



VERSUS

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PURDUE (3-4)
BOILERMAKERS

(3-4) **PENN STATE**
NITTANY LIONS



Graphic by Abbey Williams



‘A SHINING STAR’

Mouser journeys from Little Caesars to Penn State offensive coordinator

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Taylor Mouser was making pizzas and manning the cash register at his parents’ Little Caesars for nearly a year in Chandler, Arizona, after graduating from Adams State University in 2013. He worked shifts at the restaurant while searching for any coaching opportunity he could find, applying to dozens of college roles across the country just to come up empty.

But in 2015, Matt Campbell answered his call at Toledo and brought him on as an unpaid graduate assistant. Mouser packed up his life and moved to Ohio.

“I’d still be at Little Caesars if it wasn’t for coach Campbell,” Mouser said in February. “I don’t forget that. I’ve tried to do it all just to repay him back for being the only guy that returned my phone call when I was graduated, worked at Little Caesars, reaching out to every school. He’s the only person that hit me back.”

That opportunity launched Mouser’s coaching career, and he began a rapid climb through the ranks at Toledo and Iowa State before eventually becoming Penn State’s offensive coordinator this offseason, following Campbell from the Cyclones.

“Taylor has proven over his two-year period to be one of the up and coming bright minds in all of college football,” Campbell said in February. “I think he’s got fearlessness as a play caller. It’s been awesome to be part of his growth journey.”

Mouser’s rise required years of hard work, patience and a willingness to take on any responsibility. He said in February that he “just



Lucas Yendrzejewski/Collegian

Offensive coordinator Taylor Mouser speaks to the media at Beaver Stadium Oct. 13, 2026.

went to work and did everything they asked me to.”

Mouser’s initial responsibilities weren’t always glamorous. Washington State wide receivers coach Derek Sage, who held the same position at Toledo when Mouser arrived, said he “was helping our recruiting guys lick stamps and send out recruiting mailers.”

“He just was always around,” Sage told The Daily Collegian. “Can I do it? What can I do? How can I help? What can I do next?” No task was too small for Taylor, and he did it all with just a ‘yes sir’ mentality.”

Although Mouser’s time at Toledo was short-lived, he developed an important relationship with Sage that helped shape his early coaching career, as Sage soon let him join him at times and work with the receivers. That opportunity, which Sage and Mouser went at together, gave Mouser his first valuable experience coaching players, he said.

When Campbell moved to Iowa State in 2016, so did Mouser, as Campbell continued to give him opportunities. Sage remained at Toledo, meaning this time it was then-offensive coordinator Tom Manning taking Mouser under his wing.

Mouser remained a graduate assistant in his first year at Iowa State, but similar to his prior gig, he quickly began picking up more responsibilities and new titles, Manning said in an interview.

“For me, it was always pretty easy to see that he was going to be a pretty good football coach and a shining star,” Manning said. “(He) just needed to get as many opportunities as he can, and then eventually we were able to move him into the full-time position as the tight end coach.”

After years as an assistant, Mouser became Iowa State’s tight ends coach in 2021, giving him a larger role in developing players and building relationships with them. At just 30-years-old, Manning said Mouser’s relatively young age helped him relate to his players.

“Not being their buddy, but by coaching them. You just felt like there was something about this guy that you certainly could feel he had a future in what he was doing,” Manning said.

As Mouser was around the team more as a position coach, his knowledge of the game grew. He began developing a deeper understanding of Iowa State’s offensive system, learning the intricacies of different positions and how they worked together.

Manning said his knowledge was evident right away.

“For a young guy, that’s always the sign of a guy that has a bright future and could be a really good football coach,” Manning said.

Manning’s influence extended beyond helping Mouser earn a full-time coaching position: Even after the two went their separate ways, Mouser continued to rely on him for guidance. Mouser credited Manning and Sage as two of his biggest mentors, as “they’ll tell you what you need to hear and not necessarily what you want to hear.”

Their guidance helped him navigate the challenges of climbing the coaching ranks.

“I wouldn’t be where I’m at without (Tom),” Mouser said in February. “What he’s done, the feedback that he’s given me the last two years. He’s been so influential.”

Just three years after becoming Iowa State’s tight ends coach, Mouser was promoted to offensive coordinator. Campbell had witnessed his development firsthand and entrusted him with leading the Cyclones’ offense.

Like the other opportunities he earned, Mouser quickly went to work and found success leading Iowa State’s offense. During his first season calling plays, the Cyclones recorded their first 11-win season in program history, while Mouser helped oversee an offense that featured several future NFL players, including wide receivers Jaylin Noel and Jayden Higgins.

Tight ends Charlie Kolar and

Chase Allen also reached the big leagues after playing under Mouser earlier in his career.

“He did a hell of a job developing players in the National Football League at the tight end position,” Sage said. “(I’m) not surprised one bit. Taylor deserves every bit of this.”

Mouser spent two seasons as Iowa State’s offensive coordinator and appeared poised to take the next step in his coaching career when Campbell departed for Penn State in December.

Campbell believed his longtime assistant could succeed him as the Cyclones’ head coach, but Iowa State went in a different direction. So Mouser followed Campbell to Happy Valley, keeping his roles as offensive coordinator and tight ends coach and continuing a decadelong partnership. The decision was one of little hesitation.

“When coach Campbell told me what was going on, I sprinted to it, and I couldn’t wait to be able to come here,” Mouser said. “This is a dream job for anybody that likes to coach tight ends with what this place is and the people that they’ve been able to put out here. To be an offensive coordinator for a guy like coach Campbell was huge to me at a program like this.”

Mouser and Campbell brought several familiar faces from Iowa State, including Rocco Becht, wide receiver Chase Sowell and running back Carson Hansen. Their familiarity with his offensive system provided a foundation as he adjusted to his new home with the Nittany Lions.

Over a decade after Mouser struggled to find a program that would give him a chance, he found himself leading the offense at one of college football’s most prolific programs. It’s a destination he was hard pressed to imagine while making pizzas in Arizona.

“This place is incredible, it’s a school that you dream about when you’re a small-school guy like me,” Mouser said in February. “Even the idea of coming and coaching in a place like this, it’s so far fetched. It doesn’t even enter your mind when you’re where I was at before.”

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PURDUE BOILERMAKERS

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Jojo Hayden	LB/Jr.	15	Ryan Browne	QB/Jr.	39	Isaiah Needam	DB/So.	78	Sankeerth Veluri	OL/Fr.
0	Jaylan Hornsby	WR/So.	16	Kylan Fox	TE/Jr.	40	Ian Jeffries	DL/Jr.	79	Joey Tanona	OL/Sr.
1	Evans Chuba	QB/So.	16	Anthony Specia	LB/Jr.	41	Jon Grimmet	TE/Fr.	80	Brandon Kinsey	WR/Fr.
1	Smiley Bradford	DB/Jr.	17	Traveon Wright	DB/Jr.	41	Mason Alnutt	DE/Fr.	81	George Burhenn	TE/Jr.
2	Fame Ijeboi	RB/So.	17	Bisi Owens	WR/Sr.	42	Brayden Sweeney	LB/Fr.	83	Andrew Adkison	WR/Jr.
2	Jaden Mangham	DB/Sr.	18	Bennett Meredith	QB/Sr.	42	Dylan Drennan	P/So.	84	Nolan Buckman	WR/Jr.
3	Jett Goldsberry	DB/Fr.	18	Elo Modozie	DE/Sr.	43	Jackson Berryman	TE/So.	84	Maximilian Carmicle	DE/Fr.
3	Xavier Townsend	WR/Sr.	19	Landon Brooks	DE/Fr.	44	Kobe Cherry	DL/Fr.	85	Luca Puccinelli	TE/So.
4	Hudauri Hines	DB/Jr.	19	Asaad Waseem	WR/Jr.	45	Seth Turner	K/Jr.	87	Cooper McCutchan	TE/Fr.
4	Jerrick Gibson	RB/So.	20	Winston Berglund	LB/Jr.	45	Katrell Webb	DE/Fr.	88	Jojo Johnson	WR/Fr.
5	Chauncey Magwood	WR/Sr.	20	Travis Terrell Jr.	RB/Jr.	46	Luke Raab	LS/So.	89	Luke Klare	LS/So.
5	Charles Correa	LB/Jr.	21	Justin Denson Jr.	DB/So.	47	Braden Brown	DB/Fr.	90	Elijah St. John	DL/Sr.
6	Mister Clark	DB/Jr.	22	Antonio Harris	RB/Jr.	48	Donivan Taylor	DB/Fr.	91	Aiden Solecki	DE/Fr.
6	Ar'Mari Towns	TE/Fr.	22	Maxwell Barbee	DB/Fr.	50	Boaz Stanley	OL/Sr.	92	Curt Neal	DL/Sr.
7	Garyt Odom	QB/Fr.	23	Trey Smith	DE/Jr.	51	Mason Vicari	OL/Jr.	92	Jacob Echeverria Lozano	K/Fr.
7	Don Saunders	DB/Sr.	24	Raderrion Daniels	DB/Fr.	51	Jaxon Ott	LB/Fr.	93	Sam Goellner	DE/So.
8	CJ Madden	DE/Sr.	24	Izaiah Wright	RB/Fr.	52	Rocco Daly	OL/So.	94	Luke Shorter	TE/Fr.
8	De'Nylon Morrissett	WR/Sr.	25	Hudson Miller	LB/Sr.	56	Marques Easley	OL/So.	94	Rodney Lora	DL/Jr.
9	TJ Lindsey	DL/So.	26	Jack Weeter	K/Jr.	57	Tom Ewing	OL/Jr.	96	Jordan Cree	DL/Sr.
9	Jalil Hall	WR/Fr.	26	Dax Noles	DB/So.	58	Breon Ishmail	DE/Jr.	97	Wisdom Simms	DL/Sr.
10	Jesse Watson	WR/So.	28	Dana Greenhow	DB/Fr.	58	James Williams Jr.	OL/Fr.	98	Drake Carlson	DL/Jr.
10	Ta'Vari Hampton	DB/So.	29	Dee Newsome	DB/Jr.	59	Micah Banuelos	OL/Jr.	99	Hayden Timosciek	DL/Sr.
11	Tra'Mar Harris	WR/So.	30	Parker Meese	LB/Fr.	65	Brock Brownfield	OL/Fr.	99	Josiah Hope	DL/Fr.
11	Keyshawn Burgos	DE/Sr.	31	Finn Goodman	DE/Fr.	68	Nuku Mafi	OL/So.			
12	Ryan Turner	DB/Sr.	31	Carter Holsworth	RB/So.	70	Max Parrott	OL/So.			
12	Corey Smith	WR/Jr.	33	Quinn Rosenkranz	WR/Fr.	71	Terrell Berryhill Jr.	OL/Fr.			
13	John Slaughter	DB/Sr.	33	Jeremy Lewis	DE/Jr.	72	Jude McCoskey	OL/Sr.			
13	Ricky Sampson	WR/Jr.	34	Tre Moore	LB/Sr.	73	Makai Saina	OL/So.			
14	Corin Berry	QB/Fr.	35	DJ Greene	DB/Fr.	75	Rico Schrieber	OL/Fr.			
14	Emoni Smith	DB/Fr.	36	Kaleb Richmond	DB/Jr.	76	Ethan Trent	OL/Jr.			
15	Vi'Naz Cobb	DB/So.	38	Zyntreacs Otey	DB/Fr.	77	Jatavius Shivers	OL/Jr.			

PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

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

Permanent position change

Matt Campbell says Marcus Neal Jr. has moved to LB

By Andrew Deal
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State is still in search of its first Big Ten win of the season after starting 0-4 in conference play.

Matt Campbell met with the media on Wednesday ahead of the Nittany Lions' Halloween matchup with Purdue to discuss cornerback Audavion Collins, recruiting during the bye week and the depleted linebacker room. Here's what Campbell had to say.

Collins' strong first half

Penn State has a lock down corner on one side of the ball in Collins, who's provided consistency to a team that's struggled with it this season. Campbell recognized the talent he has with Collins and how he's flying under the radar despite his strong first half.

"I think (Collins) has been exceptional, and we continue to talk about the type of team we want to have, tough and disciplined, having the ability to show player-driven leadership, one of the guys that I would say has embodied that to a T so far has been (Collins)," Campbell said.

Campbell believes that people "would certainly be" sleeping on Collins as a player who's played like one of the best cornerbacks in the country.

Collins leads the country in highest forced incomplection rate at 42.9% and sits tied for second in fewest yards allowed per snap in coverage with .20 yards per snap. He's also only allowed four completions on 15 targets, which leads the nation.



Lucas Yendrzeiwski/Collegian

Head coach Matt Campbell speaks to the media at Beaver Stadium in University Park, Pa., Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2026.

"If you go out to practice every day, the same guy you see on Saturdays, that is the guy that you see on Tuesday, on Wednesday, on Thursday, and to me, that's why he's playing at that rate," Campbell said. "He embodies what it looks like to be great, to look like a pro at this point in his career and I'm really proud of (Collins)."

Bye week recruiting

Campbell went on the recruiting trail during the bye week, mainly visiting potential flip candidates in the 2027 recruiting class. He went all around the eastern part of the United States to check in on targets.

"I think for me that was probably the most enjoyable part that I've had in the last couple weeks is getting out on the road," Campbell said.

The most notable player he visited was 3-star running back Jordan Hall, who committed to the Nittany Lions the next day after Campbell watched him play on Friday night.

Campbell had the ability to take a step back and realize the strength the Penn State brand has in this age of college football. "The realization of number one, the power of what Penn State football is in terms of going in and having great conversations with high school football coaches and their family, but I also think the belief in us and our staff and what we've been able to accomplish, not just you know in our short time here, but over the long haul," Campbell said.

Another target Campbell paid a visit to was Rutgers 3-star wide receiver commit Arnold Mugerwa. He made the short trip to

Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and handed out an offer to the 6-foot-3 wide receiver.

During the week, he recognized the excitement still around the program despite a 3-4 start in his first season.

"I think there is really good energy and there is really a lot of excitement around where we're going and what we are trying to build here," Campbell said. "The conversations are pretty simple. This is who we are, this is where we're trying to go and this is what we're looking for. We really haven't wavered from that. So I do appreciate it. It was a really great week for not only myself but our staff."

Assessing the LB room

Penn State has had to work around a linebacker room that's consistently dealt with injuries

during the 2026 season.

Linebacker Alex Tatsch was ruled out for the season in the week after the USC loss, leaving just three linebackers who've played in every game, something that Campbell knows isn't sustainable. However, they may get some reinforcements with the return of linebacker Cam Smith.

"We cannot (survive with three linebackers)," Campbell said. "I think number one, Cam is kind of in the same boat as Koby (Howard) was, like man, he's working himself back. I think last week we didn't feel confident that it was unfair to put him in that situation last week, but was a lot closer to being ready to play, so I certainly think that he has certainly got the ability to be a big help."

The return of Smith will add needed depth at the position, as Campbell said he was one of the MVPs of the bye week.

Penn State will also gain more depth as Campbell confirmed that safety Marcus Neal Jr. has made the move to linebacker, something that's more permanent this time. Neal has experience playing MIKE linebacker at Iowa State, and the full-time switch allows him to showcase what he does best.

"I think it allows his talent and his ability to be at a place where we can use it even more," Campbell said. "Not only in first and second down, but multiplicity and situational football too. And again, trying to find ways to get our best players on the field and put those guys in position to be the best within the scheme."

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‘Focusing on the present’

WR Chase Sowell says it's all the Nittany Lions currently need

By Andrew Mercer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Wide receiver Chase Sowell is on his fourth team in five years. He started his journey at Colorado before stopping at East Carolina and Iowa State, eventually following Matt Campbell to Penn State.

For someone who'd been a regular in the transfer portal, Sowell's glad he doesn't have to worry about that aspect of college football anymore. Despite his background, he's not the kind of player who thinks too early about jumping ship and is more focused on doing his best at the present moment.

"It definitely feels good to be at the stage now where that type of stuff doesn't really affect me," Sowell said Tuesday. "Focusing on the process and focusing on the present is all you can do, and it was the same thing when I was in the transfer portal."

Sowell has become a vocal leader in the locker room amidst Penn State's turbulent season. He spoke up at a player's meeting after one of the team's losses, stressing the importance of day-by-day consistency instead of thinking too far ahead.



Aayan Hamdani/Collegian

Penn State wide receiver Chase Sowell (0) celebrates a completed pass during the football game against Michigan at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich. on Saturday, Oct. 17, 2026.

He said everyone on the team should be focused on making meaningful plays and living in the moment to build a portfolio of game film. Sowell's experience in the transfer portal gave him insight on how the "opportunities are the same" at every program, and having quality tape makes you stand out.

"We're not in a position for any of our guys to get picked up by

anybody," Sowell said. "So your mindset shouldn't even be on the transfer portal. You should be thinking about making some plays to even get looked at."

For him, even coming to Happy Valley was a "last-second" decision. He wasn't planning to transfer, but when the opportunity was brought to him, he followed his heart.

"I was focusing on, 'What do I need to be doing now?'" Sowell said. "I was working out. I was trying to get my body right, those types of things, and then boom, it happened."

The decision to follow Campbell to Penn State has worked out for Sowell individually, as he's been a breakout star at wide receiver in the wake of Koby Howard's inju-

ry. He's on track for a career-best season, already racking up 510 receiving yards and three touchdowns through seven games.

Sowell said his goal was to "change the narrative of the receiver room" at Penn State. It didn't matter what his role was on the team, he wanted to establish the Nittany Lions as a program featuring strong pass catchers, something they've lacked in recent years.

Since taking over the role of No. 1 receiver, Sowell's done just that, as he's been the top offensive performer since the start of Big Ten action. His most recent performance was a career-best, tallying 11 catches, 151 yards and a touchdown against Michigan.

