the team to arguably the best with the depth currently on board. Olu Fashanu, Hunter Nourzad, Caedan Wallace and Juice Scruggs have all gone to the NFL under Leonard’s coaching.

He was quick to yell at players when they messed up, but the volume was the same when he praised his guys. Not only did he have a role with the team, but also in recruiting. He kept the same level of energy at recruiting camps, offering the same tough love to commits and various prospects.

“He’s able to see his family, being away from his family for three years,” offensive line coach Phil Trautwein said. “Before that, he was at Colorado State for two

years without seeing his family, but that’s just because he loves ball. Being away from his family for five years, I don’t know how he did it, but it shows you how much he loves football and how much he loved the guys here in Penn State, and it was a really hard decision for him.”

Franklin and Trautwein had ties to Leonard prior to the three of them being on staff at Penn State. When Franklin was the offensive coordinator at Kansas State in 2006-07, Leonard was the tight ends coach. Trautwein was the offensive line coach at Boston College from 2018-19, overlapping with Leonard in Chestnut Hill, who was the tight ends coach from 2015-19.

Leonard at one point lived in the guest room above Franklin’s family garage. Trautwein called his former co-worker one of his biggest mentors.

“Having him here every single day was awesome for me,” Trautwein said. “I learned a lot from him. He coached longer than I’ve been alive, so when you do that, you know a lot, and me and him just had a great relationship. He made work fun, and I love him. I miss him. I’m happy for him.”

The 2025 version of Penn State won’t have the beloved and loud



Sienna Pinney/Collegian file photo

Frank Leonard (left) hugs Ji’Ayir Brown (right) at the Penn State game at USC on Oct. 12, 2024. The Nittany Lions beat the Trojans 33-30.

veteran presence that can be heard outside of Holuba Hall screaming at the offensive line. After a 43-year career, Leonard is tucking away the whistle, but his mark at Penn State will be left by the impact he had.

“He was a big part of our O-line room,” offensive lineman Vega

Ioane said. “He brought that energy every day, for being an old man of course. It’s unfortunate to see him go, but he’s gonna go enjoy his life now. Surely gonna miss him.”

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Tips to enjoy Blue-White as a fan

By Alli Satterfield
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s spring football game, the Blue-White Game, will kick off at 2 p.m. Saturday. The game touts spring weather, sportsmanship and free admission for attendees.

But with Penn State’s coveted tailgating tradition, the game can still offer opportunities to have fun, even for those who don’t enter the stadium.

Here are my tips to make the most of your Blue-White tailgate and game day.

of the best ways to keep people happy.

From traditional tailgate food like chips and dips, wings and pigs in a blanket, to healthier options like fruit, vegetables and hummus, there are options for everyone.

Personally, I love grilling out before the game. Things like hot dogs and hamburgers are a little bit more filling than the typical tailgate snacks, and they give the grillmaster something to do.

Be mindful of the fact that a lot of people show up just for the snacks.

playing your own games before the big game can get the competitive spirit started.

It’s super easy to bring a football, soccer ball or frisbee to play with outside to stay occupied. Just make sure not to take anybody out with a stray ball.

With a slightly higher level of commitment, it’s fun to play things like cornhole, ladder golf and horseshoes.

Playing games gets everyone involved in the fun.

Dress the part

Make sure to wear any combination of blue and white to the game.

Getting festive in your Penn

State gear not only supports the team, but is also a way to make you feel more involved in the game.

Aside from getting festive for the occasion, check the forecast beforehand to make sure you’re dressed appropriately for State College’s unpredictable spring weather.

Also, make sure to be dressed comfortably enough to navigate Beaver Stadium. I recommend closed-toed shoes.

Go to the game

If you didn’t have enough fun at the tailgate, the main event kicks off at 2 p.m.

The game is sure to be full of

cheering, fun and football, in addition to rich Penn State history.

The Blue-White game got its start 74 years ago under coach Rip Engle, and the first game was held at State College High School Memorial Field with a \$1.50 admission. Each team was led by a student captain and at the first game, the Blue team won.

Even though a lot has changed since the first game in 1951, a lot has stayed the same, including the Penn State football traditions of family and fun.

Be safe, have fun and enjoy the Blue-White game.

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TDC25APR25

Howle builds TE foundation

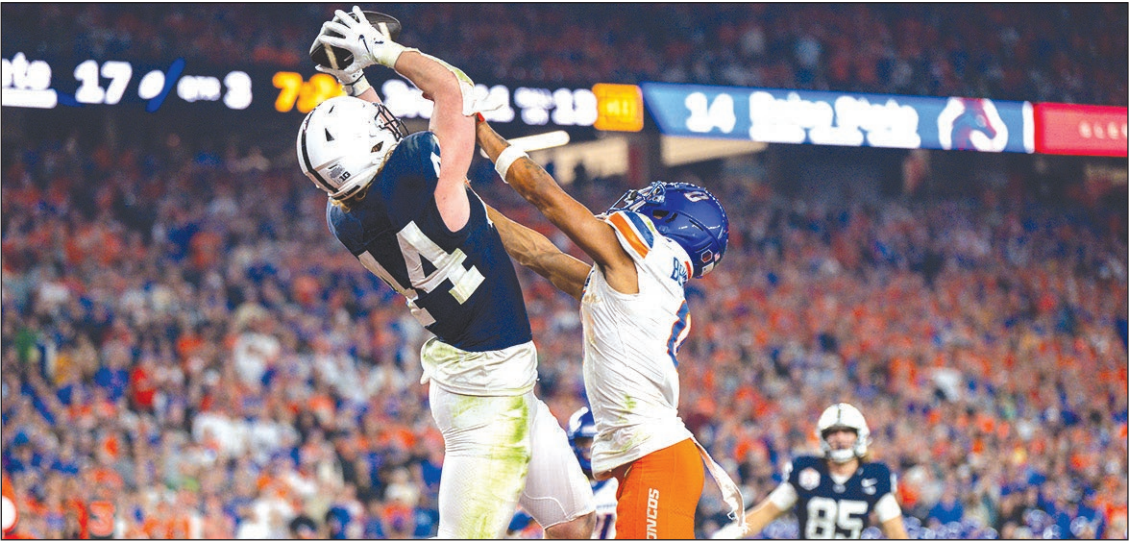
By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Next Thursday, Tyler Warren will be surrounded by friends and family when his phone rings and his life is changed. The call will not only mean he’s living out his NFL dream, it will also make Warren the fifth Penn State tight end drafted in the last seven years.

Slowly but surely, the Nittany Lions have turned their program into a tight end powerhouse — Warren is just the tip of the iceberg. Before him was Theo Johnson, Brenton Strange, Pat Freiermuth and Mike Gesicki, all of whom were high NFL Draft selections and most of which played a role in mentoring Warren.

The man behind the masterpiece, however, is Ty Howle. Howle took over as the tight ends coach in 2021 after Tyler Bowen’s departure, and all he’s done since is churn out elite talent at the tight end position. He attributes that success to both the players before his time, and Penn State’s goal of producing all-around guys.

“If you look at the history of



Kate Hildebrand/Collegian

Tight end Tyler Warren catches a touchdown pass during at the Vrbo Fiesta Bowl between Penn State and Boise State on Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona.

Penn State, and you go back further than when I was the tight ends coach, I mean, you talk about Gesicki and Jesse James, we’ve had guys who have been complete tight ends here for a long time,” Howle said. “Not just

guys who were pass-catchers or run-blocker only guys, but we’re trying to develop the overall tight end.”

It all culminated with Warren, who became the first Nittany Lion to win the John Mackey Award, given annually to the best tight end in the country. He also shattered every record his predecessors had set, but made it clear every honor was for those who came before him.

“Some of the awards I’ve gotten this year kind of speak to them, all the stuff they’ve done for me. There’s been a lot of great tight ends at Penn State, so I think it’s deserving for one of us to finally get the Mackey Award,” Warren said in December. “That kind of just means a lot to me, because I feel like I represent them too, when I have this award, and just kind of represent Penn State tight ends in general.”

Although Warren may have been the best so far, he certainly won’t be the last great tight end to come through Happy Valley. Howle has developed and recruit-

ed elite tight ends over and over, making Warren’s departure a bit easier for Penn State.

Next in line is Luke Reynolds. The former 5-star burned his redshirt as a true freshman last season and showed flashes of the player he can be, while also receiving high praise from Howle, Warren and his other teammates along the way.

“I think he’s one of the most talented young tight ends I’ve seen come in since I’ve been here,” Warren said. “I think he’s gonna be a really good tight end here, and I’m excited to see what his future’s like.”

