



VERSUS

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USC (5-1) (3-2) **PENN STATE**
Trojans **NITTANY LIONS**



WHITE OUT



LYNN’S FULL-CIRCLE MOMENT

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When former Penn State defensive back Mike Wallace took his official visit to Happy Valley, then-cornerback D’Anton Lynn was the player who showed him what it meant to be a Nittany Lion.

Lynn made Wallace feel at home as he introduced him to the campus and team. The experience became a big reason Wallace chose Penn State and began a friendship that lasted well beyond their playing careers.

Nearly two decades later, Lynn is Penn State’s defensive coordinator, embodying many of the same characteristics that drew Wallace to the program in the first place.

“He’s the best fit because he’s best in class,” Wallace told The Daily Collegian. “He’s the perfect example for what his players and what the organization can model to continue pushing the Penn State football legacy. He’s the paradigm of what Penn State football culture is.”

Lynn joined the Nittany Lions in 2008 and immediately saw the field, playing in nine games as a freshman. While he didn’t contribute much statistically, he used the opportunity to grow and earned more playing time the following year.

“He was really a genius in the film room,” Wallace said. “That rubbed off on everybody. He had a very studious nature about him from the very beginning.”

As Lynn began to see the field more regularly and become even more of an asset to Penn State’s

defense, the contrast between him as a person and player became clear.

Wallace said Lynn was “like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” on and off the field. Lynn was a friendly face across the entire roster and connected with every player no matter their role.

“If you get to know him, there’s so much joy in his heart,” Wallace said. “He has a big, infectious smile and when he sees you, he lights up. He has a lot of joy and a lot of love for the people that he loves.”

But when Lynn took the field, a switch flipped, and his friendly persona disappeared.

Lynn was aggressive, and that translated into success throughout Lynn’s four years in Happy Valley, as he was a three-time All-Big Ten honorable mention and finished second in tackles among the team and tied for first in interceptions his junior year.

“On the field, he was a nut,” Wallace said. “Just an absolute crazy man. You wouldn’t expect that out of him if you just knew him in the classroom, but the reason why he was so good was because he was a very aggressive player.”

After four years at Penn State, Lynn had a brief professional career, spending a year with the New York Jets and a year in the Canadian Football League. From there, he transitioned into coaching, something Wallace knew he’d excel at.

“It didn’t surprise me, because he was always super intelligent,” Wallace said. “He almost looked like a player coach the same way



Nick Wass/AP Photo

Indiana wide receiver Terrance Turner (1) scores a touchdown against Penn State cornerbacks D’Anton Lynn (8) and Chaz Powell (2) during the first half of an NCAA college football game on Saturday, Nov. 20, 2010.

LeBron (James) is now. He was always a leader on the field, but also somebody who was constantly teaching.”

Lynn eventually held position coaching roles with the Jets, Buffalo Bills, Los Angeles Chargers, Houston Texans and Baltimore Ravens.

He didn’t know where coaching would ultimately take him, but each stop offered another opportunity for Lynn to learn from different coaches and coordinators, eventually developing a style of his own.

“Each team that you coach with, you take bits and pieces,” Lynn said Aug. 7. “I started off with Rex Ryan and kind of got exposed to everything, but it’s a collection of all those. Each coordinator I’ve been with has been different in their own way.”

In 2023, Lynn made the move to college, becoming the defensive coordinator at UCLA before taking over USC’s defense a year later. He spent two seasons with the Trojans before Matt Campbell reached out about the open defensive coordinator spot he had after he was hired at Penn State. They had a nearly two-hour phone call where Lynn said Campbell “reminded me of why I came to Penn State as a player out of high school” and offered him the job, which Lynn accepted quickly after.

“When I got off the phone with him, there was just something in my gut that told me that this just felt right,” Lynn said. “I told my

“He’s the perfect example for what his players and what his organization can model to continue pushing the Penn State football legacy.”

Mike Wallace
Former defensive back

wife, ‘I don’t know how it’s going to work, but somehow, some way, I just feel like we need to make this work.’”

Lynn’s choice to return to his alma mater provided him an opportunity to give back to the program that shaped him.

“This place obviously had a lot to do with my development and who I am today,” Lynn said. “I didn’t think I’d get a chance to come back here and be able to give back. So to be able to be here and see things from a different perspective and be able to coach now and give back to the players has been awesome.”

Through his first few months with the program, Lynn has established a simple defense he’s said will grow in complexity as the season progresses. But even though he has nearly 10 years of NFL coaching experience and three seasons as a defensive coordinator, Lynn has remained receptive to his players’ input.

Tony Rojas, who has had four different defensive coordinators in four years at Penn State, even went as far to say Lynn has been the first of the four he’s had a personal connection with.

“What makes him a great teacher is his understanding of how the student thinks and processes information,” defensive tackle Siale Taupaki said Aug. 25. “There’s certain things that he wants done, but then his doors are always open for us to come up and be like ‘Coach, I think this, I think that.’”

As Penn State’s season has progressed, its defense has experienced its share of highs and lows. Lynn has remained the same steady presence through it all, showcasing the qualities Wallace saw in him as a teammate.

With the Trojans coming to town on Saturday, Lynn will face his former program in his first White Out as a coach. He said Tuesday that he still loves “all the people” at USC, but is happy where he is now.

“It was a full circle moment for him to get the job back at Penn State,” Wallace said. “It was such a catalyst for all of us to rally behind the team because our teammate came back to the place where it all started. It’s beautiful almost like a fairy tale. It means the world.”

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USC TROJANS											
No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Jontez Williams	CB/Sr.	23	Kendarius Reddick	S/So.	45	Caden Chittenden	K/So.	75	Ratumana Bulabalavu	OL/So.
0	Zacharyus Williams	WR/So.	23	Walter Matthews	TE/So.	46	Dylan Black	LS/Sr.	76	John Fifta	OL/Fr.
1	Kameryn Crawford	DE/Jr.	24	Shaun Scott	LB/Fr.	46	Nick De Fina	LB/Sr.	77	Alani Noa	OL/Sr.
1	Ethan “Boobie” Feaster	WR/Fr.	24	Carson Tabaracci	TE/Sr.	47	Austin Engroff	LB/Fr.	78	Chase Deniz	OL/Fr.
2	Elbert “Rock” Hill IV	CB/Fr.	25	Marcelles Williams	CB/So.	47	Caleb Moser	LS/Sr.	79	Elijah Vaikona	OL/Fr.
2	Waymond Jordan	RB/Sr.	26	Elijah Newby	LB/So.	48	Ryon Sayeri	P/K/So.	80	Luc Weaver	WR/Fr.
4	Jahkeem Stewart	DL/So.	27	Riley Wormley	RB/Fr.	48	Derek Diniz	CB/Fr.	81	Cameron Sermons	WR/Fr.
4	Trent Mosley	WR/Fr.	27	Chasen Johnson	CB/So.	49	Simote Katoanga	DE/Fr.	82	Roderick Tezeno	WR/Fr.
6	Deshonne Redeaux	RB/Fr.	28	Carrington Pierce	CB/So.	49	Grant Woods	TE/Fr.	83	Fisher Melton	TE/Fr.
6	Christian Pierce	S/Sr.	28	James Johnson	QB/Fr.	50	Taylor “Taybo” Johnson	LB/Fr.	84	Tucker Ashcraft	TE/Jr.
7	Alex Graham	S/Fr.	29	Will Doherty	QB/Jr.	51	Vlad Dyakonov	OL/Fr.	85	Tron Baker	WR/Fr.
7	Sam Huard	QB/Sr.	29	Joshua Holland II	S/Fr.	51	Andrew Williams	DE/Fr.	86	Luke Degner	WR/Sr.
8	King Miller	RB/So.	30	Marquis Gallegos	S/So.	52	Tomuhini Topui Jr.	DT/Fr.	87	Josiah Jefferson	TE/Jr.
8	Desman Stephens II	LB/Jr.	30	Kayne Miller	RB/Fr.	52	Willi Wascher	OL/Fr.	88	Floyd Boucard	DT/So.
9	Terrell Anderson	WR/Jr.	31	Madden Riordan	S/Fr.	53	Luke Brown	LS/Fr.	88	Taniela Tupou	TE/Fr.
9	Kennedy Urlacher	S/Jr.	31	Seth Zamora	WR/So.	54	Ethan Brougham	DE/Jr.	89	Brendan Cho	DT/So.
10	Braylan Shelby	DE/Sr.	34	Jayden Crowder	CB/Fr.	56	Kannon Smith	OL/Fr.	89	Griffin Brahm	WR/Fr.
10	Corey Simms	WR/So.	34	Tyson Park	RB/Fr.	57	Roman Marchetti	LB/Sr.	90	Jake Johnson	DT/Fr.
14	Ta’Mere Robinson	LB/Jr.	35	Lachlan Carrigan	P/So.	57	Esun Tafa	OL/Fr.	91	Alex VanSumeren	DT/Sr.
14	Jayden Maiava	QB/Sr.	35	Ty Swanson	DE/Fr.	58	GianCarlo Rufo	LB/Sr.	92	Sam Smith	DE/Fr.
15	Jadyn Walker	LB/So.	36	Peyton “Man Man” Dyer	S/Fr.	60	Kaylon Miller	OL/So.	93	William Weisberg	K/Fr.
15	Jonas Williams	QB/Fr.	37	Trestin Castro	S/Fr.	61	Jack Susnjar	OL/Jr.	94	Luke Wafle	DE/Fr.
16	Tanook Hines	WR/So.	37	Zachary Nandlal	P/So.	62	Travis Leonard	OL/So.	95	Jadyn Ramos	DE/Fr.
16	Prophet Brown	S/Sr.	38	Isaiah Rubin	S/So.	63	Cash Jacobsen	OL/Fr.	96	Jordan Abarca	DT/So.
17	Kayden Dixon-Wyatt	WR/Fr.	38	Patrick O’Brien	TE/So.	64	Ryan Pauley	OL/Sr.	97	Jide Abasiri	DT/Jr.
17	Deven Bryant	LB/Jr.	39	Nate Hillenburg	P/Sr.	65	Erwin Taomi	OL/Jr.	99	Jamaal Jarrett	DT/Jr.
18	Zuriah Fisher	DE/Sr.	39	Peter Sciarmino	S/Fr.	66	Breck Kolojay	OL/Fr.			
18	Romero Ison	WR/Fr.	40	Shawn Sehra	CB/Jr.	67	Kilian O’Connor	OL/Sr.			
19	Mark Bowman	TE/Fr.	40	Marcus Sung	WR/Jr.	68	Hayden Treter	OL/So.			
19	Brandon Lockhart	CB/Fr.	41	Cian McKelvey	RB/Jr.	70	Aaron Dunn	OL/Fr.			
21	RJ Sermons	CB/Fr.	41	Ryan O’Connell	LB/Sr.	71	Keenyi Pepe	OL/Jr.			
21	Alex Medyn	QB/Fr.	44	Braeden Jones	DT/Fr.	72	Elijah Paige	OL/Jr.			
22	Shahn Alston	RB/Fr.	44	Manoah Leiato	TE/Fr.	73	Tobias Raymond	OL/Jr.			
22	Talanoa Illi	LB/Fr.	45	Jaimeon Winfield	DT/Fr.	74	Justin Tauanuu	OL/So.			

