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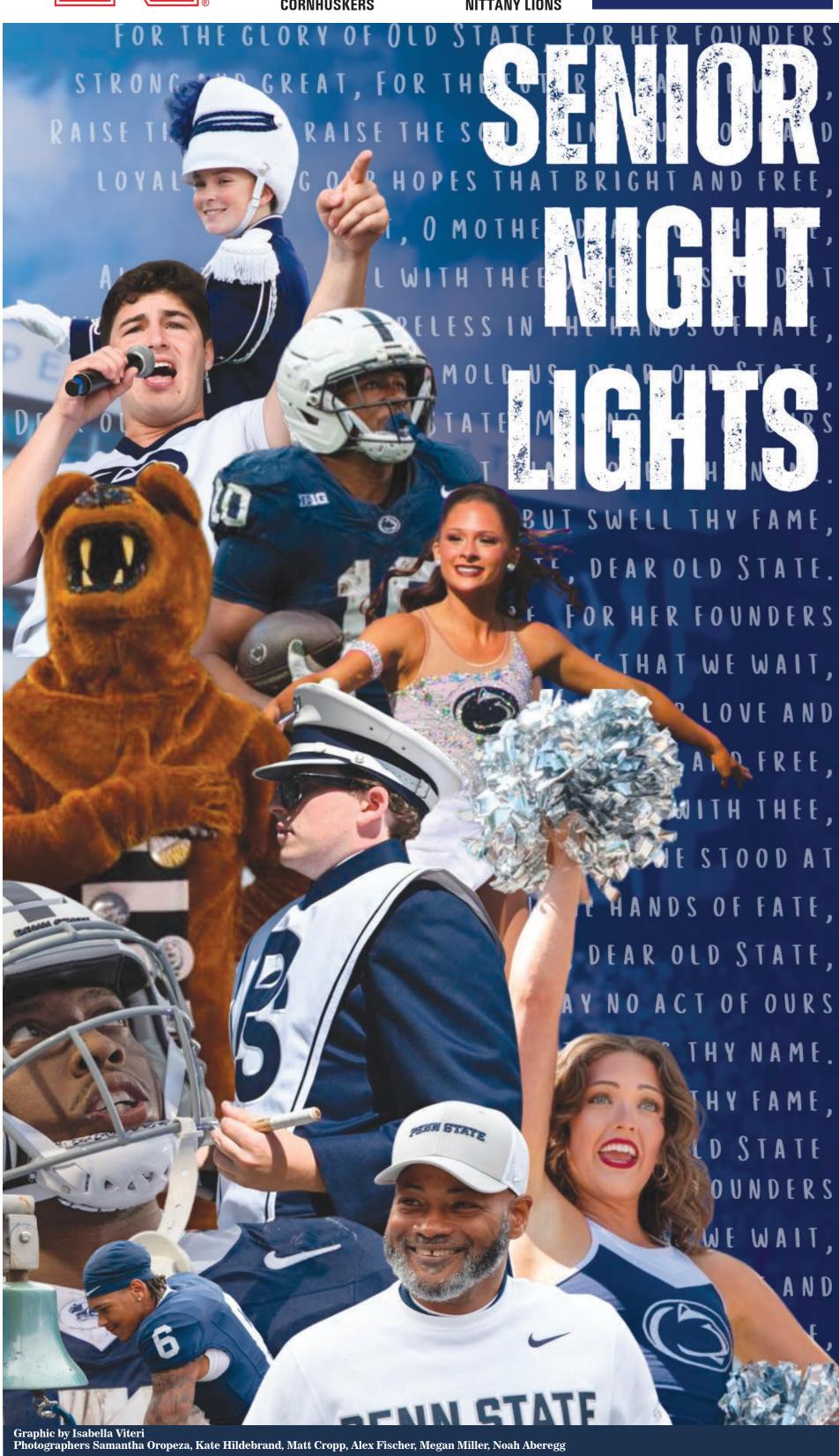
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NEBRASKA (7-3) CORNHUSKERS (4.5) PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS







THE FRANKLIN EFFECT

Interim head coach Terry Smith discusses the James Franklin hire, its impact

By Lexie Linderman THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Just over eight hours after James Franklin was introduced as Virginia Tech's head coach, the interim head coach at his previous institution met with the media following practice Wednesday.

Terry Smith opened up his scrum with a brief statement to clarify some things he said or forgot to say Monday during his emotional press conference. Smith apologized for misstating information about his hometown of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, and said he does speak with Franklin "every other day."

Besides that, Smith touched on Franklin joining the Hokies, the team-first mindset and how he's adjusting despite staff depar-

Franklin's hire

Smith didn't get a chance to ahead. watch Franklin's press conferdid express how happy he is that his former employer has already found a new destination.

"I'm really happy for him," Smith said. "In this industry with coaching, we all go through highs and lows at some point, if you're coaching, you're gonna get fired at some point. And just happy for him and his family (that they) bounced back so soon.'

Franklin has already begun recruiting at Virginia Tech, and he's offered multiple former and curfor the Nittany Lions and Smith, who have continued to try and Smith said. "Goes back to when



Interim head coach Terry Smith talks to the media during a press conference in Holuba Hall on Nov. 19, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

ence Wednesday morning, but he of Franklin already having a job and the immediate threat that poses for Penn State.

"Well, the immediate threat is to take Penn State players right with the uncertainty of the next head coach, with the locker room, which is the most important thing that we can do is protect the locker room," Smith said. "When it comes to recruits, high school recruits, he has an advantage right now because we don't have a permanent head coach."

As for Smith possibly following rent Penn State commits. With Franklin and joining his staff in that brings issues and problems Blacksburg, he didn't rule it out. a

"Anything's possibility,'

of infinite possibilities. Nothing Smith spoke on the challenges matters about those possibilities, except us playing this weekend. I love the game of football. I will be coaching the game of football on Saturday, and ... God willing, next Saturday. And then after that, we'll let business take care of business. But all that matters is we have to beat Nebraska."

Playing for the team Smith has preached effort and

playing to win since he took over as the interim head coach, and his halftime speech against Michigan State once again showed how important that was to him. He spoke more about team culture Wednesday.

recruit despite the uncertainty we brought out the 'IF,' our word team last week about individual agendas," Smith said. "We all have an agenda for our own families to be successful in this business. All of our agendas have to align to the team. And right now, all of our guys are aligned to beating Nebraska, and that's all that matters.'

One of those individual agendas is Kaytron Allen's. The senior is currently 139 yards away from breaking the Penn State career rushing yards record, and there's a very real possibility he can hit that mark against Nebraska, which has the fifth-worst run defense in the Big Ten.

But Smith wants Allen to break that record, and knows that if the running back keeps doing what "I gave a conversation to our he's done his whole career —

which is be a team-player — he'll end up on the top of that leader-

'He rushes within the team aspect," Smith said. "Him and Nick have shared the ball for their career, and he knows and understands that if Nick is hot, we're going to continue to give Nick the ball, but we want nothing more than for him to have one of those great days where he can break the record. But again, it's a team game, so we're going to feature him and Nick."

Staff departures

Penn State has already lost seven staff members since Franklin's introductory press conference, including its chief of staff Kevin Threlkel and General Manager of Personnel and Recruitment Andy Frank.

Smith was asked about those departures and how the Nittany Lions plan to fill the holes that they've left. He's confident, however, that Penn State will be just fine for the rest of the season.

"We just got to restructure, make sure that those job responsibilities are being taken care of,"

"We have a great staff here. We have a lot of people that take great pride in picking up the slack where things are void. This is no different than injuries on the field. It's the next person up. The job has to be done. So we'll adjust. We'll keep it moving. Our feet are on the ground, and we're prepared to go beat Nebraska."

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Energy up for Penn State as it searches for 2 wins in a row

By Lyle Alenstein THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Six hours and 365 miles. That's the distance between Blacksburg, Virginia and State College, Pennsylvania.

Roanoke-Blacksburg Airport for his introductory press conference Tech. He shook hands, took photos, did many interviews and took in Lane Stadium for the first time. Hours away, was Holuba Hall,

Earlier in the day, it was James

a building that Franklin hasn't set foot in since being fired from Penn State. Inside that build-

game on Saturday since Sept. 13. With the cold weather in the

air in Happy Valley, the Nittany Lions went to work inside, getting ready to build off of the momentum they earned after dethroning Michigan State. It was once again a short

Franklin that touched down at viewing window for the media, only seeing two five-minute periods. To start, it was the special as the new head coach at Virginia teams who took over both ends of the field. Both the starters and developmental squad on punt block worked on getting to Gabe Nwosu. Defensive ends Dani Dennis-

Sutton and Jaylen Harvey looked like they would've had success in ing was a team that won its first said drills. It shouldn't come off as The running backs worked on Liam Clifford was, continuing his

blocked three punts this year, including one on Saturday against the Spartans. The trio of blocks tied both Jack Ham and Andrew Collins for the most in the program for a single-season.

Barker banging kicks through the uprights. He's been a key piece of the triumph the special teams has had in 2025, going 12-for-13 on field goals with his lone missed being from 50 yards out that got blocked against Villanova to end Lambert wore Smolik's No. 14 for the half. The horn then sounded to signify the end of the period and a changing of drills. The safeties worked on blitzes.

caught short passes with quick

Quarterback Ethan Grunkemeyer was the lone gunslinger to fire off passes during the window. He threw quick On the other end, it was Ryan outs to running backs and wide receivers working the sidelines. Freshman quarterback

> Bekkem Kritza was in attendance after being inactive against the Spartans. Jaxon Smolik was not to be seen, but walk-on Jack scout team. The aforementioned duo wasn't yelled.

throwing during the media portion of practice, but wide receiver

a shock for Dennis-Sutton, as he's blitz pick ups. The pass-catchers role as a gadget quarterback. On the injury front, defensive

end Chaz Coleman missed his second consecutive practice after being inactive since the Indiana game. Safety Antoine Belgrave-Shorter also missed his second week in a row of practice, debuting on the injury report against the Spartans. With the goal being another win

this upcoming Saturday against Nebraska, assistant wide receivers coach Mark Dupuis was hyping up the team in between reps. 'That's a good drill," Dupuis

