

NATIONAL SPORTS

Casey dazzles as Nittany Lions rout Hoosiers

by Ray Parrillo
September 26, 1999
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. -- Joe Paterno was doing his best to dim the lights on the month's worth of highlight snippets Penn State quarterback Rashard Casey had just provided with

96,416 filed out of Beaver Stadium downright dazzled by the entertaining performance Casey had put on for them, Paterno was quick to serve up a warning.

"We know what we've got in Casey," Paterno said. "He's going to make big plays, and other times you're going to pay the price. You've got to

come to Happy Valley billed as one of the most thrilling and athletic quarterbacks in the country, and the sophomore didn't disappoint, accounting for three touchdowns and 271 yards passing and running.

But Casey, who shares playing time with Kevin Thompson, a hero of last week's memorable victory in Miami, outdid Randle El. The junior from Hoboken, N.J., completed 13 of 15 passes for 196 yards and two TDs and ran for 66 yards and another TD, a 31-yard bolt that had to be seen to be believed. He was on the field for all four of Penn State's offensive TDs.

"Yeah, I watched a lot of what Rashard Casey did, and all I can say is 'Wow,'" middle linebacker Brandon Short said.

After Askari Adams rubbed out Indiana's early 3-0 lead with a 37-yard TD run with an interception, Casey shook the Nittany Lions offense from its lethargy by leading a 52-yard drive that ended with Aaron Harris' 1-yard dive and a 14-3 lead early in the second quarter. The key play was Casey's delicate 30-yard touch pass to tight end Tony Stewart over the middle to the 5-yard line.

Then the fun really started. After Adams recovered a third-quarter fumble on the Hoosiers' 31, Casey made his remarkable TD run on first down. He rolled to his right, cut up the middle and screwed defensive tackle Paul Mandina into the ground with a hip fake, veered to his right, and tightrope the sideline for the final 5 yards before going airborne into



ASKARI ADAMS rolls across the goal line as Brandon Short, LaVar Arrington and Mac Morrison celebrate his 36-yard interception return for a touchdown during Penn State's rout of Indiana, 45-24.

the orange pylon at the corner of the end zone. Basically, he ran 60 yards to cover 31.

"It was a naked bootleg, and people were flying past me," said Casey, who came into the game after Thompson ran the first three possessions. "I think it added up to about 80 yards, but once I got to the end zone I wasn't tired any more."

Smiling, he added, "I've always had happy feet, because I don't like to get hit, so I try to improvise."

Asked if he believes he has altered the perception of the typical Penn State quarterback, Casey smiled again. "I'm a little bit different. I'm just trying to get the job done."

On the final TD, Casey escaped two defenders and fired a pass toward the corner of the end zone for Sam Crenshaw, who appeared to be well-covered. But the pass floated into Crenshaw's outstretched hands.

"I saw Sam come across the back of the end zone, and I just threw it toward the pylon," Casey said. "He just wanted the ball more than everyone else."

Several times, when his first option broke down, Casey bought time with his nimble legs, allowing his tight ends Stewart and John Gilmore each caught five passes.

"The funny thing with Rashard is

when he rolls out you never know what he's going to do," Gilmore said. "I just try to get into his line of sight."

Aside from Casey, the Nittany Lions played in fits and starts. They needed Adams' TD on the interception and a 90-yard punt return from Bruce Branch, the third longest in school history, to help build a 24-10 lead. The offensive line struggled against Indiana's porous defense, and the Nittany Lions failed to have a 100-yard rusher for the fifth time in five games.

On defense, Penn State didn't record a sack, yielded 385 yards, and allowed the Hoosiers to easily march through them for an 81-yard drive that made it 31-17 in the third quarter. "They made our defense look pretty bad," Short said.

Indeed, there was no reason for the Nittany Lions to feel comfortable until a 20-yard TD pass from Casey to Eric McCoo fattened the lead to 38-17 with 1:24 remaining in the third quarter. After grabbing the pass, McCoo lowered his head and simply ran over Indiana strong safety Greg Yeldell, who wobbled back to his feet.

"I just wanted to finish the job," said McCoo, who caught five passes.

Randle El tossed a 27-yard TD pass to Versie Gaddis to make it 38-24 with 10:54 to go, but the Nittany Lions used up more than six minutes before Casey hooked up with Crenshaw for the final score.



