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## ‘DON’T BE NERVOUS’

### *Penn State first-years share new experiences*

By Louise Bennett  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

With Monday being the first day of classes of the school year, Penn State first-years have officially transitioned from high school to college.

They’ve moved on from living with their parents and eating home-cooked meals to sharing a dorm with a roommate and eating in the dining halls.

With so many firsts happening this week, some first-year students have weighed in on their first impressions of the college lifestyle.

Angelica Calisi said her first few days weren’t easy, but it has gotten better as time has progressed.

“I’ve been here since last Monday,” Calisi, a first-year studying nursing, said. “It was rough at first because I knew absolutely no one, but everyone is really good at encouraging you to talk to people, and I feel like I have

met a lot of people already I can really connect with,” Calisi said.

Calisi said the CATA bus system on campus is still confusing to her and her friends.

“We just know the Blue Loop and White Loop go downtown. We’re still figuring it out, but we’re surrounded by students that can help,” Calisi said.

Christina Gutkowski said she almost never takes the bus because she loves the walk around campus.

“The walk is like 15 minutes, but it is such a pretty campus,” Gutkowski, a first-year studying kinesiology, said. “I feel like the walk goes pretty fast.”

Gutkowski wasn’t the only first-year to comment on the appearance and commodities available on campus.

Haven Sanchez said the campus is very welcoming.

“I think it is very lively,” Sanchez, a first-year studying psychology and criminology, said. “There is a lot to do on and off



Kate Hildebrand/Collegian

**First-year students** walk to the Bryce Jordan Center for New Student Convocation. Students wear different colored shirts that correspond to their academic colleges.

campus, and I really like my professors.”

Sanchez also said that she likes the benches and “nooks and crannies” available on campus where you can hang out. She specifically likes the lounge downstairs in the Chemical and Biomedical Engineering Building.

She also said it’s been a big adjustment to have roommates, but it’s going well so far.

“I grew up with siblings, but being in the same physical room with someone is different,” Sanchez said. “Because I am in a triple, it’s very different than having alone time when you’re in your room.”

Tanner Ligetti said he’s loving his current living situation.

“I live in McKean. I’m rooming with one of my best friends, and our whole floor has done events and had a good time together,” Ligetti, a first-year studying kinesiology, said. “Our neighbors

are chill. It’s been really fun.”

Aidan Riley said he also loves his roommates so far and the fun activities that the campus has to offer.

“I love it here, everyone is so nice,” Riley, a first-year studying communications, said. “So many people and everyone is getting along.”

Riley said one of the biggest downsides has been how busy the CATA buses are around campus.

“The buses are a little crowded, but that’s because everyone has to do what they have to do,” Riley said.

Other than dining hall food, dorms and new roommates, another big change for new Penn Staters can be making new friends.

Meredith Junker said she is fortunate that she has already made a lot of new friends.

“It was an adjustment, but it’s going really well,” Junker, a

first-year studying kinesiology, said. “I’ve been hanging out with some friends from home and friends from here, so it’s been pretty fun.”

Nick Buluse said he got used to the campus, the bus system and making friends during summer session, and it has made the fall an easier adjustment.

However, Buluse, a first-year in the division of undergraduate studies, had a piece of advice to offer all new incoming first-years on campus.

“Don’t be nervous to talk to people. You could be making friends that you could have for the rest of your four years,” Buluse said.

“Coming from someone who is pretty nervous to talk to people and shy, I would say start talking to people and meeting your professors.”

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Megan Miller/Collegian

**Students** walk to classes on the first day of fall semester in the hot August weather.



# First looks of fall semester



Esteban Marenco/Collegian

**West Halls Resident Assistants** host a game of bingo for residents on the first day of classes.



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**The Nittany Lion mascot** hypes up the crowd at Be A Part From The Start, a pep rally for first-year students coming to Penn State.



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**The Lion Ambassadors** sing the alma mater arm-in-arm at the end of the Be A Part From The Start pep rally hosted for first-year students. The Lion Ambassadors are the student sector of the Penn State Alumni Association.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

**The Hintz Family Alumni Center** undergoes construction during the beginning of the fall semester.



Joey Tiger/Collegian

**A bunny** hops along the lawn in front of the Willard Building on the first day of classes.



Megan Miller/Collegian

**Students** walk along a shaded pathway in Pattee Mall on their way to their classes on the first day of the fall semester.



Chris Eutsler/Collegian

**Penn State men's soccer midfielder Kojo Dadzie** runs after the ball during the match against the Army Black Knights at Jeffrey Field.