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NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name Pos	sition/Elig.
0	Javin Wright	LB/Sr.	19	Cortez Mills Jr.	WR/Fr.	39	David Hoffken	DL/Fr.	62	Sam Sledge	OL/So.
1	Ceyair Wright	DB/Sr.	21	Emmett Johnson	RB/Jr.	39	Bryson Webber	DB/Fr.	63	Brian Tapu	OL/Fr.
2	Jacory Barney Jr.	WR/So.	21	Rex Guthriee	DB/Fr.	40	Dawson Merritt	LB/Fr.	65	Teddy Prochazka	OL/Sr.
3	Marques Buford Jr.	DB/Sr.	22	Maverick Noonan	DL/So.	41	Tanner Terch	DB/Fr.	66	Grant Brix	OL/Fr.
4	Janiran Bonner	WR/Jr.	22	Isaiah Mozee	RB/Fr.	42	Derek Wacker	LB/Fr.	67	Houston Ka'aha'aina Torre	,
5	Riley Van Poppel	DB/Sr.	23	Caleb Benning	DB/Fr	43	Michael Booker III	LB/Sr.	68	Preston Tauma	OL/Fr.
6	Dane Key	WR/Sr.	23	Blye Hill	DB/So.	44	Luke Lindenmeyer	TE/Jr.	69	Turner Corcoran	OL/Sr.
7	Malcolm Hartzog	LB/Sr.	23	Conor Booth	RB/Fr.	45	Izaac Dickey	RB/Fr.	69	Landen Davidson	DL/Fr.
8	DeShon Singleton	DB/Sr.	24	Derek Branch	DB/Sr.	45	Roger Gradney	LB/Fr.	70	Noaah Fennessy	OL/Fr.
9	Vincent Shavers	LB/So.	24	Jamarion Parker	RB/Fr.	46	Connor Schutt	WR/Fr.	71	Tyson Terry	DL/Fr.
10	Henrich Haarberg	LB/So.	25	Jeremiah Charles	DB/So.	46	Kevin Gallic	LS/Sr.	72	Gibson Pyle	OL/Fr.
10	Andrew Marshall	DB/Jr.	26	Roman Mangini	WR/Jr.	47	Gabe Stenger	LB/Jr.	74	Brock Knutson	OL/So.
11	Cameron Lenhardt	DL/Jr .	26	Brice Turner	DB/So.	48	Cayden Echternach	DB/So.	75	Tyler Knaak	OL/Jr.
11	Bode Soukup	QB/Fr.	28	Kwinten Ives	RB/So.	48	Caden VerMaas	DB/Fr.	76	Jason Maciejczak	OL/So.
12	Jalyn Gramstad	QB/Jr.	29	Carter Nelson	TE/So	49	Danny King	TE/Fr.	77	Gunnar Gottula	OL/So.
12	Justyn Rhett	DB/So.	29	Braylen Prude	DB/Fr.	50	Christian Jones	DL/Fr.	78	Jacob Brandl	OL/So.
13	Nyziah Hunter	WR/So.	30	Tristan Alvano	PK/So.	50	Rocco Spindler	OL/Sr.	79	Shawn Hammerbeck	OL/Fr.
13	Jamir Conn	DB/Jr.	30	Vincent Genatone	RB/Jr.	51	Justin Evans	OL/Jr.	80	Jeremiah Jones	WR/Fr.
14	Amare Sanders	DB/Fr.	31	Mario Buford	S/Fr.	52	Dylan Rogers	LB/So.	81	Hayes Miller	WR/So.
14	TJ Lateef	QB/Fr.	32	Kenneth Williams	RB/So.	54	Jacob Bower	LB/So.	82	Eric Ingwerson	TE/Fr.
15	Dylsn Raiola	QB/So.	32	Trent Uhlir	LB/Fr.	55	Ethan Duda	LB/Fr.	83	Archie Wilson	P/Fr.
15	Dasan McCullough	LB/Sr.	33	Marques Watson-Trent	LB/Sr.	56	Julian Marks	OL/Fr.	84	DJ Singleton Jr.	WR/Fr.
16	Elijah Jeudy	DL/Sr.	34	Preston Okafor	DB/Fr.	56	Pierce Mooberry	LB/Fr.	85	Keelan Smith	WR/Fr.
17	Luke Longval	QB/Jr.	35	Mekhi Nelson	RB/Fr.	57	Ashton Murphy	DL/Fr.	86	Mason Goldman	DL/So.
17	Willis McGahee IV	TE/Jr.	36	Rowdy Bauer	WR/Fr.	57	Elijah Pitchett	OL/Jr.	87	Mac Markway	TE/So.
18	Quinn Clark	WR/Fr.	37	Donovan Jones	DB/Fr.	58	Jake Peters	OL/Fr.	88	Jackson Carpenter	WR/Fr.
18	Larry Tarver Jr.	DB/Fr.	37	Kamdyn Koch	P/Fr.	59	Henry Lutovsky	OL/Sr.	90	John Hohl	PK/So.
19	Kahmir Prescott	DB/Fr.	38	Thomas D'Onofrio	DB/Fr.	59	Rahmir Stewart	LB/So.	90	Jaylen George	DL/Jr.

PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

Khalil Dinkins

Bekkem Kritza

King Mack

TE/Sr

QB/Fr.

S/Jr.

35

36

38

Tyler Armstead

Zuriah Fisher

Jackson Pryts

16

16

16

No.	Name Posit	tion/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	N
NO. 0	Dominic DeLuca	LB/Sr.	No. 17	Ethan Grunkemeyer	QB/Fr.	1NO. 38	Winston Yates	LB/So.	No. 71	T
-	Kyron Hudson	WR/Sr.	17	Kenny Woseley Jr.	CB/Fr.	39	Ty Blanding	DT/So.	71 72	7
$\frac{1}{2}$	Liam Clifford	WR/Sr. WR/Sr.	18	Max Granville	DE/Fr.	39	Jashaun Green	S/Jr.	73	ľ
2	Audavion Collins	WK/Sr. CB/Jr.	18	Josiah Brown	WR/Fr.	39 40	Anthony Speca	S/Jr. LB/Fr.	74	
3		СБ/Jr. S/Fr.	19 19	Chaz Coleman	WK/Fr. DE/Fr.	40 42	Mason Robinson	DE/So.	74 75	J.
_	Antoine Belgrave-Shorter			Jack Lambert				•		1/
3	Koby Howard	WR/Fr.	19		QB/So.	43	Dayshaun Burnett	DE/Fr.	76	1
4	Tyseer Denmark	WR/Fr.	20	Mylachi Williams	DE/Fr.	44	Jaylen Harvey	DE/Fr.	77	,
4	A.J. Harris	CB/Jr	21	Vaboue Toure	S/Fr.	44	Matt Henderson	TE/Fr.	78	1/
5	Daryus Dixson	CB/Fr.	21	Jabree Coleman	RB/Fr.	45	Enai White	DT/Jr.	79	1
5	Devonte Ross	WR/Sr.	23	Tikey Hayes	RB/Fr.	46	Cortez Harris`	DE/Fr.	80	J
6	Zakee Wheatley	S/Sr.	23	Jahmir Joseph	CB/Fr.	47	Aidan Probst	DE/Fr.	81	I
6	Matt Outten	WR/Fr.	24	Corey Smith	RB/Fr.	48	Tyler Duzansky	SN/Sr.	82	ŀ
7	Kaden Saunders	WR/Jr.	24	Amare Campbell	LB/Jr.	50	Cooper Cousins	OL/So.	83	I
7	Zion Tracy	CB/Jr.	25	Quinton Martin Jr.	RB/Fr	50	Alonzo Ford Jr.	DT/Sr.	84	I
8	DaKaari Nelson	LB/So.	25	Alex Tatsch	LB/Fr.	51	Michael Troutman III	OL/Fr.	85	Ι
8	Trebor Pena	WR/Sr.	26	Cam Smith	LB/Fr.	52	Randy Adirika	DT/Fr.	86	A
9	Elliot Washington Il	CB/Jr.	26	Cam Wallace	RB/So.	52	Dominic Rulli	OL/Jr.	87	Α
10	Nick Singleton	RB/Sr.	27	Lamont Payne Jr.	CB/So.	5 3	Nick Dawkins	OL/Sr.	88	A
10	Dejuan Lane	S/So.	28	Zane Durant	DT/Sr.	54	Xavier Gilliam	DT/Fr.	88	S
11	LaVar Arrington ll	LB/Fr.	28	Karson Kiesewetter	S/So.	54	Ian Harvie	OL/Jr.	89	F
11	Lyrick Samuel	WR/Fr:	29	Daniel Jennings	DE/Fr,	54	TJ Shanahan Jr.	OL/So.	90	Ι
12	Anthony Ivey	WR/Jr.	30	Amiel Davis	RB/Sr.	55	Chimdy Onoh	OL/So.	92	Α
12	Xxavier Thomas	CB/Fr.	30	Kari Jackson	LB/Fr.	58	Kaleb Artis	DT/Jr.	93	F
13	Kaytron Allen	RB/Sr.	31	Logan Cunningham	WR/Jr.	59	Brady O'Hara	OL/Fr.	94	I
13	Tony Rojas	LB/Jr.	31	Kolin Dinkins	CB/Jr.	61	Liam Horan	OL/Fr.	94	Ι
14	Braz Thomas	S/Fr.	32	Keon Wylie	LB/Jr.	63	Alex Birchmeier	OL/So.	95	J
14	Riley Thompson	P/Sr.	33	Dani Dennis-Sutton	DE/Sr.	64	Eagan Boyer	OL/Fr.	98	N
14	Jaxon Smolik	QB/So.	34	Tyler Holzworth	RB/Sr.	65	Jim Fitzgerald	OL/Jr.	99	3
15	Drew Allar	QB/Sr.	34	Owen Wafle	DT/Fr.	66	Drew Shelton	OL/Sr.	99	(
15	Joshua Johnson	CB/Fr.	35	Blaise Sokach-Minnio	ek SN/Jr.	67	Henry Boehme	OL/So.		
		-,					3	, 0.		

CB/Fr.

DE/Sr.

LB/Jr.

68

70

Anthony Donkoh

Garrett Sexton

Name Position/Elig. Vega Ioane OL/Jr. OL/Sr. Nolan Rucci Caleb Brewer OL/Fr. J'ven Williams OL/So. **Matt Detisch** OL/Jr. **Mason Carlan** OL/Sr. OL/Fr. **Owen Aliciene** Malachi Goodman OL/Fr. **Donnie Harbour** OL/Fr. WR/Fr. Jeff Exinor Jr. **Donte Nastasi** CB/So. **Ethan Black** WR/So. TE/Fr. **Brian Kortovich Peter Gonzalez** WR/Fr. Luke Reynolds TE/So. WR/Fr. **Aaron Enterline** WR/So. **Andrew Rappleyea**

TE/Fr.

DT/So.

TE/So.

DT/Fr.

SN/Fr.

DE/So.

K/So. DT/Fr.

DE/So.

K/Fr. DE/Fr.

P/Sr

Andrew Olesh

Finn Furmanek

Andrew Dufault

Liam Andrews

Bobby Mears

Ryan Barker

De'Andre Cook Jordan Maver

Matthew Parker

Yvan Kemajou Gabriel Nwosu

OL/So.

OL/Fr.

Sam Siafa

FRANKLIN TO VIRGINIA TECH

5 questions Penn State needs to answer following his hire by the Hokies

By Lyle Alenstein

Franklin has been found and it resides in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Multiple reports have indicated that Franklin is finalizing a deal to be the next head coach for Virginia Tech.

With Franklin off to be the new leader of the Hokies, here are five questions that Penn State needs

How much of the current roster changes?

There was expected to be roster turnover for Penn State come the end of the season regardless, but now that topic is at the forefront of the program with Franklin's new spot coming to the

Only one player has entered the transfer portal since his departure in tight end Joey Schalffer. Who knows if more depart during the final stretch of the regular season, but if players chose to go portaling, Franklin will more than likely get the numbers of his former players up and moving.

