

Lions win 'old-fashioned bar fight' with Pitt

by Kimberly Jones
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. - Ninety-five games or not, the Pitt-Penn State rivalry may have ventured into a new dimension on Saturday afternoon at Beaver Stadium.

"An old-fashioned bar fight in the back alley," was how Nittany Lion fullback Mike Cerimele - with sweat dripping down his forehead and a smile covering his face - described No. 2 Penn State's 20-17 escape from the Panthers.

And who could argue?

The tilt, Penn State's seventh straight victory in a series that is not scheduled to continue past next season, featured a trio of game-changing interceptions, few rushing yards by either side, a timely sack by Lion defensive tackle David Fleischhauer and a game-clinching blocked field goal attempt on the second-to-last play by linebacker LaVar Arrington.

Speaking of Arrington, he also made an interception that went for naught and provided one of the contest's more entertaining side-shows when he and Pitt punter Greg DeBolt engaged in a couple of special teams battles that resembled wrestling matches, one of which resulted in not one but two personal fouls against Penn State.

"If Pitt didn't make a statement about this being a rivalry today, then I don't know what a rivalry is," said Arrington, a Pittsburgh native who didn't necessarily make a statement about his grappling ability. Said he of the double-flagged skirmish, "I knocked the punter down (and) I was laying on him." Of snuffing Nick Lotz's 52-yard field goal attempt with four seconds remaining, Arrington grinned. "I've gotta block it," was what ran through his mind before the ball was snapped. "But thinking and doing are two different things," he added.

What the Nittany Lions did was win when it wasn't easy for them, as had been the case in a pair of season-opening maulings over Arizona and Akron.

"We didn't do everything right," said Penn State tight end Tony Stewart, who made his first reception of the season, "but we showed we're tough and we got things done when we had to."

First, the offense did so, driving 77 yards after Pitt had forged a 17-17 tie with 4:34 to go on a 42-yard touchdown reception by Julius Dixon. Penn State's big play of its final series - and possibly its biggest play of the game - was a splendid pass from Kevin Thompson to Eddie Drummond that covered 51 yards

and put the Nittany Lions at the Pitt 11.

Thompson finished 17 for 29 for 232 yards with two interceptions. One pick in the third quarter re-

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NITTANY LIONS
20



PANTHERS
17

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"Kevin threw a great ball; it was easy for me," said Drummond, a sophomore who scored his first career touchdown against Akron. "All I had to do was adjust to the ball and catch it."

"You've gotta be able to win a football game like this if you have any aspirations," Penn State coach Joe Paterno said. Then it was the Penn State defense's turn. And, after Pitt's Hank Poteat returned the kickoff 47 yards to midfield, the Panthers appeared to be sitting pretty.

"I don't know what happened on that last (return)," Paterno said. Penn State linebacker Brandon Short had an idea. "Hank almost won the game for

them," he said. So did John Turman. The Pitt quarterback, a junior and junior college transfer making his first career start, completed a pass to Latef Grim for 25 yards to the Lion 25. After an incompletion and with 54 seconds to go, Penn State called time.

Considering that the two teams combined for just 120 yards rushing, the Nittany Lions figured the Panthers would continue to try to pass. They were ready.

"This is what we get into the game for," Short said. "A team's driving on you and you have to stop them to win the game."

"You just need to go out there and expect to win," said linebacker Mac Morrison. "I think we did that."

Following another incompletion, Fleischhauer dropped Turman for a 10-yard loss and drew this reaction from Arrington: "I just kept telling (Fleischhauer) that I love him. That was just a great effort on his part." It was an inauspicious end to Turman's fine day; he was 19 for 35 for 316 yards, with two touchdowns and an interception and won the Coogan Award as the game's MVP.

"We showed," Turman said, "that our offense has a spark." As the clock ticked and the Panthers lined up for a field goal try - Pitt had exhausted its final timeout early in the fourth

quarter - the crowd of 96,127 was on its feet.

The kick entered the air, and defensive end Courtney Brown and Arrington leaped. Arrington's outstretched right hand deflected it, ending the threat of overtime, which would have been a first in Paterno's 50-year coaching career.

"It was a tremendous play," Brown said. "God blessed us." Perhaps it was Pitt coach Walt Harris, whose squad is 14 scholarship players shy of the NCAA's 85-man limit, who could have used the blessing. The Panthers' starting linemen gave up 29 pounds per player to Penn State's offensive line.

"Doggone it," Harris said. "Our guys played their butts off." There was no disputing that by the Nittany Lions.

"I'll take nothing away from the University of Pittsburgh," said Penn State defensive end Justin Kurpeikis, who is from Pittsburgh. "They played unbelievable. It's too bad we only have one (game against the Panthers) left." Cerimele, the high-intensity junior whose 11-yard reception from Rashard Casey gave Penn State a 7-0 lead in the first quarter, said he "loved it today" on the field. "But I don't ever want to be in that situation again," he quickly added. "None of us do."