## THE NITTANY LIONS ARE OFFICIALLY BACK IN HAPPY VALLEY.



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**First-year Penn State students** cheer during the Be A Part From The Start pep rally.



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**Penn State THON's executive director Keegan Sobczak** speaks at the Be A Part From The Start pep rally. THON is the world's largest student-run philanthropy.



Kate Hildebrand/Collegian

**First-year students** and their families cross the street to East Halls during move-in weekend.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

**Women's soccer midfielder Kayleigh Herr** heads the ball during the match against West Chester.



# HUB poster sale turns 10

**By Daniela White**  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Started by “a guy in a van 40 years ago” the College Poster Sale Company has provided printed images as decorations for years.

The sale included over 1,000 unique posters of films, television shows and music albums, but also fine art and photography.

William Snyder, an employee at the poster sale, said the company has been coming to University Park for the last 10 years.

Starting off at the beginning of the week, Snyder said the most popular purchases have been Chappell Roan, “Utopia,” Taylor Swift and SZA posters.

“Come by and check us out,” Snyder said. “Get something good for your room.”

Located on the first level of the HUB-Robeson Center, students can buy posters from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. until Friday. The sale offers majorly discounted prices for the prints, with 24x36 posters selling for \$12.95, 11x17 for \$8.95 and 8x10 for \$6.95.

With stands of posters ranging from Vincent van Gogh to por-



Megan Miller/Collegian

**Students** check out posters provided by the College Poster Sale Company in the HUB-Robeson Center. The contents of the posters range from fine art reprints and designs to pop stars and movies.

traits of Lana Del Rey, the sale had an expansive lineup of printed pieces.

Larger posters on tables lined the perimeter of the sale while stands at the back of the room were filled with smaller posters in boxes for students to funnel through.

When Brooke Dougherty went to the poster sale in between classes, she was amazed by how

many different choices of prints there were.

“It was almost overwhelming by how many things there were,” Dougherty, a second-year studying public relations, said.

After browsing the numerous selections, Dougherty bought two posters for her new apartment: a Vogue magazine cover and an abstract piece.

In need of new decorations for his apartment, Kevin Rolzhausen said going to the poster sale was “a must.”

“I have nothing up on my walls,” Rolzhausen, a second-year studying accounting, said. “It’s kind of depressing.”

Flipping through the posters and shuffling through pictures for a few minutes, Rolzhausen ended up leaving with two large posters and one smaller one.

Rap, pop, hip-hop and other genres of music pumped from a speaker while students funneled in and out of the sale.

The poster sale wasn’t only an opportunity to purchase new room decor, but also a space for students to share their interests with friends while browsing in small groups before returning to classes or grabbing food in the HUB.

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# Students reflect on first day of class

**By Emily Lin**  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The first day of class looks a little different for everyone at Penn State.

While some students may have a jammed schedule with back-to-back classes, others might be one and done.

Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez had two classes and didn’t have to go to her scheduled labs, which made her day “much better.”

Cruz-Hernandez, a second-year studying forensic science, was also looking forward to utilizing new technology for her classes.

“I’m excited to take notes with my new tablet,” Cruz-Hernandez said. “It’s something I’ve learned I need for my science classes, so I’m excited to get to study for my classes that way.”

Sam Wilson expressed her enthusiasm about the first day after all of her professors seemed friendly, and she’s particularly excited about her fiction writing class, ENGL 212.

“I think my favorite class is definitely going to be the fiction writing class because all my friends are in it,” Wilson, a second-year studying communications, said.

Sherry Zhang said she had a great first day of classes while attending machine learning and game theory, which were both interesting to her.

“So far the classes haven’t been challenging, but I know they’re going to become more difficult as the semester progresses,” Zhang, a fourth-year studying computer science, said.

Zhang also said she’s particularly excited about the machine learning class because “AI is the

hype right now.”

Some students like Jessica Ledesma and Emily Main found their first days to be overwhelming.

“It was pretty hectic because I didn’t know what to expect from the professors and what we were going to be doing,” Ledesma, a fourth-year studying accounting, said.

Despite this, she said she’s looking forward to reconnecting with friends and being back in the academic setting.

As a new upperclassmen, Main expressed concerns about this year in her major.

“I heard that junior year is your hardest year as an engineer, and that is proving to be true already because I already have two quizzes due,” Main, a third-year studying biomedical engineering, said. Some seniors like Jasmine

Upchurch went into this year seeing the end goal — graduation.

“Now that I’m really focused on graduating and being able to get out of here in May, I had to really double down on my credits

to make sure I have everything squared away,” Upchurch, a fourth-year studying psychology and Spanish said.