During Franklin's tenure in State College, the narrative around him wasn't he couldn't win the big game. What wasn't questioned was his abilities as a recruiter and being a players'

No matter the destination of where Franklin landed, he was going to have his former players have eyes on his whereabouts. Now, it's only a matter of how many chose to follow him or decide to look elsewhere if players chose to enter the transfer portal.

What will the staff turnover look like?

Much like Franklin being a players' coach, he's been loyal to season.

the staff who have worked under his watchful eye.

It is more than likely that A new landing spot for James Franklin will explore the option of bringing back some staff

members.

Penn State's new head coach could choose to clear house regardless if the hire isn't inter-

nal, so that could leave a plethora of options to join forces with Franklin or look elsewhere. The other lingering factor with this is staff members who are lettermen that hold assistant posi-

tion spots or analysts. Franklin was loyal to guys with Penn State ties, so he could look to bring them in as the roles for them aren't guaranteed with whoever is next in line in Happy Valley.

How much will the deal for Penn State's next coach be worth?

When Franklin first inked a deal with the Nittany Lions in 2014, the initial contract was worth \$4.5 million per year over six years, according to Bruce Feldman, formerly of CBS. Then, in 2021, he signed a 10-

year contract extension worth \$75 million, with a buyout that was supposed to be nearly \$49 million, but a report from Jon Sauber of the Centre Daily Times said that Penn State reached a settlement with Franklin where the university will owe him \$9 million. Multiple reports confirmed the initial report by Sauber.

According to USA Today, there are currently nine head coaches being paid over \$10 million per year. Lane Kiffin and Eli Drinkwitz, both are hot names to potentially land elsewhere during the coaching cycle, could be names that both reach that status soon after currently holding deals where they receive \$9 million a



James Franklin, Virginia Tech's new head football coach, pauses after he was introduced during an NCAA college football news conference, Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025, in Blacksburg, Va.

That leaves the question as to if the athletic department will raise the price for its next head coach based off of the current market. Franklin made \$8.5 million per season at Penn State.

What will be the recruiting ramifications?

Franklin's buy-in from recruits was clear with the spur of players that have since decommitted following the firing of Franklin.

In the 2026 class, 13 recruits have backed off their pledge while in the 2027 class all four high schoolers dropped their commitments. For comparison, LSU had one player back off their commitment following the firing of Brian Kelly while zero players departed from Florida after it pulled the plug on Billy Napier.

While the wins in "big games" never really occurred for Franklin, his reputation as a recruiter and ability to develop was there.

One of Franklin's strengths as a recruiter was the ability to bring in talent from the DMV. From Virginia, he's landed players such as Tyler Warren, Tony Rojas, Kaytron Allen and Trace McSorley. From Maryland, he's brought in guys like Olu Fashanu, Zakee Wheatley, PJ Mustipher, Dani Dennis-Sutton, Tariq Castro-Fields and Kevin Winston Jr. To add potential insult to injury,

Brian Dohn of 247Sports tweeted that he spoke to multiple former Penn State commits who said they would take a visit wherever Franklin goes.

What will the expectations be for Penn State's next head coach?

Franklin had a comfortable seat in the Lasch Building for over 11 seasons. He arguably had the safest job in college football for a really long time.

That argument was made

because he kept winning games against winnable teams. He had double-digit wins in six of 11 seasons, won five bowl games, consistently churned out NFL talent and had an appearance in the College Football Playoff a season

Between Franklin, Joe Paterno and Rip Engle, Penn State has a long track record of having coaches stick around for a long time. That expectation in the new era of college football isn't as common anymore, as if expectations fail to be reached, programs often move on.

So if Penn State's next head coach doesn't meet expectations of whatever they might be, it'll be an interesting case of how long the athletic department keeps the coach around — a potential shorter leash in Happy Valley could be in store.

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Who could follow Franklin?

By Lexie Linderman THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After weeks of rumors, James Franklin was officially hired by Virginia Tech on Monday, marking his third collegiate headcoaching gig and his first in the

The job was open after the Hokies decided to fire Brent Pry, Franklin's former defensive coordinator and long-time assistant, after three straight losses to open enhancement up the 2025 season.

transfer portal significant movement.

could see its roster decimated this offseason. Here's a few that could potentially choose that

Tony Rojas, linebacker

First up is Tony Rojas, who already posted on X that Franklin's hire is "well deserved." He also posted after Franklin's firing, saying it was "heartbreaking," and reposted his former coach's quote on College GameDay the week after Franklin was let go about winning a national championship somewhere else.

Rojas is a Virginia native and was offered by Virginia Tech out of high school, but he never took an official, or unofficial, visit to campus. But Franklin being in his home state might change some things for the soon-to-be senior.

There's of course the chance Rojas declares for the NFL draft, but the long-term injury he picked up this season could deter him away from doing so in order to put more on film and boost his draft stock.

If Franklin wants to bring Rojas to his new destination, it's



State tight end Luke **Reynolds** catches the ball before the Homecoming football game against Northwestern.

needs to sell playing in the ACC versus playing in the Big Ten, as Franklin said himself multiple times that the latter and the SEC have separated themselves from

Chuck Losey, assistant athletics director for football performance

Chuck Losey and Franklin have Penn State's players have ex- been together since Franklin was however, is a Penn State letterpressed plenty of support after the head coach at Vanderbilt. His man, so it might be tougher to Franklin was fired by the Nit-loyalty to Franklin has been un-tany Lions in October. He's al-wavering throughout his career, mater. loyalty to Franklin has been un- convince him to leave his alma ways been a coach loved by his as he always spoke highly of him guys, which could cause some and was noticeably by Franklin's side for his last few moments in Beaver Stadium.

There will surely be guys that "James Frank's, my guy," Losfollow Franklin, and Penn State ey said July 14. "I don't want to work for anybody else in this profession. I know what I'm going to get from him every day. He knows what he's going to get from me every day. We have a strong relationship. We're like minded, we have the same goals. I don't take that for granted."

Franklin has also praised Losey right back. Across his career, he consistently spoke about how elite Penn State's conditioning and strength program is, and that's all run by Losey. If Franklin wants Losey to come with him, chances are the Nittany Lions will be in the market for a new strength coach.

Luke Reynolds, tight end

Before deciding he wanted to play tight end in college, Luke Reynolds was committed to Virginia Tech to play quarterback, giving the sophomore some familiarity with Franklin's new school.

That familiarity could be a defining factor in Reynolds' decision to stay at Penn State, transfer elsewhere or follow Franklin.

Franklin always spoke highly of Reynolds, and he was one of the highest-rated recruits in Penn State's 2024 recruiting class. He earned a green light from Franklin last year as a true freshman and has been playing a large role this season for the Nittany Lions with 218 receiving yards. "Yeah, I think (there's) a lot

of confidence (with Reynolds)," Franklin said Sept. 8. "There is also the thing that we look at too is not just that they caught it. It's, okay, after they caught it, one of the things he did is consistently made people miss ... I think there is a ton of confidence in him making the tough catch on a consistent basis.'

Ty Howle, tight ends coach

Ty Howle has been on Penn State's staff for five years, and in

very possible he could. He just that time frame, he's been Penn State's primary recruiter in the Virginia region. With Franklin picking a school in that state, it's likely he'll want Howle to join

Howle has been one of the best tight end coaches in the country in recent years, churning out talent like Pat Freiermuth, Brenton Strange, Theo Johnson and Tyler Warren, who was the first Nittany Lion to win the John Mackey Award.

The North Carolina native,

Ethan Grunkemeyer, quarterback

While many players from Penn State will be transferring out, Virginia Tech will be dealing with the same thing, and Franklin will likely want to pick his own quarterback rather than pick one from the Hokies' current roster.

Insert Ethan Grunkemeyer. As a recruit, Grunkemeyer mainly had interest from schools in his home state of Ohio, but the Nittany Lions saw something in him and he committed to Franklin. With Penn State's future head coach also likely wanting to pick their own quarterback, Grunkemeyer might be forced to find a new school anyway. Why not Virginia Tech?

If Franklin wants to pick his own quarterback, Grunkemeyer is the top option. He was set to be the Nittany Lions' starter in 2026 when Franklin was still in Happy Valley, he might just end up being Franklin's starting quarterback elsewhere.

Danny O'Brien, quarterbacks coach On the same note, if Franklin

brings Grunkemeyer, he's also bringing Danny O'Brien.

O'Brien played quarterback at Maryland while Franklin was the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach in 2009 and 2010, so the two have a familiarity and long-standing relationship. O'Brien has been coaching the quarterbacks at Penn State for five years. Franklin will likely also want

Grunkemeyer to have the familiarity with O'Brien, as that would be more likely to draw the quarterback to Virginia Tech. Additionally, the Nittany Lions' new head coach is probably not keeping O'Brien on staff, as his record developing quarterbacks hasn't been great up to this

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3 takeaways from Franklin's introduction

By Will Horstman THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

James Franklin arrived at Roanoke-Blacksburg Airport Wednesday morning, officially starting a new era for the coach.

Franklin later went to his introductory press conference as Virginia Tech's next head coach inside Cassell Coliseum, where he outlined his future with the

Here's a few takeaways from the presser.

High aspirations remain

When Franklin was interviewed on ESPN's College GameDay the weekend after he was fired at Penn State, he said his goal is still to win a national championship. At his presser Wednesday, Franklin spoke on how Virginia Tech can thrive.

"I think the first thing is alignment, like we've already talked about, from the board, the president, the athletic director, the head football coach, some of those things deal with a financial commitment, which has been made," Franklin said. "Those things started early in the process, and before I was even a candidate."

Franklin also said hiring the right assistants on staff is a part of building success for a program. He had a history of bringing in coordinators at Penn State who went on to head coaching jobs of their own. Helping that is a supportive

fanbase, which Franklin said he still has in his new destination.

"I think the things that kind of stood out to me right away is the passion for Virginia Tech football, the things that kind of align from a regional perspective," Franklin said. "I got tremendous respect for the state of Virginia, the high school football. And also when you talk about a six-hour radius from campus the number of high level football players, the types of coaching that they're getting, and the attractiveness of Virginia Tech to them as well."

Virginia Tech got its guy Franklin was fired from

Penn State on Oct. 12, and he was soon targeted as a coaching candidate by Virginia Tech. insight into it.

Franklin said he didn't want to go into the specifics of the hiring process, but he provided some "I think they were very aggressive," Franklin said. "The very first time we met, I don't want to speak for them, but I

feel like they were ready for

me to say yes that night, and I

thought it was just an initial con-

versation, but I think they were aggressive. And what I will also say, thanks to the leadership of everybody, is what was very obvious to me very early on is that they had a plan.

Franklin said Virginia Tech came to him with a plan that not only outlined what the program needed to do in the ACC but also on the national stage.

Franklin said "commitment must match those expectations," and he felt the Hokies did so.

"There was an approach and mentality that I think aligned with what I was looking for and what my family was looking for," Franklin said. "I think that really helped the process. It wasn't like having a conversation with me. I'm talking about the things that I think we need to have to be successful at the very highest level, they were already there. So I think that really helped with the entire process."

