

The Daily Collegian

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A NEW ERA

Matt Campbell to replace Franklin

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

After over a month of searching for its next head coach, Penn State finalized a deal to hire Matt Campbell from Iowa State to officially replace James Franklin, who was fired in October, according to multiple reports.

The deal is reportedly for eight years, pending approval from Penn State's Board of Trustees, according to ESPN's Pete Thamel. According to Matt Fortuna, Penn State is committing \$30 million in NIL money and \$17 million in staff pool for assistant coaches, support staff and other hires.

Campbell will take the job despite not being the Nittany Lions top target, as Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Pat Kraft had his eyes set on BYU's Kalani Sitake earlier in last week, who opted to sign an extension and remain at his alma mater.

That decision left Penn State still without a head coach, with the search lasting for 53 days. The Nittany Lions finally have their guy, though, and he's a respected one throughout the college football industry.

Campbell has consistently been a hot name whenever a head-coaching position opens up, but he has decided to remain at Iowa State in the past, citing his commitment to building the Cyclones into a national-championship contending program.

It looks like he has budged, however, after 10 seasons at Iowa State. Throughout those years, Campbell became the winningest coach in the program's history, as he surpassed Dan McCarney

in 2024. He currently has 72 wins with the Cyclones.

Campbell has won Big 12 Coach of the Year three times, including back-to-back seasons in 2017 and 2018. He's taken an Iowa State program that's been consistently poor to solid each year since he took the job, and led the Cyclones to a program-best 11 wins in 2024.

The Ohio native has the most bowl wins by any Iowa State coach with three postseason victories. Campbell has led the Cyclones to seven bowls, and they've only missed bowl eligibility twice in his 10 seasons at the helm.

Campbell got his coaching start at Bowling Green, where he was a graduate assistant from 2003-04, before he returned to his alma mater Mount Union to be its offensive coordinator from 2005-06.

He then went back to the Falcons to be an assistant coach from 2007-08. Campbell finally found some stability at Toledo, as he was hired as its run game coordinator before earning a promotion to offensive coordinator.

From there, Campbell earned his first head-coaching gig when he was given the role with Rockets in 2012. He served as Toledo's head coach for five seasons before Iowa State hired him.

The Cyclones just signed the highest-ranked recruiting class in Campbell's tenure on National Signing Day, showcasing his ability to recruit with a severe lack of resources in Ames.

Campbell has four wins over top-10 opponents in his career at Iowa State and owns 43.3% of all the Cyclones' victories over ranked opponents. His most notable ranked win in the last few years was an upset of No. 7 Okla-

"Campbell will also hope to bring Penn State its first championship since 1986, and he'll have a lot of work to do this offseason"

homa State in 2021.

He also has led Iowa State to two AP Poll Top 25 finishes in 10 seasons. The Cyclones had just two of said finishes in the 118 years before Campbell became head coach.

While Campbell has excelled in producing a competitive on-field product, his mark at Iowa State has been truly made with the culture he's instilled. His motto has been "Trust the Process," which he implemented during his first day on the job.

As a head coach, Campbell has an overall record of 107-70, with a 72-55 record at Iowa State and a 35-15 record at Toledo. He'll look to bring that success at lesser programs to one with plenty of resources for him to use.

Campbell will also hope to bring Penn State its first championship since 1986, and he'll have a lot of work to do this offseason to get the Nittany Lions ready to compete after a National Signing Day class of just two players.

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MC's 3 best wins, 3 worst losses at Iowa State

By Will Horstman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Here are some of the best wins and worst losses Iowa State had during Matt Campbell's time as head coach.

No. 10 Iowa State 34, No. 25 Oregon 17 (Jan. 2, 2021, Fiesta Bowl)

After an 8-3 season in 2020, Iowa State went to the Fiesta Bowl against Oregon, and it picked up arguably the best post-season win of the Campbell era.

The Cyclones were in a close battle with the Ducks throughout most of the first half, but quarterback Brock Purdy and running back Breece Hall both scored touchdowns within 17 seconds of each other right before halftime for a 28-14 lead.

Oregon didn't have much of a response after that, only scoring a field goal as Campbell's squad held on. Hall finished his day with 136 yards and two touchdowns on 34 carries.

No. 25 Iowa State 14, No. 4 TCU 7 (Oct. 28, 2017)

Iowa State hosted undefeated TCU during the 2017 season, and it managed to pull off the upset.

Quarterback Kyle Kempt got the Cyclones on the board with a 17-yard pass to wide receiver Matthew Eaton and a 4-yard throw to wide receiver Hakeem Butler in the first half. Allen Lazard chipped in with six catches for 106 yards as the offense did just enough for the victory.

Iowa State's defense forced three turnovers out of the Horned Frogs, including two interceptions on quarterback Kenny Hill. One of those came on TCU's last possession of the game as linebacker Marcel Spears Jr. capped off the win with just over a minute left.

Iowa State 38, No. 3 Oklahoma 31 (Oct. 7, 2017)

Quarterback Baker Mayfield and Oklahoma went on a run to a College Football Playoff appearance in 2017, but it didn't come without a blemish on the team's record.