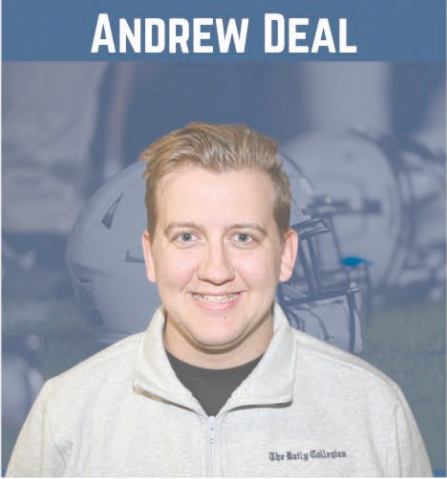
"That was what Brett (Eskildsen), Amariion Jackson, Zay Robinson, Koby and I, all of us, talked about — no matter what, we're gonna do everything in our power to change the narrative," Sowell said. "Because this is going to be one season that we're gonna remember for the rest of our lives, and whether it goes good or bad, I want to have the memories that I know our room changed history."

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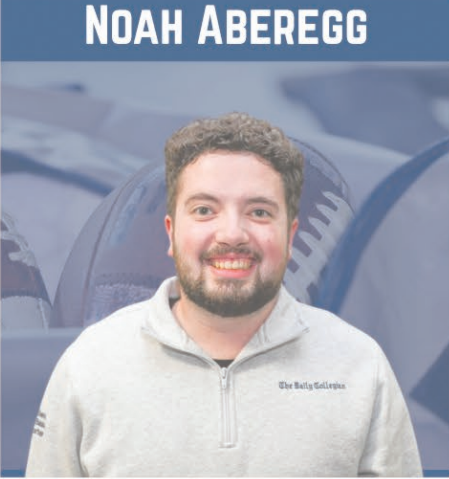
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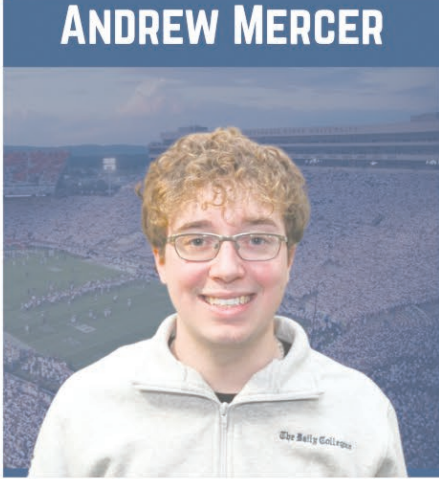
PENN STATE: 28
PURDUE: 14



PENN STATE: 27
PURDUE: 10



PENN STATE: 24
PURDUE: 17



PENN STATE: 27
PURDUE: 20



‘A lot more to show’

Tony Rojas heats up for second half of the season

By Andrew Deal
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After Tony Rojas was freed from a snap count in the first couple weeks of the season, his play took another jump on the field, proving to be Penn State’s top player on either side of the ball. Rojas recently earned recognition as an AP Midseason All-America second teamer for his production in the first half of the season, and D’Anton Lynn recognized Tuesday just how special of a player he can be. “He’s one of the most athletic inside backers I’ve seen, not just talking about Penn State, but just in general,” Lynn said Tuesday. Rojas has played like one of the best linebackers in the country, but Lynn feels he has “another level” to reach, and his hope is to get him there within the next couple of games. The linebacker has also recognized that he hasn’t reached his full potential yet. “I think I’ve been playing at a good level,” Rojas said. “Obviously, kind of hard on myself, so I know I have a lot to improve on, a lot of things to work on. During the bye week and going forward, just watching films, I know I can be better at things... I’d say obviously I’ve been playing well, but I think I have a lot more to show.” What that would look like on the field could push Rojas into even bigger conversations given what he’s done in the first half of the season. His 56 tackles, 10.5 tackles for loss and five sacks all lead

the team by a significant margin. The success that Rojas has had comes from his desire to be on the field and help the team emerge victorious in any way. Now fully recovered from his knee injury that ended his 2025 season, Rojas is a player that Matt Campbell understands wants to be on the field as much as possible, even taking upwards of 60 snaps in a game. “I’ve never met a great player that doesn’t want to play or be on the field,” Campbell said. “I think every great player I’ve been around, I’m not rotating with anybody, I’m staying on the field and if you try to sub me in, I’m not letting you do that.” And that’s I think Tony to a T.” Rojas himself said he doesn’t like when he’s on the sideline. He was itching to be on the field more in the first two weeks as he worked himself back to full strength. “But at that point when I was at my snap count, I was like, ‘Nah, I need to play,’” Rojas said. “I don’t like standing on the sideline, so I think at that point I think we got things rolling.” In Lynn’s scheme, he’s constantly trying to get his playmakers in a position to make a difference, and he’s found that with Rojas. As part of his five sacks, the linebacker feels working against the interior of the offensive line is where his strong suit is when he’s rushing the passer. However, when he’s off the field, he’s still making an impact on the team. Defensive end Yvan Kemajou has recognized the con-

fidence that Rojas brings to the unit and his ability to give others confidence throughout the game. Kemajou also noticed the help he brings behind the scenes, almost adding another coaching voice in the linebacker room. Rojas’ ability to lead by example is something both Campbell and Lynn noticed during the bye week. It’s not just his voice that has stood out, but he’s also been a leader on the practice field. His work ethic and persistence makes him a well-rounded leader on the defense. “Tony’s done some great things, and it’s been really awesome,” Campbell said. “And as we know and statistically, there’s a great catalyst when he’s at his best. But I think there’s some areas too where he can continue to improve, and he knows that. And what I love about Tony is he’s probably one of the guys that has spearheaded last week of coming out with purpose and intent, really having a great week of practice.” Rojas’ leadership and work at practice are part of his overall goal. He’s thrown personal goals out the window, focusing purely on the team and the rest of Penn State’s season. “I just want to win out,” Rojas said. “I think just winning is my biggest thing, and all those accolades and whatever doesn’t really do anything good for me. I just want to win.”

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Lucas Yendrzejewski/Collegian

Linebacker Tony Rojas (13) speaks to the media at Beaver Stadium in University Park, Pa., Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2026.

Howard returning?

Campbell needs him ‘100% ready to go’

By Andrew Mercer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Wide receiver Koby Howard is close to a return, and Penn State is eager to get him back. Matt Campbell said Howard’s been on the practice field Tuesday and Wednesday, but his status is still “questionable” heading into the Nittany Lions’ game against Purdue on Saturday. Although the Nittany Lions want their top receiver from the nonconference slate back in action, Campbell said he doesn’t want to have Howard suit up too early and will likely keep him on a pitch count if he plays this weekend. “We’ll see what tomorrow really looks like, and feel confident that if he is capable of playing, what’s that look like?” Campbell said. “How many reps does that look like? If he’s not ready, I’m not putting him on that football field until he’s 100% ready to go.” The Nittany Lions haven’t had a fully healthy wide receiver room the entire season, as Chase Sowell and Brett Eskildsen were dealing with lingering injuries early in the season before Howard went down long-term.

Howard was Penn State’s offense through the first three weeks. He had over 100 receiving yards in two of the three games, his best being a 161-yard outing against Marshall in Week 1. Sowell has stepped up in Howard’s absence, now leading the team with 510 receiving yards. But Campbell is excited to see how the pair plays together when Howard’s back. “The unfortunate piece is you haven’t had those guys on the field at the same time, probably playing in that same rhythm,” Campbell said Tuesday. “Getting Koby back will be a huge asset to our football team. That’s why we got to make sure he’s healthy and truly ready to play on the football field and make sure that we get the Koby that you saw the first three games of the season, not a shell of Koby.” Sowell himself said he’s eagerly awaiting Howard’s return, not only because he brings the “swag” to the offense with accessories and infectious confidence, but because he can back up his talk with results. Sowell called Howard’s confidence an “F-U mentality to the defense.” “It’s kind of like, ‘I want the ball, I want to make the play,’” Sowell said. “And that you need that from

some guys. We can’t wait for him back on the field for sure.” Wide receiver Zay Robinson said having Howard back gives Penn State more options on the line of scrimmage, as the Nittany Lions then have multiple players who can run different routes and play at different spots. Robinson said both Howard and Sowell can play from the slot and both can win individual one-on-one matchups from out wide, and Penn State fans will be “in for a treat” with the receiver room finally at full strength. “(Howard and Sowell) can take it no matter where they’re at on the field,” Robinson said. “They both complement each other greatly in that way, and they both are physical, want to play ball and just are really great football players.” He also said Howard has looked “great” physically at practice this week and he’s approached the field with the same mentality as he always had. “He’s attacking every day, exactly how he needs to be,” Robinson said. “And we’re just happy to have him back whenever he’s ready.”

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Jacob DeLuca/Collegian

Wide receiver Koby Howard (6) runs with the ball during the Penn State football game against Marshall at West Shore Home Field at Beaver Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 5, 2026 in University Park, Pa.