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Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**Penn Staters** discussed their thoughts on the first day of class and the beginning of the fall semester.

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MY VIEW | JULIA FREDERICK

## Don't fear the undecided

Do you know what you want to do with the rest of your life? No? Me neither!



Frederick

With the arrival of a new school year comes two important questions: what do I want to major in, and what do I want to do post-graduation?

For some, this decision is an easy one. For others, the choice isn't always clear.

It's only one of the biggest decisions you will make in life, one that you will devote at least four years and a pretty penny to.

No pressure.

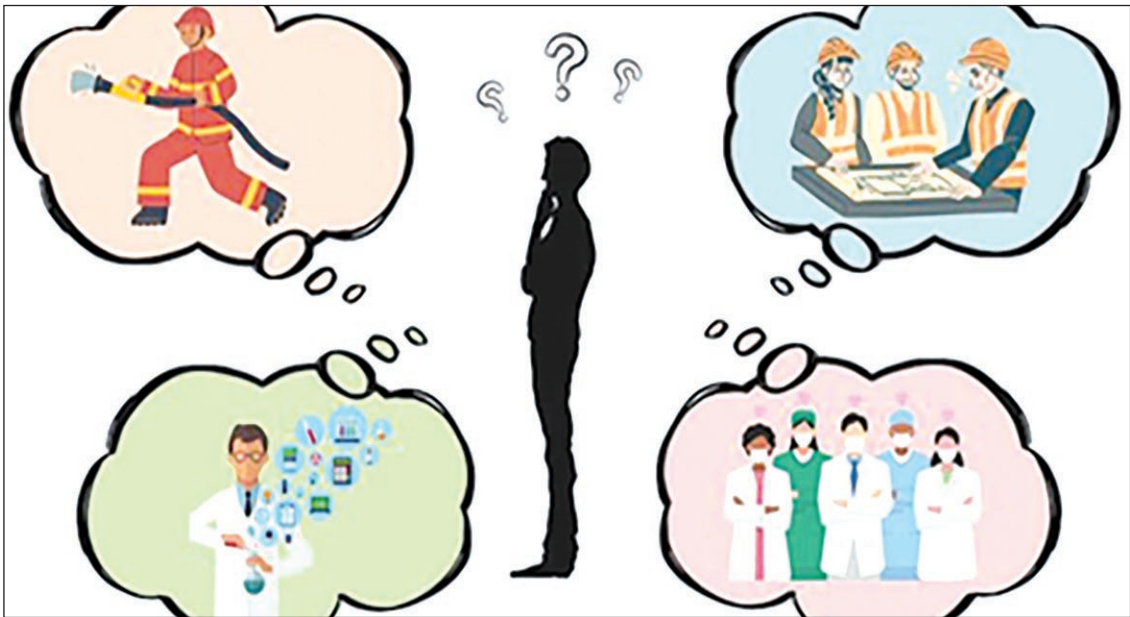
When I arrived at Penn State as a first-year division of undergraduate studies student, the fear of not knowing what I wanted to do was absolutely overwhelming.

I was bouncing between a few ideas, but I really wasn't sure what I wanted to spend the rest of my life dedicated to.

Everyone else seemed to have the next 10 years meticulously planned out while I was dodging well-intended inquiries from family and friends.

If you're feeling the panic and pressure like I was — you're not alone.

What I've learned in my time



Isabella Viteri/Collegian

as a Penn State student is it's OK to not know.

Penn State's Division of Undergraduate Studies houses nearly 25% of incoming first-year students, which means approximately one-quarter of your class is in the same undecided boat.

Being undecided shouldn't be viewed as a negative experience. It provides you the opportunity to discover, explore different disciplines and find the right fit for you.

It's also important to remem-

ber that nothing is permanent, so don't be afraid to change your mind.

If you don't feel at home in your declared major, that doesn't mean that you've failed. Change indicates growth and evolution, it's a necessary part of everyone's journey.

Switching your major, which should be given careful thought and consideration, isn't uncommon. According to a 2017 report published by the National Center for Education Statistics, around 33% of bachelor-degree-

seeking students have changed their major at least once.

Penn State offers over 275 majors, and while that may seem intimidating, it means that the possibilities are endless. There is something for everyone at Penn State, you just have to trust the process and find it.

Finding your passion does take work, so try new things, take classes that sound interesting and talk to your peers. Don't be discouraged if a discipline isn't an immediate fit.

During my first year, I loaded my schedule with classes I thought I'd be interested in. Even the classes that I didn't pursue as a major were still an invaluable part of my academic growth.