Iowa State visited Norman, Oklahoma, early on in the conference schedule and handed the Sooners' only loss of the regular season. The Cyclones fell behind early but managed to recover

from a two-touchdown deficit.

Kempt found Lazard for a 25-yard touchdown with 2:19 left in the fourth quarter.

Texas Tech 23, No. 11 Iowa State 22 (Nov. 2, 2024)

Iowa State was off to a 7-0 start last season, but its perfect record was spoiled by Texas Tech.

Running back Tahj Brooks powered in a 5-yard rushing touchdown with 20 seconds left in the game after the team marched 71 yards downfield on 12 plays. The Cyclones got the ball back but weren't able to respond.

The two teams went back and forth all game, and Becht had a 44-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Carson Brown with just over two minutes remaining to take a lead before Texas Tech's game-winning drive.

Ohio 10, Iowa State 7 (Sept. 9, 2023)

Iowa State started the 2023 season 1-1 before going on the road to face Ohio in Peden Stadium.

Despite facing a MAC team in the Bobcats, the Cyclones weren't able to generate much offense, tallying 271 total yards. Quarterback Rocco Becht tossed two interceptions, and the team's only score came with a touchdown late in the fourth quarter.

Ohio quarterback Kurtis Rourke led a touchdown early in the third quarter, and while the Cyclones' defense only let up 10 points, it wasn't enough to secure a win.

No. 10 Oklahoma 27, No. 6 Iowa State 21 (Dec. 19, 2020)

Oklahoma got off to a quick start in the 2020 Big 12 championship game, and while Iowa State nearly completed a comeback, it fell just short of earning its first Big 12 title in school history.

The Sooners scored 17 points before the Cyclones got on the board, and they had a 24-7 advantage at halftime. Iowa State came within one score of Oklahoma's lead in the fourth quarter after a pair of second-half touchdowns.

However, Purdy threw his third interception of the game.

Campbell takes command in introductory presser

By Avery Hill
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Three words — that's all it took before quakes clouded Matt Campbell's voice on Monday.

"Thank you. Um," Campbell said.

Campbell got choked up in front of a packed house that was forced to brave the chills of the Beaver Stadium media room. "I'm going to take a second, it's been a whirlwind," he continued.

At his introductory press conference as Penn State's head football coach, Campbell let the emotions fly early and often.

But it wasn't all waterworks and sniffles for Campbell during the hour-long session. As much as he cried, he smiled, made eye contact and delivered a passionate message for everyone to see.

Within moments of the opening remarks from Penn State President Neeli Bendapudi, he chuckled alongside Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Pat Kraft as if they'd been lifelong best friends. Iowa State's now-former leader appeared rather comfortable in his new uniform, which for Monday was a navy-blue suit topped off with a Penn State logo pin

that rested on his lapel.

"Our scars are our superpower, and if you're humble enough to grow through success and failure, then you continue to put yourself in position to be the best," Campbell said. "It's when we stop growing that failure starts to seep in."

That was one of many remarks the known impassioned leader used to take control of the room and leave many likely wanting to run through a wall, but what many didn't expect was for him to pull on the heart strings of the Happy Valley faithful.

He's from Massillon, Ohio, and had never been to Penn State prior to getting the job and yet he managed to not just rattle off names like Todd Blackledge, Kerry Collins and Jack Ham, but also carve out a point in his speech for Terry Smith, the Nittany Lions' interim head coach after James Franklin's firing that will remain on staff under Campbell.

To cap it all off, he led a "We Are" chant at the end of his opening speech that was met with applause by those allowed to do so within the room.

His willingness to mesh into an area unfamiliar to him,

paired with a persona that allowed him to appear more than confident, standing with one hand in his pocket as the other drove his key points — he made it seem like a hire worth feeling confident about by many.

In fact, Bendapudi said he mentioned character, culture, community and excellence upon first meeting, and she "immediately" knew he was fit for the job.

That led to a monumental day in Penn State history just a week removed from the height of uncertainty in the coaching search. Potential candidates had netted hundreds of millions of dollars in extensions and BYU's Kalani Sitake backed out of a deal that seemed all but done once the Crumbl Cookie CEO and the Cougar faithful had their say.

At that point, it seemed like Kraft, Bendapudi and company would have nothing left to smile about.

But it all worked out. They made Campbell Penn State's 17th head football coach on Friday, and he did his best to back up their decision with impassioned opening remarks to kick off the tenure.

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Photos by Matt Cropp



SEMESTER WRAPPED



Past Nittany Lions discuss their experiences in the suit



Noah Aberegg/Colegian

The Nittany Lion puts its paw over its heart for the national anthem before the Penn State football game against Iowa in Kinnick Stadium on Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025 in Iowa City, Iowa.

By Neel Ved
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

The Nittany Lion mascot is an iconic symbol of all things Penn State and its history dates back over 100 years to April 1904, when it was created.