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

‘He’s a legendary guy’

Ryan Barker balances innate talent with mental fortitude

By Andrew Mercer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Lance Frazier, assistant athletic director and Kennett High School’s head football coach, was in his office when a group of custodians hurriedly threw open the door. They told Frazier there was a kid draining 50-yard field goals in the middle of the summer.

Curious but skeptical, Frazier went to investigate. He heard the loud sound of a cleat striking pigskin and knew it was different from the average kick. When he saw the culprit was 6-foot-2, Frazier assumed he was headed off to college.

But he wasn’t. That young man was Ryan Barker, an eighth grader who asked his father for a kicking tee at Christmas. Barker revealed it was his first time ever kicking a football, and he’d be a freshman at Kennett the coming academic year. Frazier was overjoyed — the Blue Demons found themselves a superstar kicker.

“I immediately looked at the heavens,” Frazier told The Daily Collegian. “The football gods had finally blessed us with freakish talent. He’s kicking like two or three balls, so I run in the locker room like, ‘Let me go get this kid some extra balls he can use.’”

About a week after meeting Frazier, Barker said he was “thrown into the fire” and was torn between two worlds: the gridiron and the soccer pitch.

Barker was an established soccer player, and he balanced academics with being a multi-sport varsity athlete for the majority of his high school career. Most days, Barker came straight from soccer to catch the tail end of football practice, as Kennett saved special teams drills for last. Barker was socially behind in the locker room because of that, as he was still getting to know the team, according to Frazier.

“He was a typical kicker,”



Joe Klein/Collegian file photo

Penn State place kicker Ryan Barker (94) kicks an extra point during the Penn State White Out football game against Oregon in Beaver Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 27, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

Frazier said. “They’re a little bit off to the side, different from everybody in terms of how they prepare because their pressure is different from everybody else’s.”

Frazier saw Barker’s potential and told him coaches such as Nick Saban and James Franklin were going to ask him, “Are you going to play soccer, or are you going to kick the football?”

Barker chose football ahead of his senior year of high school, and he later became the first Division I football player from Kennett when he committed to the Nittany Lions as a preferred walk-on in July 2022.

Frazier said Barker attending Penn State meant so much for the program, as it’s a university with many alumni in Kennett Square, a small suburb of Philadelphia. Now, Barker’s young brother, Shay, is a Division I kicker at Syracuse, and the siblings played one season together at Kennett.

“We never had been a heavily-recruited area,” Frazier said. “There’s so many Penn State roots and alumni here in Ken-

nett. It was surreal. I knew the impact it would have on others. He’s a legendary guy for the kids because he let them know that guys from Kennett can make it big time.”

Barker redshirted in 2023 and initially lost the starting job to Sander Sahaydak in 2024 until Sahaydak went 2-for-5 on his field goal attempts through four weeks. So Franklin turned to Barker, and the former walk-on made his debut against UCLA, converting on both of his field goals and all three extra point attempts.

The next week, he rose to collegiate stardom at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Penn State and USC were tied, 30-30, in overtime before Barker kicked the 36-yard game-winning field goal, the first for the Nittany Lions since Sam Ficken’s strike from the same distance against UCF in 2014.

“That’s all I’ve ever wanted to do, is to hit a game-winning kick,” Barker said after the game on Oct. 12, 2024. “It means a lot to me and my teammates. I’m just

super proud of myself.”

Special teams coordinator Justin Lustig has instilled in Barker a “one shot, one kill” mentality in his time at Penn State.

Although the basis of the phrase is meant to keep the special teams unit focused solely on the kick in front of them, Barker said there’s specific nuances to it as a kicker and he can’t simply flush every kick regardless of the outcome.

“It’s being able to weigh the importance of the fact that it’s ‘one shot, one kill,’” Barker said. “It allows you to hone in on the sole focus of trying to replicate that feeling of the ball contact. That’s how I would describe it.”

It’s something Lustig has taught the entire special teams unit including punter Nathan Tiyce and long snapper Blaise Sokach-Minnick, and Barker has used it to keep his emotions in check. When a kick goes awry, Barker “flushes” it, which has helped him deal with high-pressure situations.

“Once I got that mindset going,

the pressure was just non-existent, honestly, because it gave me a centered focus on what I needed to do,” Barker said Aug. 7. “The outside noise and pressure is something that could distract me if I let it. I’m not gonna let anything get in the way of what I need to do.”

With his talent and Lustig’s coaching, Barker has positively impacted his fellow special teamsers. Tiyce serves as Barker’s holder, and he’s been inspired by his mental fortitude.

“He’s one of the toughest people I know,” Tiyce said. “The way he rebounds and responds to adversity is his key to everything. He’ll go on the sideline, and he’s like a goldfish. The only thing we’re focusing on is that next kick.”

Deep down, however, Barker intimately knows the stinging pain of a missed kick, but Frazier said it’s a mental skill Barker’s built as he’s matured.

Barker’s had two misses so far this season, but he said those moments of failure are what motivate him to be better.

“You never want to have that feeling of what it feels like when you miss, and that’s honestly the fuel that I use,” Barker said. “I hate the feeling of missing. It’s really awful. So I’m chasing to never feel that again and it’s how I keep myself going.”

After falling to the Badgers, Barker said his role on the team is being a “safety net.” With the Nittany Lions 0-2 in the Big Ten, his ability to handle adversity is being tested much like how it was in 2025.

“If I go out onto the field, I’m putting points on the board when the offense may not be flowing as easily,” Barker said. “Embracing that as much as possible and knowing that I’ve got the team’s back — that’s honestly where I want to be at.”

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Newcomers ready for White Out debut

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s White Out game has delivered some of the most memorable moments in college football and has recorded some of the biggest attendances in Beaver Stadium over the last 20 years.

While the Nittany Lions are coming off a two-game losing streak ahead of this week’s White Out against USC — making for one of the more unusual buildups to the spectacle in recent years — many of the new players are excited to take part in it for the first time.

“To see the crowd, see how loud they get, and feed off that energy, it’s going to be a cool experience,” tight end Benjamin Brahmaer said Wednesday. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me, so I’m excited.”

The game will be unfamiliar territory for a majority of Penn State’s starters, many of whom have come from Iowa State and haven’t seen anything like it. However, the Nittany Lions also have more than 50 returning players who’ve given the newcomers a glimpse of what to expect.

Brahmaer said teammates have described the atmosphere as “surreal” and compared stepping onto the field to being in a movie.

“I’m juiced to get out there and feed off that energy from the crowd,” Brahmaer said.

Offensive lineman Anthony Donkoh is one of the few return-



Joe Klein/Collegian

The crowd cheers as the Penn State football team take the field during the White Out football game against Oregon in Beaver Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 27, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

ing starters for Penn State and will take the field for his fourth White Out game, having been on both sides of the result in the big game.

But even after playing in one of the most anticipated White Outs in recent years against Oregon last season, the game continues to be one of Donkoh’s favorite moments of the year.

“I told them, when we run out of the tunnel, soak it all in,” Donkoh said. “It’s going to be a movie scene out there. It’s definitely one of the coolest things that I’ve ever been a part of.”

Despite the hype around one

of the greatest shows in college sports, Donkoh emphasized being cautious about becoming too consumed by the spectacle.

“Embrace it and lean into it when there’s opportunities to lean into it, but don’t get caught up in that,” Donkoh said. “At the end of the day, we’re there to play football and play at the highest level.”

Kicker Ryan Barker, who has also played in multiple White Outs, echoed his sentiment.

With the White Out comes added attention and excitement surrounding the program, especially considering the re-

sults over the last two weeks. For players going through this week for the first time, Barker said keeping that attention from becoming a distraction will be important.

“I think the most important thing is just eliminating the distractions,” Barker said. “A lot of guys will be experiencing that for the first time. So that’s kind of just been my message to all of the guys who are experiencing this for the first time, just keep the main thing the main thing.”

Matt Campbell is also taking part in his first White Out, but his role goes beyond just coach-

ing from the sidelines, as he’ll welcome in loads of recruits during the biggest recruiting weekends during the season.