CROSSWORD

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Across

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Whirlpool

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Watered down

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Bewildered

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“The Last of the Mohicans” girl

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Choleric

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Turkish title

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Walkie-talkie word

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Government official

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Tilt

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Rascal

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Swamp plants

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Suffix with ideal

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Cleo’s undoing

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Some offspring

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____-relief

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Fan setting

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Mudbath locale

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Watering can part

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Type of missile

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Fill with joy

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____-Wan Kenobi

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Bridge support?

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Like some scooters

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Rich tapestry

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Psyches

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Remote abbr.

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Jeans brand

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Trunk growth

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Dark horse

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Kind of race

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In the lead

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Unagi, at a sushi bar

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Duffer’s cry

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Deadly nightshade

61

Diving bird

62

Caspian feeder

63

Snakes, e.g.

64

Shots, for short

65

Beach shades

66

Clutter

67

Romanov ruler

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Shoe strings

10

Grimm villain

11

Herringlike fish

12

Makes lace

14

Wood stork

18

Still-life subject

23

Fall flower

24

Dependable

25

Mouse catcher

27

Camera setting

28

Record company

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Larders

30

Middle-Eastern bread

31

“Ohs” in Berlin

32

Half (Prefix)

33

Trudge

34

Clowns

35

“Enchanted April” setting

36

Like some losers

41

Hosp. feeders

46

Shopping centers

47

Harem room

48

Divers’ worries

49

“Woe is me!”

51

Oven emanation

52

Pavarotti, notably

53

Touch on

54

Wife of Zeus

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Oomph

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Nephew of Cain

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Off-pitch

59

Beaver’s work

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Unlock, poetically

WORD SEARCH

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Precious Stones

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Carnelian

Citrine

Emerald

Fluorite

Garnet

Jade

Jasper

Kunzite

Malachite

Moonstone

Opal

Pearl

Peridot

Quartz

Ruby

Sapphire

Tanzanite

Tiger Eye

Topaz

Tourmaline

Turquoise

Zircon

KAKURO

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How to play:

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

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

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

SUDOKU

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1

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How to play:

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

The Daily Collegian

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‘IT’S TIME FOR CHANGE’

Penn State alum creates tool for Democrats ahead of midterms

By Jonathon Chiu
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When he started working for Ray Bilger’s campaign to represent Pennsylvania’s 15th Congressional District in March, Nish Barot said he began to hear about how the campaign was struggling to effectively coordinate its supporters throughout the district, even with the use of event and volunteer management tools like Mobilize.

Nish, 24, of State College, Pennsylvania, interviewed Democratic organizations across Pennsylvania, Maine and Kansas over the next several months to see if they were experiencing similar issues to the Bilger campaign going into the Nov. 3 midterm elections. Through his research, Barot found these problems, which hinder the success of new campaigns in rural areas, were not isolated to the 15th District.

“The problem in rural communities is everybody starts at zero, they get to one, some people lose elections and some people win elections but all of the resources then get scattered and then we lose access to a lot of those volunteers and support networks so when the next candidate comes in, they have to start from scratch,” Barot said.

Bilger, who’s running against incumbent Republican Glenn “G.T.” Thompson, said his campaign has been working with other committees in the District to improve its local outreach, but difficulties with reaching out to and meeting supporters still remain due to disparities in the region’s infrastructure.

“A lot of what we have to deal with here are two lane roads and backcountry ways, so what would normally take a person maybe an hour, hour-and-a-half to get to one of the farthest locations takes about three hours. And then when you get there, it’s a challenge to try to organize something on the ground,” Bilger, 66, of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, said. “It goes into the broadband and the cellular infrastructure as well, because a lot of these places, because of the economic problems they face and have faced for decades, a lot of the print media that they used to have is gone. It’s a piecemeal and you have to really go out there and find how people get their news.”

Having graduated from Penn



Jonathon Chiu/Collegian

Nish Barot, creator of InvolveOS, works on his computer in Waring Commons in University Park, Pa., on Friday, Oct. 9. Barot’s tool helps connect potential volunteers with campaigns.

State in 2024 with a degree in human-centered design and development, Barot realized he could use his knowledge and background to help improve the coordination of campaigns — especially grassroots ones like Bilger’s. He began working on a volunteer and campaign coordination tool InvolveOS.

InvolveOS, which first came online in June and is currently being used by several Democratic campaigns and organizations across the state, is intended to improve the coordination of grassroots political campaigns by allowing them to upload and map out the presence and locations of donors and volunteers within a county or congressional district.

Barot left the Bilger campaign in September to work full time on InvolveOS. He said the tool provides campaigns with the ability to communicate with supporters.

Users can be added to it once they’re vetted by the organization using it, Barot said, but new users are only able to see the map of their own county or district. They can’t interact with other areas unless given permission by users in those areas.

Barot also said InvolveOS offers a “path to victory” projection based on voting records from previous elections and areas’ potential to be flipped in the midterms, which helps advise campaigns on how to best direct their resources.

Rose Petrunyak, who works for the Bilger campaign as its volunteer coordinator, said she used to have to keep track of how many people filled out sign-in sheets at events and manually compile the information of individual supporters into Excel spreadsheets.

“The problem in rural communities is everybody starts at zero, they get to one, some people lose elections and some people win elections but all of the resources then get scattered.”

Nish Barot

With the help of the tool, Petrunyak said she’s able to import existing volunteers from her spreadsheets to InvolveOS’s map of the 15th District and upload new ones from event sign-in sheets. She’s also able to make and broadcast requests for volunteers, called “asks,” to help find volunteers best able to assist with certain tasks.

“If I’m looking for somebody that wants to do a post-card writing campaign in

Warren County, I can go in and find people who are interested in doing that exact thing in that exact county,” Petrunyak, 55, of State College, Pennsylvania, said. “Then it shoots all of that to your email interface, so then you communicate after that via email. It’s been amazing.”

She added that since she’s able to record her asks on InvolveOS to help track the participation time of the volunteers, she plans to thank those who have contributed the most time to helping the campaign.

Sarah Ocampo, Bilger’s campaign public relations manager, said she often uses InvolveOS’s data to help in researching how to contact media throughout PA-15 and to assist in tailoring media scripts to certain regions of the district based on what issues have been expressed in the past.

Ocampo, 18, of State College, Pennsylvania, said InvolveOS offers new ways for campaigns to support themselves, especially rural areas that don’t usually receive backing from the wider Democratic Party outside of presidential elections. Rural areas, Ocampo added, have a presence of Republicans, so drumming up support is more difficult for Democratic candidates. “When you don’t have a lot of support from either the party or your district, it’s really important to get as much help as

possible,” Ocampo, a first-year studying public relations, said. “It’s a lot of work to keep in track of everything to coordinate and log everything, but InvolveOS does do that for the staff members of the campaign.”

Barot said his hope is for InvolveOS to spread throughout Pennsylvania, and he predicts the increased usage of the tool will make it easier to launch grassroots political campaigns in the future by allowing past campaigns to transfer their supporter networks onto new candidates through InvolveOS. But the expansion of InvolveOS would require additional support to pay for the infrastructure needed to run the tool and to fund the development of new features, such as text banking campaigns, he said.

Barot also said he intends for its users to remain solely comprised of Democrats, especially progressive Democrats, and he has no plans to offer InvolveOS to Republican candidates and organizations.

“If we look at Pennsylvania or just rural region states, Republicans have been in power for years, but we still have areas with no broadband connectivity, no cell service, hospitals that are decaying — just infrastructure that is poor,” Barot said. “It’s time for change.”

Bilger said he sees having access to more tools like InvolveOS will help to “level the playing field” by allowing smaller campaigns to better compete with larger ones despite having more limited resources and funds.

Because of this, he said such tools, if used “smartly,” stand to have a greater impact for the future of the United States than just helping Democrats like Bilger win their elections.

“The whole purpose of this campaign is to win, but winning for a purpose: to finally get in and try to change politics in our country so that we have public servants who actually understand what public service means,” Bilger said. “Our jobs are supposed to be to serve every single person, to try to make their lives better, to try to make this country better ... and I think this is one of the tools that we can use to do that.”

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College Democrats host Gov. Shapiro for ‘Rally in the Valley’ event on campus

By Jacob Godshall
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

On Sunday night, Gov. Josh Shapiro stopped on the steps of Old Main as part of a 10-day tour through 29 state counties. Shapiro was joined by local Democratic Party members, including representatives Paul Takac and Scott Conklin and local Congressional candidate Ray Bilger.

Despite the cold, dozens of students and community members crowded around the steps to listen to Shapiro and his supporters speak about the upcoming midterm election on Nov. 3. The event, “Rally in the Valley,” began with speeches from Penn State College Democrats, Students for Shapiro and the Centre County Democratic Committee.

The speeches centered around discussions of corruption in our current government, the importance of Centre County in the upcoming midterms and how Shapiro has worked to help rural Pennsylvania.

State College Mayor Ezra Nanes spoke to the audience, highlighting Shapiro’s leadership qualities. He said Shapiro “knows how to work within the government.”

Representatives Conklin and Takac also shared words of support for Shapiro, with Conklin calling Shapiro “smart” and “articulate,” and Takac

stressing the possibility of flipping the Pennsylvania Senate and House, which would result in a Democrat trifecta for the first time in over 30 years.