Franklin's meshing his experience with Hokie history

Franklin said he was a drive away from competing for a national championship last season when Penn State lost to Notre Dame in the Orange Bowl, giving him confidence he could compete for titles.

"I know what it looks like. I know what you need to do," Franklin said. "We learn from that experience. We grew from that experience again, the alignment, the commitment based on what we've done in our past as well. You pour all these things together at a place that's got great history, that's got great traditions, that's got great pride."

Franklin had been the Nittany Lions' coach since 2014, winning 10 or more games in a single campaign six times. Before that, he was at the helm of Vanderbilt from 2011-13, where he had two nine-win seasons.

Now with the Hokies, Franklin said he'll mix those experiences with his knowledge on Virginia

"But the reality is, I'm going to need to lean into all these men, coach (Frank) Beamer, coach (Bud) Foster and understand the institutional knowledge, the community knowledge and be able to take my experiences and intertwine them with the university, with the community knowledge, with the institutional knowledge, to put Virginia Tech in the best position to be successful," Franklin said.

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A STORIED TRADITION

By Will Horstman THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State is set to host Nebraska this weekend, and the history between these two teams goes way back.

The Nittany Lions and the Cornhuskers met over 100 years ago, and they've since had games between famous coaches prior to both becoming Big Ten foes. Here's the full history between

Penn State and Nebraska with the Cornhuskers holding a 10-8 advantage in the series.

Early history

Even before these two teams were both in the Big Ten, Penn State and Nebraska met on several occasions, dating back to 1920, when the Nittany Lions won the first matchup, 20-0.

The series went on a 29-year break after the first game with the squads meeting again in 1949, and Penn State came out victorious again. Nebraska got its first win over the Nittany Lions a year later by a 19-0 shutout.

Overall, Penn State started the series by winning four of the first five contests, including pitching another shutout in 1952, 10-0.

Joe Paterno vs.

Tom Osborne



Running back Saquon Barkley (26) moves the ball forward during the football game against Nebraska at Beaver Stadium on Nov 18, 2017.

the Nittany Lions were coached a second-straight game against by Joe Paterno while the Cornhuskers were led by Tom Osborne. Both are among the top 10 championship run. head coaches all-time in wins.

Osborne's squad earned a 42-17 win in the first meeting between the two coaches. Nebraska won again the next season as it got its first win on the road at Penn

Between 1979-83, Penn State 1981 with Penn State winning, 30and Nebraska met five times as 24, in a top-15 matchup. He won

the Cornhuskers a year later during the Nittany Lions' national The two coaches met for one

last time to kick off the 1983 season, and Nebraska won in a 44-6 blowout, giving Osborne a 3-2 advantage over Paterno. The two teams didn't play again

under Paterno and Osborne, but Paterno defeated Osborne in they still clashed for the rights to the 1994 national championship.

finished No. 1 in the AP Poll, claiming the national title after an Orange Bowl win over No. 3 Miami. Penn State went 12-0 after winning the Big Ten title and the Rose Bowl. Paterno's squad finished No. 2 in the poll and hasn't claimed the national championship.

Modern day Penn State hosted then-No. 8

Nebraska in 2002 inside Beaver Stadium, and it set an attendance record at the time with 110,753 people. The Nittany Lions earned a 40-7 win with their defense picking off quarterback Jammal Lord three times.

The 2003 matchup was closer with Nebraska winning 18-10, and that was the last time the two teams met as nonconference

After the Cornhuskers joined the Big Ten in 2011, the two teams met that same year inside Beaver Stadium when Penn State was on the heels of the Jerry Sandusky scandal. Both squads met at midfield prior to the game for a pregame prayer.

Nebraska squeezed out a 17-14 win with running back Rex Burkhead rushing for 121 yards and a touchdown. Penn State had the ball with less than a minute left, but its drive didn't amount to any points.

The Nittany Lions won their first game over the Cornhuskers as Big Ten opponents in 2017. Running back Saquon Barkley went for 158 rushing yards and three touchdowns to help power a 56-44 victory.

Nebraska has a 4-1 advantage over Penn State since both teams met as conference teams, and the Cornhuskers won the most recent matchup in 2020.

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Players make pitch for Terry Smith to be program's next HC

By Lyle Alenstein

When James Franklin left Vanderbilt for Penn State, he referred to the Commodores as the "previous institution." In speaking with the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors on Tuesday, he referred to the Nittany Lions as 'the last place.'

While Franklin's next chapter is known, Penn State still doesn't know its next head coach. A handful of players made their case on why interim head coach Terry Smith should be the man for the

"He works very hard for us. He pours so much energy into us. He's around all the time," starting right guard Anthony Donkoh said. "He wants to hear player feedback. He wants to know what we're doing right, what we're doing wrong. And he doesn't just listen to it. He takes the feedback and he runs with it, and he makes the changes that are necessary."

Smith was thrusted into a brutal situation, stepping in for a plummeting Penn State team team and all that." that had fired Franklin, who led the operation for 11 full seasons.

After losses to Iowa, Ohio State and Indiana, the dedication and investment he's put into the proa win over Michigan State on Saturday.

didn't waver once. Stood up to the plate and he's kept swinging every day," long snapper Tyler Duszansky said. "So everyone in the building is bought into coach Terry. Everyone knows that we can trust in him and whatever he does that will help lead us to success."

When the clock struck zero, he torade shower, signifying a muchneeded win for Penn State but also a weight off of his shoulders.

"Coach Smith has been really good," running back Nick said.



Penn State interim head coach Terry Smith wipes his eyes during a press conference in Beaver Stadium on Nov. 17, 2025.

Singleton said. "When he got the message about coach Franklin, on Monday talking about how obviously being fired, he stepped much even just being the interin and didn't blink. His energy imhead coach has meant to him. was really good. He brings up the He's played for Penn State, had

coming to a close after a home game on Saturday against Nebraska and a road game the following week against Rutgers, gram since taking over as interim Penn State is approaching the head coach was rewarded with timeline where it needs to name its next head coach.

Smith, who said on Monday "Terry stepped into the fire and that he hasn't had a formal interview for the job, views his application for it as what he does on a day-to-day basis.

Despite not having a set one-on-one on his calendar with Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Pat Kraft, his players believe Smith could easily slot into the head coaching role.

"The amount of respect and was rewarded with a purple Ga- how he carries himself as a man with respect, and how he treats everyone, and how much love and effort he puts into the game — it's crazy," safety Zakee Wheatley

Smith broke down in tears both older and younger family With the regular season members attend the university and has been on staff now for 12 seasons.

The growing feeling within the Lasch Building is Smith embodies what it means to be a Nittany Lion, and that's the pitch from players for having his interim tag stripped to become the next Penn State head

"He's an amazing human being, first and foremost," Donkoh said. "He would keep the Penn State culture, that family culture that we have around and not change the culture into a business-like culture, like most programs in the country. That's my spiel on having coach Terry be hired as the head coach."

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Kemajou earns stripes coach Deion Barnes on his pass

By Lyle Alenstein THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Mechanical engineering is the study of machines and mechanisms that involve force and movement. In his freshman year, Yvan

Kemajou has become a player of noticeable force and movement on the defensive line — it only makes sense, as he's studying mechanical engineering. "I think it's been great,"

Kemajou said. "It's been a blessing. Really just being here, having an opportunity to play at Penn State. See great players, have great coaches here. It's been amazing."

On Wednesday evening, the defensive end was the latest freshman selected by interim head coach Terry Smith on a case-by-case basis to speak to the media. Cornerback Daryus Dixson spoke postgame on Saturday, breaking a streak of around a decade of freshmen not speaking until the postseason at the earliest, as implemented by James Franklin.

answers and was respectful with around at Penn State with an offseason that will likely have tons of roster turnover, he's going to be talking to reporters more often based on the vision people in the Lasch Building have for him.

"Yvan is having an amazing freshman year," Smith said last week. "This kid is going to be a major part of Penn State's future. He continues to get more snaps. Love his development, his work ethic. Love his tenacity. He's a big, strong guy."

Kemajou, a 4-star prospect via the 247Sports composite rankings, drew rave reviews since getting to campus as an early enrollee last January. He credited work with former assistant defensive line coach Torrence Brown, who left in May to be the defensive line coach at Western

Since getting to campus, he's worked closely with position

rush. On top of that, he had to get used to getting up to speed with the level of play in college compared to high school, focusing more on scheme instead of going out there and being able to dominate while freestyling. "Just understanding plays. As a

high school player, you kind of go out there and play," Kemajou said. "Now, I'm really understanding the offensive side of how they're trying to manipulate you and what not. So just understanding that there's been a growth I've seen." He felt comfortable making the

transition to Penn State's strength and conditioning program. The staff also had conversations with him playing on the interior, but he was adamant about playing on the

He's also felt at ease with all the off field stuff, which not every player coming from high school to college is used to between living on your own and the balancing act between classes and football. The comfortability within the program has allowed him to settle in quicky and make an impact on the field He gave quick, but efficient in the same amount of time.

"I think I've been pretty well, his delivery. For his first time school and whatnot, so I don't speaking with the media he was think it was a big adjustment for composed. If he ends up sticking me," Kemajou said. "Just made sure I got all my assignments done in a timely manner. Everything's good and the living situation is also great. There really wasn't much issues coming here.'

> In a freshman year where he has notched six total tackles and a pass breakup so far, his head coach got fired and Penn State has underperformed. While Kemajou has turned heads and burned his redshirt, the year isn't what was originally envisioned.

> While lots of uncertainties are ahead for Kemajou, he feels that himself and his teammates are focused on being where their feet are and not what is in store.

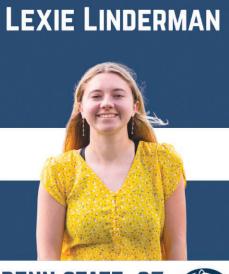
> "I feel we always focused on the next game or the game we had each week, and just being the best version of ourselves every day," Kemajou said.

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COLLEGIAN FOOTBALL STAFF PREDICTIONS











NEBRASKA: 21

LYLE ALENSTEIN



PENN STATE: 27 **NEBRASKA: 20**

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A WORK IN PROGRESS

Increasing destigmatization of mental health discussions

By Anisa Daniel-Oniko
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In recent times, students have seemingly become less reluctant to discuss their mental health, and while the exact causes are varied, social media has played a large role in opening the floor for more conversations.

Theresa Welles said increased student willingness to talk about mental health may come from a "combination of things," including a push from mental health professionals to counter the notion that mental health is somehow different from bodily health.

"I think it's been a work in progress that has been successful, and I think in some ways, what really has worked is communicating about it on all different levels," Welles said.

Welles has seen some disorders, like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), losing stigma as they became better understood, while others, like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, are still less understood and more feared. However, she's enthusiastic about the general concerns.

"I'm really excited about the group of individuals who are talking about it, communicating, learning about it," she said. "I think that students are some of the smartest humans we've had in history, and I think that they are really open to trying to connect with each other in ways that are really important."

Welles thinks social media may have contributed to mental health discussions both positively and negatively. She said social media has allowed a broader audience to hear from people experiencing mental health struggles, and has served to normalize and validate those struggles.