“It’s such an unbelievable opportunity to showcase this community and showcase the fan support, the community, what this place means, and how special it is to play football here at Penn State,” Campbell said. “It continues to showcase how special it is to play here at Penn State.”

As Penn State welcomes USC to Happy Valley at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, there will be plenty at stake. Campbell and his staff will have an opportunity to impress recruits, while the Nittany Lions will try to snap a two-game losing streak and avoid dropping three straight to start Big Ten play.

But Saturday will also provide Penn State an opportunity to reconnect with a fanbase that has watched the season take a sharp turn over the last two weeks. Even amid the recent struggles, Donkoh said having the fans still pack the stands would show their belief in the program hasn’t wavered.

“It would mean that the fans still care about us, still love us, still give us our support,” Donkoh said. “I know the defense especially feeds into that, feeds into the crowd pouring into them. I look forward to it a lot, and it’s gonna be fun. It always is.”

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COLLEGIAN FOOTBALL STAFF PREDICTIONS

LEXIE LINDERMAN



PENN STATE: 27
USC: 31

ANDREW DEAL



PENN STATE: 27
USC: 21

NOAH ABEREGG



PENN STATE: 24
USC: 34

ANDREW MERCER



PENN STATE: 31
USC: 35

Penn State lacks identity

By **Andrew Mercer**
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Matt Campbell took the podium at Beaver Stadium on Tuesday after Penn State's loss to Northwestern. The Nittany Lions are headed into their first White Out game under Campbell at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

Campbell discussed the team's lack of a real identity, offensive struggles across the board and gave an update on wide receiver Koby Howard.

Here's more of what he said.

Team identity

Campbell expressed his frustration regarding the lack of a team identity. He noted Penn State has gone through difficult times in the past and has managed to come back stronger, and while he has confidence in his players and coaching staff, the team "isn't where it needs to be."

He said the team lacks identity on offense, defense and in special teams while not playing to the standard they set for themselves. To improve the culture, he said facing adversity is crucial, something they're going through right now.

Campbell said the team wasn't where it needed to be after the Buffalo game, so he's not surprised by the void in identity at this point because the program is newly growing into it in the first season under his leadership.

"You're trying to mold the culture together, and it's a growth process," Campbell said. "We have to be better, and it starts with my leadership of making

sure we get better. But I have great belief in the humans that we have, and we're just not there right now."

Rocco Becht, offensive concerns

Rocco Becht has been inconsistent in Big Ten action with just one passing touchdown and three interceptions the past two contests. Campbell noted how when the offense struggles, it can "put a spotlight" on the quarterback's mistakes.

Although Campbell said Becht needs to be better, he was quick to defend his quarterback and said the entire offensive unit around him needs to be more consistent.

"We need to be better with the other 10 people around him too," Campbell said. "We need to be better in our pass protection at times, we certainly need to be better in terms of our run game. So we can get him into a rhythm, so he can play with great consistency. We haven't been able to do that, and obviously that is frustrating."

Campbell noted how the Big Ten is a physical conference, but downplayed the switch from the Big 12. He's played against Big Ten opponents during his time at Iowa State, and said the physicality of the conference is not the primary concern at this stage.

"Where we're at is trying to build a culture, schemes and foundations," Campbell said. "So I think the easy thing to say is, 'is it a physical problem? Is it a lack of physicality?' I think some

of that shows up when you're so inconsistent in some of the detailed things it takes to play good football."

Update on Howard

Campbell said Howard is still "a couple weeks away" from his return to the field despite Howard implying he'd be back against Michigan on Oct. 17 via his Instagram story a few weeks ago.

Not having him has added to the difficulties in the passing game, as Campbell said Howard was the player who executed against opponents' top defenders, a role Chase Sowell is charged with in Howard's absence.

"One thing that Koby brought was consistency," Campbell said. "He was the guy that was consistently executing. Koby was the guy that was creating matchups."

Campbell alluded to how many other players were dealing with offseason surgeries, which could be affecting their play now, and the team needs to have a next-man-up mentality in the wake of injuries such as Howard's. He said this applies across the board, not limited to the wide receiver room.

"There is a little bit of a process of those guys getting back to where we need them to play with the physicality and the detail we need them to play," Campbell said. "Those aren't excuses, and that happens in every team in the country. We have to make sure simplicity equals velocity."

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Kevin Cheng/Collegian file photo

The Penn State student section cheers during the White Out football game against Washington in Beaver Stadium on Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024 in University Park, Pa. The Nittany Lions beat the Huskies 35-6.

Most memorable White Out wins

By **Andrew Deal**
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State's White Out game is often the biggest matchup on the schedule each year and has made for some of the most memorable moments in program history.

From the blocked field goal against Ohio State in 2016 to multiple big plays against Michigan throughout the years, the White Out always tends to deliver in some way, shape or form.

Here's the most memorable White Outs in Penn State history.

2007: First full White Out

The first full-stadium White Out was in Penn State's victory against Notre Dame in 2007.

Penn State's defense stifled a Notre Dame offense led by quarterback Jimmy Clausen, and the ground game dominated on the offensive side of the ball.

The Nittany Lions' first touchdown in front of a full White Out crowd was on Derrick Williams' 78-yard punt return touchdown, creating one of the loudest moments in Beaver Stadium history.

Running back Austin Scott led the way offensively with 28 carries for 116 yards and two touchdowns as No. 14 Penn State came out on top 31-10 over Notre Dame.

2013: Penn State beats Michigan in 4 OT

One of the biggest wins in White Out history came against Michigan in 2013.

With Bill O'Brien at the helm, Penn State hosted an undefeated Michigan team ranked No. 18 at the time. The Wolverines were led by dynamic quarterback Devin Gardner, but it was Penn State's offense who stole the show late.

Trailing 34-27 with 35 seconds remaining, Christian Hackenberg threw a ball up and wide receiver Allen Robinson rose above the defenders and came down with it at the 1-yard line. Hackenberg snuck it in from a yard out on the next play to tie the game.

That's not all the theatrics, however. Michigan kicker Brendan Gibbons missed a 52-yard field goal before the end of regulation and had his 40-yard field goal attempt blocked in the first overtime, a kick that would've won the Wolverines the game.

In the third overtime, Gibbons missed a 33-yard game-winning field goal attempt, keeping the

score tied at 37. After making his field goal in the fourth overtime, Penn State had the opportunity to win it.

It was all in the hands of running back Bill Belton, who ran for 15 yards on the drive. Belton's 2-yard rushing touchdown won the matchup and was a program-defining win under O'Brien.

2016: Blocked field goal leads to upset win over Ohio State

Penn State hosted then-No. 2 Ohio State in 2016 in arguably the most memorable White Out ever, and it was a win that changed the trajectory of the program under James Franklin.

The Nittany Lions were heavy underdogs before facing one of the Heisman Trophy favorites in J.T. Barrett. Despite having multiple "Heisman" moments against the Nittany Lions, his efforts came up short.

Penn State trailed 21-7 entering the fourth quarter, and after a 2-yard rushing touchdown from Trace McSorley, the Nittany Lions pulled to within one score.

Ohio State attempted to put the game on ice in the fourth quarter with a field goal attempt that would've put the Buckeyes back up by seven. On a career-long attempt, safety Marcus Allen soared above the line and denied the kick, with cornerback Grant Haley scooping it up and ran the length of the field into the end zone, giving the Nittany Lions their first lead of the game.

Penn State's defense stood strong against Ohio State's dangerous offense, including back-to-back sacks on third and fourth down to end the game and send Beaver Stadium into a frenzy.

2017: Penn State blows out Michigan

A year after Penn State's biggest win under Franklin, the Nittany Lions hosted Michigan for the 2017 White Out.

On the second play from scrimmage, Saquon Barkley took it 69 yards to the house and it was all Penn State from there.

Barkley ran for 108 yards and three total touchdowns. The ground game was the main catalyst for Penn State's blowout win, as McSorley added three touchdowns on 76 rushing yards.

Penn State's 42-13 win over Michigan marked the second

consecutive White Out win, the first time since the first two full-stadium White Outs in 2007 and 2008.

2019: Penn State edges out Michigan in "Mo Bamba" game

Two years later, Penn State once again faced Michigan in the White Out. This time, it was the infamous "Mo Bamba" game, a song that still gets played to this day when the Nittany Lions' defense is on the field.

After the opening kickoff, Michigan's offense lost track of the play clock and were forced to call a timeout without even taking a snap from scrimmage after the crowd made it impossible for the Wolverines to hear.

Sean Clifford and wide receiver KJ Hamler combined for two touchdowns, with Hamler totaling 108 receiving yards. Clifford accounted for all four Penn State touchdowns, with three passing and one rushing.

Leading 28-21, Penn State's defense needed one final stop. On a pass to the end zone, Michigan wide receiver Ronnie Bell was open, but dropped the pass that would've tied the game and likely sent it to overtime. Instead, the Nittany Lions held on and defeated Michigan 28-21.

2024: Penn State beats SMU in College Football Playoff

Penn State's first College Football Playoff game was a White Out.

The Nittany Lions hosted SMU in the first round of the playoffs, and it was a defensive onslaught from the linebackers. Tony Rojas and Dom DeLuca combined for three interceptions, including two pick sixes.

On offense, running backs Kaytron Allen and Nick Singleton combined for three touchdowns and 160 yards on the ground.

In front of the first postseason White Out crowd, Penn State took down SMU, 38-10, en route to a College Football Playoff semifinals appearance.