Also in Penn State’s tight end room is true freshman 4-star Andrew Olesh, who flipped his commitment from Michigan late in the recruiting cycle. James Franklin and Co. pursued the Center Valley, Pennsylvania, native heavily, with Franklin even making a recruiting pitch to Olesh during an in-season press conferences.

“If you’re a great tight end in the country and particularly in the state of Pennsylvania, I don’t

know how you couldn’t come here,” Franklin said in November.

Luckily for Howle, the pitch to recruits comes easy, and it’s how he’s turned Penn State into the new “Tight End U.” All he has to do is point to the names he has in the NFL, especially once Warren is inevitably picked in the first round of the draft.

“This is Penn State. This is where you should want to come,” Howle said. “Obviously it’s easy to see Tyler and his success last year, but in the past like Brenton and Theo are just a great piece to sell for tight ends. But really, it all comes down to relationships.”

Howle’s other selling point is his promise to turn tight ends into the best versions of themselves. He doesn’t try to make his players into someone they’re not — he plays to their strengths while also transforming them into all-around talents.

Penn State’s tight ends have the benefit of learning from each other and picking up traits from some of the best in the business. Howle said he saw Reynolds grow from watching Warren all season, and Warren improved after playing behind Strange, Johnson and Freiermuth.

All in all, the Nittany Lions tight end room has climbed the ladder and become one of the best, if not the best, in the nation, and there’s no signs of that slowing down any time soon.

“There’s no program in the country that is doing what we are doing with tight ends right now and really over the last 10 years,” Franklin said in November. “And Ty Howle has come into that position as a Penn State letterman and has taken it to a whole other level. We’re recruiting the best tight ends in the country. We’re developing the best tight ends in the country.”

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Kate Hildebrand/Collegian

Ty Howle talks to the media during media availability in Holuba Hall on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 in University Park, Pa.

Spring portal drama

Franklin outlines stance on spring portal window

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Although the Tuesday weather in State College didn’t reflect it, the spring transfer portal was just a day away from opening, and as with any portal window in college football, the drama was already swirling.

Tennessee’s starting quarterback Nico Iamaleava entered the portal after contract disputes in the middle of spring ball, something that’s bound to happen more with NIL and revenue sharing taking over the sport. However, Penn State has steered clear of similar drama, and James Franklin spoke after practice Tuesday about why that is.

“I’ve been very pleased with how our players and coaches have handled (the portal),” Franklin said. “We still are working very hard to make sure that this is a transformational experience, and it’s interesting that that’s a two way street for players and coaches. So I can just speak on how we’re operating, and we’re not trying to operate like that.”

That doesn’t mean the Nittany Lions are immune from players entering the portal, especially with roster cuts looming. Offensive lineman JB Nelson put his name in the portal Monday, marking the first player to leave Penn State this spring for greener pastures.

Nelson likely won’t be the last either. There are 119 players listed on Penn State’s roster page, and while it hasn’t been made clear whether teams need to cut to 105 players before this season as the settlement remains pending, Franklin needs to hit that

number eventually.

The Nittany Lions’ current roster size doesn’t account for the possibility of adding players in the spring window, either. There are a few holes on Penn State’s roster that would be bolstered from a portal acquisition, but Franklin has been transparent with his players about the 105 roster-size limit and what it means for the upcoming portal window.

“It’s really kind of a no surprises discussion. And what I mean by that, if the players have any issues or concerns, we want them to come in and talk to us,” Franklin said. “We’ve talked already to the team about how we’re handling the 105, that was addressed before the first window, that was addressed before this window. So everybody is on the same page.”

New running backs coach Stan Drayton has seen and admired Franklin’s straightforward approach when it comes to the transfer portal and roster limits during his short time in Happy Valley. The former Temple head coach said the Nittany Lions aren’t trying to “tiptoe” around those difficult conversations, and are rather addressing them head-on.

“This is college football, and it’s a business that we’re in in some respects. So if the players are engaged in this climate that we’re in, then we have to have business-type conversations with each other,” Drayton said. “Eight years ago, that wasn’t necessarily the case, but to sit here and try to tiptoe around that conversation is not fair for the program. It’s not fair for the players as well.”

Franklin also continued to express his desire for just one

portal window in college football.

During the Nittany Lions’ College Football Playoff run, Franklin spoke at length about the issues a winter portal window causes to programs competing for the national championship, especially once Beau Pribula was forced to leave his program if he wanted to earn a starting job elsewhere.

“I want to be careful not speaking for all coaches, but I think a good majority of them would like one window. I think that’s in everybody’s best interest. The players know who’s on the roster. The coaches know who’s on the roster,” Franklin said. “Right now, there’s no rules. You could have 50 guys go in the portal at this time of year, and so it’s a problem.”

As for its portal approach this spring, Penn State will likely stick to its “DNA.”

Franklin has said in the past he leans toward guys he knows or recruited out of high school when dipping into the portal, and it doesn’t appear the Nittany Lions plan to change that this April.

“We’re a developmental program across the board. We believe in that,” Franklin said. “But I’m a big believer, when you can promote from within, you know what you have, you know what you’re getting. And although the portal sometimes seems sexy, you don’t always know what you’re getting until they show up on campus.”

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Lytle Alenstein/Collegian

Coach James Franklin watches Penn State football practice in Holuba Hall on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

COORDINATOR TEAMWORK



Kate Hildebrand, Noah Aberegg/Collegian

Penn State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles (left) speaks to the media, as offensive coordinator Andy Kotelnicki (right) yells at practice.

By Will Horstman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Last year, James Franklin brought in Andy Kotelnicki to be offensive coordinator. This year, he hired Jim Knowles to lead the defense, forming what’s projected as one of the best coordinator duos in the country.

But on top of their strengths, Kotelnicki and Knowles have used each other throughout spring practice to help each other out.

“Andy and I have a really good relationship,” Knowles said. “We do work together a lot in exchanging ideas. ‘Hey, this hurts us.’ Or maybe like, ‘Boy, this is good.’ We do talk a lot, probably more than anywhere I’ve been.”

Kotelnicki has 20 years of coaching experience, including five seasons at Buffalo and three seasons at Kansas prior to his first season with the Nittany Lions.

The Litchfield, Minnesota, native has led some offenses that have produced some high-end numbers. Over the last decade, Kotelnicki-led offenses are second in the country in rushing touchdowns per game and yards per play. Kotelnicki-led offenses are also best in sack and tackle for loss percentages across the same time span.

Knowles has 17 years experience as a defensive coordinator, including four seasons at Oklahoma State from 2018-21 and, most recently, three at Ohio State.

Over the past four seasons Knowles-led defenses are first in the country in total defense.

Furthermore, each coach has been a part of national champi-

onship winning squads before, as Kotelnicki won two Division III titles as the offensive coordinator at Wisconsin-Whitewater in 2013 and 2014 while Knowles won his national title a few months ago.

On top of the numerous achievements, Kotelnicki and Knowles have some history on the gridiron, which can help them when sharing feedback with each other.

“You know you have someone you’ve coached against, and it’s always just nice to bounce ideas and thoughts off of,” Kotelnicki said. “What do you do here? What causes problems? What did you worry about that we made a bigger deal? Things of that nature.”

Both coaching in the Big 12, they met in 2021. Knowles’ Oklahoma State trounced Kotelnicki’s Jayhawks 55-3. Knowles’ defense held Kotelnicki’s offense to 99 rushing yards, 44 passing yards and forced three turnovers in the game.

Both joining the Big Ten, Kotelnicki and Knowles met again last season. Knowles, once again, got the best of Kotelnicki, holding the Nittany Lions’ offense to six points en route to a 20-13 victory for the Buckeyes.

Now gearing up in the same gameday outfit, the two coordinators are able to collaborate and sharpen each other’s units ahead of the 2025 season.

“You have someone in house that’s willing to just give you an unfiltered evaluation of their preparation for you, and vice versa,” Kotelnicki said.

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‘THEY WILL NOT SUCCEED’

Students for Justice in Palestine display on Pattee and Paterno lawn

By Rachael Keller
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s Students Justice for Palestine’s (SJP) transformed the lawn in front of the Pattee and Paterno Library into a display titled, “Israel’s Genocide in Gaza” on Monday morning.

According to Roua Daas, an executive member of SJP, the lawn was divided into sections to depict different scenes from the ongoing 18-month war in Gaza, with the displacement scene meant to show the living conditions in refugee camps.

Daas, a graduate student studying clinical psychology, emphasized that there are refugees in Gaza living without food, clean water and electricity because of Israel’s “inhumane blocking of aid.”