"I've been to concerts where the lead singers have said, 'Hey, shout out to my therapist," she said. "I mean, I just think over-



A sign for the Student Health Center sits outside the University Health Services (UHS) building on Oct. 1, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

about it."

However, Welles mentioned a need for caution regarding mental health misinformation, especially on social media.

"Again, it's a place where most destignatization of mental health people live at some point," she said. "It's a place with very wide reach. Which can be great, but it's also a place that essentially anybody can get on and discuss things, and talk about things ... whether those things are true or helpful or not. So we have to be cautious, and we have to be informed consumers."

Similarly, Stephanie Stama, assistant director for community education & outreach at Penn State's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), thinks social media has impacted discussions surrounding student mental health.

Stama said research indicates pro-social uses of social media birth positive outcomes, such as "less distress, more self-efficacy (and) better self-esteem," by talking about topics like body neutrality and health instead all, there's been much more of harmful ones like body im- a sex offender map.

education and communication age stereotypes. However, she thinks context is key when it comes to assessing the impact of social media on mental health discussions.

don't people "We want self-diagnosing something that doesn't need pathologizing," she said. Baron Rogers, a Black and

African American student services coordinator at CAPS, said people go to social media to feel heard and seen, even if they find community with people they might not physically see. Rogers said there's "a lot of research showing the importance connection and belonging."

He said people forming connections or finding a sense of belonging with others or "something bigger beyond them," like nature, art or religion, provides a preventive factor for suicide risk.

However, he's had students whose mental health has been impacted by social media apps like Tea, which lets women post information about former partners and potential ones, while also providing background checks and

"I've had students who felt very judged going through this app and have had a lot of anxiety working through this app," he said. "So social media can be a real double-edged sword for sure." In general, Rogers

destigmatization makes people more comfortable receiving help. He said talking about mental health will improve everyone's access, which leads to more expansive and inclusive mental health care down the line.

"It kind of begets a wheel, right?" he said. "If you're part of a very popular fast food chain, that chain grows and access to that chain grows. The more access people have to that, the better the product and the better the Welles thinks it's important to

keep the conversation going, and said she's seen language surrounding mental health change.

"I think language is incredibly important," she said. "It's one of the things that sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom. It's really, really important that we're constantly clarifying and distilling assumptions and defining what we're meaning, and thinking about how we're impacting those that we are talking to."

With the increased openness of mental health discussions, Stama wants students to know when seeking help is appropriate.

because experiencing discomfort doesn't mean you have to reach out immediately for formal support," she said. "You do need to reach out if there are deficits or problems with daily needs like hygiene, eating, sleeping, socializing, getting to classes."

Part of being a human is getting through some things in life that cause discomfort in order to better appreciate the things that create comfort, according to Stama. She said emotions like stress may have negative reputations but can be powerful motivators, and recognizing when stress and anxiety are associated with large life events rather than clinical conditions can be helpful.

Rogers said parents and friends are not always able to help, but conversation — with friends, a

religious leader, family or the free resource CAPS Chat are the first steps before more serious interventions.

Stama said students can do self-work by making small changes to routine and visiting the mental health section in the library. She also recommends mentalhealth related events, such Health Promotion and Wellness's stress management sessions or Campus Recreation's yoga.

"I'd encourage someone who might be more hesitant to talk about mental health to try one of these adjacent to mental health activities and test it out there,' she said. "When you're learning to swim, you don't need to jump in the deep end the first time."

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Inside the Liberal Arts building

By Jocelyn Bilker THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

A loud boom, shaking floors and a visible crack sent students and faculty rushing out of the Susan Welch Liberal Arts Building on Wednesday afternoon, prompting an hours-long emergency response. The university

cited structural issue in its statement and said the building will remain closed until further notice. Instructors who teach class in the building have since adjusted class locations and formats.

Alpha Fire Company Chief Tony Berrena said firefighters discovered a crack about an inch wide in one of the building's interior walls.

Someone became stuck inside a room when the floor movement caused the door to jam, Berrena said. The person sustained no injuries.

James Strauss was teaching a class in Room 114 when the incident occurred.

"I was about five minutes into teaching my class," Strauss, a professor of biology, said. "The floor raised two to three inches and then went back down in a quarter of a second."

Strauss said he saw a crack that stretched from the floor to the ceiling on the wall behind him.

"It took a bit for all of us to process what had just happened," he said. "I looked out the window to make sure it wasn't a car or truck that impacted the building or something like that." Strauss said there were

already arrangements for his class to be moved.

Arielle Lacap was in her American Sign Language class in Room 115 when she heard the

"We just heard this loud boom, not enough to hurt your ears but it was substantial," Lacap, a third-year studying communications sciences and disorders, said. "None of us realized it was serious at first. Then we started



A crowd walks by the Susan Welch Liberal Arts Building on Nov. 12, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

seeing people walk out."

off shortly after and everyone quickly grabbed their stuff. 'My friend saw someone with a

sledgehammer go into the building and we were like, 'Oh someone must be trapped inside," she Isabella Snyder was near the

Matson Museum of Anthropology, which is housed on the building's ground floor, at the time of the incident.

crash, and I thought someone dropped something heavy," Snyder, a third-year studying anthropology, said. "It was very loud and you could feel it in your body." Rosa Eberly was wrapping up a meeting with some colleagues

and graduate students on the fifth floor. The room has large glass windows that look toward the Nittany Lion Inn and is near a stairwell.

"It was jarring," Eberly, an associate professor of rhetoric, said. "I don't know if the floor

sank but I looked at everyone and

said, 'Get out of here,' and I went

Having done research after Lacap said the fire alarm went the 9/11 attacks about how tall buildings come down, she said her main goal was to get out of the building. "I was out of there before

911 was called, and I made sure to tell everyone I encountered to get out," she said. "I had an unusually strong flight response because it definitely sounded like it was beneath us somewhere." Eberly said it felt like the

"All of a sudden, I heard a big movement was toward the back of the building on the Park Avenue side. As of Friday afternoon, orange

and white blockades restrict all entrances to the building and each door has a sign stating that the building is unsafe. There is an order to vacate under §PA Code 403.84.

"This order will not be rescinded until the safety conditions are corrected and the (Pennsylvania) Department of Labor and Industry rescinds this Order," the sign said.

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Graduate students win union

By Rubi Orellana THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State graduate workers have voted to unionize Thursday, marking one of the most important labor developments at the university in recent years.

According to results by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board, graduate workers approved the formation of the Coalition of Graduate Employees-UAW(CGE-UAW) by a vote of 1,882 for and 198 against.

This new union will represent around 4,300 graduate teaching, research and administrative support assistants across all colleges and departments. The vote follows years of organizing after a previous unionization effort in 2018 fell short. "The results of our vote

demonstrate the collective power we have built and the strong mandate we have as we head into bargaining," Maddy Jupina, a graduate assistant in the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, said. According to Jupina, with the

have a real voice to improve working conditions so that graduate employees can thrive.

play a central role in delivering instruction, conducting research and supporting de-

partmental operations, many have cited issues such as low pay, limited job security and unreasonable workload

The vote also drew attention

expectations.

from state-level officials. In October, more than 80 Pennsylvania state senators and representatives sent a letter to university leadership expressing their support for graduate worker unionization and urging Penn State to respect the election results without delay.

With certification CGE-UAW, Penn State's graduate workers join a growing national movement among academic employees.

More than 120,000 academic workers are now represented by the United Auto Workers across the country, including graduate workers and postdoctoral researchers at the University of Pennsylvania, University of Maine, University of Vermont and University of New Hampshire.

The union will now prepare for collective bargaining, with union, graduate assistants will its first contract negotiations expected to address pay, workload protections, job security and other workplace concerns While graduate assistants raised throughout the organizing campaign.

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Penn State graduate student workers gather outside Old Main to demonstrate on Nov. 7, 2024.

@DailyCollegian



down the stairwell."



The Daily Collegian







Faculty, students call for stronger union voice at teach-in

By Jocelyn Bilker THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Faculty members and student organizers from the Penn State Faculty Alliance, Students for International Labor Solidarity (SILS) and United Socialists at Penn State gathered Thursday in the Thomas Building to argue that Penn State needs a faculty

The groups argued saying that major academic decisions are being made without instructor input and that working conditions in the classroom directly affect student learning.

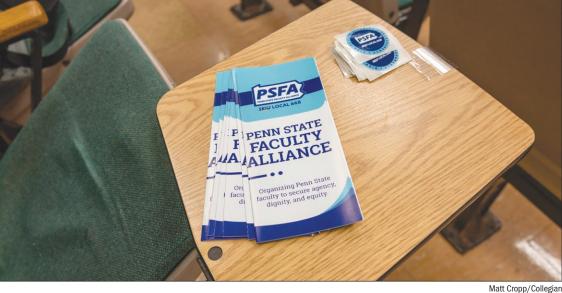
Sasha Coles opened the event by describing the day-to-day experiences of non-tenure-line instructors, who make up a significant portion of Penn State's "We're here to spread the word

about why a faculty union makes a difference for students," Coles, an assistant teaching professor of history, said. She said to attendees that

professors routinely face issues of low pay, job insecurity and limited influence over policies that affect classrooms.

"We want to capture a couple of specific incidents into this, like the lack of faculty voice in shaping the way that things are run here at Penn State," she said. "This includes everything from policies related to COVID-19 inclassroom interactions to instructional mode to health benefits. All of these things have decisions that have been made without faculty input."

Coles said most faculty consultation. She said a union would create a mecha-



Brochures sit on a table during the Faculty Union Teach-In hosted by the Penn State Faculty Alliance (PSFA) in Thomas Building on Nov. 13, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

administration.

layer of security and a venue through which to have a conversation with the university," Coles said. "It allows for a layer of protection but also the opportunity for negotiation."

One of the speakers, Mary Bellman, pointed to recent issues with classroom temperatures in old buildings during the summer and early fall as one example.

'Some of my students were sweating in the classroom and I thought, 'How is that fair?" Bellman, a clinical professor of labor and employment relations and director of labor education, said.

Bellman said she believes major faculty should have more input in instructional decisions including decisions, especially in the hopes salary, benefits, job security and of attracting the best people ing university priorities with its living wages are made without and doing the best job to teach educational mission. students.

more students because we're the university the ability to put "A union provides an extra the closest to the student experience," Bellman said. "Who's going to protect academic freedom otherwise?"

Ben Rutter, a second-year studying psychology, said students should care about faculty labor conditions because those conditions directly influence what happens inside classrooms.

"Faculty needs a greater say in individualized education," Rutter said. "This includes allowing all professors to have a greater say in the faculty senate and a greater influence over the day-to-day of various processes in different departments so we can improve the teaching quality for students."

Rutter said supporting unionization is also a matter of align-

"A huge part of the union is also "If we had more input into increasing pay for non-tenure line

less wiggle room toward finances and focus more on academics and education. By doing this, they are forced to pay more attention instead of throwing large sums of money since their budget would be a bit smaller." He said empowering

instructors helps protect the integrity of academic programs. Changing the budget like this would allow professors to be a bit less worried about their pay and be more focused on the role they play in the greater administration.