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CROSSWORD

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Across

1 Yield
5 Dined
8 Banded stone
13 Energy type
14 Zilch
15 Pitch
16 *Peanuts* character
18 Singer Lenya
19 ___ Baba
20 Food container
21 More, in Madrid
22 Zoologist's foot
23 Tweety's long-suffering bud
28 Rip apart
31 Encounter
32 Henpeck
34 *Alley* ___
36 Seize
38 Chemical suffix
39 With 43 Across, Cookie's parents
43 See 39 Across
45 ___-Wan Kenobi
46 Coral ridge
48 ___-Foy, Que.
49 Annex
50 Yarn
52 Vagabond
55 Bugs Bunny torments him
59 Play part
61 "___ luck?"
62 Immerse
64 Type of shirt
65 Maxim
68 Cartoon super hero
71 Animal toxin
72 Vein contents
73 Jack's foe
74 Bother
75 Silent assent
76 Without (Fr.)

Down

1 Ice chest, for one
2 Carol Lay comic strip
3 Family man
4 Formerly, once
5 Alias
6 Twitch
7 Antlered animal
8 Map collection
9 Casper was a friendly one
10 Gallery display
11 Moppet
12 Ram's mate
13 Trade
17 Poetic contraction
21 Copper and gold, e.g.
24 Race unit
25 Action word
26 Chisholm Trail town
27 Hindu princess
29 Immediately
30 Kind of prize
33 Force unit
35 Verse
37 Two out of two
39 Female hare
40 Qualified
41 Fish part
42 Unhearing
44 New (Prefix)
47 Winter woe
51 Swirled
53 Caped Crusader
54 Arctic and Indian, e.g.
56 Jim Backus was the voice of *Mr. ___*
57 *Foe*
58 Accomplished
60 Camping gear
63 Cribbage game pieces
65 Gardner of *Mogambo*
66 Cozy room
67 Gothic author Radcliffe
68 Ham, to Noah
69 Paid player
70 River inlet

WORD SEARCH

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Sheep Breeds

R O O M X E B G I T S K T F C V I
Z K R E T S E C I E L U E E I F U
A I B M U L O C S O M L S E M H K
T J X I L N S L F F I D R H A E X
J A Q R G K W F D A H I O G R R V
B T J E G H U R T C H G D R R U Q
K N Z B H S O D C S O R Y A O D Z
A A A R Q E A R P L O H F T N G Y
R I C E R O S M N F I M O A Q T D
A L K B R C A R X L D N L G I F V
K O E B A H R O L T R E C B D U O
U G L N P A N A M A Y O E O R X N
L N C O G T Y I H R D T M P L Q A
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N M E R I N O X P N F N I H E S O
U L S T O I V E H C N B N H Q Y R
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Ancon
Argali
Berber
Big horn
Broadtail
Cheviot
Cimarron
Columbia
Dorset
Exmoor
Hampshire
Karakul
Kerry hill
Leicester
Lincoln
Merino
Mongolian
Oxford
Panama
Romanov
Romney
Ryeland
Shetland
Suffolk
Tajik
Targhee
Tibetan
Zackel

KAKURO

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12

15

26

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19

17

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14

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20

4

How to play:

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

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

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

SUDOKU

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12

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8

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4

3

2

7

5

1

9

5

6

6

10

1

4

How to play:

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

The Daily Collegian

For the students. For the glory. Since 1887.

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Friday, Oct. 9, 2026

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24 CASES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO UPPS SINCE AUG. 19.

Penn State has sent no Timely Warnings.

By Grace Levy
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Editor's Note: This article first appeared online on Tuesday at 3 a.m. with the headline "23 cases of sexual misconduct have been reported to university police since Aug. 19. Penn State has sent no Timely Warnings."

We've edited the story and headline below to account for an additional incident that was uploaded to UPPS on Tuesday.

Any incidents that may have been uploaded after Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. will not be reflected in the below article.

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

Since Aug. 19, 23 cases of sexual misconduct have been reported to University Police and Public Safety (UPPS), according to its Daily Crime Log. These reports include incidents of sexual assault, rape and harassment listed under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

These reports occurred during the "Red Zone," a period from the start of the fall semester to Thanksgiving break where more than 50% of sexual assaults are reported on college campuses.

In the past, Penn State has issued Timely Warnings to alert the community of certain crimes reported to UPPS, especially for cases involving sexual misconduct and sexual assault.

However, the university has not issued a Timely Warning for University Park since Feb. 19, 2025, which was for two separate hazing incidents at both on and off-campus student organizations.

The last Timely Warning for a sexual offense was Nov. 19, 2024.

In 2024, 10 Timely Warnings were sent, eight of which were sexual offenses.

In 2023, 11 Timely warnings were sent, six of which were for sexual offenses and one for stalking under the VAWA.

In 2022, 15 Timely Warnings were sent, 13 of which were for sexual offenses and one for stalking under the VAWA.

Here are the cases of sexual misconduct reported to UPPS since the fall 2026 semester began.

Aug. 19

A student reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person in a residence hall on Aug. 7 in East Halls Residence Complex. The case is not cleared.

Aug. 24

A student reported being ha-



Katie McKenney/Collegian

A police car sits outside of University Towers on Friday, Aug. 28, 2026, in State College, Pa.

rrassed at an on-campus property. The case is not cleared.

Aug. 29

A student reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person in a residence hall in East Halls Residence Complex. The case is open.

Sept. 3

A visitor reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person in a residence hall between June 4 and 6 in an unknown residence hall. The case is open.

Sept. 4

A student reported being harassed on Sept. 4 in the Blue Band Building. The case is not cleared.

Sept. 6

A student reported being harassed between Sept. 5 and 6 at an on-campus property. The case is open.

Sept. 8

An employee reported indecent offenses at the Chambers Building between March 2025 and Sept. 8, 2026. The case was cleared by adult arrest.

A student reported they were sexually assaulted by an unknown person in a residence hall on Sept. 5 in Porter Hall. The case is not cleared.

Sept. 11

A student reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person at a parking lot outside Beaver Stadium between Aug. 30 and Sept. 11. The case is open.

A student reported being harassed between Aug. 21 and Sept. 11 in Nittany Apartments. The case is not cleared.

Sept. 14

A student reported being ha-

rrassed at the Intramural Building. The case is not cleared.

Sept. 22

A student reported being harassed between Aug. 24 and Sept. 22 in Pollock Hall. The case is not cleared.

Sept. 23

A student reported being harassed between Sept. 1 and Sept. 23 on campus. The case is not cleared.

Sept. 24

A student reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person in a residence hall between Sept. 17 and 18 at an on-campus residence hall. The case is open.

Sept. 27

A student reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person in a residence hall on Sept. 25 in East Halls Residence Complex. The case is open.

A student reported being harassed on Sept. 25 in East Halls Residence Complex. The case is open.

Sept. 28

A student reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person in a residence hall between Sept. 24 and 25 in West Halls Residence Complex. The case is not cleared.

A student reported being harassed between Aug. 17 and Sept. 26 on campus. The case is open.

Sept. 30

Campus police assisted an outside law agency with a reported Clery crime sexual assault at an off-campus fraternity occurring between Sept. 5 and 12. The case is closed.

Oct. 1

Campus police assisted an outside agency with a reported sexual assault at an off-campus fraternity occurring on Sept. 25. The case is closed.

Campus police assisted an outside agency with a reported sexual assault at an off-campus apartment between Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 on West College Avenue. The case is closed.

Oct. 2

A student reported being physically assaulted by a known person on campus between Sept. 21 and 26. The case is not cleared.

Oct. 3

A visitor reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person in an unknown location between Oct. 2 and Oct. 3. The case is not cleared.

Oct. 6

A student reported they were sexually assaulted by a known person in a residence hall between Sept. 17 and Sept. 28 at an on campus property. The case is not cleared.

Timely Warnings?

In Penn State's annual security and fire safety report published on Sept. 30, the university described the purpose of Timely Warnings as "an effort to provide timely notice to the campus community in the event of a Clery Act Crime that may pose an ongoing threat."

UPPS may distribute these warnings through emails, posters, web postings and media, and it has the discretion to determine whether a Timely Warning is required, according to the report. UPPS may issue Timely Warnings for events occurring off cam-

pus if the location is frequented by the university population.

The definition says they may issue a Timely Warning for the following crimes: criminal homicide, aggravated assault, sexual assault, burglary, robbery, motor vehicle theft, arson, certain hate crimes, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking and hazing.

The warnings are issued on a "case-by-case basis" based on the following criteria: One of the above listed crimes are reported; the perpetrator has not been apprehended; continuing threat risk to the safety of other members of the campus community because of this crime; and possible risk of compromising law enforcement effort.

Timely warnings are required by the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act, a federal statute governing how colleges and universities that receive federal funding report crimes on and near campus. After a Clery Act crime occurs, campus officials are required to "evaluate if there is a serious or ongoing threat to the campus community," according to the Clery Center.

In an email to The Daily Collegian, UPPS Public Information Officer Jacqueline Sheader wrote that all reports to UPPS are individually evaluated to determine if they meet Timely Warning criteria.

"Factors that may support a decision not to issue a Timely Warning include situations where the suspect has been identified and apprehended or law enforcement has determined that there is no ongoing danger. University Police also assess the nature of the crime, the circumstances surrounding the incident, the likelihood of recurrence, and the amount of information available to provide a meaningful warning," Sheader wrote.

Resources

Medical services include Mount Nittany Medical Center; Penn Highlands State College; and University Health Services.

On-campus resources include Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS); the Office of Sexual Misconduct Reporting & Response; the Relationship Violence Outreach, Intervention, and Community Education (R-VOICE) Center; and The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (CSGD).

Off-campus resources include Centre Safe.