Ethan Galley, 23, of Houston, Texas, attended the rally because he wanted to see Shapiro interact with Penn State students and community members.

“When there is a candidate running for office providing the chance to actually interact with students, I see it being fairly imperative for me to show up and make myself available to make, either that feedback known, or to show my support for said candidate if I do support them,” Galley, president of Civic Engagement Alliance and a second-year studying public policy, said.

“Josh Shapiro says what he means and means what he says.”

Ezra Nanes
State College Mayor

Galley said that the biggest issue for him is affordability for students, local residents and all Pennsylvanians.

“Obviously cost of living is continuously increasing and I think if any candidate up here actually stands a chance in

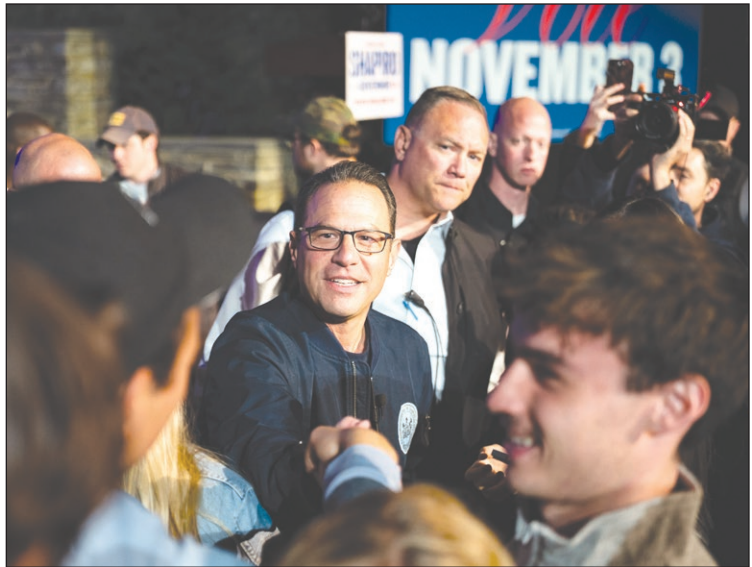
receiving both a vote from students, and a vote from further generations, the biggest thing they should be focusing on is finding ways to help students navigate housing challenges,” Galley said.

State College resident Katherine Allen said she attended the rally to support Shapiro and to hear more from Bilger. Bilger is running against incumbent Republican Glenn (GT) Thompson in the 15th Congressional District, which includes Centre County. Thompson has held the seat for nine terms.

“I’m tired of GT Thompson representing this area, particularly when he claims to work on behalf of agriculture,” Allen, 67, of Memphis, Tennessee, said. “I think the farmers are in really dire straits right now, and as far as I know, he hasn’t taken any real steps to assist them.”

Since State College is both a university-town and an agricultural area, these candidates “work on behalf of both of those groups,” Allen said. In his speech, Shapiro voiced plans to support Pennsylvanian farmers and agriculture and invest in higher education.

“I think higher-ed has been unfairly targeted by the White House, and by, frankly, the movers and shakers within the Republican Party for far too long,” Allen said, “But I also think the farmers in the agricultural



Aayan Hamdani/Collegian

Gov. Josh Shapiro engages with attendees after the Penn State College Democrats “Rally in the Valley” at Old Main in University Park, Pa., Sunday, Oct. 25.

community, they’re sort of taken for granted by one party, and I think they really need actual help.”

The rally concluded with a speech from Shapiro himself, which spanned a variety of topics. He said President Donald Trump has made upward of \$2 billion since he entered office. He also spoke about affordability, gas prices and tariffs, and said the federal government is operating with “cruelty” and “corruption.”

According to Bilger, the rally showed the “unity” of the

democratic party, and that this needs to be replicated by the national party.

“This was an example that we have all these people up here supporting every single other person,” Bilger, 66, of Pleasant Gap, Pennsylvania, said. “Not only that, but we’re also supporting our state, we’re supporting our government, our constitution, and I think that is the biggest thing.”

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Learn to Flourish Design Hub furthers mental health conversation

By Neel Ved
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In November 2025, Penn State created the Learn to Flourish Design Hub after university alumni Julie and Jason Borrelli gifted \$2 million for its creation. The hub is an on-site research and learning space located within the Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center of the College of Health and Human Development.

The hub allows for partnerships between faculty experts and engaged students as they work together to co-design, test and spread interventive measures to prevent adverse mental health outcomes and promote flourishing among college students.

The human flourishing work was started with a course called “The Art and Science of Human Flourishing,” developed in 2017 by a group of “contemplative scholars” from three universities, Blake Colaianne, the hub’s director, said.

At the time, Colaianne was in graduate school and part of the research team on the course when they started to recognize the value of human flourishing in education.

“My own research began to progress in terms of understanding how much human flourishing needs to be done collectively... and also recognizing the power of



Sawyer Hadlum/Collegian

Erik Borgia, a research assistant for the Learn to Flourish Design Hub, poses in the Biobehavioral Health Building on Oct. 26, 2026.

the student voice,” Colaianne, 38, of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, said.

One of the areas the hub has been targeting at Penn State is student-athletes. For Erik Borgia, 21, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, this was one of the main reasons he joined the hub.

“I took the class HDFS 108, ‘The Art and Science of Human Flourishing,’ last fall semester and immediately loved it,” Borgia, a fourth-year studying psychology, said.

Borgia, a research assistant for the hub, said when Colaianne told him about the hub’s creation, he knew he wanted to be part of it, since he’s an athlete himself, participating in club basketball.

Through the hub, Borgia has researched and interviewed the NCAA and professional athletes about mental health. He said it’s very powerful when people share their story, as it can be an effective way to help others.

“There are always people that

think they are alone in what they are going through, if they are not struggling they might feel a sense of isolation,” Borgia said. “When you tell your story, the whole point of the class is to educate people.”

There are many metrics and outcomes the hub looks for to determine if a mental resource is working or not — like if depression and anxiety symptoms are declining.

Borgia added that some other ways to test a resource is working is through survey items, self-reports and physiological measures that show mindfulness and compassion. Through self-reports people can see the results.

Outside of the Penn State community, the hub has been working with high schools in the Pittsburgh area. The design hub is tailoring its class to a younger audience, according to Elise Mitchell, 23, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

“Every high schooler in those high schools will have to take the course, and they are going to get some feedback and data to see if the course is helpful in lowering rates of depression, anxiety and increasing certain components including mindfulness and human flourishing,” Mitchell, the hub’s research director, said.

Mitchell also said that it has developed a series for middle school students on human flourishing.

The most challenging, but rewarding, part of Mitchell’s role has been managing the teams. Some weeks can be slow while other weeks are very busy, she said, so she has to adjust based on how research and project development is going.

“It definitely makes it worth it, and it is nice to see in real time how the work we are doing is affecting people. And how it is reaching students, and how they are resonating with it,” Mitchell said.

She said during her first month at the hub she helped run a workshop for female engineering students, something she described as a “little stressful,” as she wasn’t sure if the content was resonating. However, the feedback from the workshop was positive and very helpful, she added.

Mitchell said she expects the hub will continue addressing issues in the student community for creating tools that will promote skill cultivation and, ultimately, help students flourish.

“Research definitely takes time, and it is definitely a long term thing,” Mitchell said. “You have to be the turtle in the race and not the rabbit, but it is definitely rewarding. I am excited to see where we are in three to five years.”

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Joe Petito advocates for domestic violence support at R-VOICE event



Nate Lee/Collegian

Joe Petito, father of Gabby Petito, domestic violence awareness advocate, speaks with Sophia Mills, associate director of R-Voice, at “Together We Can” Oct. 27th, 2026.

By Marek Horgas
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Content warning: This article contains mention of sexual assault. Resources and support are available through Penn State’s Counseling and Psychological Services.

Penn State’s Relationship Violence, Outreach, Intervention, and Community Education Center (R-VOICE) hosted Joe Petito, a domestic violence advocate, for a discussion on relationship violence education and prevention on Tuesday in the HUB-Robeson Center’s Freeman Auditorium. Petito’s daughter, Gabby Petito, was murdered by her fiancé in 2021, making nationwide news.

As law enforcement searched the area around Grand Teton National Park for Gabby, her murder became the subject of several documentaries, including the 2025 docuseries “American Murder: Gabby Petito,” produced and released by Netflix. Joe recalled the conflict between wanting his daughter’s story told and the true crime documentary culture, sharing a conversation with the audience where the documentary’s director told Joe Petito he was “going to hate it.”

“If you have to exploit Gabby’s story to get someone else’s information out there to help find your missing loved one, f—g do it,” Joe said. “I don’t care. I want my daughter back, and I’d give everything in this world to get her back, just for a day. But that’s not an option. I’m never gonna get her back. So if you need to use her name to get your story out there, do it.”

More than the sensationalism, the most frustrating part of the media’s handling of the case, Joe said, was the way that Gabby’s stepparents were “dismissed.”