Richard Evan Sutton spoke about the broader importance of unions and how faculty organizing fits within a long-standing labor movement.

faculty have rights in their workplace and deserve to be treated with dignity," Sutton, a fourthnism for formal dialogue with decisions, I think it would help faculty," he said. "This would give year studying political science

and president of SILS, said. "They deserve a living wage and be treated fairly by their boss and the government.

He said Penn State's faculty, particularly non-tenure-line instructors, frequently feel undervalued despite handling large teaching loads.

"I have seen what the decline of unions in America has done to working people," Sutton said. "They are now growing in support."

He drew the room's strongest reaction when he referenced President Neeli Bendapudi's recent salary increase.

"The only (public university) president paid a slightly higher salary than Bendapudi is the head of the University of Texas,"

Students responded with a mix of laughter, boos and groans.

"We can't forget about any sense of rationale," Sutton said. "What about the closing of branch campuses too? What if they get rid of certain majors?"

As part of the event, attendees were invited to contribute anonymous "pink sticky notes' describing stresses or concerns about academic life, campus conditions or work-study jobs. The wall quickly filled with notes referencing housing costs, exhaustion, workload pressure, limited advising access and classroom issues. Organizers said the activity was meant to highlight that faculty and students often share overlapping concerns.

"Anonymity was important for allowing people to express their true concerns as an employee," Rutter said. "At the end of the day, "Students need to realize that what we work for is in the name of labor solidarity."

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"I felt more prepared than a lot of students coming into

management skills, and overall it

made the transition a lot easier

because I was used to the more

students a head start on their ca-

reer path, Allura Musto says it

"There are some

definitely have had

moment when I'm

have the normal

time, and I have

to submit a grad

next semester."

school application

Kramer brought up similar

feelings of stress and said that

she received a full-time job offer

from the Bank of New York Mel-

lon Corp., but at only 20-years-

old she wanted more time to

Some early graduates also

said they've been experiencing

FOMO, fear of missing out, be-

cause all of their friends are going

to be at Penn State longer than

meeting people and thinking

you're in the same year and real-

izing you're way ahead of them

definitely is hard," Duncan said.

"That's probably the hardest part

miss

will

opportunity to walk at graduation

about graduating early."

Duncan

"Coming into college and

experience college life.

Allura Musto

with my friends that

times when I

the 'oh crap'

While early graduation can give

difficult course load."

can also create stress.

Kramer, third-year

IPSA boosts visibility on campus



A guest speaker talks during the 5th Annual Together at the Table event in Heritage Hall in the HUB-Robeson Center on Nov. 13, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

By Jocelyn Bilker THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Indigenous Penn State's Peoples' Student Association (IPSA) is using Native American Heritage Month to increase visibility for Indigenous students on campus and highlight how national rhetoric and federal policies continue to affect Native communities.

Ayla Orona said she joined the organization because of the lack of Indigenous representation at Penn State.

"Being a Native American student at Penn State and just knowing the Native American population is so little here ... joining gave me an opportunity to provide light on the Native American community," Orona, a thirdyear studying data science, said.

Orna, IPSA's president, said campus recognition of Native American Heritage Month is important because the culture can often be undermined and unknown amongst the widespread population.

"A lot of people assume that our population is not here anymore," Orona said. "So many people don't know about Native Americans, their culture or even just history in general."

As part of this year's programming, IPSA brought in Indigenous Chef Lorinda John for a community dinner. Orona said the event drew strong attendance and offered both cultural education and commu-

nity building. John also hosted a dreamcatcher workshop. The organization's leaders said these events aim to challenge common misconceptions, State to acknowledge Indigincluding the belief that Indige-

contemporary society.

"Once you mention you are Native American, a lot of people's first response is, 'Oh, you're the first Native American I've ever met," Orona said. "People don't even realize that Native American people still exist."

IPSA's visibility has improved in recent years, according to Orona. She said the university's addition of an Indigenous faculty advisor and increased engagement from the Indigenous Faculty and Staff Alliance. "Including an Indigenous

faculty advisor was definitely a very strong move," she said. She said she credits advisor

Jacinta Garcia with helping Indigenous students connect, attend events and reach out to prospective Native students. "Highlighting Indigenous

communities has really increased just by seeing it in my past three years," Orona said. Orona said that IPSA members

saw the impact of national rhetoric and federal policy decisions on Indigenous communities, including those from the Trump administration. especially "It has come

through the type of language that is spoken," Orona said. "Policies already undermining communities that are really challenged can definitely increase challenges within Native American reservations."

She said recently, there have been a number of cuts to the Cen-

ter for Disease Control and Prevention grants that benefit Native American reservations. Other IPSA officers emphasized the need for Penn

enous history, particularly as a nous people are rare or absent in land-grant institution. McCoy

said it's

important to celebrate Native American Heritage Month because Indigenous people are "still here and their culture is still rich and alive."

McCoy, a third-year studying anthropology and art history, said Penn State is still profiting off of the relocation and displacement of Indigenous communities. The history of this isn't well known but should be. according to McCoy.

"We want to provide a safe place for Indigenous students, faculty and allies to come together and learn," McCoy,the secretary of IPSA, said. "This is especially important when kids come from reservations as they can have a hard time acclimating. It's nice for them to know they have people here that will support them.'

Sienna Strong-Jones said cultural celebration is necessary in the face of "cultural erasure."

"It's important that understand the history and recognize how our culture has evolved over time in such a beautiful way," Strong-Jones, a fifth-year doctoral candidate studying human development and family studies and IPSA's vice president, said.

cultures globally.

other in the end," she said.

Looking ahead, Orona said psychology, said. IPSA plans to continue hosting cultural craft workshops, including beadwork and dreamcatcher activities. She said the group's broader mission is to support Indigenous students on campus

year early. Reese Kramer while spotlighting Indigenous credits through her participation in the International Bac-

"We want to show we are one and that we can all help each calaureate program, an internationally recognized program that provides students with a To email reporter: jpb6798@psu.edu. two-year college curriculum Follow her on X @jocelyn_bilker. and an IB diploma.

Students discuss early graduation

college,"

By Keaton Ball

For Penn State students studying finance and accounting, planning to graduate early, the said. "I felt like I had better time financial and career benefits come with the sadness of losing valuable years of the college experience.

To earn an undergraduate degree at Penn State, students must complete at least 120 college credits. Those who have already earned credits prior to college through dual enrollment, Advanced Placement classes and other college preparation programs can reach 120 credits in less than four years, putting themselves on a fast-track to early graduation.

While this likely means a greater workload in high school, students point to several reasons to pursue early graduation.

For many, its simple math: less semesters means saving tens of thousands of dollars in tuition and housing costs. Ken Van Houten said finances are the core reason he's pursuing early graduation.

"I was able to justify coming here by saying I'm only going to be here for two, or two and a half, years instead of a full four," Van Houten, a second-year studying computer engineering, said.

He estimates that he'll save roughly \$150,000 by graduating early, a feat that would've been impossible without the 73 credits he gained through dual enrollment in high school. In addition to saving money,

early graduation offers students a chance to get a head start on their career. Jacob Duncan served in the

military after graduating high school where he worked as an electrical engineer and gained roughly 40 college credits through various training events. "I just wanted to get done

with college as fast as possible so I can move on to getting my master's and getting a career," Duncan, a third year studying For Duncan the plan was

always to go to college after the military, and a large motivator was his ability to graduate a full

Musto school.

with many of their friends. Despite this, he said he recommends all high school students look into options for early graduation. To him, the benefits outweigh the short-term pain of separating from friends. said he

earned opportunities to graduate early were talked about more in high

"It felt like something that you very much so had to seek out yourself," said Musto.

To email reporter: keb6457@psu.edu.

Digital cameras are cool again

By Skylar Williamson THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When packing a bag for a weekend trip or purses for a night out downtown, a new item is becoming just as essential as keys and wallets. Dominating the early 2000s, digital cameras are making a flashy comeback and slipping into the pockets of

After years of relying on the perfect iPhone photo, people are turning back to nostalgia and making their Instagram feeds look like they were posted from an old family computer.

John Beale, a Penn State associate Professor Emeritus of photojournalism, said digital photos feel more permanent than regular smartphone ones.

"These are the types of photos you see in a box in your grandparents' closet from years and years before," Beale said. "Because they are from a camera, they feel timeless."

People often acquire these digital cameras from older people in their lives — they've been passed down from pregenerations to avoid purchasing new, expensive ones.

Marisa DiGirolamo has an Olympus Stylus 600, a model that was created in 2005. She said it was used to document her and her siblings'

"I don't know when it happened, but all my friends started getting really old digital cameras," DiGirolamo, a second-year studying premedicine, said. "I asked my mom if she had one for me, and she did."

DiGirolamo thinks having a digital camera creates a nostalgic feeling — not just for the user — but for older generations.

It's no secret the main reason for the random comeback of these cameras is nostalgia —



to document their lives.

'Some people are interested in a different look and quality of their photos, but I think most crave nostalgia," Beale said.

The cameras people are using to make their Instagram feed trendy are typically pointand-shoot cameras, rather than digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) cameras.

These cameras are small and compact and usually have a built-in flash, making it easy to bring to any occasion and snap pictures in real time. Any type of digital camera,

however, offers a different experience compared to a smartphone camera. It's new and exciting in a way many people wouldn't feel with only an Frank Dardis, an associate

professor in the department of advertising and public relations, said the new experience is "cool and fun" for younger generations who have been attached to a phone their whole

Dardis is also a faculty associate of Penn State's Media Effects Research Laboratory, it's what older generations used and noted the camera itself is

an "experiential" product for its consumers, and all technology always has some type of resurgence. "The experience of holding a

camera, having to focus it and maybe change the settings, all make people feel a part of the product," Dardis said. Being in control of the

photos makes consumers de-

sire a camera, and Dardis said for picture-taking purposes, a camera allows more of that control than a simple smartphone would. advertising From an

standpoint, Dardis explained the price points must stay in line with consumer expectations for cameras to stay a trend, showing why young people often take their parents' old camera. Beale mentioned a good

alternative is film cameras, which are also making a steady comeback in the last few years. The disposable cameras that are used for weekend trips are film-based, and are a cheaper way to document real photos without the stress of having the perfect shot.

> To email reporter: sgw5218@psu.edu. Follow her on X @ skylargrace.

Crossword

Across

- 1 Church niche
- 5 City on the Mohawk
- 10 Tough spot14 Ancient region of
- western Europe
- 15 Kind of spray 16 "East of Eden"
- 17 One of
- Chekhov's Three Sisters
- Driver's warning during a storm **20** Col. Sanders
- 22 Building block
- -A (drug
- used to treat
- chickenpox) 24 Amend
 - Political
 - designation
- 28 Mythical monster 30 Certain Ivy
- Leaguer
- 31 Splendor
- 32 Shepherd's
- locale 33 Superman player
- 35 Religious splinter groups
- Sicilian city 41 Preserved, in a
- way 43 "Heartburn"
- author Ephron
- "Silly" birds
- 46 Less
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- Madame Bovary
- Helm heading
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- 58 "Get the

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- Down
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59 First name in

life

mystery writing 61 Short poems

descriptive of

64 Large deep dish

68 Numerical prefix

71 Biblical pronoun

72 Accomplishments

69 It may be blessed

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70 1988 country

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 - 53 Fancy tie
 - 54 Percolate 55 Trattoria topping
 - Doing business 56 Free-for-all
 - 57 Elastic fabric
 - 60 Zero, on a court Painter Magritte 62 Brain section
 - 63 Bridge colored woodland
 - 65 Pittance

66 Conclude

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Luck or algorithm?