The mascot first started with Harrison “Joe” Mason, a member of the Penn State baseball team who played third-base. At the time, the team was set to play a game against one of its toughest opponents, the Princeton Tigers, but Penn State didn’t have a mascot yet. Mason came up with the idea in the moment in order to frighten the opposing team.

In 1921, Richard Hoffman was the first ever Penn State student to wear the Nittany Lion mascot. At its start, the costume came with a mane and the person was required to walk on all fours. Currently the Nittany Lion mascot stands upright and wears a full-body fur suit with a long tail.

Jack Davis was the mascot from 2015-17 and said Penn State in his “blood” as he’s a fourth generation Penn Stater.

“As a freshman, I attended as many sporting events as I could, but never imagined I could don the suit,” Davis said.

Davis said the idea to become the Nittany Lion came when he was helping his roommate with a group project.

“In that moment, I realized the dream of being the Nittany Lion might be more realistic than I imagined,” Davis said.

There are currently three parts to the audition process for the Nittany Lion mascot. The first is a written application. In this application candidates are meant

to showcase their passion, detail their skillsets and indicate whatever creative ideas they may have.

The second step, the in-person interview, is the most important part of the audition process according to Zachary Sowa, the mascot from 2017-20. He said it’s a chance to show exactly who you are.

“(It’s) the most important because the student selected for the role will be expected to represent the symbol of our best at all times — not just while wearing the costume,” Sowa said. “The candidate has an opportunity to show their own character.”

The final step in the audition process includes a two minute custom skit, 50 one-armed pushups and a one minute prop improv challenge.

The most surprising part of the selection and training process of becoming the Nittany Lion mascot is how much the full character of the candidate is weighed, according to Sowa.

“It’s not simply given to the most entertaining or athletic candidate. Instead, it is given to a single student the judges recognize is imperfect, but believe will passionately aspire to represent Penn State to the best of their ability ‘For the Glory of Old State,’” Sowa said.

Candidates don’t get the opportunity to practice inside the suit, according to Davis.

“You put it on for the first time during the in-person audition,” Davis said. “I wanted to do a backflip in my skit, but needed to prepare for the weight and lack of visibility. To do so, I would attend club gymnastics practices in

multiple coats and a blindfold. Thankfully, it paid off,”

Davis said he grew very close with the other candidates for the job.

Michael McDermott, the mascot from 2020-23 said he took advantage of the free resources here at Penn State.

“It was always extremely difficult,” McDermott said. “Your schedule has to be ironclad and you need to be honest with yourself when it is becoming too much. I also tried to lean on the resources the University gives like tutoring and such. At the end of the day you are a student first, and that was the reason that I went to PSU.”

Though being the Nittany Lion was a large commitment, he said he learned a lot from the experience.

“The main thing being the mascot changed for me was my overall level of discipline,” McDermott said. “Having a chaotic schedule but continuing to refine my process for getting things done and not being delinquent was a struggle. However, it taught me time and time again how important it was to live a regimented life that will make you successful.”

Sowa said if he could relive anything, it’s THON.

“It was the first time I truly understood the impact that the lion could have on the community,” Sowa said. “THON is a magical experience, and I’ve often said I think the only people who may have a more magical experience than the lion at THON are the THON kids themselves.”

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Faculty file for union election

By Emma Cherubini
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

The Penn State Faculty Alliance (PSFA) announced the filing of thousands of union authorization cards to the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board, marking the next step toward the creation of a union for Penn State faculty.

The group has led the union effort

for months, and announced it filed a petition for a union election with the PLRB, during a press conference in Harrisburg on Tuesday.

PSFA is affiliated with SEIU Local 668, a Pennsylvania-based labor union for public and social service workers. They’re searching for job security, improved salary and the ability to negotiate

work conditions for faculty across all Penn State campuses.

The election will likely be held in 2026, and the organization is asking Penn State administration doesn’t “attempt to slow down this process or use costly, unnecessary tactics,” according to its website.

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State College Planning Commission hears presentations for new student housing project

By Jonathon Chiu
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Representatives from Greystar Development East, Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. and WDG Architecture spoke before the State College Planning Commission (SCPC) during a meeting last Wednesday to present the preliminary subdivision and final land development plans for the construction of a 1505-bed student housing project.

The project, which will replace long-term parking facilities along Hastings Road and University Drive, will see the leasing of 16.8 acres by Penn State to Greystar for the construction of four new student residence halls across the 2028 and 2029 academic years totalling 109,844 square feet, or slightly over one-fourth the size of the Bryce Jordan Center.

SCPC Vice Chair Zoe Boniface said she was concerned that the project did not have the sufficient provisions to prevent Penn State students, especially those acting “exuberantly,” from spilling over from designated gathering spaces and onto roadways as well as to repair the damage done during that time.

She said years ago when Jeff Kern, Chair person of the State College Borough Water authority, he spoke about how he lived in a quad on campus, and when there was a football game or other popular event, people would rush out the quad and interact for around

15 minutes in the central space, then go back inside.

“He was contrasting this with the situation on Beaver Avenue, when people pour out of the buildings for that 15 minutes, it happens to be a state highway. The police step in and have to clear that highway, no choice, and then we had riots,” Boniface said.