“Tara’s been Gabby’s stepmom since she was one, right? Jim’s been since she was two. They’ve done nothing but love that child. To not give them the same airtime or the same quotes that you give us, meaning me and Nikki, blows my mind,” Joe said.

Within the talk, Joe Petito took a grounded approach, frequently engaging the audience in his responses to mediator and R-VOICE Associate Director Sophia Mills. He shared some of the specific narratives—that he, with the Gabby Petito

Foundation of which he is the vice president, seek to change. He said “the shame of domestic abuse belongs on the abuser, not the victim.” Men specifically, he added, need to be taught about domestic violence because “everyone’s the problem.”

Joe also shared his belief that domestic violence prevention is on all of us, beginning with education that he feels could progress through different maturity levels as children and adolescents grow. He outlined lessons that could shift from “proper friendships” to mature relationships, and said he believes that domestic violence could be ended within 15 to 20 years through “proper, thorough, comprehensive” education.

Education extends into professional spheres as law enforcement have the capability to step in during domestic violence and save lives. Joe Petito pointed out that “55% of all women that are murdered... are by a current or former partner” as part of a broader topic of lethality assessments. These assessments are mandated by some states and require officers responding to domestic violence calls to progress through an 11-question set to determine if danger is mortal.

Pennsylvania does not have a statewide lethality assessment law, and all counties except Cameron, Carbon, Clarion, Forest, Fulton, Juniata, Lehigh, Mifflin, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, Somerset, Sullivan, Susquehanna and Warren counties have lethality assessment police mandates.

“If that lethality assessment was done, I do believe that she would be alive,” Joe said. “If they would have done what was the statue, which was arrest her, because they believed her to be the primary aggressor, then she would still be alive. If they would have done what was required, I believe that she would be alive.”

Mills echoed the sentiment that education is the key to ending domestic and dating violence while highlighting a picture of what relationship violence may look like outside the media.

“I think from what we see in media and various situations, oftentimes it’s physical violence, and it’s typically a man against a woman,” Mills said. “But we recognize that violence can happen to anyone, and it’s not just physical, right?”

We can see things related to financial abuse, emotional manipulation, blackmailing, gaslighting, different things related to that, even digital abuse.”

Organizations like R-VOICE, who sponsored the event, seek to increase that education at the university level. In 2024, Penn State University Park ranked 4th in rapes and 7th for dating violence out of U.S. colleges and universities with 57 and 31 incidents, respectively. This semester from Aug. 24 and Oct. 3, 23 cases of sexual misconduct were reported to Penn State University Park, according to the University Police and Public Safety Daily Crime Log.

These numbers only represent reported cases; many survivors choose to stay quiet as well. In 2025, Spotlight PA reported that the State College Police Department misclassified 254 counts of rape as lesser offenses between 2013-2021.

Mills suggested that while education is critical to destigmatizing and ending domestic violence, it starts with openness and potentially uncomfortable conversations.

“I think by, again, having these conversations normalizing some of these things, we’re able to have those conversations, to check in on our friends, call our friends out if they say something problematic, right? We have the power to do these things, and I think recognizing that is a really important step, that we have the ability and responsibility to intervene when we witness any kind of problematic, harmful, or even abusive behaviors,” Mills said.

Katie Brigham, 21, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, said she was surprised by the humor that Joe was able to weave through an otherwise serious talk. She also said that the talk would stay with her beyond graduation.

“As a future teacher, I want to educate my coworkers, my students, if I teach high school, about domestic violence. And I also want to educate my friends and my family and even my future children as well to educate them about domestic violence and how we can work together to not be in a situation like that,” Brigham, a fourth-year studying rehabilitation and human services, said.

Following his daughter’s death, Joe shifted much of his focus to work on the Gabby Petito Foundation, which currently has several apps in development to support survivors of domestic violence in safely finding justice.

“If you’re asking me to choose between the foundation and my job, I’m going to pick the foundation every time,” Joe said. “It’s so much more meaningful. I really want to do nothing else but this. And it’s really it’s really a selfish reason. I do it so when I leave this place, I get to see Gabby again, I’m going to ask her, ‘Did I make you proud?’ And hopefully she’ll say yes.”

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New environmental engineering degree



Pranav S. Narayanan/Collegian

Nathaniel Warner, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, teaches a class at the ECoRE Building on Aug. 22, 2026.

By Charlie Wallin
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Penn State launched a new undergraduate environmental engineering degree this fall, allowing for a new branch of learning and hands-on experience for many students.

After the university discontinued the degree in 1987, it was brought back after nearly 40 years. The degree, the fourth of the environmental engineering degrees, focuses on sustainability, municipal infrastructure, water quality and treatment systems.

Nathaniel Warner, an associate professor of environmental engineering and the faculty lead for the new degree, said student interest was the main driver to bring the degree — which would complement the minor — to Penn State.

“Students were like, ‘Hey, I want the minor,’ and we had maybe 10... years ago, and now it’s something like 60 to 70 each year. So that increase and the number of students interested kind of kicked off four years ago, but it took a long time to get from the idea of, ‘Let’s re-launch this degree,’ to have it launched and official this fall,” Warner said.

Warner also takes his students in Civil Engineering 475 out into the nearby streams, measuring bugs and looking at the quality of water.

“It’s an experience, and positive or negative, they remember it,” Warner said.

The smaller class sizes, especially the 400-level courses, Warner said, allows for more hands-on work rather than typical lectures. Since Pennsylvania has the second most stream miles in the continental U.S. — beat by Alaska — the opportunities for involvement are practically in the school’s backyard.

Lauren McPhillips, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering and agricultural and biological engineering, teaches the cap-

stone design course in environmental water resources, and said she really enjoys being the “solution classes.”

“We often try to be working with local practitioners or partners that have an issue that needs to be dealt with, and that’s fun because the students work the whole way through,” McPhillips said.

McPhillips said that there has been an increase in students interested in the idea of sustainability, and making an impact in the world around them might be a highlight for prospective students.

“I think students are attracted to this kind of area because they are interested in sustainability, but also, maybe you like to be outside, but you also want to figure out the solutions to keep a healthy environment while also supporting development,” McPhillips said.

There are also a plethora of minors and certificates available at Penn State, and with the support from faculty and professors, can lead to opportunities that might not exist at other universities.

Jeremy Gernand, an associate professor of environmental health and safety engineering and the undergraduate program chair of environmental systems engineering, said that the diverse choices can be interesting for students.

“Students can get involved a little bit, they can get involved a lot, they can add environmental flavors onto other skillsets... all that is not common at other universities. There’s a lot of choice here,” Gernand said.

With Penn State College of Engineering consistently ranking highly year after year, offering heavy hands-on activities and engagement for students can solidify post-graduate opportunities.

“The students get to dive in and figure out how to fix sores in the environment, and those are the kind of real world impacts they get to do when they leave here,” Gernand said.

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Legalized synthetic cannabinoids at forefront of new Drug War

Gas stations are some of the most convenient stores in America; they're open at all hours and carry a variety of supplies to offer a quick fix to a range of issues.

However, they also carry goods that are more harmful than food or gas: Tobacco products and, more recently, THC derivatives or synthetic cannabinoids.

The history of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) derivatives is a complex, interesting story. It started in 2018, when Congress passed the Agriculture Improvement Act, legalizing hemp nationwide by removing it from the Federal Controlled Substances Act. Hemp is legally classified as Marijuana with less than 0.3% delta-9 THC, the psychoactive compound in weed.

This was seen as a step forward in marijuana legislation since it dropped hemp and hemp seeds from the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Schedule I controlled substances list. This means farmers and regular Americans have the ability to order hemp and hemp seeds for a variety of reasons, such as food, fiber for clothes, paper, rope, mulch and hempcrete, a bio-composite construction material.

The 2018 bill also allowed the legal shipment and transportation of hemp and hemp-derived products across state lines, and made licensed hemp growers eligible for federal crop insurance, disaster assistance and farm loans

through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This bill seems full of positives, with little to no drawbacks; it helps many people and encourages the use of hemp over many less sustainable or environmentally friendly products.

However, unsavory actors and gray markets found a loophole within the 2018 Farm Bill. It specifically mentions delta-9 THC was still banned federally, but people realized there are many other psychoactive compounds in weed.

"Cannabis contains more than 100 cannabinoids, and the broader THC family includes delta-8, delta-10, THCA, THCV, THCP, and other closely related compounds," according to Weedmaps, a tech company that connects users to local dispensaries.

These compounds have been overlooked for decades, since they were only found in minuscule amounts in the Cannabis flower and bud; there was no point in looking deeper into them, because you couldn't use them to get high. Now, with modern technology, it's made extremely easy to extract or manufacture large amounts of these compounds through synthetic means.

Since all these compounds were found in small amounts, they were disregarded when formatting the 2018 Farm Bill. So when hemp was legalized, all these other cannabinoids, excluding the classic delta-9 THC, were legalized as well, dumping dozens of synthetic cannabinoids on the legal market.