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Puerto Rican students reflect on island's political status

By Fabiola Cruz-Gonzalez
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The island of Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory 128 years ago, a governmental status that still remains today. As a territory, Puerto Rican citizens are classified as U.S. citizens and are protected under the Fourteenth Amendment and citizens are protected by fundamental civil rights.

This has led to debate on possible futures for the island, including statehood, independence, free association and maintaining the current territorial relationship. For Puerto Rican students, the question extends beyond political terminology and into questions of identity, representation, autonomy and Puerto Rico's relationship with the U.S.

Ignacio Pedraza, 18, of Bayamón, Puerto Rico, said he favors maintaining Puerto Rico's current political relationship with the U.S., pointing to the degree of autonomy the island maintains while also benefiting from its relationship with the U.S.

Pedraza, a first-year studying international politics, pointed to Puerto Rico's ability to compete separately in the Olympic Games as something he sees as part of

the island's distinct identity. At the same time, he acknowledged problems within the current relationship, particularly Puerto Rico's reliance on the U.S.

"I'm an athlete, and one of the things I most cherish about Puerto Rico is that we have our own Olympic Committee," Pedraza said "If we become a state, we'd completely lose that."

By the mid 20th century, Puerto Rico began gaining more authority over the administration of its own government. Puerto Ricans began electing their own governor in 1948, and Congress authorized the island to draft its own constitution in 1950. The constitution took effect in 1952, establishing the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, but it didn't make Puerto Rico a state or an independent country.

Rather than seeing a change in political status as the solution to Puerto Rico's problems, Pedraza said he believes stronger leadership could improve conditions under the current arrangement.

Gabriela López, 19, of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, said her perspective on Puerto Rico's political status began long before she was old enough to vote.

One of the first essays she remembers writing in grade school

was on what she could change in the world, López, a second-year studying broadcast journalism, said. At around 8 years old, she chose Puerto Rican independence, despite growing up with parents who supported different political parties and did not openly discuss their political beliefs with her.

"We're a part of the United States, but they never treat us like we're theirs," López said, recalling what she wrote in her essay.

Years later, López said Hurricane Maria shaped how she understood that relationship.

The Category 4 hurricane struck Puerto Rico on September 20, 2017, devastating the island's electrical grid and other infrastructure. The U.S. Government Accountability Office later documented extensive delays and complications in long-term recovery projects.

"My mother hung Christmas lights on a tree we couldn't even turn on," Lopez said.

López said those experiences contributed to her belief that Puerto Rico should become independent. She also pointed to the lack of presidential voting rights and voting representation in Congress for Puerto Rico residents

as central to her frustration with the island's current status.

U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico cannot vote for president, and the island has no senators and only a resident commissioner in the U.S. House of Representatives who cannot vote on final legislation.

"As someone who adores American history, I feel it is only natural that after learning about the great political thinkers of the American Revolution, the people who laid down their lives for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, those who saw injustice and decided they deserved better, they deserved respect from their leaders. Of course I'd want the same for my people," Lopez said.

Beyond Puerto Rico's political status, López said she would like future governments to prioritize education and infrastructure, particularly its public schools and universities.

Jamil Dawahra, 20, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, questioned whether changing Puerto Rico's political status would address the problem residents currently face.

Dawahra, a second-year studying health policy and administration, said debates over statehood and independence can overshadow issues that occur regardless

of the island's relationship with the U.S.

"Fix the electricity problem, fix the water system, fix the corruption, fix the money laundering, fix the poverty problem, and then we can talk about what's better for us," Dawahra said.

Dawahra emphasized that neither independence nor statehood would automatically resolve those problems, arguing Puerto Rico should first address problems within its institutions and infrastructure.

Ana Sofia Torres Candelario, 18, of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico said she would prefer Puerto Rico not move toward independence, but added that dissatisfaction with the current system has more to do with its government than its mere political status.

Continue reading:



Professors examine concerns about AI’s rapid development

By Jonathon Chiu
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Artificial intelligence (AI) has grown by leaps since Chat-GPT’s 2022 launch, leading to concerns that its development is beginning to outpace people’s ability to control it.

These concerns are often exemplified by incidents where AI models break out of their test environments and hack parts of the internet after gaining access to it. This was the case in July, when OpenAI’s models escaped containment during a security test and managed to hack into the AI startup Hugging Face.

This incident has been followed by a series of other hacks by AI models, including successful and unsuccessful breaches into government websites belonging to Canada, Australia and the United States. The Federal Trade Commission has since launched an investigation into the matter.

In September, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei published an essay, “We Must Pace the Frontier,” focused on the Hugging Face hack and its ramifications for global AI development. He presented a plan in the essay to slow its progress both in the U.S. and potentially throughout the world.

He wrote that actions need to be taken to verify safety practices and report incidents within AI companies, including embedding evaluators with “employee-like access.” And he wrote about the need to limit AI’s ability to create the next generation of itself in a phenomenon called recursive self-improvement.

Alan Wagner, an aerospace engineering associate professor whose research and interests include AI and machine learning, said he had heard “bits and pieces” of some of the ideas presented in Amodei’s essay. Amodei’s position as Anthropic’s CEO, Wagner said, also makes him well-suited to speak on concerns within the industry.

Wagner is skeptical about whether some of the actions Amodei presented warrant a complete pause at all. He also said he was not convinced a pause of American AI development will cause other countries, like China,



Kenni Michels/Collegian

AI Vice Provost Vasant Honavar speaks as part of a discussion and Q&A panel during an AI in Research symposium. Since the start of the year, there’s been a university-wide push for AI initiatives.

to follow suit, out of fear they will be outcompeted in the race for more powerful AI models.

“There’s no way, really, to pause AI research globally. And it sort of leaves us in a situation where these things are gonna advance until something bad does happen because of both national competition and international competition,” Wagner said.

Wagner said he is also concerned having evaluators be treated as employees within the companies they are meant to keep in check will cause them to eventually work to protect a company’s interests with AI development over ensuring it is being done safely and in compliance with established policies.

He also said he viewed Amodei’s description of the threats posed by recursive self-improvement in his essay as being too vague and expressed a desire to learn more about why Amodei focused on this aspect of the dangers of rogue AI.

“Presumably, the development of super intelligent AI is not just a matter of having the agent write code: it’s algorithmic development; it’s mathematical advances; possibly, it’s just scaling, but recursive self-improvement is really not going to improve those things,” Wagner said. “An agent’s not gonna go to the Library of Con-

gress and copy books physically, so I’m not sure that these agents are going to be able to scale or improve.”

Wagner also said he predicts AI companies will form an agreement among them to set the terms of a development pause before one ever takes place.

Such negotiations between American AI companies may be possible as Sam Altman and Elon Musk, the CEOs of OpenAI and SpaceX respectively, have been reported to have joined Amodei in calling for a “coordinated slowdown” of artificial intelligence development.

Brian Lennon, a professor of English and comparative literature who specializes in topics related to AI, said he found it hard for him to determine whether Altman and Musk’s statements are completely genuine, given the investments both have made into artificial intelligence infrastructure, such as data centers.

He also said some may interpret Altman and Musk’s comments more cynically by believing they are attempting to convince the U.S. government to enact regulations that would allow their companies to dominate the AI industry by putting them in a position where they are considered “too big to fail.”

Amodei’s own calls for the

pacing of AI development come at a time when Anthropic is expected to go public sometime in November, with investors expecting the company to value between \$1.8 to \$2 trillion.

“I don’t take the entirely cynical position that this is all purely self interest. That’s likely to be a strong ingredient of anything involving as much wealth as this industry right now,” Lennon, 55, of State College, Pa. said. “Whatever you think of (Altman and Musk) as people, they’re both in charge of an intellectually very challenging situation, so you have to assume that there’s some good faith in there somewhere as well.”

Though government action will be required for regulating the long-term development of artificial intelligence, he said, he’s unsure whether this will be enacted under Trump, since its policy on the matter so far has been inconsistent.

Several members of Congress have joined in calling for enacting AI regulations. President Donald Trump has remained resistant to these demands and said all that’s needed to regulate AI development is a “strong and smart president.”

This stands in contrast to Trump’s appointment of National Intelligence Director Jay Clayton to become the administration’s

“AI Czar;” he’ll develop regulations and standards for AI development.

Lennon also pointed to the declaration of Anthropic as a supply chain risk following the collapse of a 2025 contract with the Department of Defense for use of the company’s AI models as another instance when the Trump administration was unusually hands-on in regulating the industry.

Patrick Plaisance, the Donald W. Davis professor in ethics for the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, said concerns of human control over AI do deserve attention, but they shouldn’t distract from issues stemming from the social, mental and cognitive health impacts of prolonged chatbot usage — which Plaisance has spent some time researching.

Plaisance said AI’s impact on peoples’ health, especially socially and mentally, mirrors those seen with the extended use of social media, another industry which received little government regulation in its early stages.

He said the only way to prevent this from happening again with artificial intelligence is through the pressuring of AI companies to enact guardrails. This could be a similar path to what led Meta agree to pay a \$17 billion settlement and implement stronger child safety features on Instagram and Facebook after a federal lawsuit filed for these platforms’ addictive effects on children, Plaisance added.

“The single metric of success for chatbots really comes down to engagement. That’s all the companies care about, is keeping your eyeballs there,” Plaisance said. “That was the same thing that we allowed to be the metric of success for social media platforms, and we now know the harms that stem from that kind of mindset. It took us 15 to 20 years, and I hope it doesn’t take us another 15 or 20 years to realize that we have to grapple with these similar moral questions with AI assistants.”

