



# VERSUS

Vol. 125, No. 2

Friday, Sept. 6, 2024

@DailyCollegian

BOWLING GREEN (1-0)  
FALCONS(1-0) PENN STATE  
NITTANY LIONS

Graphic by: Isabella Viteri  
Photos by: Sienna Pinney, Jackson Ranger,  
Kate Hidelbrand, Caleb Craig

Not  
the old  
offense



# 'I LOVE IT'

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

At half time, running back Nick Singleton had to wait over two hours due to a weather delay before touching the ball on offense again.

Despite the delay, he found a hole on the first drive of the third quarter and found paydirt on a 40-yard score that silenced the smattering of West Virginia fans who waited out the Morgantown storms to cheer on the Mountaineers.

"I was stretching a little bit, trying to stay healthy, because you never know when we go back on the field," Singleton said. "Just trying to keep hydrating, keep my body OK."

While the break in the action could have slowed down the Penn State offense, the unit came out of the locker room firing on all cylinders, and Singleton was one of the players who shined in the season opener.

He finished the game recording 13 carries for 114 yards and a touchdown, as well as a reception for 13 yards, and looked like the dynamic runner the college football world saw his freshman season.

"It sets a great tone, it starts up front with the (offensive) line," Singleton said. "It's just me using my vision, patience and just bursting out the speed — it's a good start."

Singleton piled on a pair of 40-yard runs with one going for a score. With explosive plays being the mantra of the offseason, his massive gains aided the team to exceed its goal — hitting the

explosive play threshold of 15%. The squad reached 18% against West Virginia.

"Nick was able to bust a few there that really changes the stats, changes the numbers, so that was good for us," James Franklin said.

What contributed to these large plays was the debut of Andy Kotelnicki's scheme. Singleton lined up out wide as a wide receiver at times and even motioned into the backfield on jet sweeps.

The Pennsylvania native has enjoyed the scheme and its creativity for both him and his teammates. "It feels crazy man, I love it," Singleton said. "Just getting our players in open space, our best players the ball too. So stuff like that, we gotta keep going."

Singleton said he hasn't seen an offensive scheme like that before, and being lined up as a wide receiver is something he hadn't done on a consistent basis since high school.

While the offense looked completely different than last year, Singleton said the unit only showed "a little bit" and there's "more to come."

The first game might have just been a tease of what's to come schematically, but Singleton knows he and his teammates have to keep their heads down and keep grinding.

"I'm just about helping the team win," Singleton said. "They put me in the best position to have success."

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Megan Miller/Collegian

**Penn State football head coach James Franklin** speaks to the media during his weekly availability on Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2024, inside Holuba Hall in University Park, Pa.

## Football notebook

By Joel Haas  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

they've committed elsewhere.

"We're not a negative recruiting team, we're not a team that's going to go after other people's recruits just to go after other people's recruits," Franklin said.

### Tight ends

It's been known for some time that senior Tyler Warren holds down the top spot in the tight end room, but there's been some shuffling in the depth chart behind him.

Khalil Dinkins, who was a full participant at Wednesday's practice after missing the previous couple weeks with an unspecified injury, didn't make the trip to Morgantown with the team.

"He's missed a ton of time, both mentally and physically, so we gotta knock the rust off and we'll see if he's ready," Franklin said. "Then, as you guys have seen, he can be a weapon for us."

Andrew Rappleyea seemed to be the biggest beneficiary in Dinkins' absence, earning the second most snaps behind Warren. Franklin mentioned Luke Reynolds and Joey Schlaffer as others who could "fill that role" in his absence.

"Football is very important to (Rappleyea). He works at it. He's committed, he's athletic. He's a great route runner. He wants to be a physical tight end, which is something that's very important to us here," Franklin said.

"As you guys know, I keep saying Tyler Warren's the most complete tight end in the country. I think Rap has a chance to be one

of those guys as well."

### Cornerbacks

Another room with good depth this season is cornerback, where Franklin previously said he feels like there are "six guys that can all play."

"Terry's done a phenomenal job that we have depth at the cornerback position like I don't remember us having before, and I think very few programs in the country have," Franklin said.

A.J. Harris and Jalen Kimber, who transferred from Georgia and Florida respectively, earned starts against the Mountaineers. Kimber, who spent the previous four seasons with the Gators, earned Franklin's trust because of his experience.

"When you talk about a veteran, you're talking about a guy who's played a bunch of football in some serious conferences and done it at a pretty high level ... then he came here, and he's done the same thing," Franklin said.

Another player on Franklin's radar is freshman Dejuan Lane, one of two first-years to earn the "green light" to burn their redshirts, along with Cooper Cousins.

"He's doing some pretty good things. Big, strong, fast, physical guy that's working very, very hard at it right now," Franklin said. "We're trying to fast-track his development, speed up his maturation process."

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## A better Beaver

By Joel Haas  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State's \$700 million Beaver Stadium renovations won't be completed until 2027, but many changes will be in place ahead of the team's home opener against Bowling Green on Saturday, according to a release.

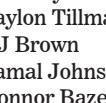
Among the changes are concourse expansion, which will improve circulation with over 15,000 feet of extra space. Four new escalators are also being installed and will be available before the Illinois game.

The south end video board was

replaced, and ribbon boards on the north and south end increased in size. Additionally a super ribbon board will be fully installed by the Ohio State game.

A frequent complaint throughout the years, Penn State addressed the wifi issues with improved connection. Additionally, the winterization of the stadium has been completed, meaning Penn State is capable of hosting a home playoff game, should they be selected.

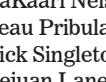
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## BOWLING GREEN FALCONS

## FOOTBALL ROSTER

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Harold Fannin Jr.	TE/Jr.	14	Jackson Kleather	K/So.	28	Victor Vazquez	S/Jr.	57	Daylen White	DL/FR.
0	Darius McClelland	CB/Sr.	14	Jonny Sorenson	QB/Fr.	30	Dorian Pringle	LB/FR.	60	Dontrez Brown	DL/SR.
1	Malcolm Johnson Jr.	WR/Sr.	15	Caleb Goodloe	WR/Fr.	30	PaSean Wimberly	RB/Sr.	65	Jake Burns	OL/SR.
1	Jordan Oladokun	CB/Sr.	15	Avi McGary	LB/Sr.	31	D'Kyah Banks	S/Fr.	70	Alex Harris	OL/FR.
2	RJ Garcia II	WR/Jr.	16	Chace Davis	DL/Sr.	32	Patrick Day	S/Sr.	71	Rico Steele	OL/FR.
2	Brock Horne	LB/Sr.	16	Rahkeem Smith	WR/Jr.	33	Jordan Porter	DL/Sr.	72	Cadee Zimmerly	OL/JR.
3	Lucian Anderson III	QB/Fr.	17	Bam Booker	DL/So.	34	Elias Owens	LB/FR.	75	Nate Pabst	OL/JR.
3	Joseph Sipp Jr.	LB/Jr.	17	Trey Johnson	WR/Sr.	36	Jabari Mitchell	LB/FR.	77	James Thomas Jr.	OL/FR.
4	Edward Rhambo	CB/So.	18	Jalen Burton	CB/Sr.	38	Dierre Kelly	DL/Sr.	79	Darius Gaddy	OL/JR.
4	Terion Stewart	RB/Jr.	18	Winn Sharp	WR/Fr.	39	Henry Reifsneider	LB/FR.	80	Ocean Brabbs	TE/FR.
5	Anthony Hawkins	DL/Sr.	19	John Henderson	P/Jr.	40	Ethan Wagner	K/So.	81	Elijah Boyd	TE/JR.
5	Jaylon Tillman	***	19	Shawn Thigpen	WR/Fr.	41	Josira Andrews	S/Fr.	82	Eli Jacon-Duffy	TE/FR.
6	CJ Brown	S/Jr.	19	Allijah Williams	LB/FR.	41	Quillan Jimenez	SN/Fr.	83	Pierce St Geme	WR/FR.
6	Jamal Johnson	RB/Sr.	20	TJ Nelson	S/Fr.	42	Chris Williams	LB/Sr.	84	Dom Grguric	WR/JR.
7	Connor Bazelak	QB/Sr.	20	Justin Pegues	RB/Jr.	43	Matreece Dillard	DL/FR.	85	Caden Campbell	TE/FR.
7	Jacorey Benjamin	CB/Sr.	21	Todd Bumphis	CB/Sr.	44	Davi Afogho	LB/FR.	85	Travis Kenner	K/FR.
8	Baron May	QB/Jr.	21	Chris Edmonds	RB/FR.	46	Zach Long	K/Jr.	86	Ian Drummond	TE/SR.
8	Trent Simms	S/Sr.	22	Nakai Amachree	RB/FR.	46	Devin Taborn	LB/SO.	87	Jared Merk	WR/FR.
9	Isaac Hill	TE/Fr.	22	Kal-El Pascal	CB/FR.	47	George Carlson	SN/JR.	88	Jacob Harris	TE/FR.
9	Darius Lorfils	S/Jr.	23	Myles Bradley	LB/SO.	50	Alex Wollschaeger	OL/SR.	89	Blaine Cleaver	DL/SO.
10	Levi Gazarek	TE/Sr.	23	Jaden Copening	RB/FR.	51	Dillon Robinson	OL/FR.	90	Davonte Mills	DL/SO.
10	Donny Stephens	LB/Jr.	24	Bryce DeFalco	RB/FR.	52	Nick Reimer	OL/SR.	95	Joe Shimko	DL/JR.
11	Demetrius Hardamon	LB/Sr.	24	Justin Ekland	LB/SO.	53	Billie Roberts	OL/SR.	98	Alan Anaya	K/JR.
11	Finn Hogan	WR/Jr.	25	Jace Henry	CB/FR.	54	Brody Bolyn	OL/FR.	98	Malik Moses	DL/FR.
12	Camden Orth	QB/Sr.	25	Mar'Kel Porter	RB/FR.	55	Evan Branch-Hayes	DL/JR.	99	Ali Saad	DL/SR.
12	Tracy Revels	S/Fr.	26	Cameron Pettaway	S/Fr.	56	Tunde Fatukasi	OL/SR.			
13	Cynceir McNeal	WR/Fr.	27	Coleman Teasdale	RB/Sr.	57	Ian van der Merwe	DL/SO.			
13	Charles Rosser	LB/Sr.	28	Jaison Patterson	RB/Sr.	57	Alex Padgett	OL/JR.			



## PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

## FOOTBALL ROSTER

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Dominic DeLuca	LB/Jr.	18	Joey Schlaffer	TE/Fr.	42	Mason Robinson	DE/FR.	74	J'ven Williams	OL/FR.
1	Jaylen Reed	S/Sr.	18	Max Graville	DE/Fr.	43	Tyler Elsdon	LB/SR.	75	Matt Detisch	OL/SO.
2	Liam Clifford	WR/Jr.	19	Josiah Brown	WR/Fr.	44	Jaylen Harvey	DE/Fr.	76	Mason Carlan	OL/SR.
2	Kevin Winston Jr.	S/Jr.	19	Jack Lambert	QB/Fr.	44	Tyler Warren	TE/Sr.	77	Sal Wormley	OL/SR.
3	Julian Fleming	WR/Sr.	20	Mylachi Williams	DE/Fr.	45	Jackson Prys	LB/SO.	79	Addison Penn	OL/SR.
3	Jalen Kimber	CB/Sr.	21	Vaboune Toure	S/Fr.	47	Will Patton	SN/Fr.	80	Mehki Flowers	WR/SO.
4	Tyseer Denmark	WR/Fr.	23	Antoine Belgrave-Shorter	CB/FR.	47	Aidan Probst	DE/FR.	82	Ethan Black	WR/FR.
4	A.J. Harris	CB/So.	24	Ta'Mere Robinson	LB/FR.	48	Tyler Duzansky	SN/SO.	83	Jake Spencer	WR/SR.
5	Omari Evans</td										

# Jaylen Reed shows AJ Harris the ropes

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

A.J. Harris arrived on campus in January after transferring from Georgia with high expectations, but adapting to a new program, teammates, coaches and environment can be a lot for a true sophomore.

A trip out to Houston during the summer with players from Penn State's secondary changed that, and he found someone to help guide him in Jaylen Reed.

"It was me, Jaylen Reed, Zakee (Wheatley), it was a few back end players," Harris said. "And you know, it was something to bond, some team bonding before the season. It was actually this summer and I definitely believe that's what kind of brought some of our back end together and made us such a tight knit group, and I believe that it definitely paid off."

The trip featured work from trainer Jacory Nichols, who's trained some top tier talent at the high school, college and NFL level.

While the trip required some grinding and sweat equity, it presented an opportunity for the veteran Reed to take the young Harris under his wing.

"He didn't play that much at Georgia, but I just told him one

thing, 'we put the work in for all this stuff, man'" Reed said. "We really did this the whole offseason, just go out there and be yourself, it's amazing. I always tell him because I know he got the talent, got everything you need, he just got to prove to the world now."

Reed is in his fourth season at Penn State and knows how the program is operated inside and out. The Detroit native has seen a lot of football and knows that Harris has what it takes to succeed for the Nittany Lions.

"I think of A.J. Harris as a complete corner, he's one of them guys on the team that you can't keep off the field. He can do everything at the position," Reed said. "He can run, he can tackle, and it's just rare to have someone that can do every component to become a corner. Having a guy that helps you dial in your defense, play harder, it gives me confidence when I'm in the game with him that I know he's going to do his job to the best of his ability."

Harris earned the starting job for Week 1 against West Virginia, and credited the work he did "behind closed doors."

That extra preparation behind the scenes was a reminder from Reed to Harris that he was deserving of that starting spot. Harris



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**Cornerback A.J. Harris** celebrates with wide receiver Harrison Wallace III during the Blue-White Game in Beaver Stadium on Saturday, April 13, 2024, in University Park, Pa.

ris "really appreciates him" and said that Reed helped him calm his nerves before the game.

"Just understanding that I had somebody that truly believed in me. He's definitely one of those teammates that you love to have and go to war with, and I can't wait to see how the rest of this season reveals for him," Harris said.

"He had a great start to his season, and I believe he'll do nothing but get better as the season goes."

Reed went for nine tackles, two pass break ups and a fumble recovery.

Harris didn't blow up the stat sheet like his teammate did, tallying three tackles and a pass break up, but his impact was felt with his physicality and aggressive playstyle.

Reed has had an impactful presence for Harris in his time in Happy Valley and it's benefited him tremendously to have someone to look up to. As Reed reflects on his time in Happy Valley, hav-

ing someone to help out is a testament as to how much he's grown.

"To have people to look at me when it's time to go to work, when it's time to go to play football, and somebody to lean on as me, you know, I take that personally," Reed said. "And I'm going to keep doing that every single day, and hope everybody can do the same thing."

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## Donkoh reflects on 1st start

By Lexie Linderman  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State experienced unprecedented turnover on its offensive line this offseason, and with that came a serious battle for the starting right tackle position between redshirt freshman Anthony Donkoh and Wisconsin transfer Nolan Rucci.

It was unclear up until the day of the Nittany Lions' Week 1 matchup who would get the starting nod, but when the blue and white took the field for warmups, there was Donkoh, lined up with the starting offense for the first time in his career.

"It was really exciting to have my first start," Donkoh said. "My mom, my dad, my two brothers and my sister were there ... so it was really cool."

Signs of Donkoh earning a starting role in 2024 began back in January during Penn State's Peach Bowl loss. The true freshman played left tackle on the biggest of stages with Olu Fashanu sitting in preparation for the NFL draft.

Donkoh has even been compared to Fashanu as a result, with some seeing similarities between the redshirt freshman and his former mentor and teammate.

For Donkoh, these comparisons are an "honor," but the offensive lineman doesn't quite see

the similarities, saying "everyone has their own style of playing."

Comparisons aside, Donkoh has continued to impress his teammates and coaches, with James Franklin having high praise Monday for the right tackle following his first career start.

"He's such a contentious young man. He's extremely intelligent, both from a football IQ standpoint, but also in the classroom," Franklin said. "He's just got a workman-like approach and just continues to get better ... we thought he went out and played really well in Week 1."

Donkoh also talked to some of his former teammates on game-day, with Fashanu and Caedan Wallace reaching out to the redshirt freshman as he prepared for his first ever start.

The right tackle also made sure to highlight the impact Wallace had on him and his game, saying he learned so much from the now-New England Patriot because he played on the right, just like Donkoh.

"He was a really big help, letting me know how to shift my weight, how to balance my weight and stuff like that on the right side. How to step, how to set all that stuff," Donkoh said. "He's a great dude, an amazing person. I love him a lot."

Going through the film from the Nittany Lions' Week 1 win was

the first time Donkoh had significant tape of his to look at — tape that flashed his strengths, but also exposed his weaknesses.