All of these new substances were legalized with little

oversight and little testing of both the product itself and the methods used to extract and manufacture these cannabinoids. Since this loophole was first exploited, these synthetic THC derivatives have exploded everywhere in the U.S., most commonly sold at gas stations and convenience stores where other gray market items are sold.

However, even dispensaries regulated by the Pennsylvania government use THC-A, a naturally occurring THC derivative. This derivative turns into THC when heated up, thus having the same effect when smoked.

There has been little research done on these new compounds, since they hit the market relatively recently, but the research conducted so far has yielded some unnerving results. Quality control is inadequate in the newly emerging THC industry. Consumers are ingesting products that are mislabeled with compounds that have never received any toxicological testing; and EVALI cases continue to be reported with a fatality rate approaching 2% in California, a study from the National Library of Medicine concluded.

EVALI, an E-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung injury, was first identified in 2019. It's sometimes referred to as vaping-associated pulmonary injury or vaping-associated lung injury. EVALI is an acute or subacute respiratory illness and can be fatal, according to the American Lung Association.

Another study done by the National Library of Medicine showed that none of the

synthetic THC products tested were labeled correctly and many had unlabeled additives and harmful chemicals. When looking at 27 products from 10 brands, none were found to have accurate labeling, with 11 products containing unlabeled cutting agents. These studies essentially concluded that there were so many unknown chemicals found and not labeled in THC derivatives, you have no way of knowing what's in them when you buy them.

A lot of the people responsible for the production of synthetic cannabinoids don't follow any safety regulations when it comes to safe extraction or chemical manufacturing of these psychotropics, letting many harmful chemicals into the final products. Yes, that's right: Many times THC derivatives aren't extracted from hemp but rather chemically manufactured in a lab, which somehow is still allowed in this loophole. Both these methods have caused adverse health risks, and even death in some instances.

This has been found to be a problem not only in manufacturing methods, but also in the product itself. "National poison control centers received 2,362 exposure cases of delta-8 THC products between January 1, 2021, and February 28, 2022. Of the 2,362 exposure cases: 58% involved adults, 41% involved pediatric patients less than 18 years of age, and 1% did not report age. 40% involved unintentional exposure to delta-8 THC and 82% of these unintentional exposures affected pediatric patients," according to the Federal Drug Administration.

These products are concentrated in such high doses they've become lethal. Because of their widespread legality and availability, children can become easily exposed, causing hospitalizations and even deaths.

The concept of someone dying from weed was thought to be almost impossible before now. No deaths from overdose of marijuana have been reported, according to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration. Synthetic cannabinoids have completely changed the landscape when it comes to marijuana, making it much more harmful.

As a student at Penn State, you have access to these THC derivatives. My advice: stay far away from them. From mislabeling, to problems in the synthesizing process to the pure potency of it, it's just such a dangerous and stupid activity.

You literally have no idea what you're putting in your body and how it will affect you. I know it's legal, and a lot of people use that as a justification, but it's only legal through loopholes, and many shady actors are taking advantage of that.

Gas station weed is a risky substance to put in your body. You might be fine and have a grand old time being high, but you risk death or life-altering medical conditions. Playing Russian roulette with your life doesn't seem like a good price to pay just to get high.

Quentin Journey is a columnist for the Daily Collegian. Email him at qej5007@psu.edu

MY VIEW | Michelle Diamond

Harassment about hell treads line between free speech, hate speech

Coming to Penn State, there are a few things you can count on seeing: Old Main, students relaxing and playing volleyball on the HUB Lawn and old men

standing on the sidewalks, posters in hand, warning students that they're going to hell.

Standing downtown the other week, I noticed a man planted firmly on the sidewalk, screaming through a megaphone at a line of college students outside of Doggie's Pub. It was hard to make out what he was saying with his mouth so close to the device, but his poster was loud and clear.

In big, bold lettering written across a display of flames, he listed everyone going to hell. I can condense it for you: If you're not a straight, white, Christian man, I have news for you.

While he was holding this sign with the weight of his privilege supporting it, he pointed at individual women, saying, "You should be ashamed for dressing like that. Cover up. You're tripping these guys up." Apparently those aren't just outrageous phrases used to parody misogynists. Real people actually have these thoughts — who knew!

Not only was he singling out women, but he was calling people the "f" slur as well. When the cops came, they didn't do anything. The man yelled at everyone, saying he had a right to free speech. And that he does. Even hate speech is something we all have a right to.

Not all types of speech are protected, though. There are five categories of unprotected speech: fighting words, true threats, false advertising, obscenity and incitement. But I want to focus on fighting words. (Though I encourage anyone living under the Constitution to understand the law and your rights.)

Merriam-Webster defines fighting words as "words which by their very utterance are likely to inflict harm on or provoke a breach of the peace by the average person to whom they are directed."

When someone utters slurs, they have gone beyond hate speech. A person who is gay, who has likely faced discrimination before, is being blatantly targeted by this word. It's verbal violence.

Of course, I'm not a lawyer or a judge, and the law is all about interpretation, so I can't assert that I'm right. However, using this word inflicts mental harm (I don't see a distinction between mental and physical) to a gay individual being talked to as "less than" human.

Calling out individual girls for what they are wearing is likely to cause harm, undermining the bodily autonomy of that specific woman, perpetuating the notion that men have a say over our bodies.

I will say, there's a fine line between fighting words and hate speech. This is what makes the topic so ambiguous and debatable. Is calling someone ugly hate speech or fighting words? Is calling someone stupid hate speech or fighting words?

When we put what this man outside of Doggie's said into context (which the law takes into account) we're in a college town that has a reputation of hiding sexual assault from the greater population.

Undermining a woman's bodily autonomy where sexual assault is prevalent further enables and encourages this behavior toward women. This kind of language stretches beyond the definition of hate speech. It's language that objectifies women's bodies. It's language that undermines women's humanity.

Degrading a person through language falls under the category of fighting words, in my opinion. How do you comfortably navigate a college town when people are warning you about your inevitable entrance to hell?

While I do believe the cops can take action on the grounds

that this often violates the First Amendment, especially in the example I gave, it doesn't seem action will be taken any time soon.

I don't have exact steps I think you should take, but I wanted to leave you knowing it's OK to question people's arguments and their interpretation of the law.

Reporting will likely lead to nothing, but it can't hurt to take action in situations where you feel threatened and unsafe. It can't hurt to respectfully make a case for why this is unprotected speech. We all have a responsibility to help make the community more welcoming and less harmful to already susceptible individuals.

I think Penn State needs to become clearer on what the First Amendment actually entails. While this specific incident didn't occur on campus, it has several times in the past, and it's likely to find its way back into University Park's bounds eventually.

Above all, don't let it get to you. These protestors don't define your worth and they certainly don't get to dictate the way you live your life. Be yourself and dress as you please. They're just mad they can't pull off a crop top.

Michelle Diamond is a columnist for the Daily Collegian. Email her at mrd6001@psu.edu or follow her on X @ **MichelleDiamo**

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Who we are

The Daily Collegian's editorial opinion is determined by its

'PRESSURE IS A PRIVILEGE'

Blue and white to stars and stripes, teammates meet at World Cup

By Sara Castrovinci
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Kealey Titmuss grew up watching what she called an “incredible dynasty” get built in the U.S. women’s national team. This fall, the Penn State goalkeeper earned a spot on the United States’ U-20 World Cup roster alongside a Nittany Lions teammate: Emma Johnson, a true freshman who carried the same childhood dream of representing her country on the world stage.

“I got to watch all these amazing players come through this system, hear their stories and watch them succeed. So it’s just so surreal that I’m kind of on the path that some of these players were a part of,” Titmuss said. “I was so excited to be doing it with her; to have EJ on the journey with me and be able to support her.”

Their paths to the same roster couldn’t have looked more different. After Titmuss, a Grand Blanc, Michigan, native, made her way through the youth national team setup in the U-16, U-17 and U-19 international camps, coach Erica Dambach recruited her when she was the nation’s top-ranked goalkeeper in the class of 2024.

Though Johnson is new to the collegiate level, she has multiple caps for the U-20 squad under

her belt, playing in five matches with three starts this year. She totaled nine appearances in her youth national career. She’s also been a constant in the system at the U-15, U-18 and U-19 levels.

Johnson, a Greenfield, Indiana native, started in her first two collegiate games against No. 2 Notre Dame and No. 22 West Virginia before leaving for the World Cup in Poland: She tallied 59 and 67 minutes in the matches, an im-



Casey Fugere/Collegian

The Penn State women’s soccer team huddles during the match against Rutgers at Jeffrey Field in University Park, Pa., Saturday, Oct. 17, 2026. The Nittany Lions defeated the Scarlet Knights 1-0.

“I got to watch all these amazing players come through this system, hear their stories and watch them succeed. So it’s just so surreal that I’m kind of on the path that some of these players were a part of”

Kealey Titmuss
Goalkeeper

pressive stat for a player new to the Penn State program.

“I’d consider her a junior. She had the freshman experience her junior year of high school,” Dambach said. “When I watched Emma play in her senior year of high school, she was ready.”