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Mojofest Happy Valley revives PSU local music fans

By Brennan Kramp
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Coming just six months after its debut in State College, Mojofest Happy Valley returned to Tussey Mountain on Saturday, for another round of heavy jams and



Stella John/Collegian

The drummer of The Dirty Turkeys gets dumped on during the Mojofest Happy Valley Music Festival at Tussey Mountain on Oct. 3, 2026.

good times in the sunshine.

That morning, the board and crew of Local Mojo’s Penn State branch had a much more relaxed set up. There was no panic in their efforts as they already had one major festival undertheirbeltfromlastsemester. A general feeling of gratitude and excitement was all that loomed around the open festival grounds.

After the soundcheck of the headlining band, The Dirty Turkeys, lead singer of the band, Bradley Hansen, 25, from Boulder, Colorado, talked admiringly about the growth and attraction local music has gained from the East to West Coasts, saying that people want to feel something again.

“They want to dance, they want to boogie, they want to see someone rip the electric guitar and play the drums and feel it, feel it deep in their bones,” Hansen said.

After the last Mojofest Happy Valley, Local Mojo founder Charley Blacker said that Penn State’s 2026 Mojofest would be “something Happy Valley’s never seen before.” He couldn’t have been more accurate.

As the line formed outside the festival, students and local residents came dressed in their bohemian-inspired fits, while they trickled into the festival grounds with anticipation for what the day had in store. Bands and DJ’s from both State College and all around the country were lined up for eight straight hours of good music and good vibes.

One Penn State student, Asher Reno, 18, from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, said he was introduced to the festival through a few friends that had attended the semester before.

“I don’t know any of the people here today, so I’m excited to discover some more local music,” Asher, a first-year studying business, said.

Kai Petrosky, 19, from Somerset, Pennsylvania, expressed how much he loved the environment that the festival created for the community.

“It’s just as great as last year,” Petroski, a second-year studying business and data analytics, said. ‘It’s good music, it’s a great atmosphere, there’s just a bunch of people here that really seem awesome.”

The show kicked off with a DJ performance from the director, Ava Plachter and marketing director, Caya Kassaraba, of Local Mojo Penn State. State College bands, Sean Thomas and the Waterfowl Festival Band, along with DJ’s, Soho, Poh and Jacob Gavin, followed the opening act and gave the crowd a reminder of what the State College scene sounds like.

Other acts like the popular Happy Valley bands Mick Mac and 3:46 Sunrise drew in more and more people to the front of the stage by the hundreds, continuing to give people that thumping, upbeat and reviving taste of the Happy Valley sound.

Masses of people swayed, hands high and smiles wide, as they sang word for word every tune that came through the monitors. Soon, the entire festival ground transformed into a sonic commune and the only things that seemed to matter were simple: listening and enjoying.

The show finished out with the headlining act, The Dirty Turkeys. The crowd, thinned out by a small margin, maintained its unyielding spirit as the band

uploaded their head-bashing drums and ground-shaking bass.

Mosh pits formed in front of the stage, filled with fans wearing Garfield onesies, leather jackets and Elton John sunglasses. At one point during the band’s song “Quinceanera,” Hansen departed the stage to be with the crowd as he created his own whirlpool of fans and belted out the chorus of the song.

After the show concluded, fans headed into a line, while they waited for the bus shuttles to take them back into downtown State College.

Dylan Tomb, 21, from Pittsburgh, said he couldn’t get enough of it and, at one point, couldn’t even feel his legs because he was moving so much. He praised the feeling that the festival gave not only to him but also to everyone around him.

“How could you not want to come up here on Tussey mountain, with the best view, to listen to some local music?” Tomb, a fourth-year security and risk analysis major, said. “It was just the best time.”

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Celebrate fall on a budget

By Colleen Cratty
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Fall has always been an aesthetic season. From the early seasons of Gilmore Girls to a playlist with all the sappy classics, you probably want to enjoy all of fall’s glory as much as you can.

But fall, of course, comes right after the first month of school, which might have your bank account looking about as empty as the branches of the trees will.

If you’re at a loss, don’t worry. Local events and your very own kitchen can keep you occupied this season.

Here are some ways to celebrate fall without breaking the bank.

Make your own pumpkin spice latte

Buying viral drinks from Starbucks might cost a pretty

penny, but the ingredients are all available at local grocery stores to save you some money this fall.

Pour espresso or freshly brewed coffee into a glass over ice. Add pumpkin puree, maple syrup, pumpkin pie spice and vanilla and stir until combined. Add your milk of choice to the mixture, and you’ve got a homemade pumpkin spice latte.

Extra pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon make a good topping for extra flair.

Bake seasonal goods

Another way to celebrate fall in your kitchen is by baking some of your favorite seasonal pastries. Pumpkin bread, apple crisp and cinnamon rolls are some classics that can put you in the fall mood.

An apple crisp is simple and great for those who are new to baking. You just need to make spiced apples and the topping, then bake them. The apples need to be chopped and mixed with sugar, cinnamon and lemon juice.

Then, brown sugar, oats, flour, cinnamon, salt and cold butter need to be mixed together in a

separate bowl. Spread this over the apples in a baking dish, and stick them in the oven. Serve with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream for the perfect fall dessert.

Thrift and forage for decor

Whether you’re looking for an autumn aesthetic or a spooky Halloween vibe, finding cheap decorations can be difficult. One of the best ways to get great decor for cheap is heading to your local thrift or antique shop.

Thrift shops have amazing vintage decor for low prices. Some pieces to look for are brown glasses or vases, woven baskets, vintage quilts and warm-toned hardcover books. These are perfect to add to your home or apartment for that fall essence.

Another way to get decor for cheap is to search outside. Pinecones, acorns and branches are great centerpieces that are no cost to you.

You could also make a wreath with natural materials. Wreath bases are available for cheap at

most craft stores, and you can use twigs and leaves to make a homemade wreath.

All of these options are also environmentally friendly which makes them great options to celebrate fall while lowering your carbon footprint.

Have a movie night

For those looking for a simple night in, a movie night is a great choice. Whether you love scary Halloween movies or feel-good autumn classics, a comfy watch-party on the couch is a fall staple.

Horror movie-lovers might want to rewatch standard scary films like “Scream” or “Friday the 13th.” Some upcoming horror releases are “Other Mommy” and “Clayface,” which both come out in October.

Make some popcorn, grab a blanket and have yourself a chill movie night this fall.

Visit a farmer’s market

Farmer’s markets are a great way to soak in those fall vibes while also supporting lo-

cal businesses. Some local markets to visit are the State College Farmer’s Market and the Boalsburg Farmer’s Market.

Both of these markets sell products that are perfect for fall, like pies, coffee, cider and more.

Participate in a volunteer project

Fall is the season of gratitude and giving, so it’s a perfect time to get involved with something for the community. Take some time to think about the causes that mean the most to you and then research different ways you can make an impact.

Some local options are volunteering at the State College Food Bank, which provides food security to the people of Centre County, as well as Centre County PAWS, which is an animal shelter in State College.

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‘The Scarlet Letter’ proves shame keeps us from living



Hall overeager to move, especially without looking weird. The threat of being found imperfect lives in the flash shining from someone recording on Snapchat for their private story.

The threat of public ridicule continues when the lights turn back on, too. Like the Puritans of 17th-century Boston in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Scarlet Letter,” the looming cloud of potential shame makes us dampen our efforts to experience life properly because making a mistake is a mortal sin in 2026.

“The Scarlet Letter,” published in 1850, chronicles the journey of a woman named Hester Prynne (which intentionally rhymes with “sin,” per my AP English Language and Composition teacher) who commits adultery and bears the child out of wedlock, then slated to wear a bright red “A” that stands for “adultery” on her chest for life.

Who did she do it with? The pastor and most pious man in the village, Arthur Dimmesdale.

However, no one in the town knows the identity of the father and Hester swears herself to secrecy, bearing the brunt of criticism from society.

The townspeople, as soon as she exits the prison, begin gossiping about Hester’s sin and how she should be punished, but not without Hawthorne highlighting their own flaws: “‘What do we talk of marks and brands, whether on the bodice of her gown, or the flesh of her forehead?’ cried another female, the ugliest as well as the most pitiless of these self-constituted judges. ‘This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die.’”

Judgment levied against other people is so common that there are major Bible passages warning against it. We dislike what a person’s wearing, how they speak, what they do on a daily basis and choose to treat them differently based on our judgements when we often exhibit those exact traits ourselves.

The fundamental attribution error, a common psychological bias in humans, pushes us to attribute mistakes to a moral deficiency or personal failure in others, even though those same mistakes are due to factors out of our control when we’re in the wrong.

The “ugly, self-constituted judges” in the novel want to eradicate Hester’s blemish on the history of their town with even village’s leader, Gov. Bellingham, proposing that Hester’s illegitimate child, Pearl, be taken from her as Hester’s sin made her unfit to be a mother. The same leader preaching spirituality also lives lavishly throughout the course

of the novel, directly opposing the ideals of the religion the Puritans follow.

There is such a thing as healthy judgment, since it is such a critical part of the way we navigate the world. Sometimes an instinctual “ick” allows us to avoid dangerous or otherwise unpleasant situations. But when we ignore the lines of thinking that would offer compassion to others and instead choose to die on a hill based on a single act, we become the self-constituted judges that we fear so much.

“When we ignore the lines of thinking that would offer compassion to others and instead choose to die on a hill based on a single act, we become the self-constituted judges that we fear so much.”

Kippi Hall
Columnist

The internet acts as the townspeople and the scarlet letter on Hester’s bodice. While marks of the same mistake live on forever in the digital world like an ink stain, that same community ridicules and relentlessly ostracizes the one

with the mark. In doing so, we deprive ourselves the opportunity to make mistakes and truly live.