"I felt like I did really well in the run game," Donkoh said. "In the pass game, my biggest problem was keeping my hips strong ... and that's something that I've been emphasizing a lot this week, trying to keep my hips strong, trying to be as square as possible for me to prevent anybody from getting my edge."

As for the offensive line as a whole, Donkoh thought the unit couldn't get much going in the run game in the first half. Despite that, Donkoh said he was proud of how he and his teammates adjusted and improved that phase of the game in the second half.

Despite earning the start in Morgantown, Donkoh knows Rucci is waiting in the wings, giving him some extra motivation to keep improving and growing each day.

"(Rucci) is a really good guy. He's a great player," Donkoh said. "I just have to keep working, knowing there's someone behind me that can easily come and take my spot, so it's just pushing me every single day for me to do better for myself."

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## Pribula jack-of-all-trades

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

against West Virginia. He had option runs with both Nick Singleton, Kaytron Allen on the field — he also lined up at wide receiver, throwing it back to his days at Central York High School, where he played wideout his freshman season.

"I think the next step is really just continuing to develop and really just being able to do everything that (Kotelnicki) asked me to do, whether that's lining up at



Chris Eutsler/Collegian  
Beau Pribula warms up on the sideline, ready for any role.

"When I go on the field, you know, you're not allowed to have two helmet communications on the field at once, so I have two different helmets," Pribula said. "Or when we have two quarterbacks, I got to have a helmet without one."

Last season he took a backup role with situational usage for designed runs and garbage time — just three snaps into the Week 1 contest against West Virginia, the junior took the field for his first play of 2024 and his expanded role.

"He's not just a running quarterback. He's really taken a step forward in the pass game, and it's been really cool to see that," Drew Allar said postgame Saturday. "I don't think he gets enough credit for how good he is as a passer, and he's going to cause a lot of stress throughout the year for defenses."

In Andy Kotelnicki's debut as offensive coordinator, Pribula saw the field for 20 snaps and rushed for 25 yards on three attempts, with two going for first downs.

The York, Pennsylvania, native completed his lone passing attempt for a 19-yard strike to a wide open Tyler Warren for a touchdown.

"Being able to, each week, add to that package so that the defense can't put you into a package," Franklin said. "We also want to make sure that it's not the same things that you're seeing."

On the score to Warren, Allar was split out wide as a wide receiver. When both Pribula and Allar are on the field at the same time, Allar is the one wearing the green dot, which adds another layer of complexity to Pribula's job in the offense.

The use of the new technology and ability to be a traditional quarterback was far from the only thing Pribula put on display

running back, receiver, quarterback, whatever that is," Pribula said. "Just trying to get good at all those areas, because I'm going to be asked to do things like that, like you saw in the past game."

Kotelnicki has been emphatic that Pribula is one of the best playmakers on the offensive side of the ball. He played 139 snaps in 2023, just 15% of total plays for Penn State.

Regardless of his role a year ago, 2024 is a new campaign for Pribula and he's set to be a featured piece in the offense.

"My mindset has been the same from the start, really ever since I was a freshman, it's always preparing as if you are the starter," Pribula said. "So when my role is what it is now, nothing changes and it's not a huge jump. So really, just having a mindset from when I was young to now has made it easiest to transition mindset wise."

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Megan Miller/Collegian

Offensive lineman Anthony Donkoh speaks to the press about his Week 1 start after practice. Donkoh started in Penn State's Week 1 game against West Virginia.

### Joel Haas

**What to watch for:** Penn State and Bowling Green both picked up convincing wins in Week 1, but are in completely different worlds in terms of talent and resources.

There are some solid players on the Falcons roster, including sixth-year quarterback Connor Bazelak and running back Terion Stewart, but the Nittany Lions should blow out the visiting MAC team in Beaver Stadium given the severe advantages at virtually every position.

Score: Penn State 45, BGSU 10

### Lyle Alenstein

**What to watch for:** While the rushing attack for Bowling Green was working against

the Rams, the Penn State defensive line should be

well prepared to shut it down after stopping the dangerous West Virginia ground game.

Score: Penn State 60, BGSU 3

### Avery Hill

**What to watch for:** Bowling Green might be striking a hot cord after its week one blowout over Fordham, but

Penn State is hotter.

After taking down steeper competition, the Nittany Lions will keep things rolling on both sides of the ball. Since Julian Fleming was a non-factor against West Virginia, Andy Kotelnicki will put him on track for a big day on Saturday.

Score: Penn State 52, BGSU 12

### Lexie Linderman

**What to watch for:** Penn State should have no trouble with this one despite Bowling Green putting on a show

against Fordham, as the Nittany Lions are more dominant in practically every aspect of the game.

However, the Nittany Lions need to be careful with the Falcons' run game. Bowling Green running back Terion Stewart rushed for three touchdowns in the Week 1 win, and is certainly not looking to slow down.

Score: Penn State 55, BGSU 6

### Guest Picker: Rhys Patrykus

**Falcon Media Sports Network**

**What to watch for:** To have a chance to win, Bowling Green's defense has to show up right off the bus.

They kept it close with Michigan last year because they picked off J.J. McCarthy three times and made him uncomfortable. The pass rush is good, but Allar, Allen and Singleton will force BG to play the run, opening up the big-play passing for Penn State.

Score: Penn State 31, BGSU 10

# Omari Evans playing to his strengths

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Omari Evans burst down the seam with 19 seconds left in the second quarter, jumping over the defender and hauling in a bomb from Drew Allar on a 55-yard reception.

The play set up an 18-yard touchdown to Harrison Wallace III to close out the first half, putting the Nittany Lions in front 20-6.

"We know how fast Omari is, an explosive athlete. I was like, 'I'm just gonna give Omari a chance.' And I think he did a great job of fighting for the ball and coming down with it, and that really set up the play. Because if we don't get that play, we're just running out the clock in that half," Allar said postgame Saturday.

Evans saw the gridiron quite a bit and has grown his on-field relationship with Allar, saying it's "way bigger than what it was (before)."

"It made me feel good because it shows that (Allar) trusts me," Evans said. "I could bail him out sometimes when nothing's open."

Evans appeared in 13 games



Megan Miller/Collegian

**Wide receiver Omari Evans** speaks to the press after football practice on Wednesday, Sep. 4, 2024. Evans caught two passes for 55 yards against West Virginia.

his freshman season, tallying 55 yards on five receptions and a touchdown. That touchdown came in 2022 in garbage time against Ohio, when Allar subbed

in for Sean Clifford and connected with Evans on a 32-yard strike.

The buzz was there for his debut season in Happy Valley, but it never came to fruition. A year lat-

er, his second go-around in a wide receiver room that had spots up for grab, he failed to meet expectations and recorded 94 yards on four catches with a score.

Now in his junior season, Evans is prepared for a big 2024 and wants to make it hard to take him off the field, finding confidence in Andy Kotelnicki's scheme.

"It just feels good, like I said, he uses everyone to their strengths," Evans said. "So that's got to be a good feeling, knowing what you do best is going to be put on the field every Saturday."

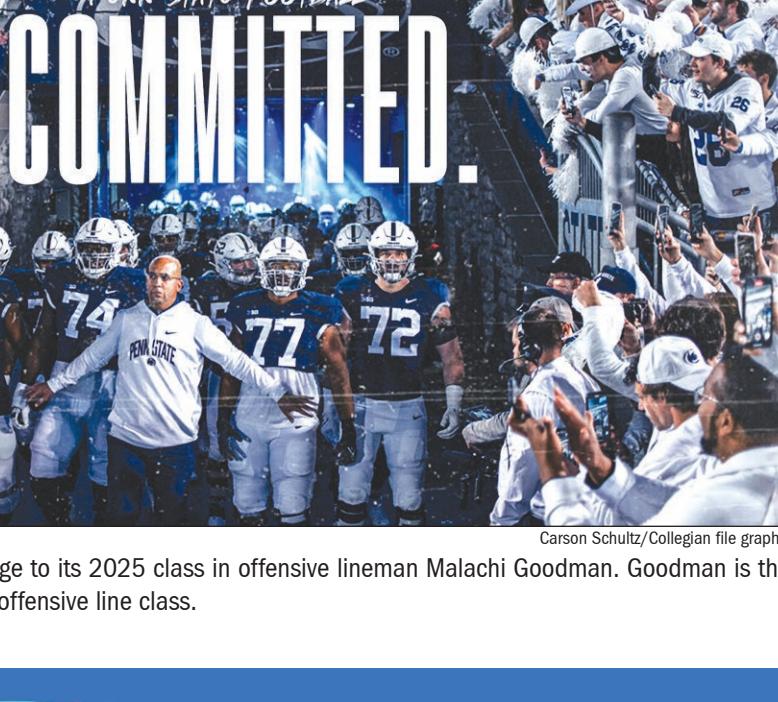
The expectations for the Killeen, Texas, native are at an all-time high. Evans started the contest alongside Harrison Wallace III and Liam Clifford, and was third among the position in snaps at 31, trailing Wallace and Julian Fleming who registered 35.