Use the process of elimination. You truly never know unless you try, and college is the time to explore as much as you can.

While in the midst of trial and error, don't force yourself onto a timeline. Make an effort not to compare the experience of others to yours, everyone takes college at their own pace.

I'm a third-year English major, and I didn't declare my major until the spring of 2024. It took me a while to get here, but that doesn't make the process any less valid.

Do I have a step-by-step plan for what I'll do after graduation? No, but I trust that with some work and dedication, I'll figure it out and so will you.

College is a journey. Don't rush to the finish line, enjoy the race.

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Cartoons by Nathan Campbell



MY VIEW | JADZIA SANTIAGO

## De-influencing the college experience

If you were to ask me how I felt just over two years ago, when I'd just graduated high school and was planning the start of my Penn State journey, I would have said one word — terrified.

Back then, I felt like my high school career had gotten away from me.

While I'd made grades I was satisfied with and graduated with honors, I felt like I hadn't lived up to my fullest potential in those years.

College was a whole new landscape, and I swore that these four years were going to be different.

However, for multiple reasons, I had nobody to tell me how to accomplish that.

Search engines were no help, either; all they gave me were generic study tips, advice specific to careers I wasn't sure about yet or ads for fancy calendar apps.

So, like many of my peers, I decided to hear from people who'd been through it, and I opened social media.

Big mistake.

Once I searched, I was hit

with endless streams of conflicting advice.

I'll admit that some of it was reasonable; talking to your professors and career counselors, staying on top of requirements and going to class are all important.

I can't overstate the value of hard work, keeping busy and getting involved; if it weren't for those things, I wouldn't be writing this column today.

However, the other side of the advice was a nightmare.

There were videos talking about how reinventing yourself completely is a necessity, or about how you need prestigious internships and leadership positions right away.

One video I remember distinctly went something like, "college isn't for making friends. It's for networking only, and the people you meet in college are not your friends."

The underlying tone of all of these videos was that if you didn't pack your schedule until it was bursting, or treat freshman orientation like a business

dinner, you were a failure and weren't going to be successful in life.

Needless to say, all that searching did was make me more of a scared first-year, afraid to do anything for fear of doing it wrong.

I'm a third-year now, and here's what I've learned: an influencer's job is to influence you to do something.

Sometimes, that means influencing you to feel bad about yourself. So, I stopped listening, and I can't stress enough how much better my

life got. I've found wonderful communities in student organizations, made grades I'm happy with and landed internships that have been incredible experiences.

Take it from me, you don't need people online to help you succeed.

It's important to remember that these particular influencers don't know you, so they don't know your personality or the strengths you have. They

don't know where you come from or where you want to go.

Above all, they don't seem to know that everyone's college experience is different, and it's all about finding your own path to success.

In reality, you should take your advice from people who can see what makes you amazing.

Talk to as many people as you can, like professors, career counselors, advisors and your peers.

They will help you explore your strengths, whether they're ones you've been working on or new ones you didn't know you had. Explore as much as you can, and try as many new things as possible. Find people to network with, but also people to laugh with until 2 a.m. on the weekends.

Most importantly, turn off your phone once in a while and stop listening.

Trust me, you'll do just fine.

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# ‘I’ve still got nightmares’

*Reigniting the intense rivalry between Penn State and West Virginia in Week 1*

By Joel Haas  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When Penn State makes the short trip across the border and into the mountainous heart of West Virginia for a season-opening clash against the Mountaineers, it’ll reignite a rivalry lost in time.

## FOOTBALL

Though the Nittany Lions haven’t traveled to Morgantown in over 30 years, there’s been no love lost between the neighboring fanbases. As the anticipation for the 2024 campaign builds and the preseason banter ramps up, both squads will enter with clean slates, but only one can leave unblemished.

“I’m excited for sure. West Virginia, they’re a good team, they’re practicing hard,” running back Nick Singleton said. “I’m looking forward to that.”

The last time the Blue Busses made their way to Morgantown, no players on Penn State’s roster had been born, and James Franklin was still playing quarterback for East Stroudsburg. However, they’re well aware of the environment that awaits them.

“It’s a very, very challenging place to play. For an opener, that’s going to create some challenges and issues for us, and a team that I think is feeling really, really good about themselves and has a ton of confidence,” James Franklin said.

Brett Wright, who played linebacker for Penn State during its last trek to Morgantown, fondly remembers the hatred he experienced from the Mountaineer faithful.

“I mean the fans were ornery, let’s put it that way,” Wright said. “I’ve never heard so much vitriol.”

O.J. McDuffie, who played wide receiver for Penn State from 1988-1992, plans to make the trip with his kids to support his alma mater despite some bad memories from previous matchups.