The second scene showed a hospital in ruins displaying broken medical equipment and scrubs with blood smeared on them.

Daas said Israel continues to bomb and target hospitals in Gaza to block citizens from getting care. One of the informational signs stated that none of Gaza’s 35 hospitals are working at full capacity, with several being fully destroyed.

Another scene showed a classroom to bring attention to the fact that many children haven’t been able to attend school since the conflict began in October 2023.

The scene included chairs set up like a classroom, each with either a child’s picture, story or a statistic on child death during the occupation attached. The ground was also covered with childrens’ shoes, toys, books and clothes.

“Imagine that kind of



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

A classroom scene sits on the lawn outside the Pattee and Paterno Library as part of the “Israel’s Genocide in Gaza” display on Monday, April 21, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

disruption in such an essential and critical part of a child’s life, in addition to everything else they have witnessed,” Daas said.

Sarah Dweik, an executive board member of SJP, added that almost all of the universities in Gaza have been completely or partially destroyed.

Dweik, a doctoral student studying communications arts and sciences, said it’s important to highlight that Penn State students are on campus working to get degrees, but their Palestinian peers don’t have that access to education anymore.

Another scene featured a large torpedo sculpture with the words

“PSU Funds Torpedos” written on it, and two signs attached that read: “Applied Research Lab Off Our Campus,” and “End the Penn State War Machine.”

In front of the piece, there was a sheet made of Penn State clothing that read, “WE ARE Complicit in Genocide.”

According to Daas, the scene was meant to remind onlookers of what she described as Penn State’s complicity in genocide through torpedo research and maintaining institutional relationships with “war profiteers” and other organizations that have supported Israel.

Lastly, there was a scene titled “Gaza is Unbreakable.” According to Daas, this was meant to

represent ways the Palestinian people have maintained their traditions and lives despite the conditions they’re in.

“This (scene) is really meant to remind us that we know that everything Israel is doing right now, everything that Trump is doing right now is in an attempt to erase Palestine and Palestinians,” Daas said. “Despite all of these attempts, we reassert that they will not succeed.”

Malcolm Malone said this scene spoke to him the most.

Calling it the “Ramadan Table,” Malone, a third-year studying anthropology, said knowing people celebrated Ramadan and fasted from sun-up to sundown in such a difficult and dangerous

environment was like a resistance.

“Even though they’re in some of the worst conditions imaginable, they’re still displaying that steadfastness,” Malone said. “They’re not going to let this occupation happen, they’re always resisting.”

The event also featured dozens of signs that had statistics from the occupation, stories from Palestinians, QR codes to access videos and art pieces.

Along with these small signs, there was a large Palestinian flag in the middle of the lawn, a poster that said, “Israel is a Genocide State: From the River to the Sea Palestine Will Be Free,” and a large art piece that read, “Resistance Against Occupation is a Human Right.”

Malone said it was very telling that during the time he was standing at the event, about four to five tour groups walked past the display and not a single guide mentioned it.

“They talked about how Penn State is such an inclusive space for all of their students,” Malone said.

“Then right now, we see this huge display highlighting how Penn State isn’t doing anything to help Palestinianans here or abroad, and the tour guides just don’t mention that.”

Dweik said the display will give students another kind of visualization with what it means to live their daily lives while this conflict is happening in another continent.

“We’ll also recognize that a lot of the things we get to do in our life is a privilege compared to what’s happening in Gaza,” Dweik said.

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Lectures to limelight

Professor Molly Countermine discusses music career

By Nadya Solometo
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When heading out for a night downtown, students can encounter a variety of options for entertainment. With a wide net of bands to be heard, sometimes you can look to a stage and see a Penn State professor holding the microphone.

Molly Countermine has been involved with the downtown State College music scene since first moving to the area in 1997.

“In the beginning of ‘98, I had joined an existing band and played with them for about a year,” Countermine, a teaching professor for human development and family studies, said. “I’ve been in and around the music scene in State College for 27 years now.”

Countermine has been involved in a slew of musical groups, with some names being Ted McCloskey and the Hi-Fis and Honey Pie.

Working with other musical talents, Countermine expressed how the experience is never replicated between the different acts, with each one feeling distinct from the others.

“When I perform in a duo, that’s going to be very different than when I am with a full band,” Countermine said. “It varies not only on which venue we’re at, but it will vary on who is at the gig.”

Countermine and her groups have performed at various spots downtown, including Cafe 210 West and Doggie’s Pub. Her favorite is the Phyrst, which was one of the first venues she performed in.

“I’ve certainly played at Phyrst the longest, so it has a special place in my heart,” Countermine said.

Another aspect to Countermine and her performances is the utilization of a “playlist” — a list of songs that Countermine and her other band members loosely follow.

“None of the bands that I play with operate with a setlist, we’ll play from what we notice the crowd is responding to,” Countermine said. “There’s no



Joe Klein/Collegian

Molly Countermine performs at Doggie’s Pub on Saturday, April 19, 2025.

reason to have a setlist, because that doesn’t take into account how many people are there, or if there’s a birthday or special event going on, and when you’ve been playing as long as we have, there’s no reason for a setlist anymore.”

Honey Pie member Sam Christensen said this way of playing is what helps Countermine stand out from other performers.

“A unique thing about the way we rehearse is that we are able to get songs down very quickly,” Christensen said. “We like to learn the music that we have loved for our entire lives, so it makes it a lot easier to get them down when you already know all of the words.”

According to Countermine, the bands all play music that span decades, ranging from different genres and artists.

“We can play a country song just as easily as we can play an R&B,” Countermine said.

“We can do Dua Lipa to Chappell Roan, to The Rolling Stones to Tom Petty.”

Chris McGuire, the drummer for the Hi-Fis, also spoke on the process behind learning song choices for performances.

“We’ve definitely started

out not being 100% sure of a song, but once we play it live, we can usually find the spark that brings it to life for the crowd, and us too,” McGuire said. “And if that doesn’t happen, we just don’t play it anymore.”

McGuire, who has performed with the Hi-Fis since 2021, spoke about the “gravitas” with which Countermine performs.

“The power behind Molly’s voice is what stood out the most; it’s not easy being a singer, period,” McGuire said.

“You are really in the spotlight, and I think it is hard for some singers to bring their full power, especially to every show, but she brings it.”

McGuire added that Countermine’s performance is always impressive.

“Molly gives 100% every show. Of course, she doesn’t always feel 100%, but it doesn’t matter,” McGuire said. “She really is at home on the stage and entertaining. She loves the energy of the crowd and connects with them so easily.”

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Sleep out, speak out

By Nandini Sanghvi
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Students traded comfort for compassion at Penn State Students United Against Poverty’s (SUAP) “Sleep Out, Speak Out” from 7:30 p.m. April 17 to 7:30 a.m. April 18 at the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Student Farm.

First ideated by Social Bite co-founder Josh Littlejohn, the sleep out campaign involves giving up your bed for one night in solidarity with the homeless.

“It’s about raising awareness for the homeless population in the State College community,” Holden Foster, the government and community relations director for SUAP, said. “(People) don’t always receive the support they need, so it’s super important to raise awareness.”

The event involved an evening of discussions facilitated by a speaker from the nonprofit organization Out of the Cold, followed by the sleep-out itself.

“We’re going to talk about raising awareness and are planning on sleeping the entire night here,” Leanne Lenz, the associate director of the SUAP, said. “In addition to our speakers, we’re just having discussions on how we can best help others in the community.”

Foster, a graduate student studying international affairs and Spanish, said finding a safe and open environment for participants to spend the night in was a key challenge for organizers because “it can be difficult to camp out on campus.”

“The student farm had this

wide and grassy area, so we thought it was the best place for the event to happen,” Foster said. “We’re really happy that the farm let us use this space.”

Events like the sleep out are aimed at addressing stereotypes so that “students who are struggling see those of us who care to help,” according to Lenz.

“People have a certain image of what homelessness looks like, but in reality, those who are homeless simply don’t have stable housing,” Lenz said. “A big misconception is that those who are homeless don’t have jobs, but really, a lot of people are working to provide for other necessities.”

SUAP also works to provide those without a home with the resources they require. According to Foster, SUAP is always ready to help students “experiencing a crisis or facing any kind of homelessness.”

After 12 hours outside, students said the experience gave them a new appreciation for their daily comforts.

Claire Ferrara, the director of operations for the SUAP, said the sleep out showed her “how easy it is to take everything we have for granted.”