Other than his 55-yard strike, he snagged just one reception where he was bottled up for no gain. However, he showed flashes of what he's capable of and has to keep getting better if he wants to elevate his role in the offense.

"Just staying consistent, bringing energy every day, helping my teammates as much as I can," Evans said.

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Carson Schultz/Collegian file graphic

**Penn State** landed a 4-star pledge to its 2025 class in offensive lineman Malachi Goodman. Goodman is the third addition to Phil Trautwein's offensive line class.

## Penn State earns

### 4-star commit

By Lyle Alenstein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The 2025 class for Penn State isn't done just yet.

The Nittany Lions landed a commitment from 4-star offensive lineman Malachi Goodman on Tuesday.

Goodman stands at 6-foot-5, 315-pounds, and will be playing on the interior at the college level. He is the No. 146 nationally, No. 8 overall interior offensive lineman and No. 3 player in New Jersey.

The Nittany Lions offered him on Oct. 11, 2023 and he made his

first trip to campus on Nov. 11 for an unofficial visit. He then came up on Jan. 27 for Junior Day and May 31 for an official visit.

The Paramus, New Jersey, native plays his high school ball at Paramus Catholic and chose the blue and white over Auburn and USC.

Goodman will join a 2025 class of offensive linemen in 4-star offensive tackle Owen Aliche and 3-star interior offensive lineman Michael Troutman.

Email reporter at [lca5223@psu.edu](mailto:lca5223@psu.edu).

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Vol. 125, No. 2

Friday, Sept. 6, 2024

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Kate Hildebrand/Collegian

Penn State students gathered on the HUB Lawn on Wednesday to hear about Penn State's hundreds of clubs. The fair was pushed back a week due to a heat advisory in State College, but students still came out in full force.

## GETTING INVOLVED

*Penn State students find their interests, passions at annual Involvement Fair*

By Emily Lin  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The annual Penn State Involvement Fair took place from 1-5 p.m. Tuesday on the HUB-Robeson Center lawn, where students had the opportunity to find organizations that matched their career interests and personal passions.

Alexa Lintz said she was enthusiastic about finding clubs that aligned with her high school interests.

"I did a lot of sports in high school, and I was looking to get involved in a lot of different athletic clubs, sports, and dance teams possibly," Lintz, a first-year studying psychology, said.

Lintz said she was also eager for an opportunity to explore her heritage.

Referring to her diverse roots,

"I wanted to learn a little bit more about where I came from," Lintz said.

Journey Escontrias said she also visited the fair to connect with her heritage.

"I visited the Mexican American Student Association, and it seems really cool," Escontrias, a first-year studying Korean, said. "I'm Mexican American, and I would really like to know about the culture as well."

In addition to finding a community to help remain involved with her culture, Escontrias said she also has a passion for Korean pop culture.

"I'm also trying to look for a K-pop group here as well," Escontrias said.

Madelyn Okolichany said she's focused on making connections and getting involved from the start of her college experience.

"I just wanted to get involved as a freshman," Okolichany, a first-year studying communication sciences and disorders, said.

Okolichany is interested in joining groups like Trilogy to experience sisterhood and pursue philanthropic endeavors.

"I really want to get involved with THON and one day be able to dance at THON," Okolichany said. "I was also talking to some sororities, so I definitely want to rush in the spring when I get the chance."

For Mark Bridgeford, campus offers a chance to blend his interests in sports and spirituality.

"I'm just here to find out what I would be interested in, like different spiritual things," Bridgeford, a first-year studying finance, said.

He added that he also wanted to join club basketball because

he greatly enjoys the sport.

Bridgeport said his initial impression of Penn State was the sheer size of the university, and now believes that's supported by the overwhelming variety of options available.

Since the involvement fair is open to everyone, upperclassmen had the opportunity to uncover new interests.

Braden Jones visited the involvement fair with his free time.

"I'm just kind of looking around, and obviously with me being in my third year, I don't have a ton of time," Jones, a third-year student studying biomedical engineering, said.

Jones said he had already signed up for the Biomedical Engineering Society before, reflecting his commitment to his field and involvement on campus.

Jones said his past experience

es include running track in high school and engaging in various other activities like skiing and exploring outdoors, but there is one club that caught his interest.

"The most interesting one was probably the one where they explored caves," Jones said.

Nazahat Tahsin, said she visited the fair with hopes of finding a new organization that sparked her interest.

"There were a few fitness-related clubs like the Taekwondo Club and the K-Pop Club that caught my eye," Tahsin, a second-year studying chemical engineering, said. "I was also interested in joining several engineering clubs since they were related to my major. It would have been great to meet more people in my field."

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## Penn Staters explore the world

By Daniela White  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Instead of football games in Beaver Stadium or chilly nights at the Berkey Creamery, some Penn State students opt for warm days in Singapore or holidays in Paris.

Avani Salunkhe studied abroad at the National University of Singapore last fall because it better suited her schedule.

Salunkhe, a fourth-year studying biology, said she studied abroad during the fall semester of her junior year to take all the classes she needed before graduating in fall 2024.

Even though Penn State football games are some of the most popular fall events, Salunkhe said they weren't a huge factor in deciding to study abroad in the fall.

"I know a lot of people care about football," Salunkhe said. "I enjoy going to games, but I'm not diehard about it."

Salunkhe said her experience studying abroad multiple times prompted her to work for Penn State Global, and she recommends people to study abroad in the fall.

"It's much less competitive because so many people want to go in the spring," Salunkhe said. "You have a higher chance of getting into competitive scholarships if you apply for the fall too."

Salunkhe said she was the only American in her program, but she quickly bonded with

students from all over Europe.

Abbie Fish said she spent the fall of her junior year in Paris because she wanted to experience the season change abroad.

"I wanted to be there for Christmas too," Fish, a fourth-year studying supply chain and information systems, said. "When I traveled to London, they put up Christmas decorations, and Paris hosts a lot of Christmas markets. It was just something unique to experience."

Similar to Salunkhe, Fish said she had to weigh the fact of missing Penn State football games, but luckily she was able to watch the Ohio State and White Out games online, or at a bar with a Penn State friend.

Fish said unless students have FOMO for the football games and other activities, it's a lot of fun to be abroad during the fall.

"You can go to soccer games," Fish said. "And I know a lot of people like Halloween, but I know Barcelona and London do Halloween too."

Compared to her friends who studied abroad in the spring, Fish said going abroad in the fall felt lonelier.

"When I came back, a lot of my friends were abroad," Fish said. "I missed them like my entire junior year, but it's both just a great experience, whether you go in the fall or the spring."

Spending her fall semester in Sydney, Kaitlyn Hnatkowsky said it was the best experience ever.

"None of my friends were going abroad, so I kind of just wanted to go and do my own thing," Hnatkowsky, a fourth-year studying supply chain and information systems, said.

Studying in a program as an exchange student in Sydney, as opposed to being with other abroad students, Hnatkowsky said it forced her to meet new people.

"If I didn't go alone, I don't think I would've branched out as much," Hnatkowsky said. "I don't think I would've even tried to meet new people if my friends were there."

Hnatkowsky said a big factor in choosing to study abroad in the fall was her love for the spring semester at Penn State.

"If you go away in the spring, you're away (from Penn State) during the summer too," Hnatkowsky said. "I left in July and came back in November, so I was able to come back for the second semester — I didn't have to wait all summer to come back to school."

Thinking more people should study abroad in the fall, Hnatkowsky went back to how it made her branch out more.

"I think going on the alone route was the best thing I could've done," Hnatkowsky said. "It's a completely different perspective."

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## Student farm kicks off

By Julia Key  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State's Ross Student Farm hosted its annual Campus Food Systems Kick-Off on Wednesday, showcasing food system engagement and initiatives that take place throughout the school year.

Several farm-acquainted student organizations attended the event to exhibit how the student-run farm benefits Penn State and the State College community.