Boniface said she was also concerned that the project would also cause an increase in jaywalking into downtown State College from University Park due to a lack of a barrier preventing such incidents where the project is to be developed.

She also asked if there was any way to vary the color schemes.

“You have a very nice palette of colors between these buildings,” said Boniface. “I wonder if it would be a good design idea to slightly vary the pattern between the various buildings. It would make it feel a little less monolithic. It could be subtle, but anything that humanizes the space, I think, is a good idea.”

Boniface also asked the representatives about if there were steps being taken to replace the long-term parking that would be removed by the project upon its commencement and completion.

Daniel Nickerson, Greystar’s senior director, said the grade, or slope, of the gathering spaces would prevent large groups from successfully gathering together and that Greystar’s

property management team had given feedback on the project and offered solutions to minimize repair costs.

“We recognize that there’s kind of a yin and yang of these 15 minutes that could prove not as great to these spots but you also want to provide areas for students that are enjoyable and for them to use the outdoors and really utilize this,” Nickerson said. “One of the things that we’ve worked with our team is where we’re using hardscape versus grasses because that would get destroyed pretty easily and then we’re also working through the site furnishings to ensure they’re bolted down.”

Nickerson also said there was a lot of consideration for directing foot traffic to the intersection of University Drive and Hastings Road and that there would be new discussions among the project’s team members to find ways to discourage jaywalking. He also said Greystar was not responsible for accounting for the fate of the long-term parking but said Penn State would account for it in their annual parking and transportation plans.

State College Borough Manager Tom Fountaine said Penn State had more parking than they are required to have and that any reductions from the project would not cause them to fall under the required number.

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Crossword

Across

1 Cord

7 Woman's hat

13 Dock worker

14 Bow-wows

15 Notched

16 Vigorous reprimand

17 Large Chinese deer

18 Grey or white wading birds with long necks and long legs

20 Educ. group

21 "___ Got a Secret"

22 Man of La Mancha

23 Acclamation

25 Car attached to a locomotive

27 Blue

29 Put on the payroll

30 Bar, at the bar

31 Ended a fast

32 Teller's stack

33 Tabloid twosome

36 Form of ether

38 Holes 11, 12 & 13 at Augusta National, "___ Corner"

41 "Seinfeld" uncle

43 Bulrush, e.g.

47 Gave a buzz

48 ___ Tuesday (Mardi Gras)

49 Constitutional

50 Kind of warfare

52 Sofia Coppola, to Talia Shire

54 Fannie or Ginnie follower

55 Vatican vestment

56 Collection of Zoroastrian texts

58 Engine sound

59 Heavy rains

61 Importunity

63 Repeating

64 Sweetheart

65 Sports stat

66 Swirled

9 Fall mo.

10 "The Little Tramp"

11 Unit of surface area equal to 100 ares

12 Subjects of wills

14 Apportion

15 Maliciousness

19 Spanish flower

22 Aug. follower

24 Hot temper

26 Activities

28 Thieves' place

34 Grimm character

35 Most contemptible

37 Bone (Prefix)

38 Los Angeles suburb

39 Polo strikers

40 Gives power to

42 Miss in a 1934 song

44 Settled minister or parson

45 Took a brief look at

46 Mournful poem

49 One way to run

51 Heroic tales

53 Short composition for a solo instrument

57 Blow off steam

58 "Frasier" actress

60 William Tell's canton

62 Wander aimlessly, with "about"

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WORD SEARCH

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Darts

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

Accuracy	Checkout	Flights	Shafts
Archer	Chucker	Hat Trick	Sport
Arrows	Compete	Numbers	Target
Average	Cork	Oche	Team
Barrel	Dartboard	Points	Throw Line
Beer	Darts	Pub	Traditional
Board	Event	Score	
Bullseye	Feathers	Sections	

Kakuro (Cross Sums)

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

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Senior Column: Let Zach be Zach

When does a person finally figure out what they want to do with their life? When does that switch flip? When do people have this “a-ha” moment when they determine that this is how they’re going to pave the path for their success and growth?



Zach Karpf It’s all subjective, really. Stepping into a college with 45,000 students, an endless list of majors, minors and extracurriculars and the largest alumni network in the world, to be honest, I had no idea what I was doing.

All I knew was that I wanted to go to Pennsylvania State University. My pop’s alma mater. It was a dream of mine. Not only was there determination in me to go to the school of my dreams, but I also wanted to make him proud. To see me thriving in the same place he did back in 1990 (Sorry Dad. Not to make you feel old or anything.)

But when I got here, I had no idea what to do. I was in the Division of Undergraduate Studies, taking every general education class under the sun to see if there was something, anything, that lit that spark in me. Something that I had the drive to pursue and to create a career and a future out of.

Time passed quickly. At first, I thought I wanted to do computer science. If you ask the people I know now, they’d laugh at you for even considering the idea, haha. Then I said, “Scratch that,” and pivoted. I don’t even think you could say I did a “180.” It was more like a “360” or whatever number on top of that you want to add.