“It was hard to sleep with the cold and the noises of the environment outside,” Ferrara, a fourth-year studying health policy and administration, said. “The whole experience really gave us some perspective.”

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Jonah Richmond/Collegian

Students slept outside the Student Farm as part of the “Sleep Out, Speak Out,” event on Thursday, April 17, 2025 in University Park, Pa.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Evelyn and Jim Piazza pose for a picture on Feb. 23, 2025 at their home in Naples, Fla. Their son, Tim, died in 2017 from injuries he sustained during pledge initiation for Beta Theta Pi at Penn State University. Since their son’s death, Evelyn and Jim Piazza have dedicated much of their lives to ending hazing on college campuses. They helped write the Timothy J. Piazza Antihazing Law, passed in Pennsylvania in October 2018. Along with other families affected by hazing-related deaths, they formed the Antihazing Coalition with the Interfraternity Council and National Panhellenic Conference. They continue to raise money to support the Timothy J. Piazza Memorial Foundation, which provides specialized prosthetics for children.

TELLING THEIR STORIES

Piazzas, students share experiences with hazing at Penn State



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Jane, a second-year student at Penn State, poses for a picture on March 26, 2025 in University Park, Pa. Jane, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, rushed a professional fraternity and was hazed by the executive members. “I know people have gone through a lot worse, but this is [a professional] frat... I was really shocked that they were hazing at all.” Even though Jane believes her experiences were not as bad as they could have been in a social fraternity or sorority, it still affected her everyday life. She described feeling stressed out all the time because she had to attend meetings every night. “All the [executive] members, they would scream at us and curse at us and tell us to do stuff and we would just have to do it, you know. They’d be like, OK, everyone bring us cigarettes or bring us a vape or bring us alcohol, bring us weed.”



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Jane poses for a picture on March 26, 2025 in University Park, Pa. Jane says she no longer has interest in being active in her current fraternity. Now she describes being “put-off” from those opportunities because of how she and others were treated. “The whole time I was [thinking], is this even worth it? Do I actually even wanna be a part of this fraternity?”



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Evelyn and Jim Piazza wear rubber bracelets created in support of their son, Tim. “The opportunities started to present themselves for us to be a voice, at universities, fraternities, sororities and that type of thing...We felt an obligation that we had to do it, because if we don’t do it, who’s gonna do it? I firmly believe that was the right call,” Jim said.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Frank Linus, a fourth-year studying political science, poses for a picture on March 30, 2025 in University Park, Pa. Linus was hazed by the Friends of the Commonwealth upon running for President of the Commonwealth Student Government. “Obviously there was a law passed because of the hazing that occurs at Penn State, and while some of it may seem innocuous, it still creates a very in-group, out-group culture that permeates even to the most basic interactions,” Linus said. According to its website, the Friends of the Commonwealth is an alumni interest group dedicated to strengthening the relationships between past, present and future students. “It’s probably not a good thing that you have students who are in leadership positions, who are breaking the law kind of flagrantly, and you’re not really doing much about it because the organization is not technically a registered student organization.”



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Anna Marcovitch, a second-year studying psychology, poses for a picture on March 29, 2025 in University Park, Pa. Marcovitch joined a campus music group and was hazed by the members of the organization. Marcovitch said they had been brought to an apartment without being told where it was. She described how everyone except her and one other person was drunk and yelling at the new members to do specific things. “There were just too many sexual things that I just didn’t think had to happen, at all...There was no way that I could have known that they were gonna tell us to do any of that stuff.”



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

“It’s just made me realize hazing doesn’t have to be just drinking, it’s related to whatever they make you do that you don’t wanna do,” Marcovitch said. “No matter how big or small it is, they can’t make you do something to be a part of a group that has nothing to do with that. It just broadened my perspective of what hazing is and how much consent is needed for these things, because there is a lot of peer pressure.”



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

“That morning I was meeting with a student from Rutgers. We got to talking and this kid was in a fraternity. He just looked at me and said, you know, at Penn State they haze really hard. People could die from hazing. I didn’t think much about it at the time,” Jim said. “When we got in the car to go to Hershey Medical, I said to [Evelyn], ‘this better not have anything to do with that f-ing fraternity,’ and she said ‘well, it was the first night of pledging’...I just knew Tim was gonna die.” The Piazzas have strived to increase legislation surrounding Greek life hazing. They travel to universities across the country to tell the story of their son’s death, educating students and encouraging them to think about the consequences of hazing.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Jim Piazza poses for a picture on Feb. 23, 2025 at his home in Naples, Fla. “We’re not saying kill fraternities, we’re saying let’s make them better... I would say it’s satisfying, of course, you’re doing some good stuff hopefully, and making a difference, but I mean, I’d rather have my son back.”

‘It’s a wonderful thing to be part of’

Bartenders share experiences, stories from inside The Lion’s Den

By Rebecca Fein
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

The Lion’s Den. Where Penn State students go to wash away their academic pressure and forget about the various stressors of college life.

A bar is a bar, and alcohol is the same wherever you go, but students keep coming back to the Den because it’s the people that make the place.

This is an ode to the ones who serve you endless bloody marys and vodka sodas, the ones who clean up after the night you probably don’t remember. They’re the people behind the scenes (and the bar) — give it up for the bartenders.

Gianna Girol explained how she initially got into bartending.

“After my sophomore year, I had an unpaid internship, and for me personally, my summer money is what carries me through the school year, so I definitely knew I needed a job,” Girol, a third-year studying broadcast journalism, said.

Girol also said it’s a great way to hang out with friends who are over 21, even if you’re not quite there yet.

“I actually didn’t turn 21 until two weeks ago, and my friends were already 21, so I didn’t want to sit around at home all night,” Girol said. “So then I applied and got the job.”

On the other hand, Paige



Jacob DeLuca/Collegian

The Lion’s Den stands on East Calder Way on April 16, 2025 in State College, Pa. The Den is a popular downtown night spot for students.

Fry had different motives for a bartending job at the Den.

“I started working at the Lion’s Den after I had made the decision to leave my last bartending job,” Fry, a State College resident, said. “I was looking for both a change of scenery and a healthier workplace environment. After my interview, it was clear to me that the priorities and values held by the Den were very closely aligned with my own.”

Issy Caswell wanted a job that worked with her busy life.

“I wanted a job that worked well with my schedule and cheer

practices, along with school.” Caswell, a third-year studying biobehavioral health and Penn State cheerleader, said.

Although these three bartenders ended up working at the Den from different paths, they share a similar story when it comes to why they’ve stayed.

“I love the family environment, I am always looking forward to coming into work to be with everyone,” Caswell said.

Fry agreed with Caswell’s sentiment.

“The Lion’s Den has cultivated a staff environment that feels like

family,” Fry said.

Fry also thanked the ownership of the Den for creating such a welcoming atmosphere.

“I couldn’t be more thankful to Chris and Bridgette Rosengrant for offering a safe workplace environment where young women are valued, first and foremost, for their work ethic.”

Girol also commented on the closeness of the staff.

“I love the people I work with,” Girol said. “We’re actually all friends, and it’s a really positive environment and atmosphere.”

It wouldn’t be the Den without

some outrageous stories, and the bartenders had plenty to share. Girol recounted the time star tight end Tyler Warren made an appearance.

“One time that was so fun was during football season when Tyler Warren came into the Den,” Girol said. “He was on my side of the bar, and everybody was so excited to see him. People were screaming at him, ‘Go to the Eagles,’ and everyone was buying him shots, it was like a meet and greet.”

On the contrary, Fry’s story narrated a bit of a more hectic time.

“Setting the scene — the bar is slammed, six people behind a bar that generally fits two, everyone is soaking wet and confused,” Fry said. “There were literal inches of water on the ground from a geyser continuously erupting next to the bar. The entire bar was a ‘splash zone.’”

Some were even courageous enough to trudge through the water for a drink.

“It took everything in me to not die laughing as I tried to continue to serve those brave enough to come to my bar through the ocean of water, while I was stepping over the chaos of people on the puddle of a floor,” Fry said. “Everyone was drenched. It was insane and hilarious.”

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Sienna Pinney/Collegian file photo

Old Main is framed through spring blooms on April 19, 2024.

Campus closure announcement delayed

By Kiera Ginn
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State President Neeli Bendapudi said Thursday that the university will delay announcing which commonwealth campuses will close until after final exams and graduation.

Spring graduation commencement are currently scheduled from May 9-11.

Bendapudi initially said in February that campus closure information would be shared before spring commencement.

Abington, Altoona, Behrend, Berks, Brandywine, Harrisburg, Lehigh Valley, Great Valley, Dickinson Law, the College of Medicine and the Pennsylvania College of Technology will remain open, according to the February statement.