By Katie Herron THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Some Penn State students have manifested the life they want through the "lucky girl syndrome" trend circulating on social media.

The trend, highly popular on TikTok, encourages viewers to positively speak their aspirations into existence. This can look like a video of a woman strutting down the street reciting phrases like "I am lucky," "what I want will come

to me" or "I attract good things." This trend also includes users reusing other people's audios and mantras to manifest the same lucky circumstances for themselves. While the trend seems to have positive meaning behind it. what does it mean for the Penn students adopting this

mindset? Michele Ramsey, professor of communication arts and sciences and women's, gender and sexuality studies at Penn State Berks, weighed in on the impact of the social media trend. She believes language can construct a

person's social reality. "If you grow up in a house that, let's say is racist, you're probably going to grow up believing certain things about certain people," Ramsey said. "You can change that opinion on your own, but when everything coming at you says one thing about a group, you're going to grow up with that worldview.'

She related that experience to the trend's idea of speaking more positively about what you want to convince yourself to achieve and believe it. Although Ramsey does believe that, she also clarified there's a difference between changing the perception of reality versus actually shifting

"Your brain is gonna try to prove itself right, that you're actually lucky and that this thing is actually happening."

> **Mia Ramirez** Yoga Club President

"There's a phrase out there. emotions. She encouraged people Luck is preparation meeting interested in the trend to pracopportunity," Ramsey said. tice constant visualization and According to Ramsey, journaling.



important to consider whether you achieve your goals because of this apparent "lucky girl syndrome," or if it's your own preparation and opportunities intersecting.

"It's the idea that everybody can pull themselves up by their bootstraps," Ramsey said. "Except some of us — if we want to get to the 100 yard line, some of us start at the 20 and the rest of us have to start at zero. — Guess who's getting there first?"

expressed Ramsey also concern for the underlying message for audiences interacting with the "lucky girl syndrome' trend on social media.

'It reinforces this idea that women should be nice and positive," Ramsey said. "You should be positive, you should be happy, you should smile more, right? We don't say those things to men, and there's some danger there (because) of that." Mia Ramirez, president of the

Yoga and Meditation Club, thinks it's important for people to reflect on if the things they are trying to attract are what they really want or need. She believes a lot of people think they want something because of overexposure on social media. "We teach the opposite,"

Ramirez, a fourth-year studying economics and political science, said. "We teach our members to go inwards and figure out what they really want to get. That's the biggest difference with the trend Ramirez believes there is a

positive impact when visualiz-

want, and tuning in with your

"It's conditioning your brain to get a specific thing," she said.

Although Ramirez supports the use of visualization and manifestation techniques, she thinks it's important for people to take time to show gratitude for the things

they already have in life. "I try to see life as a scale," Ramirez said. "It's never gonna be that the bad things are so heavy, and the nice things of your life are just a minimum. Our brain loves to focus on negative and bad

Sakshi Jain finds the "lucky girl syndrome" trend uplifting.

'You manifest good luck into your life and it comes true," Jain, a third-year studying computer science, said.

Jain said manifestation can help people make changes in their lives, as long as they're also putting in effort to realize the change. She thinks this trend is opening people's eyes to the benefits of manifestation and an adjustment in mindset. 'People are interested because

you're manifesting good luck and success into your life, and obviously everybody wants that for themselves," Jain said. "Seeing someone participate in this, and seeing these things happen to someone else makes another person curious, 'Can I do this? Will this work for me?" Ramsey acknowledged that

the world, especially now, can be an intimidating place to navigate on your own. Trends like this can add direction into people's lives. 'With things that are scary, ing yourself achieving what you these trends help relieve some

people," Ramsey said.

To email reporter: kah6798@psu.edu. Follow her on X @ ktherron137.

ORD SEARCH

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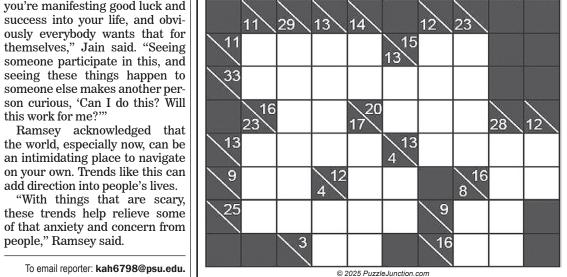
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Kakuro (Cross Sums)

The rules are easy to learn: A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it. A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it. You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit may be used only once in any sequence.



My American Tongue

Ppinion

It's not easy to hide the fact that I'm an American living abroad because my accent tips



pretty quickly. To me, this is a normal thing, but the people I meet tend to act like I'm a

unicorn they've

caught in the wild or like my American-ness is some dirty little secret.

I don't think being American necessarily makes me special, especially in a diverse metropolis like London, and I'm not trying to hide anything, especially when I'm taking ridiculous photos outside of Buckingham Palace. Actually, I think it's a great conversation starter because people tend to have questions about life in the States. There are three main conversations that stem from my American-ness that I've kept encountering during my time abroad.

Politics

The first, and oftentimes most entertaining response I get to my nationality, is the political conversation. Now, it usually

starts off with a coy, "not to get too political," before the person I'm speaking to immediately launches into the most political conversation humanly possible.

During the government shutdown, these conversations were entertaining because of the way in which my partner in conversation would always briefly allude to the idea of me reopening the government myself. I'm not sure what ideas led to the notion that the American public is that involved in their government, but these suggestions reminded me of Kris Jenner telling Kim Kardashian to "just call Taylor up" to resolve the broader drama between Kanye West and Taylor Swift.

Fortunately, the government has reopened, but it's not because I just called Donald up.

These conversations, aside from indicating that some British people know less about the American government than they think they do, have shown me what the global population thinks about American politics in the current moment. Generally, in my discussions, they're concerned about the level of drama and theatrics in our government, and I would agree.

My circle has a similar fatigue in regard to the fact that there always seems to be news, and it rarely seems to be positive.

Junk Food

The British kids in my classes typically ask about Crumbl and Chick-fil-A. They're mesmerized by the sheer amount of options we have in America, and they'll ask if the chains they have here, like McDonald's and KFC, are the same in the States. They're

This interrogation is usually followed up by their claim that U.K. chocolate is better than American chocolate, which I do have to agree with, and an unsupported claim that they would be fat if they lived in America. Sometimes they spice it up and let me know that they would also be broke.

"If I had Target, I would have no money," one of my history classmates said. "I can't even begin to fathom the fact that they have a Starbucks inside."

Tourism

Other people meet me, and instead of hearing "Alli" when I introduce myself, apparently hear "Tripadvisor Owl" because

they immediately start asking me for trip recommendations in America. They want to know where they should go if they fly to the U.S.

That's such a broad question because the landmass itself is so large, and America has so many different things to offer. I consider myself pretty welltravelled, so I can recommend specific places if I'm asked for details, but it's particularly hard to spit out a random travel destination that someone would enjoy within the first five minutes of meeting them.

I typically freeze, blabber and end up suggesting "uhh maybe New York City."

I do have my favorite places to visit, and rather strong opinions about them, I just forget what to say when I'm put on the spot like that. Plus, despite how much I feel that Brits underestimate the amount of time they need to really explore America, it feels incredibly snobby to say that you could see the U.K. in a week, but spend a month in America and still have hundreds of miles to explore.

High School Musical

Another common

conversation-starter is "what's American high school like?" and this question is always related back to a TV show or movie.

They want to know if it's like "Euphoria," "Gossip Girl," "Mean Girls (2004)" or "High School Musical." I feel like the answer is obviously "no," and I'm genuinely curious why this question comes up so much.

Although I wish I were Sharpay Evans, American universities are more like the TV shows in terms of the academic laxity and party scene. But we still, unfortunately, don't have choreographed dance routines. We need to work on that one, guys!

Actually, I volunteer to choreograph a flash mob for us to perform in the HUB-Robeson

These conversation pieces do, at this point, have automatic replies in my head, but it's always fun to chat about them with new people and learn about even more perspectives.

Alli Satterfield is the abroad columnist for The Daily Collegian. She is a secondyear studying journalism. Email her at ams1258@psu.edu or follow her on X @amsatterfield8



Cartoon by Nate Campbell

Navigating the holidays without family

"It's not that you're

bitter over others

experiencing love,

but rather that

the hole in your

life starts to sting

around the edges.

Jadzia Santiago

Around this time of year, it becomes more and more apparent that there are some questions I



answer, like: "What do you plan to do with an English degree in this econo-

just can't

my?" "Is being Santiago sarcastic in a column and listening to Dan and Phil's podcast seriously the highlight of your week?" "Why has God (if he be at all) abandoned us in this cold,

Worst of all: "What are you doing over break?"

uncaring universe?

If you're anything at all like me, you also especially dread that last one.

For some context (and to make a long story short) my immediate household is ... complicated. And if I wanted to reach out to my extended family, I'd need to hold a séance or have a weapon on hand for self-defense, because most of them are either dead or dead to

It's either digging up the dead or the past for me — you know, the usual.

For those of us in circumstances that are in any way similar, being on a campus surrounded by people returning to full, warm homes (or at the very least, Thanksgiving tables where there's no risk of forks flying) can be so isolating.

It's not that you're bitter over to bring you along to their thers experiencing love, but rather that the hole in your life starts to sting around the edges. Sometimes, you feel abnormal, like your lack of familial connections is a personal failure or a curse, somehow.

And no matter how nonchalant you try to be about it, people who have those connections just can't seem to understand, or know what to say. They may

even validate your previously mentioned fears.

Or, they may pity you and be awful at hiding

You don't hold it against them, because your circumstances really can be hard to imagine and empathize with. But you do

occasionally wish they wouldn't respond like that — and you know exactly what I mean.

Look, I'm not going to give you some trite advice like "you can make your own holiday!" or "I'm sure your friends/partner/ etc. will bring you along" or "you'll have that someday!"

Like many of the cliché claims people throw at the less fortunate for their own comfort, all of those statements are empty promises.

Even if you did have someone

festivities, I know from experience that you never stop feeling like an intruder, charity case or

And no matter how much you celebrate on your own or in the future, it doesn't change anything now.

That's not even acknowledging the idea that if you don't have your own family, an "earned" one that you can

lose with one wrong move, is somehow a seamless substitute.

Nor do any of these statements stop the endless flood of dread for all the inevitable empty (literally or metaphorically) chairs on other occasions: graduation, birthdays, maybe even your

wedding or the arrival of your children into vour life (should you choose those things).

The truth is, for some of us, the months are cold, the days are short and the nights are hollow save for the grief.

All in all, this time of year can be bleak and painful, and I want to acknowledge that.