Rebecca Durbin, a coordinator of the event, said it served as an opportunity for student clubs and organizations to "engage with the student farm community."

"It also marks the first gathering at the farm since the summer, allowing attendees to reconnect with the farm's location and learn about its food systems," Durbin, a fourth-year studying environmental science, said. "The event aims to foster connections and promote awareness of the farm's activities."

One of the clubs featured at the kick-off was the Food Recovery Network at Penn State, which, since its founding in February 2023, has recovered 7,074 pounds of food from dining halls, making 748 meals that saved 26,881 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions.

"We take [the dining hall's uneaten food] the next day, go to Lion's Pantry, Abba Java, Out of the Cold, all the homeless shelters in the area and drop off the food there," Anant

Pothakamury, Food Recovery Network treasurer and a third-year studying biochemistry and molecular biology, said.

Another organization featured was The Lion's Pantry, an on-campus food pantry open and accessible to all students, faculty and staff.

"The main mission is to combat food insecurity," Juan-Rodrigo Solares, a fourth-year studying biochemistry and molecular biology, said.

The Lion's Pantry is intern-based and collaborates with other organizations, such as the Student Forum and the Food Recovery Network club, to host food trucks across State College.

Representatives of Baking Club, One Health Club and the Culinary Medicine Club were also present.

Aside from the organizations, there was merchandise for sale with proceeds going towards helping expand the student farm, a sustainability-fact-based scavenger hunt with prizes and sustainable kitchen utensils for purchase.

Webster's Bookstore Café, a fully vegan eatery, provided a farm-to-table dinner with menu items including their chickpea salad wrap, kale salad, and roasted vegetables.

Tours of the farm were also available to show where various fruits and vegetables are grown, including basil, garlic, kale, thyme, squash and feso peppers.

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The Daily Collegian



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Daily Collegian Podcast Network

# Something for everyone

*Paper Moon Tattoo Company gives everyone their own little niche*

By Michelle Diamond  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Although Paper Moon Tattoo Company isn't always described as a traditional tattoo and piercing shop, its staff has welcomed students and community alike for the past six years.

"The environment was very welcoming, even though the layout and decor reminded me of a bar," Sierra Wong said.

"Everyone was very friendly and quick to greet us, and [they] got us in earlier than we booked for."

Wong, a third-year studying integrative science, went with her friends to Paper Moon Tattoo to get piercings.

After going with her friends, Wong decided to book a tattoo appointment for herself, as she was looking for a fine-line artist — something Paper Moon Tattoo had to offer.

"We have somebody who does everything, so any style that you're looking for we can probably fulfill," Marina Carmena said. "Everyone's got their own little niche."

Carmena, originally from North Carolina, moved 500 miles by herself to work at Paper Moon



Emma Lessick/Collegian

The Paper Moon Tattoo Company entrance sign hangs out on the store at State College, Pa. The shop offers "Walk-in Thursdays," where customers can enter without scheduling an appointment.

Tattoo and learn from Adam Zimmer, the owner of the shop.

"I love to do illustration fantasy or gaming fantasy tattoos," Jessica Dusk said. "My favorite tattoo I did, so far, was a wizard possum."

Dusk, a tattoo artist at the shop, emphasized the education that the artists and clients both receive while tattooing or being tattooed.

"We're very informal about what we do to keep it safe and make people feel comfortable," Dusk said.

Carmena described Paper Moon Tattoo as "a big, loving, chaotic family." Pricing varies

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By Steven A. Kister  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Started by former State College Area School District special education teacher Teri Linder, Penn State and SCASD have collaborated to run LifeLink PSU.

Sponsored by the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, the program supports 18- to 22-year-old State College Area students with disabilities.

"All in all, it's an incredibly successful secondary transition and mentoring program," SCASD Director of Special Education Heather Pringle said.

"It provides a college-like experience for our State College students, and it allows them to interact with same-age peers on a daily basis."

State College Area students with disabilities are eligible to continue public education until age 22.

The partnership allows students to interact with Penn State student mentors and learn from students of the same age," Pringle said.

This leads to an increase in behavioral and academic progress, according to Pringle.

To apply, students must submit materials including an application, letter of recommendation and transcripts.

Students must also have a paid or volunteer work experience while in the program.

"This is my 21st year in education, most of which was in special education, what I went to school for here at Penn State," LifeLink PSU Program Coordinator, Ryan Gill said.

"I graduated in 2004 with my teaching certificate in special education."

Gill said he attended Penn State when LifeLink was founded in 2002.

"Unfortunately, I wasn't aware of it at the time, or I would have liked to have been involved then as a student volunteer," Gill said.

"I knew of the classroom, I had always revered it, so when I started with the school district, I made it known that I would be interested if this position were ever available."

Gill completed a year in math support and intervention when a teaching position had finally become available.

"Then the position came up and I interviewed for it," Gill said. "They had already known I was interested, so it worked out more quickly than I had imagined."

Gill is now in his second year teaching with LifeLink PSU.

"There was a lot to learn. It's not a typical classroom environment," Gill said. "I've always taught at the high school level."

This is a little bit different in that we're sort of on an island here for a State College School District classroom."

What started as a partnership with the Penn State College of Education has now become a program containing 302 Penn State mentors, accumulating a total of 5,515 volunteer hours as of the 2023-2024 school year.

Special education teacher Peyton Stark has been employed at State College Area High School for the past three years. The SCAHS alumni received her master's in special education from Clarion University during the height of COVID-19.

According to Stark, the school district has decided to create a program called LifeLink Gears, an extension of LifeLink PSU targeted toward first-year students.

Stark said that students often go out with mentors to their classes.

"It's nice, all of us together as a group are learning about where things are on campus together and sitting in on these classes," Stark said.

"We've had so many programs reach out. Every day, more and more people are wanting to sign up and become student mentors and work with our students."

Kayla Monger, a former student mentor, said she discovered LifeLink while looking for a study spot.

"I was studying in the HUB, trying to find a quiet place to study, so I ventured up to the third floor and LifeLink PSU had a trifold poster outside the classroom with information."

This is when everything changed for Monger.

"I'm one of six children, I have three siblings with disabilities, I knew I wanted to get involved when I saw that poster," Monger said.

She signed up that day to work with students on math and get lunch together, with her experience leading to a year as a special education paraprofessional with LifeLink.

Last July, Penn State and LifeLink PSU announced they'd continue their relationship for the next four years.

Students looking to become a mentor can email LifeLink PSU teachers Ryan Gill at [rtg11@SCASD.org](mailto:rtg11@SCASD.org) and Peyton Stark at [pas20@SCASD.org](mailto:pas20@SCASD.org). Those interested in the State College Area School District can reach out to Heather Pringle at [hrp13@SCASD.org](mailto:hrp13@SCASD.org).

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Carter's Table's quesadillas and tacos are a staple of the Mexican restaurant, making them earn a spot on the list.

## Ranking State College's Mexican restaurants

By Sienna Pinney  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As a Californian attending Penn State, one of my primary concerns moving to Happy Valley was the Mexican food scene in State College.

While State College doesn't live up to most of my favorite Mexican restaurants at home, I am pleased to inform you that hope is not lost — delicious Mexican food is available for Penn Staters to enjoy.

If you agree that the best Mexican restaurants have horchata and an open salsa bar, this ranking of State College Mexican restaurants will be right up your alley.

With large portions, relatively fast service and Californian-approved guacamole, there's a reason El Jefe's is generally crowded.

The breakfast options also make it an enticing restaurant earlier in the day.

Open from 8 a.m. until 4 a.m., El Jefe's is always there for you when you need it.

My go-to order is the super quesadilla for \$10.25 with sour cream and guacamole to dip. Life wouldn't be complete if I didn't order horchata to drink.

While El Jefe's doesn't meet my criteria for having an open salsa bar, not everything can be perfect.

Living on the south end of campus, El Jefe's is also a relatively short walk for me compared to Yallah or Lupita's.

### 2. Carter's Table

I'll admit that I nearly flipped a coin between this and my first-place ranking, so take that as you will.

What first began as a stand at the weekly farmer's market evolved into a permanent location downtown, for which I am eternally grateful.

Even in the busiest crowds, I've never had to wait more than a few minutes to receive a plate of hot, delicious happiness. While the menu is not as long as several other Mexican food menus in State College, everything offered is perfection.

The first time I ate at Carter's Table, I immediately took to Google reviews to leave five stars and glowing praise for the food and how pleasant all of the employees were. I also give bonus

from artist to artist, as the time needed to complete a tattoo depends on which artist executes it.