I decided my sophomore year that I wanted to be an astrophysicist. I wanted to learn about the stars and if there really is life out there besides

on our planet. Something that never went away, however, was my deep love for sports. Coming from a suburb about an hour outside of Philadelphia — New York sports fans do your worst — you can guess the passion I felt for my hometown sports teams. My greatest love was, and still is, the Phillies.

While I was still searching for a major to call my own, I decided to take a gander into sports writing and fill the gaps in my day since I wasn’t involved in any other kinds of extracurricular activities.

I joined the Daily Collegian as a candidate in January 2023. My only thought was that it’d be cool to go to games for free, sit in the press box and write about my favorite thing in the world. If you haven’t guessed by now, that thing is baseball.

I thought, “What the hell, I’ll try it out and see what happens. The worst case is I find it’s not for me and move on.” Well, how wrong was I?

It’s not often you meet someone and they immediately become a role model. I am lucky enough to say that I’ve had that experience quite a few times in my Collegian career, but it all trails back to my first experience having an editor. Well, in this case, it was editors.

Sam Woloson and Joel Haas. I don’t think I could have asked for a better duo to look up to as I began my writing career. They made stern edits but always explained their reasoning. They made themselves available for questions and learning experiences. They were always happy to help, and they’re two of the strongest leaders I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with.

I remember mentioning to them my passion for baseball and my intense desire to be put as a candidate on the baseball beat. Lucky for me, I guess they saw that passion and put me on the Collegian’s baseball coverage, and I took my not-yet-found talents to Medlar Field at

Lubrano Park. (Gotta be careful about adding that last part *cough* Andrew *cough*).

It was in the press box behind home plate that I met some of the people who would shape my college career, most notably Lyle Alenstien and Adam Waxman. From you I learned how to style my writing, how to interview and how to present myself in a professional journalism setting. For that, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Following a largely mediocre baseball season I was left with a choice.

I was entering my junior year, and by Penn State rules, I needed to declare my major by the end of May, or I needed to petition to stay in DUS for another semester. At that time, a strange thought entered my head. If you or your parents have ever heard of it, there’s this marvelous show called “The West Wing.” It’s a show that gives you an inside look at what the White House’s penultimate people, the president, the chief of staff and the communications director actually do. It’s my dad and I’s favorite show of all time. There’s an episode where President Jed Bartlett and his Chief of Staff, Leo McGarry, have an argument in the Oval Office about a memo produced by a former political opponent that highlighted every fault of the organization and was a roadmap on how to defeat them in an election.

They argued back and forth about who was more at fault for holding the administration back. At the end, the president yielded to McGarry and took fault for not being aggressive about his policies because he didn’t want to make too many political enemies. At the end of the scene, McGarry wrote a message for the president on a napkin. The message read, “Let Bartlet be Bartlet.”

I thought of that scene in my head when I decided what my

major would finally be cemented as, but, Leo’s words rang in my head. “Let Zach be Zach.” I knew what I had to do then, and I decided to become a journalist. So I said, “Screw it, let’s do it.” Little did I know at the time, the fall 2023 semester would lead me to meeting someone who changed the course of my college career.

The 2023 Penn State men’s ice hockey beat. There were some shake-ups with the overall lineup of reporters, but the majority of the season consisted of three writers: myself, Lexie Linderman and Greg Finberg.

I was lucky enough to have them be placed on my beat and to watch them grow as writers and as journalists. I vividly remember using all of my extra meal plan money or lioncash to buy us donuts, hot chocolate, chicken baskets, you name it, I got it for us.

I returned to baseball in the spring and was left with a decision over the summer. I’d just been told I wasn’t selected to be the summer sports editor, right after not being picked to be on the football beat. I was at a loss for what to do. That’s when I got one of the most important and most random phone calls of my entire life.

It was Greg. He called me to talk about a few things, mainly what we wanted to do at the Collegian in the new school year. My thought was that we were both going to try and write for men’s basketball. Instead, he popped the question.

“Zach, do you want to apply to be sports editor with me?”

Wow. After being denied so many times, did I really want to go through it all again? I admired Greg and he always impressed me with his vocabulary, writing style and dedication to being the first person to ask Guy Gadowsky the best question of the night. If he was asking me, there’s no way I could say no.

Turns out, his motivation was

the only thing I needed. For the entire 2024-25 school year, I sat with Greg at the table every day, running a staff of up to 51 reporters over 16 different sports. There were many Panda Express runs, multiple phone calls a day to discuss content ideas or complain about an article we just read that needs drastic changes and trips to Irving’s every Sunday morning for a bagel before our budget meeting. That year meant the world to me and it changed my life. I’d never trade it for anything else.

Greg, even though I didn’t get to see you a lot during my last semester, I want you to know that your support and your partnership during our time as editors means the world to me. I’ll always respect you and hold that year close to my heart. Thank you for pushing me to apply for a role that changed the way I think about myself and what I can accomplish.