This leaves Beaver, DuBois, Fayette, Greater Allegheny, Hazleton, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Schuylkill, Scranton, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre and York as the campuses under consideration for closure, which would take place as early as the 2027-28 academic year.

Bendapudi said the decision to postpone comes after consultation with students and faculty about the best time to release the news as the university nears the end of the academic year.

She added that the university will wait until the Board of Trustees meets in mid-May to discuss and finalize plans. No decisions are final until approved by the board.

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Drag, horror, queer history collide

By Gianna St. Thomas
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Author Heather O. Petrocelli brought her book, “Queer for Fear: Horror Film and the Queer Spectator” to life on stage alongside “drag legend” and Penn State alum Peaches Christ, as the two delved into queer horror, favorite scary films and their shared history.

The lecture and drag show, hosted by the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (CSGD), highlighted horror’s LGBTQ+ roots last Wednesday night in the Freeman Auditorium.

Sible Sible opened the show, along with a few clips from horror films such as “Midnight Mass” and “All About Evil.”

Petrocelli, who specializes in film studies, queer theory and public history, highlighted LG-BTQ+ stories and experiences throughout the event. She said horror is inherently queer, as it evolved from gothic literature — a genre shaped by many queer authors.

Kate Rawson, assistant director for the CSGD, said she felt empowered after hearing from the speakers.

“That motivation of sticking



Geraldine Cruz/Collegian

Drag performer Peaches Christ performs in Freeman Auditorium on April 16, 2025.

together with the community, fighting back, being your authentic self, that willingness to fail — that really spoke to me,” she said. “I hope it was inspiring for a lot of students and faculty and staff who came tonight.”

Rawson said she hoped those navigating personal struggles or interested in queer horror felt seen and validated, highlighting a sense of community at the show.

Joshua Grannell developed the Peaches Christ persona during the production of his senior thesis film “Jizzmopper: A Love Story,” which won the audience award at a Penn State Student Film Festival.

“Horror was always a cozy

blanket, in a way,” Grannell said. “I love being scared and the release it offers.”

Grannell said he loves entertaining people — whether by making them laugh, scream, or simply putting on a show.

“Life is hard. Life is bills,” Grannell said. “I like creating a space where, for 90 minutes, you can check real life at the door and just have fun, let go.”

Emma Duffy, who works for the CSGD, said she hates horror, but the event made her like it more.

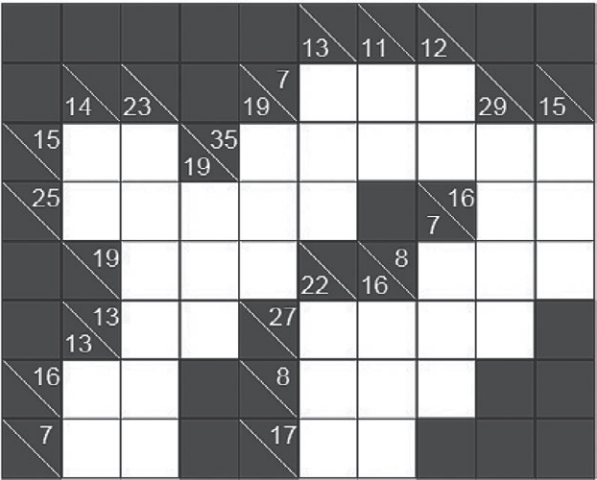
“I enjoyed listening to Heather speak, and when she got emotional, it really resonated with me and made me think about the state of the queer community today (and) how important it is to promote things like queer horror for people to see,” Duffy, a third-year studying recreation, park and tourism management, said.

Duffy said her favorite part of the event was the drag queen performances, adding that the lecture helped contextualize the community’s roots.

“Be loud and proud about who you are,” Duffy said. “Take advantage of that rich history that comes with queer culture.”

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Kakuro



The rules are easy:

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.

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Sudoku

	5	4			9	3	
9		7	3		5	4	2
				9			
	2		9		8		1
				3			
	9		7		6		4
				7			
7		9	8		1	2	3
	3	8				1	6

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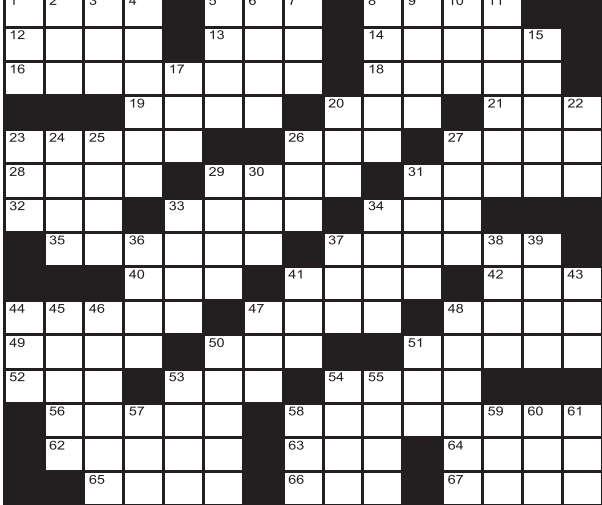
Y P Q Y I G C A F E S L E T O H Y G
N A E N A R R E T I D E M C J C W N
E U L F I V E N N A R E I V I R N O
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I A V A A P H X O L D A Q C R M T L
L Q T S L G S G T B A L L M V A L C
W B T I Z G M S U H E G E Y U M I R
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L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

Alps
Autobahn
Belgium
Cafe
Castle
Croissant
Cuisine
Eiffel Tower
England
Euro
Ferry
France
Germany
Greece
Hotels
Ireland
Italy

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Louvre
Mediterranean
Monaco
Nice
Nightlife
Opera
Paris
Passport
Portugal
Riviera
Rome
Seine
Spain
Vatican
Wales

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Crossword



Across

1 Playwright
5 Preschooler
8 City in Eastern Utah
12 Missile housing
13 Leave speechless
14 Met expectations?
16 Southern California sight
18 Lynley of film
19 Kegler pieces
20 Batman after Michael
21 Fiddle stick
23 Talking bird of poetry
26 Moose ____
27 ____ Nui (Easter Island)
28 Seed covering
29 Like Jack Sprat's diet
31 Cavalry weapon
32 Like a Burnside mouse
33 Impoverished
34 Figured out
35 Trembling trees
37 Thanksgiving dinner guests, probably
40 Woodpile item
41 Mutual fund fee
42 The Pointer Sisters' " ____ So Shy"
44 German industrial

city

47 Money maker
48 Chanel of fashion
49 Phi ____ Kappa
50 Clunker
51 "Vacation" character
52 Slot machine symbol
53 Glass component
54 Jezebel's husband
56 New Hampshire's state flower
58 Lawbreaker
62 Cathedral topper
63 Big galoot
64 Fraternity party attire
65 Pampering places
66 Samurai's sash
67 Dance lesson

Down

1 Psychic's claim
2 River inlet
3 Down with the flu
4 Force
5 Mountain pool
6 Has a mortgage
7 Pipe joint
8 Cousin of a cockatoo
9 Kind of hygiene
10 Balloon filler
11 It has a fruit that has an edible pulp called monkey bread
15 Inclination
17 Malaysian export

20 Sliding door site

22 Children's card game
23 Wet behind the ears
24 Kind of rug
25 Competes
26 Pickle container
27 Pro follower
29 Yearn
30 Dawn goddess
31 Auctioneer's shout
33 Lowly laborer
34 Pesky insect
36 Tell it to the judge
37 Charged particle
38 " ____ next?"
39 Religious offshoot
41 Cover
43 Tofu base
44 Flow's partner
45 Elite group
46 Thin pieces of wood
47 Ornamental flower, for short
48 Ancient units of length
50 Cubes
51 Zodiac animal
53 ____ avis
54 Spirited horse
55 Old 45 player
57 Mouth piece
58 Bill's partner
59 " ____ to worry"
60 Ripen
61 Race unit

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MY VIEW | TERESA PHELAN

It happened again

"Prayers and condolences."
"But (we) have to get over it,
we have to move forward."



Phelan

"It's a shame."

"We've got to deal with it."

This is Donald Trump and his administration's reaction to the unwarranted killing of children, teenagers and young adults in schools.

Instead of instituting stricter gun control laws and running regular background checks, the government can only offer thoughts and prayers.

On Sept. 13, I wrote a column that addressed the fear that follows students into college, dreading the day their school is known for being the location of the latest school shooting.

On April 17, for the students of Florida State University, this fear was realized.