But here's the thing: no matter what you do or don't go home to, you got yourself here. And although it can be hard to cope with the fact that a loving and/or present family seems to be the "default" on this campus that also means you did all of this without the privileges many others have.

I get it, and I see you. Without a stable family, the holidays feel like a moot point,

excruciatingly useless. So, when people ask you what you're doing over break, I know that it's hard not to groan.

And yes, however exhausted this statement may be, I do hope that you someday experience the love and togetherness you're lacking right now if you want it.

But we all know that beyond validating the ire, I'm focused on solutions for right now.

So, I want you to know that regardless of how this time of year makes you feel, you're doing pretty good given the circumstances.

Despite what you have or haven't been shown, you're alive and moving.

Not telling you to make your own holiday, here, but I do think that's something to celebrate, even if it's just you.

In fact, especially if it's just

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

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National Duals insight

Cael Sanderson, other coaches provide thoughts on the invitational

By Andrew Deal
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

National Duals The Invitational have made headlines over the past

couple of weeks, WRESTLING as it has the

absence of the top team in the country from the event.

Penn State opted to not compete in the invitational, leading to many talks across the country about the growth of the sport and the Nittany Lions' participation nationally-promoted event.

Penn State's been the best team in the country over the last decade, winning 12 of the last 14 national championships, making it reasonable to have a team of that caliber compete in the event in order to grow the sport.

"I think it's a shame that Penn State's not here. We can stick to the positives about the fact that they're not here is a bit of a sign of how they see things and do things," Ohio State coach Tom Ryan told reporters on a video call prior to the duals. "They should be here. They're not, so we'll focus on all the great coaches that chose to grow the sport."

A big part in why the Nittany Lons didn't join is their participation in international freestyle competitions. Seven of the 10 spots on the USA representatives, all potential match they wanted.



Geraldine Cruz/The Daily Collegian

Penn State's Connor Mirasola speaks to head coach Cael Sanderson and associate head coach Casey Cunningham during the dual against Oklahoma's DJ Parker in the Bryce Jordan Center.

starters for the team's dual season.

"I think they knew right away when they were putting it, when and where they're putting it, we're probably not (participating) because we're pretty consistent," Cael Sanderson said last week.

Wrestling has consistently seen growth in the sport with constant additions being made to broadcasting the championships at the highest level. ESPN+ recently was added to the broadcast schedule, giving U23 team were Penn State fans the opportunity to watch any "They should be here. They're not, so we'll focus on all the great coaches that chose to grow the sport."

> **Tom Ryan** Ohio State coach

the Nittany Lions' program, the sport has seen an increase in viewership, as competitiveness has taken a rise.

One piece to the growth is the recent resurgence of Oklahoma State under David Taylor. The former Nittany Lion has the Cowboys back to national prominence. In addition to Oklahoma State, Ohio State, Iowa and Nebraska continue to make a push to reach Penn State's level.

'It's our obligation as coaches, With Penn State's recent as athletes, as fans to continue dominance, and many histori- to move the sport forward and cal milestones reached within this is a pretty awesome event,"

Taylor said on a video call with the media before the event.

It caught a lot of national attention, showcasing talent in the country outside of Penn State. Ohio State came out victorious, defeating Iowa in the championship. Oklahoma State finished in third place after defeating Nebraska. However, it was the high-profile matches that made headlines.

Yeah, really good wrestling, cool event," Sanderson said. "But yeah, (it) looked like a lot of fun." National-title favorites were

given a major spotlight, with one of the national broadcast crews on the call. Some of those favorites rose to the occasion. others fell, making immediate shifts in the rankings earlier in the season than normal. Those matches made one thing clear to many people.

"It's gonna be a fun year," Luke Lilledahl said.

The National Duals Invitational will likely return after the success it had. Will Penn State join in the years to come or will it continue to remain consistent in what it does and how it schedules its season?

Only time will tell.

"Yeah, create an event that everyone wants to be a part of and that we're asking you to be a part of, right?" Sanderson said last week.

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Undefeated Start



Forward Ivan Juric (3) and guard Kayden Mingo (4) block during the Penn State men's basketball game against Fairfield in the Bryce Jordan

By Myles Hannak

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN Penn State basketball started

4-0 for the fourth straight year and third under coach Mike Rhoades, yet it wasn't ex-**BASKETBALL** pected to be a

continuation this streak.

The Nittany Lions entered the 2025-26 season with a fresh roster, bolstered by their top Big Ten recruiting class, which featured a mix of freshmen and transfers. Only Freddie Dilione V and Dominick Stewart returned as the only real rotational players from last

season. The blue and white were picked to finish last in the Big Ten at conference media day, and a disappointing 78-62 exhibition loss to Dayton reaffirmed those predictions for their first time on the

court together. But once the official season began, the worries began to fade, and Rhoades' team synchronized well to kick off 2025, maintaining an average victory margin of over 18 points during the undefeated

start. Each opponent ranked below the Nittany Lions in KenPom, but the team handled business with consistency. Wins over Fairfield, New Haven, Navy and La Salle helped Penn State establish an early identity on both ends of the

Depth Scoring

Penn State entered the season with uncertainty around how its starting lineup would shape up.

Dilione and Stewart played contrasting roles last year, but it wasn't clear if those would carry

Rhoades made some early adjustments, particularly with Dilione. After starting 28 games last season, the redshirt junior

has taken on the role of a vocal veteran leader, coming off the bench in every game this season. He is averaging 12.3 points per game, making him the third-highest scorer in the Big Ten among players who have yet to start a game this season.

With Dilione coming off the bench, Penn State has mainly started Kayden Mingo, Melih Tunca, Eli Rice, Josh Reed and Saša Ciani. Stewart also made his first career start in the opener against Fairfield.

Despite a set starting group, Penn State's depth has stood out, utilizing rotation behind Mingo and Dilione as lead ball handlers.

Rhoades described his bench as "an army," and fresh legs have lived up to the label, rotating in consistently. Nine Penn State players average double-digit minutes, led by freshmen Mingo and Tunca, who play over 30 minutes and lead in scoring.

This season, Penn State has leaned on a collective, heavy team approach that wears down opponents through physical trap defense, with the bench playing 40-60% of the minutes in every game so far. In the second halves, the

Nittany Lions' pace has come alive. Penn State has kept its shooting rate while wearing down opponents, often slowing opposing offenses after the break, where they struggle to match that pace.

Shooting Inconsistency Penn State's disciplined motor,

as shown so far, has posted strong figures across the board, ranking in the bottom three in the Big Ten in fouls and turnovers, while ranking in the top 5 in conference steals per game at 7.8.

Despite holding pace and control for an entire 40 minutes,

the blue and white hasn't been able to turn this momentum into widespread shooting stability.

Stewart has accounted for 34% of Penn State's threes. Outside of him, the team shoots just 32 percent from deep, with only Tunca and Rice having made more than five from downtown.

Through four games, Penn State ranks in the bottom half of Big Ten scoring. Despite efficient shooting numbers, the offense hasn't come easily as it appears in the stat sheet.

If Stewart remains the primary shooting threat, his nnact could be limited The sophomore contributed strong outings, including six downtown makes against New Haven, and he'll soon need teammates to match that shooting touch.

The Nittany Lions have also drawn fouls often, but are shooting just 68.6 percent from the line. It's one of the worst rates in the conference, and improving that shot will be key moving

Rebounding & Inside Presence

Just four games in, Penn State's quick, wing-heavy lineup has shown signs of vulnerability.

The blue and white rank as the second-worst rebounding team in the Big Ten, as it struggled to find an answer after last year's starting center, Yanic Konan Niederhäuser, departed

for the NBA. Guard Dylan Mingo leads the team in rebounding and is one of just two Penn State players averaging more than five boards. That's an early concern for a group hoping to compete physically.

The Nittany Lions have been outrebounded as a team only once this season, in the La Salle win, but have consistently seen opponent big men clean up on the glass.

In the first game of the season, Fairfield's Brandon Benjamin reached double-digit boards, and against Navy, two Midshipmen reached such a feat as no Penn State players notched more than seven in that contest.

The Nittany Lions use a trio of international players down low, Ciani, Ivan Jurić and Tibor Mirtič, and the group will have to step up off the glass for Penn State if it wants to fix their rebounding struggles.

Mirtič has seen more minutes against smaller teams, offering size over speed, but Rhoades will need to adjust the rotation to address the team's early rebounding headaches.

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Series Split

By Maggie Hardy THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State returned home after three weeks and played host to a divi-

sion rival — not to mention the No. 2 team in the

country — meant an exciting weekend for Hockey Valley.

The Nittany Lions split the series with the Wolverines, after dropping Friday night's matchup and responding with a redemption win on Saturday.

Here's a look at what went right, and what went wrong this weekend.

A resounding response

After the blue and white's 7-1 loss Friday night, the one word coach Guy Gadowsky consistently used to describe his team's performance was "disappointing."

The Nittany Lions were out-skated, out-muscled and purely out-played by the Wolverines for the last two periods, getting outshot 37-27 after 60 minutes of play.

The team's fight physicality were noticeably lacking, and it seemed like an out-ofcharacter performance for the blue and white during a Big Ten contest in front of a home crowd.

On Saturday, Penn State looked like a completely different team to that of just 24 hours prior.

"There was a shift in mentality in between games, and I think that just comes from within," freshman forward Shea Van Olm said. "Obviously, getting swept in Michigan State, backs up against the wall after Friday, we could have gotten swept both weekends, I think that's a huge motivator."

The blue and white scored the first three goals of the contest, and when Michigan made a lategame surge in an attempt to come back, the home team held strong to capture the eventual 4-2 win. Penn State also held the edge

at the faceoff dot on Saturday, winning 31-of-58. Secondary scoring

the most talented in the Big Ten on paper, and its offensive stars are often the ones leading the scoring, but relying on a small group can only get you so far.

After the Nittany Lions' top producers have been shut down in recent weeks, an emphasis



Megan Miller/The Daily Collegian

Forward Shea Van Olm (93) watches the action during the Penn State men's hockey game against Michigan in Pegula Ice Arena.

was placed on the need for their secondary scoring to step up, and this weekend, they did.

Sophomore Nick notched his first collegiate goal, while skaters Reese Laubach, Nic Chin-DeGraves, Luke Misa and Van Olm all recorded their

second of the season. "To win in this league, there's no way you can rely on one line,' Gadowsky said. "I thought analytically, (the Misa line) was our best all weekend, and that's really good to see because (secondary scoring) is a necessity, it's not a luxury."

Special teams shine, fail

Heading into the weekend, the Nittany Lions knew they were up for a challenge, facing the Wolverines' NCAA second-ranked power

Penn State's penalty kill stood tall in one of its toughest tests yet, killing 7-of-8 powerplay attempts.

"I think it has to give us some confidence that we can get the job done," Gadowsky said. "I think right now, it's four guys plus a goalie that are on the same page, and so far, so good."

On the other side of the puck, the blue and white's powerplay unit was stifled all weekend, going 0-for-5.

The man-advantage has been Penn State's roster is one of a consistent struggle for Penn State, ranking fourth in the Big Ten with a powerplay percentage of 21.4%, despite sophomore JJ Wiebusch being tied for first-nationally with six powerplay goals.

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