There’s another line from The West Wing, said by President Bartlet. “We will do what is hard. We will achieve what is great.” There haven’t been many things in my life where I can say I did what was hard and I achieved what was great. From my experience working for The Daily Collegian, I can comfortably say that, together, we did what was hard, and we accomplished many things that were great.

To Joey Kline, Chris Eutsler, AJ Piazza, Alex Osman, Amy Schaffer, Joe Tuman, Kaitlyn Murphy, Dan Perez, Liam Wisser, Evan Smith, Dan Mader, Andrew Deal, George Keene and Kate Hildebrand. To the many staffers I’ve had the pleasure to lead and to work with.

To The Daily Collegian. Thank you. This organization will always be the best thing that’s ever happened to me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Now, in the immortal words of Josiah Bartlet, “What’s next?”

Senior Column: The journey

I absolutely love movies.

Rom-coms, musicals, action blockbusters, sci-fi, drama, the occasional horror or comedy — anyone close to me knows that one of my favorite places to be is in a movie theater recliner with a small popcorn and half-cherry-half-blue-raspberry Icee.



Kaitlyn Murphy I’m not entirely sure where or when this affinity began, but I do know why. Movies are a two-hour long transportation to another world, or an alternate version of our world, where anything’s possible.

The more movies I watched, the more I started to think critically about the scripts, acting, cinematography and directorial choices, or as certain people describe it, the “sauce.” I knew this passion was something I’d like to pursue in college, but I wasn’t crazy enough to think I could major in it and make a movie of my own. But I could write about them. Or if not movies immediately, entertainment and lifestyle in general.

Enter — The Daily Collegian.

While it feels impossible to sum up my time on the Collegian in one column, I feel the best way to do so is to break down my three and a half years on staff into the three acts of a film: the setup, the confrontation and the resolution. Act 1, Act 2 and Act 3/3.5 (since I had to go and graduate early).

Act 1: The Setup

I first heard about the Colle-

gian from my high school newspaper editor-in-chief and former Collegian staffer, Maggie Day. While I’ve told her this before, I have to put into writing that Maggie’s description of the Collegian combined with my accepted students day tour of the Willard Media Center is ultimately what led me to choose Penn State.

The first involvement fair table I approached freshman fall 2022 was the Collegian. I applied immediately, started candidate class and joined the lifestyle beat.

At the same time, I also found the CommRadio arts department and three of my best friends — Jack Freiser, Izzy Charboneau and Sophia D’Ovidio. Through the Collegian, I got hands-on experience covering musicals, concerts, SPA lectures and more. Through CommRadio, I reviewed new TV shows, movies, albums and yapped on-air about pop culture.

I found the best of both worlds in these organizations. But the difference was, I formed a friend group out of CommRadio and sat at its designated table every day, but the Collegian was something I kept strictly for journalism work experience.

Everything changed when summer editing applications opened up spring sophomore year, and my lifestyle editors encouraged me to apply.

Act 2: The Confrontation

In the summer, news and lifestyle staff are combined and shared by two editors. I had zero news experience and was

doubtful I’d get the job, but by an incredible twist of fate, I was partnered up with current editor-in-chief Mercedes Hamilton to summer edit.

With help from Mercedes and Ella Castronuovo, I learned some Daily Collegian editing staples that I’ve used every day since — how to fact check, delete the Oxford comma at all costs and navigate the hellscape that is BLOX.

Becoming an editor opened up a whole new world for me. Junior year, I continued news editing during an extremely chaotic time on campus and the world.

Keeping up with classes, THON meetings, show choir rehearsals three times a week, editing and posting Collegian content, leading budget meetings, finding story ideas every week and still trying to maintain a social life tested me in ways I hadn’t been in my first two years.

But through this, I also started sitting at the Collegian table. I started comparing experiences with people who were going through the same thing, bonding over how crazy being an editor can be.

I got to know people like Joe Tuman, Sam Woloson, Amy Schafer, Teagan Mayr, Cearra O’Hern, Ritamarie Montagna, Meg Miller, Lyle Alenstien, AJ Piazza, Zach Karpf, Joey Klein, Dan Perez, Kippi Hall, Chris Eutsler and Alex Osman.

People who might’ve technically been my coworkers, but quickly became friends I could go on a Dunkin’ run with or maybe sit in the second row of the State Theatre with for a

Board of Opinion, which is made up of members of its Board of Editors, with the editor-in-chief holding final responsibility for content. The opinions expressed on the editorial page are not necessarily those of Collegian Inc., a separate institution from Penn State.

About the Collegian

The Daily Collegian is published by Collegian Inc., an independent, nonprofit corporation with a board of directors composed of students, faculty and professionals. Penn State students write and edit both papers

and solicit advertising for them.

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Daily Collegian

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Who we are

The Daily Collegian’s editorial opinion is determined by its

Tournament takeaways

Penn State women's volleyball eliminated in second round

By Andrew Mercer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State appeared in its 45th consecutive NCAA Tournament last weekend, advancing past South Florida, 3-1, in the first round on Friday before being swept by Texas on Saturday night. The Nittany Lions concluded their 2025 season with a 19-13 record, unable to defend last year's national championship. Here are three takeaways from Penn State's performance in the NCAA Tournament.