Hester has the opportunity to leave Boston village and shed her sin to begin a new life. But she stays and faces the music, because the scarlet letter is proof she did something out of passion and love.

Dimmesdale, however, avoids confession and the Puritans of the town continue to regard him as a perfect, devout man, even attributing his visible inner turmoil to his holiness. The pastor physically and emotionally deteriorates as his secret sin and internal passion for Hester burn through his facade, a remarkably similar fate for when we try to subdue our own desires to experience life fully.

Going out and socializing with the fear of making a fool of ourselves or trying a new hobby we aren’t immediately good at, like dancing at the club, are some of the greatest tools we have against depression. Conversely, social and physical inactivity are greatly associated with higher risks of depression, according to a study published in the National Institute of Medicine. Psychological biases like the spotlight effect in concert with the omnipresent chance of being shamed online make those activities that much more difficult to do, because the constant judgment is proof that any mistakes are the whole constitution of who we are.

But Hester Prynne disagrees. Her past makes her a resource

for compassion for the townspeople, morphing the scarlet letter into a symbol of owning who you are regardless of what others believe and being empathetic to those who try and fail, too.

Mistakes are an inevitable part of who we are and to get rid of them or attempt to explain them away would be disingenuous. However, they’re not our entire character and, wrong or not, they paint the background of who we choose to be beyond them.

The narrator states, “If truth were everywhere to be shown, a scarlet letter would blaze forth on many a bosom.” The ubiquity of our flaws makes judgment, outward and inward, seem ridiculous, and turns the nightmare of failing in front of others into nothing more than a bad dream to move on from.

Shame is a powerful force that can be wielded unfairly and excessively, leaving us paralyzed and projecting that guilt onto those who put our flaws on display. But puritanical standards don’t align with having a full life.

We all need to dance at the club some more, stopping only to admire those who trip over their own ankles then rebalance themselves to continue doing it anyway.

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MY VIEW | Quentin Jurney

Vegas comes to State College

Gambling and sports have slowly merged to form a parasitic relationship that exploits all of the negative aspects of the sports world.

Gambling exacerbates massive amounts of fast cash into every facet of professional sports and, more importantly, sports at a collegiate level. Even college athletes are able to place bets on professional sports.

Since May 14, 2018, sports betting has become legalized

nationwide. In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court struck down House Bill 74, the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA), which banned all sports gambling in the United States with the exception of Las Vegas.

In Murphy v. National Collegiate Athletic Association, House Bill 74 was overruled, legalizing sports betting and gambling nationwide. A Pandora’s Box was opened, and the basis of the professional sports landscape we see today emerged from within it.

39 states and Washington, D.C., have some form of legalized U.S. sports betting, whether online or in person.

Sports gambling and online gambling have become bigger than ever, especially with younger generations.

Penn State isn’t immune to gambling’s takeover of sports. As one of the most popular football teams in the U.S., the demographic of people who are actively betting has also expanded. Not just sports betting fanatics but our very own student body as well. With a heavily male-dominated student population, these companies prey on that demographic and cater to their obsession with sports gambling.

Even The Daily Collegian puts out betting odds on Penn State football games, showing how widespread and influential betting is in high-level sports.

Happy Valley Casino, located in State College, had its grand opening in May 2026. There are very few reasons to invest resources into this type of business in State College and the sole reason to do so is to addict the student body. With over 40,000 students at Penn State’s University Park campus, young adults are heavily intertwined in State College’s population, so a casino built here primarily targets students and preys on their vulnerability.

Since sports gambling is such a popular vice among young men, especially at a big sports school like Penn State, it creates a pipeline effect where sports gambling normalizes constant gambling. Now there’s a physical place where students can gamble on a variety of other games of chance. Since they’re

already used to betting and gambling, going to a casino often isn’t a big leap from placing bets on their phones.

Now, this doesn’t mean you should avoid casinos completely; if you go once or twice for the experience, or if you want to play a poker game at your friend’s house every once in a while, that’s a different story.

But casinos have spent millions on research to get people addicted to coming back, and online sports betting has portrayed itself more as skill than gambling.

Gambling has proved to be a very easy way to lose yourself and destroy your life. With the predatory nature of casinos and the susceptibility of college students, it becomes dangerous to have a casino in the State College area. With the pipeline between online sports betting and gambling at a casino being more apparent, leading to addiction, there’s a cause for concern when a casino is built in a college town.

If Penn State cares about the well-being of its students and its public image, as it especially should nowadays, a casino like Happy Valley Casino should be met with heavy scrutiny. As a student debating whether you should go to the casino often or start sports betting online, I would step back and think twice before going into a place that bets on you becoming addicted.

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

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Zach Gleiter/Collegian file photo

A sign hangs outside the construction site for the Happy Valley Casino by the Nittany Mall on East College Avenue on Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025 in State College, Pa.

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'I HAVEN'T LOOKED BACK SINCE'

Penn State Baseball Club brings family to competition

By Noah Radio
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

"We've got bats and s—t." That's the refrain Greg "Sandy" Sanderson, the eventual founder of the National Club Baseball Association, used to convince students when he and his classmates built the Penn State Baseball Club (PSBC) in the late 1990s.

The club now has six national championships to its name and has made the National Club Baseball Association (NCBA) DI World Series 18 times since 2001. No one's questioning if Jacob McGuire and AJ Capizzi have bats.

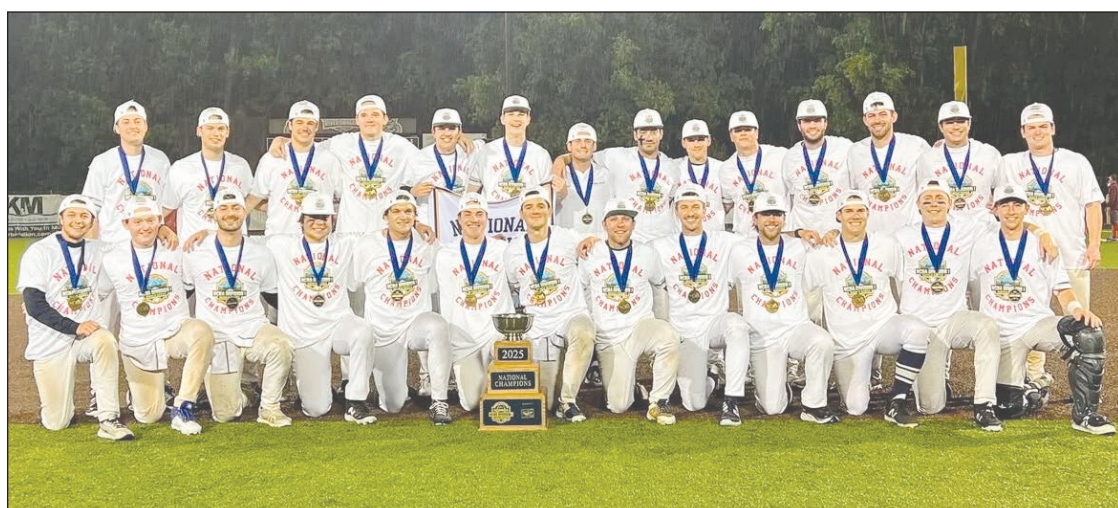
McGuire, the club's president, and Capizzi, the 2025-26 treasurer, both credited their success to the culture set by past teams.

Once Sanderson and club founder Dan Snyder convinced prospective players that they were more than "guys getting together, watching MLB and swapping baseball cards," the ascension was quick. The PSCB played its first intercollegiate game when Sanderson got a call from former Montgomery County Community College baseball coach Lou Lombardo.

Lombardo got word from his daughter, then a Penn State student, that a baseball club was in the works in Happy Valley. He reached out to Sanderson and invited the new team to play a two-game series. The Nittany Lions assembled their hand-me-down jerseys with zippers down the front and mismatched hats and split the set 1-1.

"That's when the lightbulb went off," Sanderson said. "Imagine if we practiced or prepared and had tryouts and really got the best players available on campus. And that's when it really took the turn and became more, 'Let's go play other schools.'"

That's exactly what they did. Sanderson began organizing trips to play other schools, including a spring break trip to Panama City, Florida, that the club still



Courtesy of Jacob McGuire

The Penn State Baseball Club poses for a team photo.

takes today.

"We always felt like Penn State was the best club baseball team we knew about and there was nothing to show for it. There was no national championship, no league to start or to play in," Sanderson said. "I wrote a letter, printed it out on the computer. In a nutshell, it said, 'If you have club baseball at your school, call me.'"

Sanderson quickly became inundated with messages from Colorado State, Texas A&M, Weber State and schools all across the country. Those teams built the foundation of the 34-team inaugural NCBA.

As the league progressed and added more teams, the organization eventually gained enough notoriety that other sports wanted a piece, and CollClubSports was born to help branch out to other club sports. Sanderson's CollClubSports now includes basketball and flag football for eight total leagues.

Both teams are entirely student-run, and the efforts are spearheaded by the executive board and the coaching staff. They prepare practice plans, run practices and make all of the game decisions a major league manager would make, while also balancing the academic rigor

that comes with being a college student.

Coaching for the club is not just a perfunctory role; many are former players who suffered injuries and then pivoted to the dugout. Many Penn State coaches go on to pursue coaching as a career.

Cam Medic, an assistant coach and Director of Baseball Operations at Gardner-Webb, led Penn State to its 2023 national championship and jumped right into coaching after he graduated.

After reaching the World Series in 2009, the Division II team won the club's first national championship in 2011. The Division I team joined the party just two years later, winning the 2013 national championship in its 10th World Series appearance.