"The prices are very fair. They charge for tattoos by the hour, which is more common now," Wong said.

Paper Moon Tattoo said it's good with piercing ears for kids aged 6 and up, as well as first-timers of any age.

"I truly recommend the piercer [Jessie Lee Zimmer], as she was super friendly and quick. She gave us lollipops to keep our blood sugar up and some water too," Wong said.

Paper Moon Tattoo offers "Walk-in Thursdays" in addition to typical bookings.

"Get here early, get your walk-in appointment in — we have some specific restrictions that can be found on our website and our Instagram," Carmena said.

Paper Moon Tattoo frequently posts on its Instagram to keep followers updated and aware of any important information regarding its shop.

"LGBTQ+ safe — we love everyone. We have a blast," Dusk said.

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freshers and smoothies have me making stops at Yallah just for the drinks.

When the protein options from Yallah are compared to some of the other Mexican restaurants, I don't think Yallah comes out on top. While tasty, it does not make me think of authentic, impossible-to-beat Mexican food.

The taco flight is also a delicious dish, and if you happen to be dining with someone under the age of 8, they eat free if you purchase a quesadilla or taco flight.

While the food is perfect, Carter's does have limited hours with a closing time of 9 p.m., and it lacks horchata to drink.

### 1. Lupita's Authentic Mexican Food

Located on the opposite end of downtown from Carter's Table, Lupita's has everything a good Mexican restaurant demands; an open salsa bar, large portions, killer carnitas and most importantly, horchata.

I've never been able to finish a plate at Lupita's because my stomach is weaker than my eyes. But my taste buds would never give up if it weren't for a lack of space.

My goal is to try everything on the menu before I graduate this spring, and so far, every item I've tried has been my new favorite.

I'm a carnitas quesadilla girlie at heart, but Lupita's is challenging that viewpoint by astounding me with every new dish I try.

The king quesadilla is \$14.99 and comes with a medium drink and rice and beans on the side. Dear reader, if you try nothing else, try this with carnitas and horchata.

There are several vegetarian options as well, such as the empanadas with cheese or the regular quesadilla.

The true mark of an authentic, top-tier Mexican restaurant is an open salsa bar, and Lupita's delivers. With crema, mild to spicy options and more, there's something for everyone's taste buds.

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# Needless to say, Swae Lee kept it in check

By Carolena Bongi  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Pennsylvania State University Student Programming Association (SPA) Concerts Committee and Movin' On delivered a performance Penn Staters will never forget.

Penn State's annual student-run music festival, LightsUP, featured a mix of hometown talent and big-name artists that performed on the HUB-Robeson Center's Lawn on Friday.

The event featured student performers such as Swervo Staacks, Jaaye and MB3 Brown. Each of these acts brought their own unique energy to the stage.

The excitement only grew as the night progressed, culminating in a performance by Sage The Gemini, who set the stage for headliner Swae Lee.

The evening kicked off with Swervo Staacks, whose performance immediately energized the crowd. Between sets, attendees enjoyed activities like

mechanical bull rides, food stalls and t-shirt sales.

Jaaye and MB3 Brown kept the momentum going, each building upon the excitement in the air.

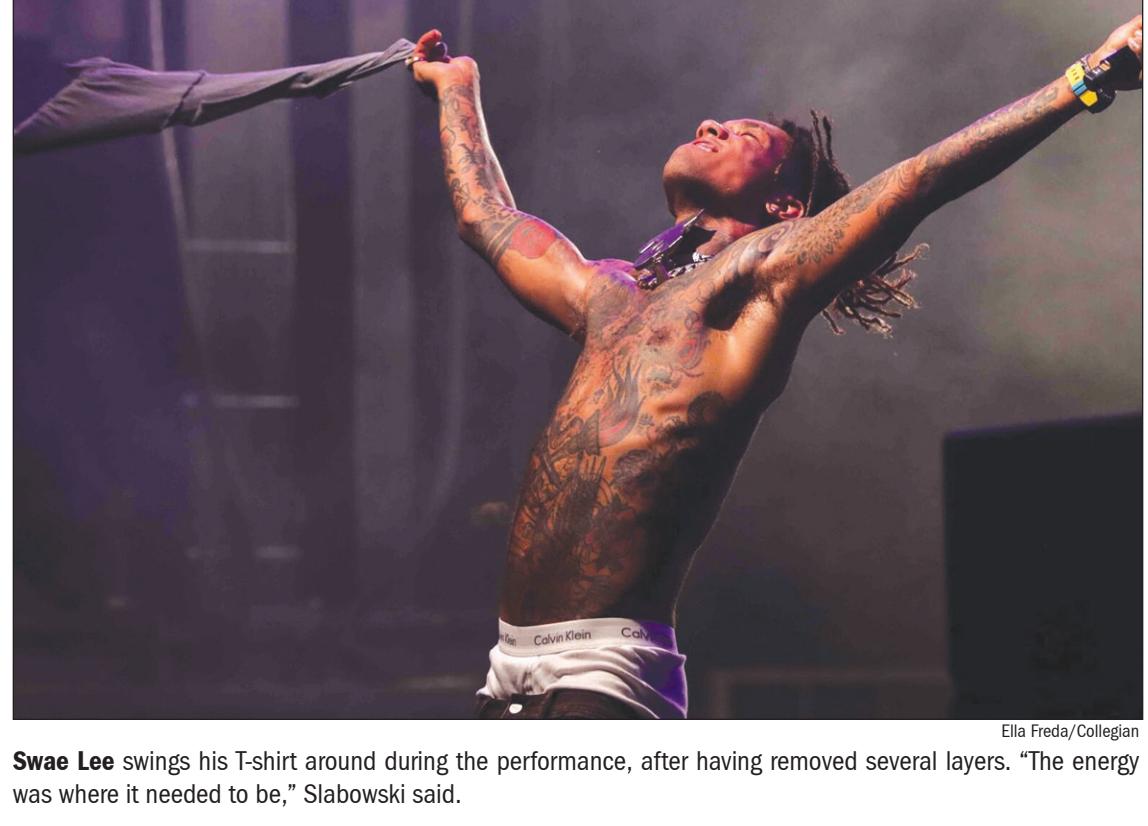
Swae Lee did not disappoint, launching into fan favorites like "No Type" and "Come Get Her," which had the crowd singing along. One fan even shouted, "Swae, marry me! I love you!" — a testament to the enthusiasm of the night.

During his performance, Swae Lee expressed his admiration for Penn State, mentioning how he wished he had attended school here and how the university brought incredible energy.

His connection with the audience was palpable, as he engaged with fans and fed off their energy throughout his set.

"This school is one of my favorites to perform at," he said, even noting that "Penn State got the vocals."

For many in the crowd, the night was more than just a concert — it was an experience that



Ella Freda/Collegian

**Swae Lee** swings his T-shirt around during the performance, after having removed several layers. "The energy was where it needed to be," Slabowski said.

captured the essence of Penn State's vibrant community.

Hiba Al-Nabhan praised the event for its positive atmosphere, calling it "sensational" and noting the respectfulness of the crowd.

"Everyone was so respectful and it was so nice," Al-Nabhan said.

Reflecting on the overall experience, Al-Nabhan highlighted the joy of being with friends and the unique opportunity the event provided.

"Spending time with friends and getting to experience this for free was amazing," she said.

The crowd went wild when Swae Lee performed "Sunflower," a hit from the 2018 animated film "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse." The song, already a crowd favorite, brought everyone together in a moment of shared excitement and nostalgia.

Lindsay Slabowski was captivated by the live performance, especially hearing Swae Lee perform songs she had grown up with.

"Seeing Swae Lee live was absolutely insane — hearing some of the songs I've grown up with was crazy," Slabowski, a first-year studying forensic science, said. She rated the experience a "perfect 10 out of 10," adding, "the energy was where it needed to be."

Isabella Siciliano spoke to the enthusiasm of the crowd and highlighted the communal spirit of the event.

"The energy the crowd brought and being with my friends were my favorite parts," Siciliano, a first-year studying business management, said.

As the night began to wrap up,

Swae Lee thanked the crowd and wished everyone a great rest of the evening.