We often associate mass casualties with elementary, middle and high schools, but 17 mass shootings at colleges have claimed the lives of 117 individuals since 1966.

Graduating high school doesn't mean the threat is gone; it's just delayed.

Students eating lunch, studying and counting down the days until the semester was over were running from the sounds of gunshots, hiding in classrooms and sending the texts no one wants to receive.

It's hard to fathom the idea that there are students on FSU's campus who have now survived two mass shootings, but I guess at the end of the day, thoughts and prayers are the fix.

Trump's administration loves telling grieving families and those who no longer feel safe on their college campus that their trauma is only worthy of thoughts and prayers and not actual change.

Religion is used to cope, and while I get that it provides relief, it doesn't fix the systemic issue that plagues schools nationwide.

Addressing the nation after Thursday's shooting and saying the tragedy was "a shame" while backing the idea that gun safety laws aren't changing is just another one of Trump's contradictions.

Instead of protecting children, we're still worried about erasing DEI efforts from universities and unjustly taking visas from international students. We seem to only defend students against threats the government deems more important than the safety of its youth.

There's a lot to be said about the current administration, and politics are forever dividing, but curbing the number of school shootings our country has to endure shouldn't be a two-sided debate.

Schools are implementing mandated training for teachers

and students just in case. Other countries don't have training just in case. Other countries have never had their vice president call school shootings a "fact of life."

Accepting this as part of our culture is both embarrassing and utterly terrifying. We have just accepted this is the reputation our country is willing to take on.

As if leaving home isn't hard enough for college students, the looming danger that follows them into every building creeps into the back of their mind, wondering who's next.

The perpetrators in these crimes are more talked about than the victims. Their faces are plastered everywhere with stories crafted about their motive.

We live in a society where the first thing that people will blame is their political affiliation, but Democrat or Republican, they have committed murder and don't deserve any grace or understanding afforded to them.

We need to start saying the names of those who have lost their lives, sharing their stories and remembering how their lives were taken from them.

Often, the rhetoric surrounding these casualties is that, in comparison with other crimes, mass shootings are relatively rare, but it doesn't feel that way.

Since Columbine in 1999, there have been over 400 shooting incidents at K-12 schools, with 17 mass shootings on college campuses.

It's hard to see these numbers and feel OK, but in the words of President Trump, "(We) have to get over it, we have to move forward."

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Cartoon by Ethan Capitano

MY VIEW | JADZIA SANTIAGO

Accepting your spring body

Content warning: This column contains discussion of negative body image and fatphobia. If you or a friend are in need of assistance, there are resources available.

Santiago

The moment I wake up on the first warm day of the year, I'm greeted by the feeling of my stomach and thighs.

It's not, by any means, the first thing I should notice. I've got fresh air coming in through the window, a pile of unfolded laundry on the floor and an alarm that's probably been going off for an eon.

But my skin is sticky with sweat, and because of that, I'm aware that my pajamas fit me tighter than they used to.

It's objectively a neutral thing. I've gained weight, big whoop, bodies do that, especially when you're stressed out like I've been. So, I'm not complaining, because it's not a bad thing.

But I'm not going to pretend that we don't live in a world — and on a campus — that disagrees, which is a pitfall I think many body positivity and body acceptance arguments ignore, intentionally or not. Regardless

of how I feel about my body, people have, do and will treat me differently depending on how it looks.

Whether we realize it or not, we're kinder to those who take up less physical space. As someone who's fluctuated in that regard, I know I'm not the only one who's seen or felt it.

This is especially true if you're someone who's under scrutiny or on display. I'm a woman of color with some outward-facing roles on campus, and sometimes, I catch myself saying, "This body is bad PR."

Cut that down, and you get to the core of it: "This body is bad."

It's a ridiculous notion, really, of a moral association tied to a lump of flesh. But unfortunately, it seems like there's a non-negligible amount of people who believe in it.

And now, the weather's getting warmer, so for many of us, it's time to reveal the truth of our bodies. So, I've been dealing with the question: When the world doesn't like my body, how do I believe that my body is good?

My personal answer? You

don't have to.

The system we use to determine a "good" or a "bad" body is one size fits all. Objectively, the percentage of people who fit every standard is very, very small.

That's not even unpacking what many of those standards are rooted in. So, no, your body isn't "bad," but it doesn't have to be "good," either.

Going off the body standards number line, I've never had a body that people consider "good." And in order to heal from the stress of that, I don't find it useful to redefine goodness, to create

my own standard, because people will always hold me to their own.

Instead, I'm OK with my body, regardless of whether it's "good." Beauty isn't a prerequisite for life, something you need in order to have permission to exist — and when we constantly seek to reassure ourselves that our bodies are "good," all we do is reinforce that notion within ourselves.

I also accept that the world might treat me based on its

opinions, and I navigate those things when they come up. But I know who I am, and I carry that with me regardless of how my pajamas fit.

And I know what you're thinking: Jaz, you said people will treat those with smaller bodies better, right? So if we just shrink, maybe we'll be loved, or bad things won't happen to us.

No. Your body isn't responsible for the bad things done to it — or the you who lives within it. And other people's opinions are, sincerely, not your problem.

However, I acknowledge that people will make their opinions your problem. So my solution is to just ... do it anyway.

Put on the shorts. Go for the walk. Plant your feet in the grass.

Acknowledge that your body is a result of the complex life you live, everything that makes up the you that you are.

And then lie down and let it soak up the sun.

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Ushering in a new era

Sprinting coach Brandon Rizzo brings success to Penn State track

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State track coach Brandon Rizzo didn't know what he wanted to do coming out of college. He was graduating with a degree in exercise science and was aiming at a physical therapy career, but something wasn't sitting quite right with him.

It wasn't until a conversation with his counselor that his whole world turned upside down, landing him in the position he's in today.

"(My counselor) said the most beautiful thing I think anyone could have said to me at that moment," Rizzo said. "He said, 'I think you're afraid to fail,' and I love that. That motivated me."

With his love for track and field, coupled with his success competing throughout high school and college, Rizzo earned a position as an assistant coach for the Passaic Valley Regional High School track and field team.

In New Jersey, Rizzo led the sprinters as he personally worked toward his then-career goal of becoming a collegiate coach.

"I always wanted to be a college coach because I felt like I had unfinished business for myself," Rizzo said. "I think there were so many lessons I learned being a high school coach that I realized my college career wasn't complete, so I didn't want other people to face that."

After a few years of coaching at the high school level, Rizzo became eager for a new challenge and began pursuing college coaching gigs across the U.S.

"I emailed every single mid-major (and) Power Five team in the entire country. I was like, 'Hey, I want to be a volunteer coach, I work for free, I just want to learn,'" Rizzo said. "I told myself I could be a Power Five coach by the time I was 65."

Rizzo heard back from Penn State associate head coach Erin Tucker, who oversaw the sprinting program and was willing to take a chance on Rizzo. He departed for Happy Valley in 2021 with the title of volunteer sprinting coach.

Rizzo made a mark on the program from Day 1, helping many

athletes achieve success during his first year.

"We're really excited about what coach Rizzo has been doing here at Penn State for our program," head coach John Gondak said. "You could tell when he was here as a volunteer coach that he had some strong knowledge, and when given the opportunity, that he was going to take it and run."

Before becoming a full-time coach, Rizzo had already coached an NCAA Championship-qualifying 4x400-meter team, helped Yasmin Brooks win a pair of Big Ten Championships and made his mark at the 2022 U20 World Athletics Championships, coaching James Onukwa.

In his first year as the full-time assistant coach for sprints and hurdles, Rizzo prioritized recruiting. Not only did he want to look at the statistics of the athletes, but he also valued their strength and willingness to hustle.

"I get made fun of a lot because I go on road recruiting a ton because, at times, I think people are well beyond a number," Rizzo said. "I understand track is a numbers game, but I truly believe I have to just meet you and I have to feel off you that you're a dog."

Ahead of the 2023-24 season, Rizzo took his recruiting talents farther than just the incoming freshman class, but dove into the portal as well, securing one of the best Penn State commitments ever.

"Rizzo knows talent. He sees someone and just knows it," 2024 NCAA champion Cheickna Traore said. "I competed against Rizzo as a senior, and I was a freshman, and he knew from there. He was like, 'Yo, you shouldn't be at this level.'"

Although Traore arrived as a graduate student with only one year of eligibility remaining, Rizzo made the most of his time in Happy Valley.

"Rizzo has had so much belief in me that I didn't even have myself, and I'm a very confident person," Traore said. "My biggest thing Rizzo taught me was just to believe in myself."