Martin remains star

It comes as no surprise that the superstar right-side hitter topped Penn State's offensive leaderboard in both matches. On top of a successful regular season, resulting in her being nominated as an AVCA National Player of the Year semifinalist for the second-straight year, Martin provided the same high-octane hitting in the tournament that she brought to the Nittany Lions in late August.

Against South Florida on Friday night, when Penn State was hot, Martin was on fire. She ended the contest with 22 kills and four digs. On 44 swings, the Florida transfer only made seven errors, hitting .341.

However, in the second set where the blue and white only scored 12 points, the Nittany Lions tried desperately to find creative solutions when the Bulls' defense figured out Martin's game. Back on the court for the third set, Martin once again found her footing, contributing six kills and an ace. Then, in the



Geraldine Cruz/The Daily Collegian

Defensive specialist Ava Falduto (2) watches the ball during the Penn State women's volleyball game against Princeton at Rec Hall.

fourth set, she added another ace and six kills.

While the Nittany Lions were outclassed by the Longhorns in the second round of the tournament on Saturday night, Martin was still the primary hitter for the Nittany Lions as usual. The 6-foot-6 right-side hitter tallied 16 kills on 40 swings, hitting .225, adding five digs, as well.

Between Texas's devastating runs on the scoreboard, Martin found pockets of success, attempting to spark comebacks that ultimately fell shy of Torrey Stafford's superior performance.

Setting wins games

It's no secret that the departure of Penn State's All-American setter, Izzy Starck, dealt a heavy

blow to the Nittany Lions' offensive capabilities. In 2024, the connection between Starck and Jess Mruzik was crucial to the blue and white winning its eighth national championship in program history.

This season was supposed to be a similar year. With Martin transferring to fill Mruzik's shoes, Starck was primed for another championship campaign. However, when she departed from the team due to mental health concerns, Saint Louis transfer Addie Lyon was thrust into the starting role.

In the national tournament, Lyon's connection with Martin was key to Penn State's victory over South Florida in the opening round. However, the offensive system around Lyon had

already begun to show cracks. In the second set, the Nittany Lions hit only .091, as the Bulls seemed to read every attack like an open book.

Against Texas, the Nittany Lions were unsuccessful for the entire duration of the match, hitting just .124 as a team. Once again, the second set was Penn State's worst nightmare, as the blue and white hit -.065.

Despite finding limited success in the national tournament, Lyon stepped up to the plate and took the starting role by the horns. By putting up a career-high 1,092 this year, she proved herself as a quality setter. She also proved that with a truly elite setter alongside Martin, Penn State could be back in the national championship conversation.

Filling Grimes's shoes

Gillian Grimes has been a staple member of the back row for all four years she's been in Happy Valley. With three seasons at the libero position, a national championship and a Big Ten Libero of the Year award under her belt, the Westchester, Illinois, native brought stability and confidence to the back row.

However, when Penn State lost to Texas on Saturday night, it was Grimes's final collegiate match.

Grimes had a comparatively down couple of games, considering her averaging 13.78 digs per match. The 5-foot-6 senior put up 10 digs against South Florida, and ended her collegiate career with an 11-dig performance against the Longhorns.

Despite the numbers telling a different story, the digs that Grimes made proved why she was named the Big Ten Libero of the Year. She dove, reaching out with one arm, resulting in saves that kept the Nittany Lions in system.

Behind Grimes in the depth chart are Ava Falduto and Jocelyn Nathan, both members of the 2024 National Championship roster alongside Grimes. Falduto had a strong showing against South Florida, with eight digs, while posting a three-dig performance against the Longhorns in the 3-0 loss.

Falduto is currently listed as the backup libero, and has made a strong case to be chosen as the starting libero as a junior in 2026.

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Iowa State connections



Geraldine Cruz/The Daily Collegian

Head coach Cael Sanderson watches a dual during the Penn State wrestling match against Oklahoma in the Bryce Jordan Center

By Lyle Alenstein
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Cael Sanderson remembers how hard it was for him to leave his alma mater of Iowa State as the wrestling coach to depart for the same role at Penn State.

Sanderson said it was something that he took "a lot of heat" for in the moment, but he knew it was an opportunity he had to take advantage of and wouldn't look back on.

"It was a tough decision, and it was something that didn't make a lot of sense at the time," Sanderson said. "Looking back at it, people think that it was a no-brainer, but at that time, it was a tough decision."

Sanderson has been responsi-

ble for coaching 12 of Penn State's 14 national championships, establishing the Nittany Lions as arguably the most successful program in all of college sports.

So, when Matt Campbell spoke at his introductory press conference as the new head football coach, he cited the success of the most recent Iowa State coach to depart for State College.

"I'm going to demand a similar standard of excellence that the last great Iowa State coach that came here, and that last great Iowa State coach is Cael Sanderson," Campbell said. "I can't thank Cael enough. He spent 45 minutes with me on the phone two nights ago, and we talked about our similar journeys and similar paths."