NITTANY LIONS
45

HOOSIERS
24

his daring runs, dart-like passes, and eye-popping improvisation.

The 72-year-old coach has always liked his quarterbacks tall and straight, with their feet planted firmly in the pocket, structured to play it safe. Guys like Casey, whose feet always seem to be dancing on hot coals, whose amazing athleticism inspires him to take risks, tend to make old Joe a bit nervous.

So on a glistening afternoon as

live with it."

Saturday, when No. 2 Penn State (5-0 overall, 1-0 conference) more often than not looked quite a bit less than a national championship contender, Paterno and the Nittany Lions were pleased to live with what Casey gave them - the impetus for a crazy 45-24 victory over Indiana (1-3, 0-1) in the Big Ten Conference opener for both teams.

The Hoosiers' Antwaan Randle El

This Penn State more entertaining than previous Joe Paterno squads

by Ray Parrillo
September 26, 1999
Knight Ridder Tribune

PHILADELPHIA -- The uniforms are still bland as the walls of a hospital ward, and if you turned the clock back a generation, you'd still see most of the same coaches nervously pacing the sideline.

Rest assured, though, this has been a very different kind of Penn State football team so far this season.

In their finest hours under coach Joe Paterno, the Nittany Lions bludgeoned teams with a relentless running attack centered on a workhorse tailback who followed the lead of a powerful offensive line. They had the controls in the hands of one quarterback. They refused to give opponents openings by making mistakes. Their defense rarely gave up big plays.

None of which characterizes the way these Nittany Lions have built a 5-0 record and positioned themselves as the No. 2 team in the nation in the minds of the media and coaches who vote in the polls.

One moment, these guys exhilarate their fans with explosive plays. The next moment, they frustrate them with miscues.

The two-quarterback system makes them more entertaining, and certainly

more interesting. Last week, it was Kevin Thompson beating Miami with a 79-yard strike to Chafie Fields. Saturday in the 45-24 win over Indiana, it was Rashard Casey showing the kind of marvelous athleticism that's likely never before presented by a Penn State quarterback.

With Thompson and Casey, Paterno is going by the seat of his pants. At 72, Paterno is juggling the most important position on the team. What can be more fun than that?

But as the Nittany Lions enter their bye week, they know they must tighten up their act if they are to reach their goal of playing for No. 1 in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 4.

They have yet to have a running back gain 100 yards in a game because, for the most part, the offensive line isn't blocking effectively. Often, they couldn't even clear the porous Hoosiers out of the way. In the five games, they have been penalized 29 times for 253 yards. They have fumbled 17 times and have been fortunate enough to lose just six of them. The defense has been more opportunistic than dominating.

Mostly, they have remained unbeaten through sheer talent and their penchant for making big plays. Likely, it will require more for them to run the table. Four of Penn State's seven re-

maining opponents - Ohio State, Purdue, Michigan and Michigan State - are currently ranked, with a composite record of 15-1. Poor blocking, penalties and fumbles could result in a loss to any one of them.

Paterno had hoped to use the Indiana game as a chance to firm up the basics, but Penn State needed Casey's acrobatics, a 90-yard punt return by Bruce Branch, and an interception returned for a touchdown by Askari Adams to defeat spirited Indiana.

"I wasn't really pleased with the way we played," said Paterno, with testiness in his voice. "We were up and down, inconsistent, sometimes really good, sometimes sloppy. We're just making so many mistakes. We were just very erratic. I think we can use it 1/8th the bye week 3/8."

Said Casey: "We had some mental errors that we have to correct if we're going to win the national championship."

On the defense, which has allowed nearly 20 points a game, linebacker and captain Brandon Short said, "We're not that bad, but we're not that good, either. There were times when we looked pretty bad out there 1/8 against Indiana 3/8."

Letdown week. One problem for teams that have designs on competing for No. 1 is the debilitating effect a

huge loss can have.

Miami became a case in point Saturday, blowing a 23-3 lead and losing to East Carolina, 27-23. The Pirates, who had to vacate their Greenville, N.C., campus for the week because of the effects of Hurricane Floyd, scored 17 points in the fourth quarter to become only the second team in 14 years to defeat Miami after the Hurricanes led after three quarters. The week before, the Hurricanes suffered a heart-breaking 27-23 loss to Penn State.