Steelers give Cleveland rude welcome, 43-0

by T.J. Simers
Los Angeles Times

CLEVELAND - They waited three years for this, and by the start of the fourth quarter they were headed to the parking lot, witnesses no more to the worst defeat at home in Cleveland Browns' history.

If the gun-toting, bayonet-fixed U.S. Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon had performed in pregame festivities with the same precision as the Browns, it would have been a blood-bath.

The Pittsburgh Steelers pounded the expansion Browns, 43-0, Sunday night, as happy as anyone that Cleveland is back in the league after recording their seventh victory in a row over them.

It was only the ninth time in franchise history the Browns had failed to score at home, the very first time in the new Cleveland Browns Stadium before 73,138.

"We learned about some of our individuals tonight," Cleveland Coach

Chris Palmer said.

They can't play football very well.

The Steelers had more points than the Browns' had offensive yards, 43-40, and if the city of Cleveland thought the return of football and a blimp flying overhead with a national TV audience watching would be a boost to its self-esteem - oops.

"I'm just sorry the fans of Cleveland had to go through that joke tonight," fullback Marc Edwards said.

This was one for the dawgs, all right, the Browns running nine times for nine yards, a dead man falling flat on his face gaining more yardage on the average.

Ty Detmer and Tim Couch combined to average 1.6 yards a passing play. Couch, the No. 1 player selected in the 1999 draft, came on in relief in the fourth quarter and his first pass as a professional was intercepted. He's still waiting for his first completion.

"The easiest way to take the crowd out of it is not to give them anything to cheer about," Pittsburgh Coach Bill

Cowher said. "I think all of it's execution."

Whose execution? This was cruel and inhumane punishment for a group of people who once cheered Jim Brown, Otto Graham and Marion Motley. All the anticipation, the hoopla, the fireworks. As badly as these people felt when Art Modell took his team to Baltimore, and as good as they felt three hours earlier in the evening, it just might never be the same.

Commissioner Paul Tagliabue showed up before the game, the noted stadium serial killer returning to the scene of the crime, christening the Cleveland Browns' new playpen and officially putting an end to the gritty history of down and dirty football.

Tagliabue had allowed Modell to abandon these people, and it appears he wants to knock off the Los Angeles Coliseum next, maybe as early as Monday after another set of expansion meetings in New York. History be damned, and the

day is coming when the NFL will have a stadium built with only luxury boxes.

Here's a place where atmosphere counted for something for so many years, the stirring voice of John Facenda seemingly whistling in the chilly winds with every grimy pileup, a place where the home-field advantage meant more than having every seat in the place painted orange.

Ballyhooed as the return of the tradition-rich Browns, this experience was more akin to a wine-tasting festival than a renewed rivalry with the Steelers.

This is not Cleveland as most fans remember it. The paying customers had to buy personal seat licenses, a personal blockade to the return of some of the diehard blue-collar locals, and what is this football world coming to when someone is handcuffed and removed from the Dawg Pound for being nothing more than unruly less than a quarter into the game?

The last-line of defense for Cleveland has always been its Dawg Pound at the east end of the field, a threat of

bodily harm to any opponent daring to cross the goal line face-first.

But now the dog-faced drunken customers are ejected for firing dog bones, batteries or other missiles onto the field. Ruff-ruff just doesn't cut it as evidenced by the Steelers' willingness to take up residence in the end zone.

The new stadium doesn't even allow nasty signs to adorn the stadium walls. Who knows, beneath the stadium, the Welcome Wagon might have been there to greet the Steelers.

Baseball builds throw-back fields of dream, but come to Cleveland Browns Stadium and you could be sitting in Tampa Bay or Washington or Carolina, all pampered in comfort in one of the climate-controlled and spacious club lounges. It used to be a test of manhood to attend a Browns' game. But this is progress, the NFL way, orchestrated by Tagliabue who has had nine new stadiums open on his watch with new ones to come in Denver, Pittsburgh and Seattle in the next few years.

NFL SCHEDULE

Week 2

Sunday, September 19

Arizona @ Miami	1:00
Green Bay @ Detroit	1:00
Ind. @ New England	1:00
Jacksonville @ Carolina	1:00
Oakland @ Minnesota	1:00
Pittsburgh @ Baltimore	1:00
San Diego @ Cincinnati	1:00
Seattle @ Chicago	1:00
Tampa Bay @ Philadelphia	1:00
Washington @ N.Y. Giants	1:00
New Orleans @ San Fran	4:05
Cleveland @ Tennessee	4:15
Denver @ Kansas City	4:15
N.Y. Jets @ Buffalo	8:20

Monday, September 20

Atlanta @ Dallas	9:00
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Bye: Saint Louis

GAME OF THE WEEK

WASHINGTON @
N.Y. GIANTS

Andre Agassi continues comeback by winning his second U.S. Open

by Bill Fleischman
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

NEW YORK - Good show, guys. Following rousing semifinals, the U.S. Open men's final is often anticlimactic. Not this year.