“I’ve still got nightmares of Morgantown, I don’t know if I really wanna go back to be honest,” McDuffie said.

Though he was the team’s top target through the air, one of his fondest memories of the rivalry is



Jackson Ranger/Collegian file photo

**Quarterback Beau Pribula** weaves through West Virginia players during the football game against West Virginia on Sept. 2, 2023 in University Park, Pa. The Nittany Lions won 38-15.

the Nittany Lions’ success in the run game.

“It seemed like we might have thrown the ball like 12 times, we just pounded them with the run,” McDuffie said. “Me and Terry Smith took a lot of pride in just blocking, blocking, blocking.”

Smith, who’s coached the Nittany Lions’ cornerbacks for the past decade, suited up in the blue and white as a wide receiver from 1987-1991. A product of western Pennsylvania, he’s intimately familiar with the university and its culture.

“My brother played at West Virginia, and I grew up with four or five guys on my street that played at West Virginia, so I’m very familiar with Morgantown and what that stadium is going to be,” Smith said. “I’m happy we’re playing at noon there. It can be a crazy environment, they have a great fan base.”

The last three times Penn State played at West Virginia’s Milan-Puskas Stadium were 1988, 1990 and 1992 — all three games rank among the nine most-attended in the stadium’s history. With Penn

State joining the Big Ten and losing its independent status, the series came to an abrupt halt during arguably its most intense period.

When the Nittany Lions open their season with a trip to The Mountain State, they’ll undoubtedly be faced with another raucous crowd, including a “Stripe Out” environment of garnet and gold.

Opening in a hostile environment leaves little margin for error for a Penn State squad looking to hit the ground running with several new pieces across the coaching staff and roster. Though there’s been 32 years since the last game in Morgantown, the rivalry has picked up where it left off.

“I think opening with this type of game, I think it’s really good because it motivates and prepares everybody. You better have your I’s dotted and T’s crossed, and understand and be prepared for what that environment will be like,” Franklin said. “From what I understand, you can’t find a ticket to this game.”

Despite the resentment be-

tween the two fanbases, Wright looks fondly on the culture West Virginia is known for. Similar to Pennsylvania, the state is known for its blue-collar work ethic.

The Mountaineers have embraced their state’s reputation, even releasing all black coal-themed uniforms this offseason. According to Wright, the same work ethic that fuels the state’s residents is evident in the team’s playstyle on the gridiron.

“I do believe in culture, and I do believe that the richness of your soul, and the type of work that people do have an influence on the type of culture of a state and their reputation,” Wright said. “I look at that as the highest form of hard-working, soul-of-the-earth people, doing the hard work ... that’s the reputation of West Virginia and that’s the reputation of how they play.”

On top of regional and cultural similarities, the two schools shared in many recruiting battles over the years. Penn State’s lopsided history in the all-time series undoubtedly contributed to local recruits’ commitments.

“A lot of states recruit through

the national scope. (For Penn State) it was the western PA, Ohio and West Virginia ... a lot of guys grew up with us,” Wright said. “You can’t think of Penn State without Pittsburgh or West Virginia and that recruiting base, just tough, hard nosed players from coal-mining country.”

In a world where Oregon Ducks and Maryland Terrapins play in the same conference, many regional elements of the sport are disappearing as financial profit is being valued over tradition. But for two of the most historic programs in the sport, who reside just 180 miles apart and share many cultural similarities, Saturday’s matchup brings with it a heavy history and a taste of the past.

“There’ve been tough battles there. It was the ‘beasts of the east,’” Smith said. “Every time you strap up and play those guys, you better be ready to play, because I’m pretty sure they’ll be ready.”

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## Club Roundnet aims for 2024 success

By Will Horstman  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Run it back.

After facing a disappointing early exit to Emory University in the Round of 16 at nationals last spring, Penn State Club Roundnet aims for redemption in the 2024-25 season.

“We didn’t get the results we wanted to,” Club vice president Michael Moniz said. “We really performed below what I know we could’ve done.”

Despite the outcome being less than what was hoped for, the trip to Minneapolis was still the highlight of the season for most.

“We still had so much fun in Minneapolis,” Moniz said. “Hanging out, going out to eat and exploring the city, it was just a great time.”

However, the club did find success at its qualifying tournament for nationals, the East Bay Sectionals. With Penn State hosting the tournament, a lot of people from the school came out to support the club.

In the semifinal matchup, Club Roundnet was tied 2-2 to RIT with only one more team to play for its Division I squad.