Now that their chance of climbing back into the national championship picture is gone, the Hurricanes can hope to get some satisfaction when they play No. 1 Florida State on Oct. 9.

Tennessee came within an eyelash of suffering the same fate as Miami. A week after losing to Florida, the Vols needed a 15-yard TD pass from Tee Martin to Cedrick Wilson for a 17-16 win over Memphis.

The BCS. The Bowl Championship Series standings will be released on Oct. 25 and each Monday thereafter until conference championship games are completed on the first Saturday in December. The standings are based on four components: the polls, eight computer rankings, strength of schedule and teams' records. The top two teams in the standings will play for No. 1 in

the Sugar Bowl.

Heisman watch. Ron Dayne's hope of winning the Heisman Trophy, as well as his chance to break Ricky Williams' NCAA career rushing record, might have been crushed Saturday by Michigan's defense, which held the Wisconsin tailback from Berlin, N.J., to zero yards in the second half of the Wolverines' 21-16 victory.

Dayne had 88 yards on 14 carries in the first half, but had none on eight carries in the second. Michigan's goal was to limit the senior to 80 yards. "Eighty-eight's not bad," Michigan linebacker Ian Gold said.

If the Heisman were awarded today, it likely would go to Florida State receiver Peter Warrick, who had a 75-yard punt return in the Seminoles' 42-10 rout of North Carolina. Warrick has scored as a receiver, running back and punt returner. In four games, he has 30 catches for 441 yards.

Purdue quarterback Drew Brees strengthened his position in the Heisman chase in the Boilermakers' 31-23 win over Northwestern, a victory decided on his 99-yard TD pass to Vinny Sutherland. Brees completed 32 of 50 passes for 405 yards. This season, he is 107 of 172 for 1,325 yards, with 10 TDs and three interceptions.

No love lost. Washington finally got

a return on the \$997,000-a-year contract it gave Rick Neuheisel to lure him from Colorado. It was sweet, too, because Neuheisel's first win as Huskies coach came Saturday against Colorado, 31-24.

The game was hyped as a bitter duel between Neuheisel and Gary Barnett, who left Northwestern for the Buffaloes job. After the game, Neuheisel and Barnett exchanged a quick handshake but barely spoke. Meantime, the Huskies doused Neuheisel with Gatorade and several Colorado players chatted with their former coach. "I didn't know how it would shake out after the game," Neuheisel said. "I didn't know if there would be bitterness. Quite frankly, it was nice to know they still cared about me."

A reprieve? Beleaguered Alabama coach Mike DuBose lived to coach another day as the Tide defeated Arkansas, 35-28. DuBose had two years chopped off his contract after he admitted in August to lying about a personal relationship with a university employee after the school settled a sexual-harassment suit against him. Then last week, when the Tide lost to Louisiana Tech, Alabama athletic director Bob Bockrath, an ally of DuBose, was fired. Alabama will play No. 3 Florida on Saturday.

Europeans still steaming over Ryder Cup celebration

by Hank Gola
September 28, 1999
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

BROOKLINE, Mass. -- The Americans have their cup. The Europeans have their cause.

Having relinquished Samuel Ryder's gold chalice for the first time in four years, the vanquished visitors returned on the Concorde Monday morning less concerned with America's stunning final-day onslaught than they were outraged with the spontaneous combustion of emotions the U.S. displayed on the 17th green.

It was evident what angle was being hammered home by the Fleet Street crew and it's not going to die until the teams square off again at the Belfry in two years.

With all the pomp and ceremony that attends the Ryder Cup, it took some time until the Europeans reached the interview room Sunday. But they were still 12 angry men two hours after Justin Leonard's 45-foot putt slammed into the hole and what seemed like the entire American contingent spilled onto the

green, stomping over the putting surface where Jose Maria Olazabal still needed to putt to halve the hole and save the day.

"You saw it for yourself," said the Spaniard, who, after the excitement died, backed off twice from his ball before rolling it a few inches wide of the cup.

"I don't think that kind of behavior is what anybody expects. It was an ugly picture to see."

Olazabal should know about emotion. He punched out a wall at his hotel room in Pinchurst after a bad day at the U.S. Open this year.

"I realize there was a lot of emotion going on, but you have to keep your feet on the ground," he said.