Johnson credited a lot of her

confidence heading into the World Cup to Dambach’s wealth of advice. Dambach has deep coaching roots as an assistant and head coach with the United States youth and senior national teams for over 16 years. She said the coach helped her prepare for the world stage both on and off the field, especially with her mentality.

Despite her accolades, Titmuss has yet to see any minutes on the pitch for the blue and white.

“She has worked really hard to avoid the comparison game,” Dambach said. “She has played the role of backup goalkeeper, kind of as an apprentice, growing, learning and committing herself to her development.”

Working alongside Nittany Lions goalkeeper coach Tim Wassell has been a key factor in Titmuss’s success, she said. Wassell has drawn in seven top-five Top Drawer soccer classes since 2014 and has consistently produced professional-level NWSL and abroad recruits.

“He’s been in my corner every

step of the way,” Titmuss, a red-shirt sophomore, said. “I have a lot of faith in him in my development and I can feel myself getting better.”

Though they’re in different chapters of their personal athletic stories, that hasn’t prevented Johnson and Titmuss from developing a close relationship. Johnson said their friendship formed

“You have a lot of pressure on social media from everything that the women of the U.S. team have done. But, owning that, I think pressure is a privilege.”

Emma Johnson
Midfielder

in a “unique way,” having bonded through previous national team

camps prior to joining the blue and white roster.

“It was a great moment to go into the World Cup on the same college team — not a lot of teammates get to do that,” Johnson said.

Despite doubts about her size, speed, injuries and mentality, Johnson maintained her confidence. Wearing the crest is “more than ourselves,” she said.

“You have a lot of pressure on social media from everything that the women of the U.S. team have done. But, owning that, I think pressure is a privilege,” Johnson said.

Despite a hard-fought 1-1 draw through regulation time, the States’ journey in the U-20 World Cup ended Sept. 16 in the Round of 16 when they lost to Brazil 5-4 in a penalty shootout. After the loss, Johnson and Titmuss made sure to channel their newfound international experience and game knowledge back to Penn State.

Johnson and Titmuss returned to Jeffrey Field to continue using their newfound confidence and knowledge to help push the Nittany Lions forward as the Big Ten and NCAA Tournament approach. Investing in her teammates and being the “best version” of herself is one of her top priorities. She plays alongside some of the best players in the country, Titmuss said, so it’s important to bring back her ability to adapt to her teammates’ needs.

Dambach said the competitive experience of the World Cup helped them acclimate again to the Nittany Lion culture, and lent them a new perspective on approaching competition.

“They look at these opponents with respect, but not fear,” Dambach said.

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‘They’re ready to go’ Returners to anchor new-look roster

By Elliott Inscho
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Josh Reed and Reggie Grodin are roommates. Ivan Juric lives next door. In a locker room otherwise composed of newcomers, the trio will enter the 2026-27 campaign as the only continuity with last season’s iteration of the Nittany Lions, and are set to begin their second season under Mike Rhoades against Canisius on Monday.

At local media day, the fourth-year head coach pointed to them as having helped to anchor the largely new roster.

“They’re just high-level kids,” Rhoades said. “They’re about the right stuff, and I think the type of teammates they are helps with the leadership from everybody, and those guys have done a good job of that with all the new guys.”

Reed and Juric played significant roles in their debut campaigns in the blue and white, posting 11.5 and 10.2 points per game, respectively, and started together in 25 out of 32 games.

The duo should continue to consistently slot into Rhoades’ frontcourt throughout the upcoming season, likely alongside Miami (OH) transfer Brant Byers, and the rapport built last season will carry over into 2026-27.

“(We’ve) played a lot of games and a lot of minutes together, so the chemistry is pretty seamless,” Reed said. “We get along great both on and off the court. I love playing with (Ivan). He’s been good in our exhibition so far. He’s been good in practice, so I’m excited.”

Juric was a stalwart at center while Reed generally played power forward last season, but the Croatian identified the versatility that both he and Reed possess as something that could give Penn State an advantage while they play together.

“Both me and him can play both inside and out,” Juric said. “Depends on what the defense gives us. So yeah, I think it really will be (a) problem for other teams. Just (having) us both at the same time on the court.”

While his 7-foot stature might suggest otherwise, Juric has a relatively reserved personality.



Nate Lee/For the Collegian

Forward Ivan Juric attempts a dunk during two on twos at the men’s basketball media day at the Bryce Jordan Center in University Park, Pa., Oct. 28, 2026.

Rhoades has high expectations for Juric’s second campaign.

“Ivan’s a quiet guy, and he’s still one of the youngest guys on the team,” Rhoades said. “We were asking a lot of him last year. I think there was great growth there; his family and his people back home were really impressed how far he’s come, and I think his sky’s the limit for him.”

Reed was the only Penn State player celebrated on last season’s Senior Night against Ohio State. He graduated with an MBA in the spring, and completed an internship with Harris Blitzer Sports & Entertainment, the company that owns the Philadelphia 76ers, over the summer.

A variety of legal maneuvers in multiple states have ruled him eligible to return to Penn State this year, a move that Reed described as “pretty easy.” Still, the ever-shifting landscape of college sports means that there’s still a chance that his eligibility could be rescinded.

“Just taking it day by day, working, working it out on the court,” Reed said. “Just worried about basketball at this point. Not really focused on the outside noise and things like that.”

As the fifth-year from Atlanta

wraps up his college basketball career, his roommate Grodin is just getting started after seeing no game action and redshirting last season.

Still one of the less-experienced members of Rhoades’ roster, he’s seen the group flip from mostly young players like himself to a more veteran-heavy team.

“I’ve never been in a situation with that, but I guess that’s the norm in college basketball now,” Grodin said. “It’s been great. I don’t want to say you can’t win, but it’s definitely difficult to win with a bunch of young guys in the Big Ten versus (having) more experience.”

Grodin was injured over the summer and “had to get some work done on a knee,” according to Rhoades. All signs suggest he’ll be good to go against the Golden Griffins, though.

With 11 players joining the roster since Penn State last took to the court against Northwestern on March 10, the Nittany Lions’ old guard has instilled the established ideals into the newcomers.

Byers, who averaged 14.2 points per game in the Redhawks’ magical run to the NCAA Tournament last season, said they’ve echoed Rhoades’ values in every facet so far.

“They know the way that Rhoades wants to play, the practice style and game style and stuff like that,” Byers said. “They’ve done a pretty good job at leading in that way, whether it’s vocal or by example.”

Five days before the 2026-27 season gets underway, Rhoades was full of praise for the character shown by his three returners.

“All three of those guys are great teammates,” Rhoades said. “Before you get to leadership, our number one rule is (to) take care of your own stuff. Those guys do that at a high level. All three of them are good students. They’re on time. They’re ready to go. They’re ready to work.”

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Kampersal speaks on mistakes, goalie battle

By Mashiah Mitchell
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Ten games into the season, No. 7 Penn State currently sits at 7-3 with a near-perfect 5-1 record in conference play,

HOCKEY

placing the team atop the Atlantic Hockey America standings. The team’s on a five-game winning streak after its overtime loss to Syracuse.

The Nittany Lions carry this streak into Canton, New York, for a two-game series against the RIT Tigers. RIT is 2-8 on the year so far but undefeated in AHA matchups, sweeping Delaware before hitting a downturn, dropping four in a row shortly after.

Prior to this Halloween series hitting the ice, coach Jeff Kampersal spoke to the media on Wednesday morning. He covered how he and his staff are handling the ever-evolving goalie battle between Maddy Campbell and Morgan Stickney, the balance of allowing mistakes in a winning environment and the biggest factors in closing out games so far.

Goalie competition

Both Campbell and Stickney have started five games each, with Stickney getting the most recent series starts, earning AHA Goalie of the Week honors after her 95% save percentage in the St. Lawrence series.

Kampersal went on to say that both goalies are “neck and neck in terms of ownership of the net.” He noted that the decision is made based on practices and signs of improvement.

“There are many things that go into the decision; both are really good talents, and we tell them consistently to take the decision out of our hands by the end of the week.”

Addressing mistakes

The Nittany Lions added seven freshmen during the off-season. They’ve all played on a consistent basis and contributed a new layer, but that has not come without its mistakes.

“They’re gonna make mistakes, no question, but we’re looking for improvement upon

such,” Kampersal said about reassuring the rookies. “We encourage mistakes to prevent fear because the margin of error is slimmer than last year. I get frustrated with certain things, especially repetitive mistakes.”

In addition, Kampersal talked about how the freshmen are still getting acclimated, and how “[they] don’t want to crush confidence, but those little things and habits are usually glaring issues, of course with the freshmen more so given they had more space in high school.

Closing the door

The Nittany Lions have scored 16 of their 32 total goals on the year in the third period alone, showing that the blue and white show up for all 60 minutes of play every single game.



Collegian file photo

Jeff Kampersal walks onto the ice to shake hands after a home game against Union College on Oct. 7, 2017.

Kampersal doesn’t want his team to get complacent in the early stages of the game.

“We have been playing better when we’re down and not giving up when we’re down two goals,” the skipper said. “I want to carry the underdog mentality throughout all periods and not just when we’re down, though.”

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