“Everyone at the sectionals was watching, and we ended up pulling it out,” president Jake Hurst said.

Winning 21-18, Club Roundnet moved on to the final.

“That was cool to celebrate with the team and advance to the finals,” Hurst said.

Club Roundnet’s Division I squad ended up placing second in the sectionals competition field, qualifying it for nationals.

“We secured that power pool for nationals,” Hurst said.

The club gives its members moments and memories that will highlight their college experience.

Before attending Penn State,

Hurst visited a spikeball pick-up event hosted on campus.

“I showed up, and there were like thousands of nets out,” Hurst said. “I was like, ‘Holy cow, this is my type of campus.’”

After that weekend, Hurst made it a priority to join Club Roundnet once he was a freshman at Penn State.

In addition to offering the opportunity to play spikeball, Club Roundnet gives the opportunity for its members to continue their athletic careers.

Secretary Raylyn Tarquinio originally planned on being a Division I beach volleyball player, but those plans fell through due to COVID-19.

“I knew I wanted to play something competitive,” Tarquinio said. “Spikeball is not as intense but still fulfills that competitive drive.”

For its members, Club Roundnet is more than just a club to play spikeball. The club also allows its members to meet their closest friends during college.

“Everyone is just so awesome,” Treasurer Matt Mesaros said. “Everyone is so loving and everyone cares about each other.”

The club forms a tight bond between its members, giving everyone a welcoming environment.

“It’s nice to have a little community that I can rely on if I need something or need someone to talk to,” Tarquinio said.

Everyone in the club supports each other. For competitions, each club is typically separated into two divisions, Division I and Division II. While Division I squads get more attention, Club Roundnet makes sure to show support for its Division II squad too.

At a sectionals tournament, Club Roundnet’s Division II squad was in a finals match,

which came down to a few points.

“The entire team was watching,” Mesaros said, “I think that it was really special that all the D-I team was tearing off to be able to watch the D-II team compete.”

That type of community is exactly what Hurst wants to build.

As club president, he wants to use that as a “platform to build a good culture and community of people that just love spikeball and love each other.”

As the core four officers of the club for the upcoming year, Hurst, Moniz, Tarquinio and Mesaros wanted the opportunity to give back to the club that has already given them so much.

“I really wanted to be a big part of the club team just because it’s given so much to me my first year,” Mesaros said. “It’s given me a family and a community.”

Being a core four officer gives them an opportunity to step up and take on a bigger leadership role.

“I wanted to get involved more than I already was,” Moniz said. “I really wanted to get on the exec board and give back.”

To serve their community and help others is a task that was easy for all four to accept.

“I’ve always been involved in community service,” Tarquinio said.

“So (being secretary) is pretty easy for me to fulfill.”

Heading into the fall, one goal remains in everyone’s minds — win the national championship.

Tryouts will be held at the beginning of the fall semester. In the same week, Club Roundnet will host the East Roundnet Series, which the club hopes will kickstart a championship season.

“We’re going to bring home a national championship,” Hurst said.

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Courtesy of Jake Hurst

**Penn State Club Roundnet** poses with its team banner. The team has national championship aspirations in 2024 after qualifying in 2023.

## Sean Clifford signed to practice squad

By Avery Hill  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Former Penn State quarterback Sean Clifford’s NFL career will live to see another day.

Clifford threw for 207 yards, one touchdown and one interception on a 51.2% completion percentage in the 2024 preseason.

He was drafted by the Packers in the fifth round with the 149th overall pick of the 2023 NFL Draft by Green Bay. After quarterback Malik Willis was traded to the Packers earlier in the week, Clifford gets a chance to be a reserve quarterback as part of the practice squad.

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Jackson Ranger/Collegian file photo

**Quarterback Sean Clifford** runs as he prepares to throw the ball during the football game against Maryland at Beaver Stadium on Nov. 12, 2022.



# Drew Allar ‘handles his business’

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Drew Allar only had to wait one half before getting his first taste of college football.

While Sean Clifford remained in the locker room to open the third quarter in the 2022 season opener against Purdue, Allar took the gridiron at Ross-Ade Stadium to face a black sea of over 57,000 fans that matched the night sky.

“I think that was really the only time I was really nervous in my college career honestly, because I wasn’t expecting it,” Allar said in August. “It wasn’t really planned, it (was) like ‘Hey Drew, if we go up by this score, you’re going in.”

The Boilermakers had just marched down the field for a touchdown to go in front 21-17. The score by the black and gold put immediate pressure on the freshman’s first snaps and welcomed him to his first moment of adversity in college.