At first, captain Ben Crenshaw apologized for the display, which included not only jubilant players bear-hugging and high-fiving Leonard but caddies, players' wives and team officials "going nuts," as Leonard put it.

Then, as the American press conference continued, one could sense an irritation with some of the suggestions.

When a questioner with a clipped

accent told Tom Lehman that a European official said he should be ashamed of himself, the '96 British Open champion paused for a moment.

"There was never any ill intent on anybody's part whatsoever," he said. "We were excited. We were very excited. And obviously, in retrospect, we probably wish we all would have jumped up and down in place."

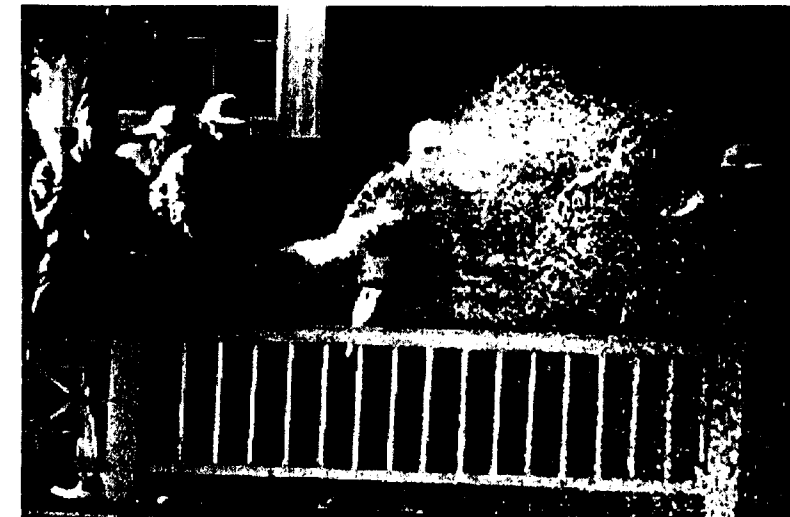
"But I'm not going to apologize for being excited. I guess memories are somewhat short. Valderrama (in Spain) wasn't exactly a cakewalk for us over there. Their fans were pretty interesting, too."

Said Davis Love III, harkening back to '97, "There's been a lot of celebrating on a lot of holes in a lot of Ryder Cups."

Naturally, the European team insisted it wouldn't have acted the same way in the same situation. And the Euros already were miffed by the Boston-style heckling they had received all day, with Colin Montgomerie the biggest target.

"Disgusting," Paul Lawrie called it. Payne Stewart agreed.

Playing against Monty, Stewart



U.S. team members, including Tiger Woods (left) and Mark O'Meara (center), spray champagne from a balcony overlooking the 18th green after the U.S. team defeated Europe in an incredible come-from-behind victory to win the Ryder Cup.

offered to step in and "take care of" the situation if the Scot needed it.

"Some of our fans, they're a little bit over the top," Stewart said. "They got out of control. It happened numerous times. He doesn't deserve that."

"It should just not ever happen," Jesper Parnevik chimed in. "I'm kind of the little American on the

European team. I live over here and I have a lot of friends in the crowd today and they were embarrassed just to hear some of the heckling that happened to Monty, for example."

For now, it goes into the memory banks, only to stoke more emotions when the Ryder Cup rivalry is renewed.

NFL SCHEDULE

Week 2

Sunday, October 3

Baltimore @ Atlanta	1:00
Arizona @ Dallas	1:00
New Orleans @ Chicago	1:00
New England @ Cleveland	1:00
Philadelphia @ N.Y. Giants	1:00
Jacksonville @ Pittsburgh	1:00
St. Louis @ Cincinnati	1:00
Tampa Bay @ Minnesota	1:00
Carolina @ Washington	4:05
N.Y. Jets @ Denver	4:15
Kansas City @ San Diego	4:15
Tennessee @ San Francisco	4:15
Oakland @ Seattle	8:20

Monday, October 4

Buffalo @ Miami	9:00
-----------------	------

Bye Week: Detroit, Green Bay, Indianapolis

GAME OF THE WEEK

BUFFALO VS. MIAMI

CRAIG HAZELWOOD	
MIAMI	30-20
JASON SNYDER	
MIAMI	17-14
MATT WIERTEL	
BUFFALO	20-14