In one year, Rizzo helped Traore become a four-time school record holder, three-time First Team All-American and national

champion in the 200-meters.

"I can't tell you the amount of times I think I've celebrated, got mad, cried. Dude, it's been a roller coaster," Rizzo said. "It's like one moment I'm at a home meet indoors, and the next moment I'm in Paris."

Despite the athletes being responsible for the execution on the track, Traore credits Rizzo for all of the success he achieved at Penn State. As a 28-year-old coach, Rizzo often gets overlooked for the success of his athletes, but that's not the case for Traore.

"I might be biased, but I'd say Rizzo is probably the best coach on the track team," Traore said. "As a young guy, Rizzo doesn't get looked at like he knows what he's doing, but that doesn't mean anything."

While helping Traore become a national champion with countless hours on the track during practice and competition, Rizzo also stayed busy on the recruiting trail, finding a successor for the Olympian.

"The biggest thing to me is (Rizzo's) willingness to hustle," Gondak said. "We'll come back from a meet at 2 a.m. on Sunday, and by 10 a.m. the next morning, he's over at the Armory watching high school kids compete. Just his hustle and willingness to watch track meets and be a presence around high school coaches and high school athletes has been super impressive."

As soon as Traore graduated, sprinting success carried over immediately to freshman Ajani Dwyer, whom Rizzo scouted in New Jersey and recruited to the team.

"When I emailed Rizzo, he was like, 'How did anyone miss you? Your build and everything, you could be really, really great,'" Dwyer said. "I was on the visit, and we stopped by the records, and he points to Cheick and tells me that this is the big thing, and then right after him, you're gonna be the next big thing."

Ahead of Dwyer's collegiate opener, Rizzo was hyping him up, knowing he was capable of great things.

"Training up to (the season opener), he always told me, 'Bro,



Courtesy of Matt Rudisill/Penn State Athletics

Penn State track and field assistant sprinting and hurdles coach Brandon Rizzo watches the action on the track.

you're the real deal. You're about to do something,'" Dwyer said. "Before the final, he said, 'You're about to go do something crazy in this final, go ahead, go do it.' I did it, and we had this great hugging moment. I knew before we're gonna be something special, but to finally see it put in, it was wonderful."

In his opening meet, Dwyer recorded the second-best 60-meter time in Penn State history, running 0.01 seconds behind the school record of 6.54.

Despite this success out of the gate, Dwyer struggled a few times during the season, including tripping out of the blocks in the 60m dash. As his coach, Rizzo used his background and experience to strengthen Dwyer's confidence through these struggles.

"I've messed up a lot in my life. We talk about mental toughness, and we work on it in practice," Rizzo said. "I tell them to stop making plans. The way you plan out that race is probably most likely not going to happen."

In addition to his seriousness and toughness, Rizzo finds a way to connect with each and every one of his athletes, emphasizing the importance of a strong relationship.

"I'm genuinely his biggest fan," First Team All-American sprinter Zoey Goldstein said. "He is such

a great coach because he really values the emotional aspect of his athletes. He's not solely focusing on the times and the physical aspect, but he truly builds emotional connections with every one of his athletes."

Despite being just one individual in a team of over 100 athletes and coaches, Rizzo's excitement and affection alone provide a full-team effect to any athlete preparing to compete.

"It's just having a coach that you could just rely on when he's not even on the line, but you feel like you could still rely on him because it's a lonely sport, you're by yourself," Dwyer said. "But with Rizzo, I don't feel like it's a lonely sport. I feel like it's a team effort when I'm on the line."

As Rizzo's third season as a full-time assistant coach nears the finish line, his passion and love for the sport and his athletes haven't gone unnoticed and will continue on throughout the rest of his career.

"I knew that he believed in me, and I genuinely think that he believed in me even before I believed in myself," Goldstein said. "I literally could go on and on about how much he's helped me, and I genuinely think he's just so amazing at what he does."

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Softball's silver slugger

Brooke Klosowicz powers Penn State's historic batting breakthrough

By Myles Hannak
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State has surged inside the batter's box in 2025, setting a new program home run record, while on track to challenge the team batting average record.

Despite this offensive success, there were initial concerns for the Nittany Lions, as only two of the five batting average leaders returned from the previous season. Many believed Penn State's pitching would spearhead the unit following its first appearance in the College World Series in more than a decade.

However, the Nittany Lions' bats have decided close games, overcoming injuries and growing pains in the bullpen. One name leading this batting resurgence is sophomore designated player Brooke Klosowicz.

"Brooke Klosowicz has been one of our best offensively all year, and she has also been a leader for us on the field," coach Clarisa Crowell said March 9. "Brooke had limited opportunities for us last year ... if you look at her stats offensively, she is hands down our best hitter all year, and it has been a lot of fun."

The Johnsbury, Illinois, native came to Penn State after a highly decorated career at Johnsbury High School, where she earned all-conference honors in all four years and was a first-team all-state selection during her last two seasons.

Klosowicz's talent was evident early on, as she drew interest from multiple Division I teams even before she entered high school, with Penn State among them.

This attention stemmed from an impressive travel ball career, in which Klosowicz competed against pitchers who had already received college offers while she was still in middle school.

Despite her early success,



Jacob DeLuca/Collegian

Infielder Brooke Klosowicz (8) scores after hitting a home run during the Penn State softball game against Pitt on April 15, 2025.

Klosowicz faced a clear jump in talent at the collegiate level during her freshman campaign in Happy Valley. The newcomer appeared in only 33 of a possible 55 games last season, starting 11 and batting .239.

Klosowicz made significant improvements in the offseason, which enabled her to find her stride in summer ball, earning a spot as a Florida Gulf Coast League All-Star.

"Mentally, I just tried to simplify it as much as I could. I think last year, during my freshman year, I would just get a little too overwhelmed when I had the opportunities," Klosowicz said. "But summer ball helped me a ton, just going in there with a better mindset and just knowing I'm doing this to better my game and better the people around me. I really took that confidence from summer ball and brought it into fall ball."

Klosowicz showcased this momentum, as she began her breakout year on a national stage. After going hitless in the season

opener against Duke, Klosowicz embarked on a 32-game on-base streak — the longest streak of the season to that point.

"I gotta shout out my dad for helping me. He's been helping me since Day 1, since I was 7 years old playing," Klosowicz said. "On the softball side of it, I gotta give it to my girl Emily Maddock from last year, who really just helped me open my eyes and realize it is just a game and just try to have fun with it."

Klosowicz's breakout carried into Penn State's first series at Beard Field, where she was named Big Ten Player of the Week after tallying nine hits in 12 plate appearances across the first four games.

"I obviously had some self-doubt after not performing how I wanted in my freshman year," Klosowicz said. "I think once I started feeling more confident here at Penn State and being back home, I think that was when it kind of clicked."

During Penn State's next homestand, Klosowicz kept

rewriting the history books, breaking the program record with her 19th double of the season. Penn State also set a program record with its 54th home run of the season on April 5, which was fittingly hit by the Nittany Lions' emerging star.

"It's always awesome to be home. There's nothing like it, especially (because) we have this great batgirl, Allison ... We do it to inspire her, and I hope all the younger generations who come to our games see that and just fall in love with the game even more," Klosowicz said. "I think that's what makes it so special for me, that little girl that I once was is now here, and they can do it too. So personally, that's my favorite part of being home, just seeing all the little girls cheer us on."

The Nittany Lions' No. 8 showed no signs of slowing down, as she maintained her pace as a top batter in the Big Ten, ranking sixth in batting average at .470. She's also challenging the program's RBI record, currently three short of tying the mark at

49. "I would have never expected (the awards) for me," Klosowicz said. "Obviously, I try to keep my head down with blinders on and just (think), 'What can I do for my team? What can I do to help us win games?'" So, honestly, I use that more as motivation to prove to Penn State, my coaches, my teammates, I just do it for them."

Klosowicz stands out as a key batter this season, experiencing an unprecedented and unexpected breakout with historical significance. Her performance has been instrumental in helping Penn State navigate a season marked by numerous ups and downs.

However, with a lineup filled with batters hitting over .300, the offensive barrage is poised to continue, with Klosowicz leading the charge.

"I try to keep it simple and not overwhelm myself with flooded thoughts. I just want to keep the game as fun and easy as I can make it out to be," Klosowicz said.

"Obviously, it's all much easier said than done, but if I can make this sport that's so hard on my body and on my mental health fun, and if I can make it easy, I see success in my future."

Penn State must navigate the heart of its schedule as the season winds down and the post-season nears. If the Nittany Lions want to make a run at the Big Ten Tournament, it'll only be achievable behind the bat of Klosowicz.