No. 2 seed Andre Agassi climbed off the Arthur Ashe Stadium hardcourt to beat seventh-seeded Todd Martin Sunday night, 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 6-7 (2-7), 6-3, 6-2, to gain his second U.S. Open title.

The last major tournament final of the millennium was worthy of champagne toasts for both players.

Since filing for divorce from actress Brooke Shields in April, Agassi has won the U.S. Open and French Open, and was runner-up to Pete Sampras at Wimbledon. In raising his Grand Slam tournament title total to five, Agassi won two majors in one year for the first time. Single life has allowed him to make a serious commitment to tennis again. Agassi's ranking has rocketed from No. 141 to No. 1.

Any day, Agassi, 29, will show up on billboards advocating bachelorhood.

Former touring pro Brad Gilbert has directed Agassi's comeback. Two years ago, Gilbert said Agassi's "agony was self-inflicted. I told him he had a lot left. If he rededicated himself, he'd get everything back."

Said Agassi: "I had to make a choice: play the game or quit. If I was going to play, I had to do a lot of work."

Agassi worked with his personal trainer, Gil Reyes, for hours daily in the broiling Nevada sun. He lifted weights and ran up and down a 320-yard hill he named "Magic Mountain."

Martin, appearing in his second major tournament final, moved through the top half of the Open draw vacated by four-time Open champion Pete Sampras. The top-seeded Sampras withdrew prior to his first match with a herniated disk. Martin breezed past unseeded Cedric Pioline, 6-4, 6-1, 6-2, in the semis.

Martin, also 29, is experiencing an Agassi-like resurgence. Throughout his career, Martin has been hampered by injuries. The former Northwestern University student gained momentum toward the final with his Round of 16 victory over Greg Rusedski. After dropping the first two sets, Martin won in one of the tournament's most remarkable matches.

"I feel very good about the way I played," Martin said. "I lost to a better player."

The 6-6 Martin hit 77 winners to 45 by Agassi. However, Martin's unforced errors more than doubled Agassi's, 60 to 23.

Agassi's amazingly low unforced-error total wasn't his only stunning statistic. He also went the entire 3-hour, 23-minute match without suffering a service break.

"I'm just thrilled to be in this situation," said Agassi, a 1-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 winner over No. 3 seed

Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the semifinals. "(Martin) gave me a lot to worry about. He was not only serving great, he was volleying magnificently."

After dominating the second- and third-set tiebreakers, Martin's serve was broken in the third game of the fourth set. Agassi saved two break points in the eighth game.

Any question about the outcome was decided in the second game of the final set when Agassi broke Martin's serve at love with a stinging backhand service return down the line.

Martin also was broken at love in the final game. After Martin hit a backhand into the net, Agassi raised both arms and flashed a smile from here to Las Vegas for his adoring fans.

Explaining the slip in his serving effectiveness, Martin said, "I lost my legs a little."

Martin's biggest problem was dealing with the "relentless pressure" of Agassi. Said Martin: "Over five sets, under this type of pressure, that's quite an achievement."

If Agassi had continued at his mid-1990s level, he would have stayed on the same elevated level as Sampras, who has a record-tying 12 major titles. But Agassi said he has no regrets.

"If it wasn't for those valleys, then these peaks would be this high," he said. "It's kind of how my spirit has always worked.

DOUBLE THE FUN:

Williams sisters win U.S. Open Title


by Helene St. James
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

NEW YORK - A day after she upset top-seeded Martina Hingis of Switzerland to capture the women's singles title, Serena Williams teamed with big sister Venus to win the U.S. Open doubles championship.

The Williams sisters defeated Sandrine Testud and Chandra Rubin, 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, on Sunday, adding \$330,000 to their weekend earnings.

Serena Williams won \$750,000 on Saturday after ousting Hingis, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4), and climbed the world rankings from No. 7 to No. 4. Third-ranked Venus Williams, who lost to No. 1 Hingis in the semifinals, won \$210,000. She and Hingis retain their ranks, as does No. 2 Lindsay Davenport, who lost to Serena Williams in the semis.

After her singles win, Serena Williams got a call from Bill Clinton, the first president to phone the women's champion, and his daughter, Chelsea. "I didn't really think my day could



Serena Williams returns a shot against Kim Clijsters of Belgium in Williams' third round victory at the U.S. Open

get any better," she said. "I was thinking, 'Wow! He said they had watched my last three matches, and they were really rooting for me, him and Chelsea. I talked to her, also. She's really nice. She said she'll show me

around Stanford when I go there for Fed Cup. Pretty exciting."

Chelsea is a student at Stanford, which will host the Sept. 18-19 Fed Cup final between the U.S. and Russia.