Penn State won Division I national championships in 2018 and 2023 and embarked on a historic three-peat.

The Nittany Lions traveled to Alton, Illinois, for the 2023 World Series with the likes of LSU and Virginia Tech, and defeated Wisconsin-Whitewater in the championship. In 2024, Penn State went back to the Land of Lincoln for a World Series highlighted by two showdowns with Grand Canyon.

"It got to the point where we were five innings into the game in the World Series, a huge high-

intensity moment, and we had to essentially leave the field," Capizzi, a Zelienople, Pennsylvania, native, said. "We went back to our hotel for two to three hours, just waiting to hear."

After a few innings of evenly matched play, the game went into a weather delay, and both teams retreated to their hotels. They beat Grand Canyon, a game that set them up for a "prime position to then reach the championship game."

"I think that moment sticks out to me because the perseverance our club had," Capizzi said.

The 2025 World Series also featured a repeat matchup marred by precipitation. In the second game, they lost to Virginia Tech.

"They sent us into the losers bracket in which we had to claw all the way back to get a rematch with them in the finals, which was exactly what we wanted, right?" McGuire, a Gibsonia, Pennsylvania, native, said. "They're the team that sent you out. You want to get them back."

Just like the Grand Canyon game a year ago, the championship clash was soaked with rain. McGuire said you could see water coming off of their jerseys.

The game went into extra innings tied at six, and in the bottom of the tenth, first baseman

Owen Mathes came through with the bases loaded and two outs. McGuire pitched the final 4 2/3 innings. He said every emotion was going through his mind.

"There's nothing as special as everyone's happy being in the dog pile. It was when we stood up and we looked around and there was tears in everybody's eyes. That is a memory that I will hold forever. And it wasn't so much that it was happy tears because we had just won; it was because of the group," McGuire said.

The common thread throughout the PSCB is the community that comes with it, McGuire said, and that the team is like his family.

"After my senior year, I was pretty ready to hang 'em up," Capizzi agreed. "I really didn't want to play anymore, but just the second that I played my first fall league game, went through tryouts — I haven't looked back since."

Earlier this year, former PSCB players came together to purchase a house in Boalsburg dubbed the "PSBC Lodge." The lodge is an extension of a group chat of "old balls" that Sanderson said is active nearly every day.

"Their experience with the Penn State Baseball Club meant enough for them to invest this much money to build this place for us other guys to come back and all hang out together—pretty awesome," Sanderson said.

For Sanderson, McGuire and Capizzi, Penn State club baseball will be a part of their lives forever. Sanderson said it's been his life since he joined.

"And then it's spinning off into what's become my career, running the National Club Baseball Association. There's not a day goes by, literally not a day of my life goes by, that someone from the Penn State Baseball Club doesn't send me a text message," Sanderson said.

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Hockey Valley returns

2026-27 season starts with road trip

By Maggie Hardy
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It's been almost 200 days since Penn State's season that was once filled with the hope of a national title ended with the final buzzer at the Albany Regional Semifinals at MVP Arena. Now, No. 17 Penn State is back for its 2026-27 campaign.

"When it's game week, then everything just sort of feels good... I enjoy the adrenaline part of it," head coach Guy Gadowsky said. "You know Thursday's coming, and that's when you've got to get ready to go, and everything's just back on. It feels good."

The Nittany Lions start their season on the road in the 30th annual Ice Breaker Tournament, which brings together four teams from across different conferences to open the college hockey season. No. 16 UConn and Sacred Heart will co-host, with Penn State and Bowling Green rounding out the field.

The blue and white begin Friday, with a 7 p.m. match against UConn at Toscano Family Ice Forum in Storrs, Connecticut, and finish Saturday at 7 p.m. against Sacred Heart at Martire Family Arena in Fairfield, Connecticut.

The new Nittany Lions

Penn State's roster looks much different from the last time the team hit the ice back in March, after losing five of its top six scorers and a few key blueliners.

The Nittany Lions welcome 11 new faces to the squad this year, and with Gadowsky's emphasis on "scoring by committee" this season as opposed to top-6 heavy production, the group has a chance to make an immediate impact up and down the lineup.

"The younger guys have been great. They fit in well, all the transfers as well," captain Reese Laubach said. "Great for the culture. Great group of guys."

Transfer forward Justin Poirier is expected to have a big season for the blue and white, after registering 29 points in 27 games during his freshman year at Maine.

In for returners, captain Dane Dowiak is back after suffering a season-ending upper-body injury in February and will most likely play an instrumental role on the team's top line. Notable forwards Shea Van Olm and Luke Misa are also expected to take big developmental jumps as they enter their sophomore years.

On the back end, blueliner Jackson Smith proved himself as one of the best defensemen in the conference last season, and after being named to the Preseason All-Big Ten second team, he looks poised for another big year. The Nittany Lions have also put together another strong goaltending tandem this season.

Sophomore Josh Fleming returns as the likely starter after posting an impressive .924 save percentage in his first season. Freshman Ryder Fetterolf is coming in as the clear backup after being named both the OHL and CHL Goaltender of the Year last season.

Scouting UConn

The last time these two teams met, it was etched in the history books as Penn State defeated UConn in overtime of the 2025 Allentown Regional Final, sending the program to its first-ever Frozen Four.

"They're extremely structured and play really hard," Gadowsky said. "That's what we saw in Allentown, and that's what I'm sure we're going to see at UConn."

The Huskies have had a lot of success in recent years, making it to both the Hockey East Championship and the NCAA Tournament in each of the last two seasons.

UConn, like the Nittany Lions, also saw significant roster turnover in the offseason.

The Huskies lost their leading goal scorer Ryan Tattle, captain Tabor Heaslip and starting goaltender Tyler Muszelik.

Ten newcomers — nine freshmen and one transfer student — joined UConn's squad and will get a chance to debut against the Nittany Lions on Friday.



Lucas Yendrzejewski/Collegian

Head coach Guy Gadowsky embraces captain Reece Laubach (29) during an open practice at Pegula Ice Arena on Tuesday Oct. 6, 2026

One of UConn's biggest strengths is the return of forward Joey Muldowney for his senior season. Muldowney is a key part of the Huskies' offense, scoring 29 points in 34 games last season and earning second-team Hockey East All-Star honors.

Scouting Sacred Heart

Penn State has won all six previous contests against Sacred Heart, with the last meeting during the 2019-20 season.

The Pioneers are members of the Atlantic Hockey America conference and finished second last year behind Bentley with a 23-14-3 overall record.

Sacred Heart has a massive class of 17 newcomers this season, including 11 freshmen and six transfers.

The Pioneers are predicted to have a big year after AHA men's head coaches voted them to top the conference standings in a preseason poll. Starting goaltender Ajeet Gundarah was also voted the Preseason Player of the Year.

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Jeff Kampersal talks road trip, season start

By Mashiah Mitchell
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After two massive series that have the Nittany Lions at 2-2

HOCKEY AHA standings as the only team undefeated in conference play, Penn State will head north to meet the Syracuse Orange in a two-game conference battle. Before that, though, coach Jeff Kampersal spoke to the media ahead of his 20th series against the Orange in his Penn State coaching tenure. Here's a recap of the media availability.

Down two

In this series, the blue and white will be without star junior forwards Grace Outwater and Abby Stonehouse, as they were chosen for Team Canada's selection camp to possibly make the roster for the IHF Women's World Championship in November.

This is a big blow to the Nittany Lion offense, as the two account for over 30 percent of the team's total points so far this season. Kampersal expects those who'll be with the team to not only step up, but also show out. He says the game plan will be adjusted to feature freshman forwards like Kylie Amelkovich and Sofia Ismael as they come into their own.

"It will be different, of course, with the number of forwards; we lost a few last year during the Olympics," Kampersal said. "So we're going to go in there with ten forwards, and people will fill those roles left by (Grace) Outwater and (Abby) Stonehouse. No matter how many we play with, we are confident in that number and ready to compete."

Clementine vs. Orange

This year's Syracuse team covered their graduation losses and plugged similar talent into those spots, including freshman defender Maryn Broderick, who replaces the towering Charlotte Hallet, a six-foot-tall cornerstone of the Orange's past four seasons who recorded over 100 blocks in her 136 games played.

The Orange currently sit at 3-1 on the season, their best start up to this point in over ten seasons. Under the tutelage of former USCHO Coach of the Year Brian Idalski, Syracuse looks primed to return to the NCAA tournament, a feat the Orange has achieved only twice since the program's inception.

Kampersal and his staff know the talent Syracuse has, and they plan to fight fire with fire in terms of taking advantage of the opportunities they open up with speed and puck control on the attack.

"They did add more speed with Kenny (Kendra Raypholtz) and more sizeable defenders who can get their body in the way," Kampersal said. "They work incredibly hard on the forecheck and are a defensively sound team, so we hope to catch them in transition to not hit that wall around the net they tend to create."

Battle of attrition

Penn State followed up two heartbreaking losses against the Ohio State Buckeyes with two massive wins against RMU. Throughout both series, the blue and white showed a never-say-die attitude, battling period after period as if the game was 0-0 from start to finish.

In the Robert Morris series specifically, they went down 0-2 in the first game, but came out in the third period and looked like a completely different team.

Kampersal feels this was much needed for a team that is still integrating its new talent and seeing where they are both physically and mentally when the game may feel as if it is out of reach.

"Being more intentional with what we're doing was a good message we got, especially that first game (against Robert Morris) when we went down 0-2," Kampersal said. "This group has a lot of grit & pride. Syracuse has a new coach; they're quick, fast, so we're gonna have to adjust to their speed, but the biggest thing we wanna carry into that series and forward is that we're gonna battle to the end."

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