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Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

**Students** react to the complimentary concert. "Spending time with friends and getting to experience this for free was amazing," Al-Nabhan said.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

**Sage The Gemini** opens for Swae Lee at SPA's annual LightsUP performance.

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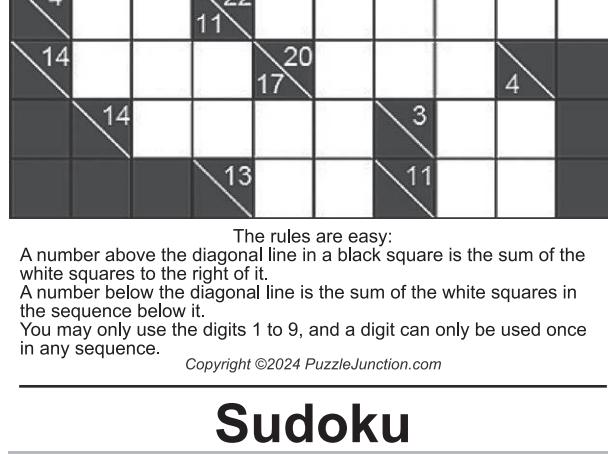
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Gulf  
Harbor

Headland  
Inlet  
Lagoon  
Loch  
Marsh  
Mouth  
Narrows  
Peninsula  
Point  
Port  
Sound  
Spit  
Strait  
Surf  
Swamp

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## Kakuro



The rules are easy: A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it.

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

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

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## Sudoku



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## Crossword



**Across**  
1 Castle defense  
5 Old hand  
8 Strong joe  
11 Garden bulb  
13 Slaves  
15 Groove-billed  
16 Fancy home  
17 Colorado resort  
18 Wee hour  
19 Come after  
21 Weasel relative  
23 Old dance hall  
25 Decanted  
27 Possess  
28 "We've been \_\_\_!"  
30 Camera setting  
31 Hospital unit  
32 Get situated  
34 Select  
37 Pelvic bones  
39 Moving option  
40 Stooge  
42 Little shaver  
43 Peaceful  
46 Pizza order  
47 Fujairah bigwig  
49 Nickname  
50 Pretense  
51 Bring in, like goods  
53 Extinguish

55 Raccoon relative  
56 Common refrigerant  
58 Wise one  
59 Sine or cosine  
62 Obliterates  
66 Rodent  
67 Media attraction  
68 Hearty entre  
69 Some trial evidence  
70 Comics shrike  
71 Himalayan legend

14 Muzzle  
20 Fly like an eagle  
22 Scouting group  
23 Lie in  
24 Kind of ink  
25 Trashed, as a play  
26 Not at home  
27 Japanese sash  
29 Sidetrack  
33 Pencil holder  
35 Half of a 60's quartet  
36 Doubly  
38 Highly skilled  
41 Fishing equipment  
43 Lady's man  
44 Classic art subject  
45 Those not printed  
48 Wavelike design  
51 Hawkeye  
52 Vallenato locale  
54 Kwanzaa principle  
55 Parachute part  
56 Informer  
57 Decay  
60 Hail, to Caesar  
61 Links prop  
63 Stan who created Spider-Man  
64 High school sub.  
65 \_\_\_ bunny

**Down**  
1 Lyrical cable inits.  
2 Paris assent  
3 Completely  
4 Scrabble pieces  
5 Model  
6 Stretch of turbulent water  
7 Bullfight cheer  
8 Photo finish  
9 Single  
10 Last name in fashion  
12 Mexican revolutionary leader Villa  
13 Greek cross

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Friday before a home game!

VERSUS



# Undersized & underrated

## Inside Penn State forward Danny Dzhaniyev's journey to Hockey Valley

By Maggie Hardy

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Danny Dzhaniyev is no stranger to flying under the radar.

The Penn State forward has been underestimated and overlooked for the larger part of his hockey journey.

Standing at just 5-foot-5, the shortest on the team by three inches, Dzhaniyev's had to work a bit harder than most to be where he is today.

The senior's size meant that many failed to see his true potential, starting from the very beginning.

Dzhaniyev grew up in Brooklyn, New York — a far cry from the rolling hills of Central Pennsylvania — and was raised as a first-generation American in a Russian-American household.

His parents immigrated to Brooklyn in 1994 from Azerbaijan, embarking on a new chapter in a new country. Dzhaniyev spoke on just how much his heritage and culture have influenced his upbringing.

"It was a lot different from all my friends, all my schoolmates, my teammates," Dzhaniyev said. "I think overall it helped me a lot as well growing up, shaping me into the person I am today."

His passion for the game of hockey was first sparked at the famous Madison Square Garden. Dzhaniyev was just 2 years old



Tyler Mantz/Collegian file photo

**Danny Dzhaniyev** flips the puck during warm-ups for the men's hockey game against Wisconsin at Pegula Ice Arena on Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023 in University Park, Pa.

when his dad first took him to see a New York Rangers game.

After that, he was hooked.

"It was something that hit me pretty hard. I just wanted to play like those guys on the ice," Dzhaniyev said.

While growing up, Dzhaniyev split time playing with Xavier High School and the New Jersey Junior Titans, but it was the U.S. National Team Development Program that put him on the map.

The NTDP is one of the country's most elite hockey develop-

ment programs, constantly pumping out the next generation of NHL superstars. Players like

Patrick Kane, Auston Matthews and Jack Hughes have all gotten their start at the USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth, Michigan.

To Dzhaniyev, the opportunity was a "dream come true."

"Not many people can say they played for the development program. It's something I have a lot of pride in," Dzhaniyev said.

While with the program, Dzhaniyev played in 154 games, tallying 37 points en route to winning the 2019 U17 Five Nations Tournament in Sweden.

"From the time I stepped into there, to when I left, I learned so much," Dzhaniyev said. "You learn from the best, and you get to play with the best as well."

Some of "the best" Dzhaniyev played alongside include a list of current NHLers — San Jose's Thomas Bordeleau, Seattle's Matty Beniers and Minnesota's Brock Faber to name a few.

The forward recounted the years spent playing with his teammates and how their recent success provides extra motivation to reach the next level.

"They're all awesome people, great teammates, great to be around," Dzhaniyev said. "I want to be at the same level as they are. Just seeing that motivates me a lot and helps me push more toward my goal."

After the NTDP, Dzhaniyev's next step took him to the USHL, where he played one season with the Dubuque Fighting Saints, tal-

lying 18 points and 18 assists in 49 games.

Although an unconventional route, Dzhaniyev called his time in the USHL "very beneficial".

"It was just the biggest confidence builder," Dzhaniyev said. "I think it benefitted me way more than I thought it would have, especially going into college that next year."

And, at last, Dzhaniyev's hockey journey landed him in Hockey Valley.

The forward's first recruitment talks came about after competing on a tournament team with Penn State coach Guy Gadowsky's son, Mac.

"If I remember correctly, their team won the tournament when they weren't supposed to at all, and largely due to Dzhaniyev's play," Gadowsky said. "He was just a kid that was exciting to watch and worked extremely hard."

After Dzhaniyev's standout performance caught Gadowsky's eye, the young forward was asked on a visit to State College and was blown away.

The Brooklyn native remarked that, even after the offers started rolling in, Penn State was always in the back of his mind. After playing far from home for so long, Happy Valley would only be a four-hour drive away.

When Gadowsky called with an offer, it was a no-brainer for Dzhaniyev.

"All my family was in the car ... I told my mom and my dad, and (they said), 'You better say

yes right away,'" Dzhaniyev said. "And yeah, I told Coach Gadowsky I was in."

Dzhaniyev's first two years with the Nittany Lions were solid, tallying 18 points his freshman season and 15 in his sophomore season. It was last year that was the breakthrough, however.

The forward notched career highs across the board, including a team-high 20 assists and a team-second 29 points, improving in just about every category possible.

The forward has always been skilled and able to produce offensively, but the development of his full 200-foot game is what pushed his play to the next level. Offensive skill can only get you so far in Division 1 hockey, so Dzhaniyev focused on improving his play on both sides of the puck.

The forward's development was not only noticed by the coaching staff, but by his fellow teammates as well.

"Last year he was so much better on the defensive side of the puck, and his stats just skyrocketed," fifth-year defenseman Jimmy Dowd Jr. said. "It's fun to see for everyone ... you want to see everyone get rewarded."

Dowd and Dzhaniyev have known each other for years, even before the two made their way to State College, and the pair have become close friends.

"Me and Danny have become super close over the years," Dowd said. "He's always working as hard as he can, and he just does it and loves it too, never complains."

Gadowsky was also quick to praise Dzhaniyev's fierce work ethic.

"When you give him a directive, he really takes it seriously," Gadowsky said. "I think I speak for our entire staff ... when I tell you that all of us are just so impressed with the work that he's put in and the results that he's gotten because of it."