"Our goal is to just always go 1-0 each game. We take games one at a time," Klosowicz said. "Seeing what our offense can do and knowing what our pitchers can do, I really see a lot of success ... If we pour into each other and have full confidence in each other, I think we will finish strong."

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‘Fundamentally important’

Sustainability State College holds Earth Day celebration

By Jonathon Chiu
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Sustainability State College held its second annual Earth Day celebration from 12-4 p.m. on Saturday at the State College Municipal Building and the Sidney Friedman Park.

The celebration included a live animal exhibit by Centre Wildlife Care, puppet-making using recyclable materials with puppeteer Adam Swartz and a stamp carving and clothes printing session with local artist and professional illustrator Eve Pavlina.

Several engagement stations were also set up both inside and outside of the municipal building where additional activities were held such as face painting.

State College Mayor, Ezra Nanes, made a speech around 1 p.m. in the municipal building about the importance of promoting sustainability in the face of climate change and environmental degradation.

Nanes also made proclamations officiating April 22 and April 25 as Earth Day and Arbor Day within State College, respectively.

In an interview, he said the celebration is meant to bring the local community and various organizations together within State College and Penn State.

“By celebrating and recognizing Earth Day and by issuing



Samantha Oropeza/Collegian

Multiple people gather around many booths during the Earth Day Celebration at the State College Municipal Building and Syndey Friedman Park on Saturday, April 19, 2025 in State College, Pa.

proclamations, what we do is we build the sense of community committed and focused on these issues,” Nanes said. “Sustainability is fundamentally important; it has to do with our impact and interaction with the environment, and it also has to do with the relationships that we build.”

Several information stations were set up inside the municipal building to represent these

organizations and act as outreach to State College residents.

Nanes continued by saying that the creation of relationships built upon human dignity helps to further efforts to promote sustainability through a common mindset, which is “more important than ever.”

Jackson Bouffard, an intern at the Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center, said

outreach was important in allowing them to build relationships within the community.

“A lot of work that we do is behind the scenes,” Bouffard, a fourth year studying environmental resource management, said. “Doing the analysis is not really the hard part of anything we do, it’s gaining the cohesion and the social element because people can be abrasive to certain

changes. You don’t want to just roll into someone’s property and say ‘you need to change this.’”

Food trucks were situated at Sidney Friedman Park and included Brazilian Munchies, Rebelz Cuisine, Real Taste 570, Webster’s Bookstore Cafe and Coffee, Hemp, and Tea.

There was also live music from Biscuit Jam, Eric Ian Farmer, The Cleary’s, Code Blue and Matt Marsden.

A labyrinth made from recycled materials by the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority and the Centre Region Council of Governments was also set up in the park to educate event goers about the importance of practicing sustainability.

State College resident Cameron Mothersbaugh said he appreciated the borough’s dedication to promoting sustainability.

“Sustainability as a whole is really important to me; I care about the environment a lot, and I want to support the local community,” Mothersbaugh, a 2017 Penn State alum, said. “It’s nice to see that there’s a symbiotic relationship between the community and the local government and knowing that they value the environment and want to keep our community healthy and thriving.”

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Filipino Association holds Barrio Fiesta

By Nawaf Aljarboua
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Penn State Filipino Association (PSFA) held its annual Barrio Fiesta at the Eisenhower Auditorium last Saturday to showcase Filipino culture through dances, music and performances.

This year’s Barrio theme was “Stranded,” which displayed 10 contestants dropped on a remote island in the Philippines, competing in various challenges.

“It’s a combination of Filipino history, showcasing everything from traditional to modern Filipino culture and heritage, as well as pop through dances and skits,” Mark Hinlo, PSFA co-philanthropy director, said.

Hinlo, a second-year studying environmental resource management, said the event gave him a sense of home.

“It makes me feel like a true Filipino,” Hinlo said. “It gives me a chance to eat food that I only eat in Filipino households — stuff I miss that I can’t make here, which Barrio brings.”

He described this year’s Barrio as “a product unlike any other.”

The event began with a speech from PSFA President Jade Figueroa, a fourth-year studying global and international studies who highlighted her appreciation of the hard efforts put together by all members of the club.

Shortly after Figueroa’s introduction, the national anthem of the Philippines played in the auditorium.

The event consisted of nine dance acts, including the Bulaklakan/Payong folk dance, which symbolizes joy and celebration;



Jacob DeLuca/Collegian

Students perform Sayaw sa Bangko during the Penn State Filipino Association’s annual “Stranded” Barrio Fiesta in Eisenhower Auditorium on Saturday, April 19, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

traditional Tinikling dance, which mimics tikling birds movement; and a street-style hip-hop routine that originated in the U.S.

Nat Clark, who choreographed the Bulaklakan/Payong dance, told the audience they chose the theme for its connection to spring time.

During the intermission, there was a 60-second fundraising activity called “miracle minute,” where donations were

collected from the audience for the PUSO (Purposeful Unconditional Service to Others) Foundation. As a non-profit organization, PUSO serves underserved communities, especially in the Philippines.

A luncheon took place before the start of the event, providing an opportunity for attendees to eat and talk, Charelle Jandoc, co-cultural director at the PSFA, said.

“The whole process really highlights connections with members of the Filipino club and celebrating heritage,” Jandoc, a fourth-year studying integrative science, said.

At the end of the show, the president held an awards ceremony for members of the club. Then, a final dance called the “September Line Dance” was performed while the audience joined in from their seats

in the audience.

“It was great seeing the community come together like this,” Penn State alumnus Chylle Gamino said. “Being a grad student, being able to see the next students come forward and contributing to our previous work at the club feels really great.”

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Student Farm members discuss spring plans

By Nawaf Aljarboua
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

From new products to events and activities, the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Student Farm at Penn State has a lot to offer this spring.

Students and faculty will grow new products at the farm,



Joe Klein/Collegian

Greenhouses at the Dr. Keiko Miwa Ross Student Farm on Wednesday, March 5, 2025 in State College, Pa.

including berries.

“This is the first time we’ve grown them,” Brenna Fitzpatrick, field production director and mentor to interns at the Student Farm Club, said. “We’re gonna start planting blackberries and raspberries, and then we’re also going to plant blueberries later.”

Fitzpatrick, a second-year studying plant sciences, said this was possible with the help of other students, such as students from the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, who helped determine the soil and structure levels needed to start growing this fruit.

“We had other students from the College of Ag determine, ‘OK, what are the soil recommendations and soil nutrient levels that you need for these berries?’” Fitzpatrick said. “So we’re going to start growing those now.”

In addition to new products this spring, the Student Farm is fundraising to establish a permanent base on the farm, Fitzpatrick said. The base would be an up-to-standards space, containing temperature-controlled wash packs and cooling systems that is safe for washing, packing and storing produced products from harvesting, as well as having an outdoor classroom and restrooms.

This spring, the Student Farm will also focus on events and upcoming activities, according to Sarah Landauer, an AmeriCorps member for the Pennsyl-

vania Mountain Service Corps servicing the Student Farm.

On Feb. 13, the Student Farm held its Food Justice Summit at the HUB-Robeson Center. This was the first food justice summit held at Penn State, which focused on addressing food injustices and promoting food security.

“It was a cool event that brought community members, staff, faculty, students and all to the space to discuss food injustices that people are facing and kind of map out ways that we can make changes at the university,” Landauer, a fourth-year studying environmental resource management, said.

Then, on March 24, the Student Farm held its annual growing kickoff event, Garden Grow-How, where campus partners discussed growing and seed saving, as well as table gardening.

The Student Farm is holding its Earth Day on the Farm Festival on Friday, which will include live music, food trucks and workshops. There will be several community partners tabling at the event, including Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center, the Pennsylvania Game Commission

and the Spring Creek Watershed Commission.

Attendees can buy workshop passes that’ll give them access to activities, such as shiitake mushroom and worm vermicomposting workshops.

To end the semester, the Student Farm will host its Plant Sale fundraiser May 2 at Tyson Greenhouses, Headhouse 3. The farm will sell native plants, flowers and garden vegetables, such as lettuce, broccoli, tomatoes and more.

Student Farm treasurer Alex Schultes said the Plant Sale is helpful for students looking to start gardens since they’re heading home the following week.

“Plant Sale is one of our biggest fundraisers,” Schultes, a second-year studying agricultural and biological engineering, said. “We have it on the last day of the spring semester.”

According to Schultes, the club tries to make each semester better than the last, and it’s currently working to plant a variety of healthier plants.

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