“It was a tight game on the road, primetime game, Thursday night game, and I was warming up like ‘alright this is about to happen, I’m about to go in,” Allar said. “Definitely some nerves, but as soon as I completed that first screen pass it was like, ‘OK, it’s just football at the end of the day.”

The first career completion went to wide receiver KeAndre Lambert-Smith for 11 yards, and Allar finished the drive 2-for-4 for 26 yards.

The gunslinger finished his freshman year with 10 appearances, going 35-for-60 with four touchdowns. The buzz for the former 5-star recruit was evident as soon as he stepped on campus and when he flashed in limited snaps.

Despite the “we want Drew” chants from the Penn State student section every time Clifford had a miscue, the Happy Valley faithful had to wait for the 2023 campaign for Allar to fully take the reins of the offense.

When West Virginia came to town for a 7:30 p.m. tilt under the bright lights of Beaver Stadium for the season opener last year, the Penn State fans got their first taste of Allar starting — he made a statement immediately.

“Welcome to the Drew Allar era” exclaimed play-by-play broadcaster Noah Eagle as the gunslinger stepped up into the pocket to connect with Lambert-Smith for a 72-yard touchdown bomb on his first drive, opening up the floodgates en route to a 38-15 win over the Mountaineers.

Looking back at it a year later, Allar said the moment “definitely hit” as a welcome to the starting role, but it was the Beaver Stadium roar that resonated with him most.

“It was more of the atmosphere of the crowd, there was 110,000 fans there or something like that,” Allar said. “So just hearing and feeling the explosion of Beaver Stadium when that play happened was surreal and something that I won’t forget for the rest of my life.”

The Medina, Ohio, native faced highs and lows during the campaign, including losses to Ohio State and Michigan during the regular season that ultimately ended Penn State’s College Football Playoff hopes.

A teary-eyed Allar said he “sucked” following the defeat to the Buckeyes. Following the loss to the Wolverines, he blamed himself for fumbling while trailing 14-9 in the third quarter.

Despite pointing the finger at himself, the losses weren’t entirely on Allar. The inexperience in big-game settings showed, but he dealt with wide receivers who were a sore spot, and former offensive coordinator Mike Yurcich, who didn’t play to his strengths. Newly minted offensive coordinator Andy Kotelnicki is ready to put Allar in position to succeed.

“It’s evident he’s got a great talent (that’s been) bogged down, he throws the ball hard, he has ability to throw with touch, he has ability to process quickly,” Kotelnicki said. “I think I’ve noted it before, his willingness to see a stimulus and respond to it — I think it’s at a really high level and that in itself is really hard to change or hard to develop. You need a lot of reps but some of that just comes through wiring. A lot of us couldn’t ever do what he does because we couldn’t react the way he does.”

Allar showed promise despite



Jackson Ranger/Collegian file photo

**Penn State quarterback Drew Allar** tears up after Penn State’s loss to Ole Miss during the Peach Bowl. The Nittany Lions lost 38-25.

the ebbs and flows of Year 1 as a starter. Former Indiana coach and new Penn State defensive coordinator Tom Allen knew game planning for him wouldn’t be easy, but factored in his inexperience.

“Up to our point, he hadn’t thrown an interception, our game was the first one he threw all season,” Allen said. He’d done a great job of protecting the football and we made such a massive deal of taking the ball, so it was like ‘how can we force him into a mistake because he’s young, and nobody likes to get hit in the mouth.”

Allen said the Hoosiers’ defense philosophy was “trying to force errors through his youth.” That youth showed on the field last year, but also off the gridiron.

The emotional meltdowns following defeats to Ohio State and Michigan created the stigma that Allar wasn’t mature enough for the spotlight or built for marquee matchups. His recruiting pedigree brought big expectations at Penn State, and he’s ready to put postgame breakdowns behind him.

Allar said they “talk about being a thermostat rather than a thermometer.” He needed to control the heat as opposed to absorbing it.

“Last year, with me being a first-time starter, learning how to bounce back quicker was

something I kind of struggled with because I kind of dwelled on things when things don’t go my way,” Allar said. “I think I’ve done a better job of learning how to flush that.”

With a year as the face of the offense under his belt and the self-inflicted postgame wounds a

passion and drive to lead them.

“He’s just gotten a little bit better because the way he works, the way he prepares and the way he trains,” James Franklin said. “And was voted by his peers as well as all the coaches and the staff as a captain because of how we all see he handles his



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**Penn State quarterback Drew Allar** runs the ball into the end zone for a touchdown against Michigan.

thing of the past, he’s ready to be the field general the team needs.