Dzhaniyev's size meant an uphill battle from the beginning, and his drive has taken him to some great heights.

Prepped and primed for a big senior season, don't be surprised to hear about a 5-foot-5 kid from Brooklyn making waves among the best of college hockey.

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Megan Miller/Collegian

**Forward Danny Dzhaniyev** skates towards his team after scoring during the Penn State men's hockey game against Michigan

## Blue Sapphire Bronk

By Ryan McKenna

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

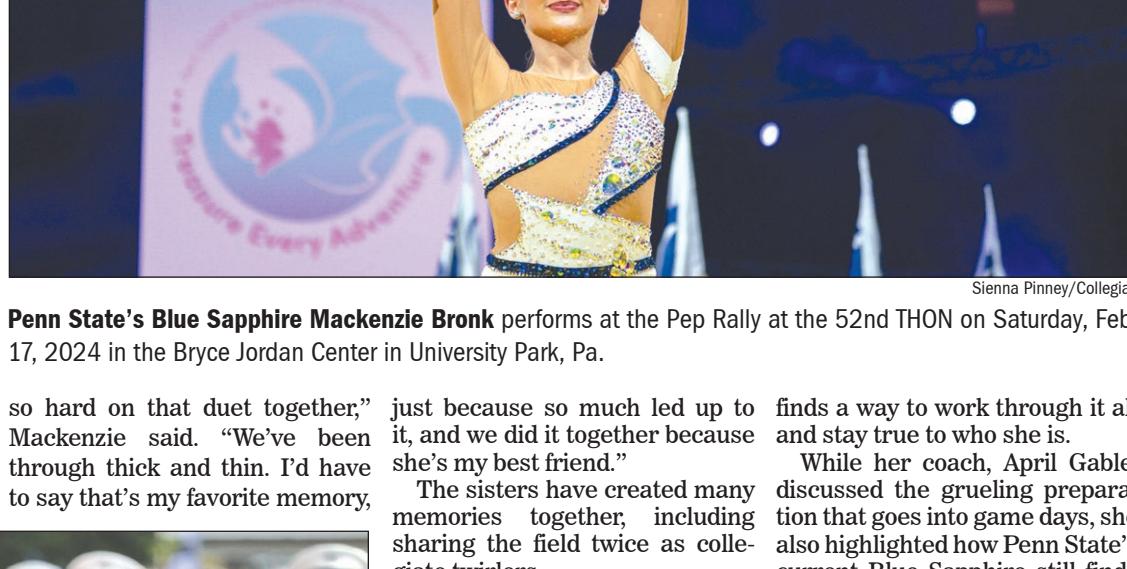
From being the Touch of Blue Blue Sapphire to being named Miss Majorette of America, the life of Mackenzie Bronk is a crazy one.

Bronk grew up in Maryland in a family with a long lineage of twirlers. Both of Bronk's sisters twirled at the collegiate level in addition to her mom and grandmother; all five members starting at the young age of 3.

Bronk's older sister, Maddie, was a four-year twirler at the University of Maryland. The two competed in duets together at the International Baton Twirling Federation ever since Mackenzie was 8 and Maddie was 10.

Competing alongside her sister has been one of Mackenzie's favorite parts throughout her twirling career.

"We had been doing that duet since I was 8 years old and she was 10 years old, and we'd worked



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

**Penn State's Blue Sapphire Mackenzie Bronk** performs at the Pep Rally at the 52nd THON on Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024 in the Bryce Jordan Center in University Park, Pa.

so hard on that duet together," Mackenzie said. "We've been through thick and thin. I'd have to say that's my favorite memory,

just because so much led up to it, and we did it together because she's my best friend."

The sisters have created many memories together, including sharing the field twice as collegiate twirlers.

During Mackenzie's freshman year, Maddie got to experience the feel of Beaver Stadium. The following year, Mackenzie had a homecoming of sorts, traveling to Maryland with her family on the sideline as Penn State visited Maryland.

Maddie reflected on the two gameday memories the family shared and how much it meant to her.

"Well, I thought we were lucky to have that experience once," Maddie said. "So having that twice is honestly kind of insane ... Having that experience together was just a full circle moment for both of us."

Mackenzie's journey as Blue Sapphire continues to embark on new paths. However, despite all of the chaos during game day, Bronk

finds a way to work through it all and stay true to who she is.

While her coach, April Gable, discussed the grueling preparation that goes into game days, she also highlighted how Penn State's current Blue Sapphire still finds time before games to make someone's day.

"She's a wonderful representative of Penn State and the Blue Band," Gable said. "When you see her at Penn State — whether it's teamwork, or she's picking up the kids and running them around or getting the Lion to come over and take a picture — she is like, 'How can I make their experience better?'"

Performing in front of 107,000 people would already be enough pressure for most. However, it's those small moments that help Mackenzie find calm through the storm.

The junior twirler highlighted how the nervous energy on game days goes away, allowing her to focus on how she can make a fan's day.

"Once I see someone and I start talking to them, I just completely forget about all of my worries," Mackenzie said. "I have this little Penn State fan in front of me that looks like their eyes are lighting up because they see the sparkles of my costume, and I have the opportunity to talk to them. I just want to give them that game day experience that I had when I came to Penn State."

Former Penn State Blue Sapphire Rachel Reiss is someone Mackenzie has looked up to. Reiss was Mackenzie's big sister on her former club team, Dynamics, and when she saw Reiss at Penn State, she knew it was home.

"I had my eyes set on Penn State since I was 10 years old because of Rachel Reiss," Bronk said. "I saw her twirling and I was like, 'Oh my gosh, that's insane.'"

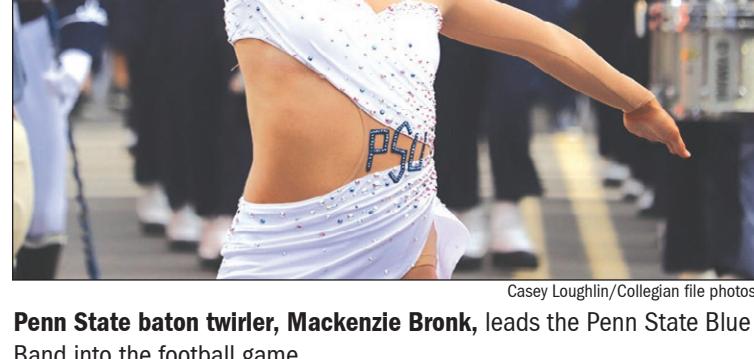
Throughout Mackenzie's time in Happy Valley, the Blue Sapphire position has come with a lot of responsibilities. In addition to being a full-time student and competing at the national level, Mackenzie partakes in weekly practices and performs on game days at Penn State.

Thankfully for Mackenzie, the people who care about her have been by her side. Last off-season, Mackenzie was named Miss Majorette of America, and she thought about the people who cared about her and helped her along her journey.

"I was shocked, star-struck, and I started crying because all these emotions started flowing in," Mackenzie said. "It's so much gratitude and emotion because it wasn't just me who did it. It wasn't a single person's effort ... Every single person here played a role in this exact title that I've been trying for for so many years now."

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Casey Loughlin/Collegian file photos

**Penn State baton twirler, Mackenzie Bronk, leads the Penn State Blue Band into the football game.**

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

# HARRIS WALZ

As the school year begins, I would like to take this special moment to welcome you back to campus.

It feels like yesterday that I was a student at Howard University. I found forever friends, people who shaped me and supported me. I found my beloved Alpha Kappa Alpha sisters. Like many, college is when I started to become politically engaged. Together, we learned that progress happens in our country when young people fight for it.

Throughout my travels as Vice President, I love talking to young leaders. I am continually amazed by your grit, your perseverance, your intellect, and your deep passion for making our world better.

It is because of the record turnout among college students in 2020 that I am Vice President today. And to win this election, I need your support.

This November, so many of our fundamental freedoms are at stake. The freedom to vote. The freedom to live safe from gun violence. The freedom to love who you love, openly and with pride. The freedom to breathe clean air and drink clean water. And the freedom to make decisions about your own body.

Later this semester, you will have the opportunity to vote in an election that will decide the future of our country. You will have the power to shape our future. To continue to build the country you want to live in—one where your fundamental rights are protected—by taking to the ballot box and making your voice heard.

Your vote has never mattered more. When young people fight for progress, it changes the course of our nation. I believe in you. I am inspired by you. And I am rooting for your success.

Sincerely,



Vice President Kamala Harris