When Sanderson and Campbell

spoke on the phone, Sanderson said Campbell expressed deep appreciation for speaking with him.

Campbell talked about his love for Iowa State. Campbell talked about his experiences in Ames, Iowa, which was similar to what Sanderson saw both as a wrestler and as the head coach of the Cyclones.

"We talked a little philosophy, and talked a little bit about the program out here," Sanderson said. "I think he's gonna do a really good job. You can tell he's a very humble guy. Very competitive. And you put those two things together, that's a pretty dang good recipe."

Campbell spoke very highly of Sanderson as well.

"We've watched Cael from afar and talked about building excellence in a program the way Cael has," Campbell said. "To be out to be able to link arms with him — I couldn't be more grateful. And Cael, I really appreciate your time."

Sanderson reaped the benefits of making the transition from Iowa State to Penn State. His track record of both team championships and individual championships for his wrestlers demonstrate just that.

After 10 years at Iowa State, Campbell is hoping to be the next head coach from Iowa State to find triumph in State College — Sanderson believes he can get it done.

"Coach Campbell, he's gonna love it out here. We're gonna love him," Sanderson said.

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Worst loss in Rhoades era



Owen Ballard/For the Collegian

Players huddle during the Penn State men's basketball game against Campbell University in the Bryce Jordan Center.

By Will Horstman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It's cliché to say "when it rains, it pours," but that's essentially what happened to Penn State when it visited Indiana on Tuesday night.

The Hoosiers dominated the Nittany Lions from start to finish, earning a 113-72 win inside Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall in Bloomington, Indiana, which is Penn State's worst loss in the Mike Rhoades era. Guard Lamar Wilkerson finished with a career-high 44 points on 72.7% shooting from the field and 66.7% shooting from 3-point range.

Indiana got an early lead with a pair of 6-0 runs, but Penn State managed to stay close by only holding a 17-12 deficit. But then, the Hoosiers turned up the heat, going on a 30-4 run over 7:03 during the latter portions of the second half for a 47-16 lead.

While Penn State contained Indiana to an extent for the remaining 3:54 of the half, the Hoosiers still led 58-26 at the break, which is the worst halftime deficit the Nittany Lions have faced in the Rhoades era.

For the Nittany Lions, they were notably more turnover prone than usual. They averaged 8.2 turnovers per game entering Tuesday's game, but they had 11 turnovers in the first half alone. Indiana ended the night by forcing 14 turnovers, which it scored 26 points off of.

Even using its usual deep rotation, Penn State's 10-man rotation couldn't generate much scoring. The Nittany Lions had nine bench points at halftime and finished with 29 points off the bench — a result that's unlike the previous games they've had this season.

Furthermore, it took Penn State until the 3:23 mark of the first half to reach 20 points. Wilkerson already had 20 points at that time as Indiana led, 49-20.

It wasn't just Wilkerson who went off for the Hoosiers with forward Reed Bailey and guard Tayton Conerway having 18 and 17 points, respectively. Forwards Tucker DeVries and Nick Nick Dorn were in double figures as well, and the ball was hot for Indiana as it had 30 assists on 42 made field goals, shooting 68.9% from the field and 54.8% from 3-point range.

The Hoosiers kept its foot on the gas pedal in the second half, going on a 17-2 run for an 83-34 advantage with 13:57 left. Penn State's defense left Wilkerson open on some plays as he set an Indiana record with 10 made 3-pointers in a single game.

Otherwise, guard Kayden Mingo made some flashes of his potential, tallying 19 points with a few tough baskets along the way. Guard Freddie Dilione V chipped in with 14 points off the bench as well, and guard Melih Tunca was in double figures, too, but the Nittany Lions shot 46.4% from the field and 31.3% from 3-point range as a squad.

Penn State had a rare bright spot as it went on a 7-0 run in the second half, but the game was well into garbage time as Indiana kept up its play for a commanding victory.

Up Next

Penn State will return home to host No. 9 Michigan State at noon Saturday inside the Bryce Jordan Center. The Spartans are 8-1 on the year and rated as the No. 12 team in the country by KenPom.

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Representing their country



Emma Lessick/The Daily Collegian

Forward Gavin McKenna (72) reacts to the referee's call during the Penn State men's ice hockey game.

By Maggie Hardy
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Both Penn State prospects Gavin McKenna and Jackson Smith will head to Niagara Falls for training camp

HOCKEY

with a chance to compete for Team Canada in the World Junior Championships later this month.

McKenna's name on the list came as no surprise, as the widely-regarded top prospect in next year's NHL draft is one of Canada's most exciting young talents. The freshman has four points and 14 assists through 16 games and earned the Big Ten's Rookie of

the Month honor for the month of October.

Smith's name was circulated in talks of the World Junior Championships roster, and now he'll have a chance to compete on the international stage.

The Calgary, Alberta, native was the blue and white's first ever first-round draft pick taken No. 14 overall by the Blue Jackets this year — and has been strong for the Nittany Lions, tallying three goals and six assists on the season.

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