Usually a soft-spoken player who leads by example, Allar has broken out of his shell and taken on more of a vocal leadership style. He’s still a “lead by example” kind of guy, but made it a point of emphasis to be a vocal presence, and as a result is a captain for 2024.

“Drew definitely has been more vocal in his leadership style,” defensive tackle Dvon J-Thomas said. “Of course you want that from QB1. All teams go as QB1 goes, all offenses go as QB1 goes. Just to see that from Drew, especially stepping into a somewhat unfair situation, just being so young with all of the expectations and the hype on his shoulders, he’s taken to it well.”

Allar’s sophomore season can be spun in different ways. He showed immaturity in press conferences following big losses, but he also earned respect from his teammates and showed the

business. Total respect within our program.”

With pressure thrown at him every which way last year, the quarterback has a chance to send a message early against the first team he started against — West Virginia. Allar has heard nothing but “great things” about the Morgantown atmosphere and the “energy the crowd has,” and knows it won’t be an easy feat to replicate the success he and the team had last year.

Now a year older and wiser and holding captain status, Allar has found comfort in himself, ready to take the lessons learned and apply them in Year 2 as a starter.

“I’ve learned a lot of things over the past year about — just in general — football, life and I think I’ve been able to really apply that and I just feel a lot more comfortable being me,” Allar said.

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Jackson Ranger/Collegian file photo

**Penn State quarterback Drew Allar** looks to pass the ball during the game between Penn State and Michigan State. The Nittany Lions won 42-0.

## Kakuro

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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

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## Word Search Plants & Flowers

E V O L G X O F X C Z I N N I A D V  
P R I M R O S E S V R V T F Y E K D  
H H W O A D N E W F P O B F E O I I  
Y A C O L L O B E L I A C W B H K E  
I L G F R E L D T P H C E U C A N Z  
S C J C N R T O A M N R S R S I Y A  
E R V L K G A U W Y I T O N B L C E  
S H E F U W E Y N I L S M M Z H J G  
O O R T T P T R I L L I U M J A R N  
R P B E S R I F A L D L L Y S D E A  
O B E R W A R N E N O Z C Y S G W R  
S P N D Z O K B E C I X O L H P O D  
B M A O N S L L E B E U L B I T L Y  
P O P P Y A Y F Q U X M M B U L F H  
Q D M F R S E A E L I M W L G X N Y  
Z U P O Z I E Q Q N H R I L V Z U M  
M M C L S R O X T Z O P G D A I S Y  
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Asters  
Bluebells  
Cactus  
Columbine  
Coneflower  
Coral Bells  
Crocus  
Dahlia  
Daisy  
Daylily  
Fireweed  
Foxglove  
Geranium  
Hydrangea  
Iris  
Lobelia  
Lupine

Mallow  
Marigolds  
Mint  
Mum  
Orchid  
Phlox  
Poppy  
Primroses  
Roses  
Sunflower  
Trillium  
Tulips  
Verbena  
Violet  
Yarrow  
Zinniar

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## Crossword

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### Across

1 Taro root  
5 Absorbs, with “up”  
9 Iraqi city  
14 Discomfit  
15 Samoan cash  
16 Ordinary  
17 Farmer’s chick warmer  
19 Durable fabric  
20 Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy  
21 Floppy  
23 Drops on blades  
25 Mark of perfection  
26 Angler’s basket  
30 Black ink item  
33 Educ. group  
36 Robust  
37 Ranch, maybe  
39 Ornamental pocketbook  
40 Supporter person  
41 Shamu, for one  
42 Fabricated  
44 Sag  
45 Juicer  
46 High point  
47 Surrealist Max  
48 Court do-over

### Down

1 “Beowulf,” for one  
2 Comedian Carvey  
3 Backgammon  
6 Cheerios grain  
7 Trudge  
8 Rani’s wear  
9 Pails  
10 Pallid  
11 Legal action  
12 Diatribe  
13 Lily family member  
18 How Junior behaved

### Across

22 Have the helm  
24 Maori “woman”  
26 \_\_\_ salad  
27 Sine or cosine  
28 Expel  
29 Modify  
31 Bubbly drinks  
32 Refines, as ore  
33 Evita, for one  
34 Fiesta fare  
35 Show flexibility  
38 Unit of pressure  
40 Blood carrier  
43 Shipping hazard  
44 Introduction  
48 Weighed down  
50 Bay window  
51 God in Vedic mythology  
52 With, in Paris  
53 2004 Queen Latifah movie  
54 Hotel convenience  
55 Give off, as light  
57 Isinglass  
58 Decant  
59 Craving  
60 Catch sight of  
63 Victoria’s Secret item

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