

Holy Toledo: Penn State falls badly

by Ray Parrillo
Knight-Ridder Tribune

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. -- On Monday, Penn State parachuted out of the Associated Press top 25 for the first time since the end of the 1992 season. At least Southern Cal was kind enough to pull the rip cord for the Nittany Lions by not padding the score.

On Saturday, on a sweltering afternoon before 94,296 spectators witnessing Penn State's home opener at Beaver Stadium, the Nittany Lions justified their disappearance from the country's elite. They left no doubt that they didn't belong as they got pounded by Toledo, 24-6.

In last Sunday's 29-5 loss to USC, the Nittany Lions stumbled and bumbled and told themselves that most of the damage was self-inflicted. In this one, they were soundly beaten by a Mid-American Conference contender that had its way in just about every aspect of the game.

Frankly, the final score was deceiving. "It wasn't really close," senior line-backer Aaron Gatten said. "It was like we were never in the game."

Gatten's postgame comment hit harder than any of his teammates on a defense that was manhandled by the Rockets' offensive line.

Toledo, which did just about everything with precision, amassed 385 yards on offense, 245 on the ground, and averaged 4.7 yards per play. Tailback Chester Taylor carved up the Penn State defense for 141 yards and two touchdowns.

The Rockets were a remarkable 11 for 19 on third-down conversions de-

spite missing on their last four tries, and they toyed with Penn State on punishing and demoralizing TD drives -- an 83-yarder to end the first half and an 80-yarder to open the second.

With the defeat, the Nittany Lions fell to 0-2 for the first time since 1990, when they dropped their first two games to Texas and USC. Saturday's loss was their first in a home opener in 10 years.

Afterward, coach Joe Paterno, who, with seven to go, may have to wait until next season to become the all-time leader in victories among major-college coaches, was quite believable when he said: "Obviously, we're not very good."

Surveying the damage, defensive lineman Jimmy Kennedy said: "We have a lot to worry about, a lot that has to be fixed."

One disgruntled player, sophomore running back Larry Johnson, called the offensive system outdated and the play-calling predictable and blamed the offensive line for Penn State's futile running game. In fact, not much of what he said seemed likely to boost morale.

"We have the best backfield in the country, but we don't have the offensive line to go with it," said Johnson, who scored Penn State's only TD of the season so far on a 61-yard pass from Rashard Casey on Saturday.

"We have coaches who have been here 20, 30 years. It seems like things never change. We run the same offense. Teams that play us know what we're going to run. They can pull out tapes from '92 or '93 and we run the same offense. The same plays, same system. Guys guess on that, and they

end up guessing right. "Everything we do is too predictable. Everybody knows what we're doing. Sometimes I don't even know the play and I can stand there and guess the play. The system's been around too long."

In the next breath, Johnson said that he thought the system was good enough to succeed if the Nittany Lions could manage to do some catching, blocking and tackling.

At the north end of Beaver Stadium, perched atop the second level of seats, was a gigantic new scoreboard with a video screen that showed the action with impressive clarity and in vivid color.

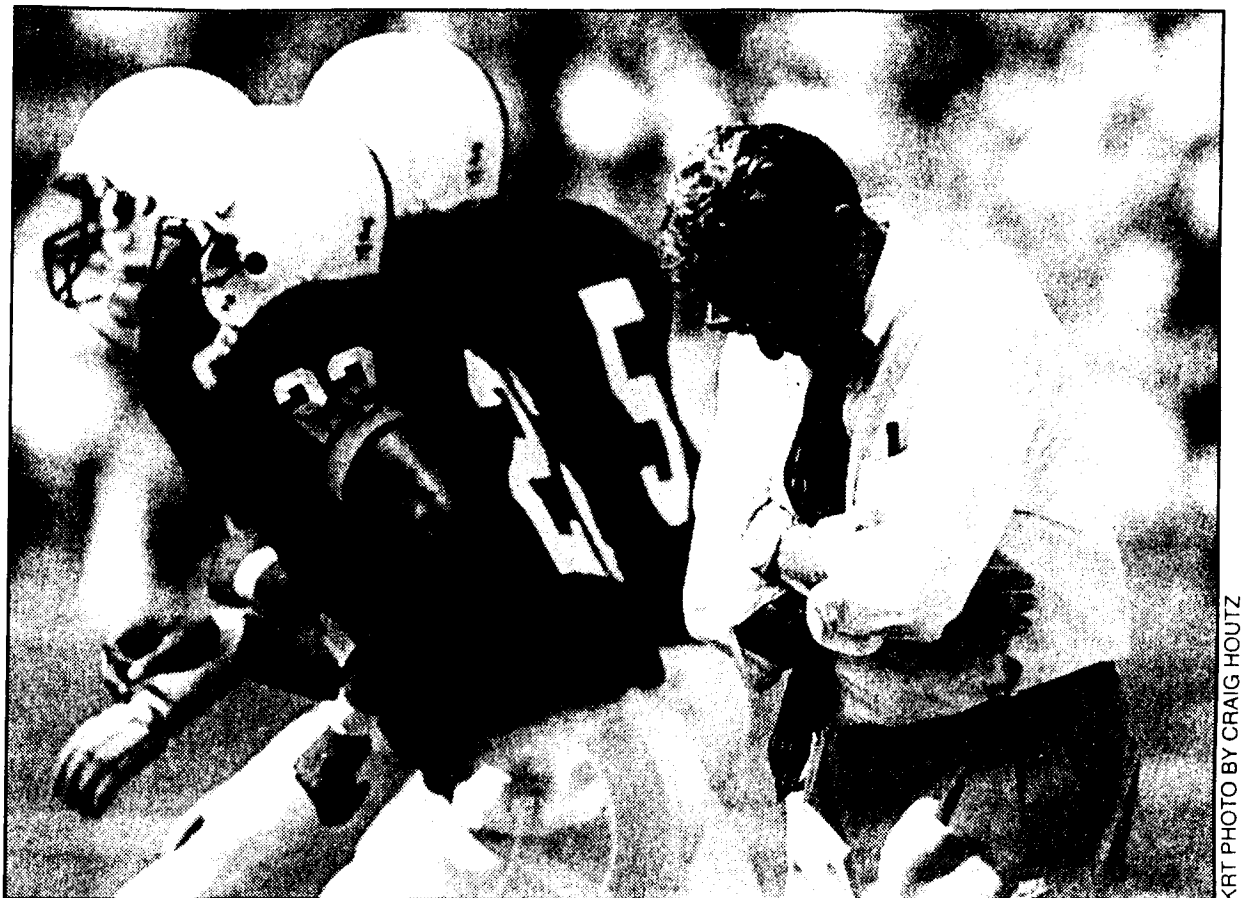
Mostly, this is what the fans saw on it:

Taylor and his backup, the speedy Antwon McCray, running at will through the heart of Penn State's defense behind crisp, aggressive blocking that had the Nittany Lions' linebackers struggling just to keep their balance.

Toledo's quarterback, Tavares Bolden, making nearly every play he had to with both his legs and his arm. Bolden almost flawlessly executed coach Gary Pinkel's ball-control passing game, completing 18 of 28 passes. On the third-quarter TD that made the score 24-0, he kept his poise in the face of blitzing pressure by free safety Titicus Pettigrew and tossed a 13-yard scoring pass to Lyle Green.

Penn State's blockers proving unable to open running lanes or adequately protect Casey.

A repeat of last Sunday's exhibition of bad hands by the Penn State receivers. Sam Crenshaw dropped three passes and Rod Perry two. On each



Joe Paterno is not happy with Penn State's fifth consecutive regular-season loss, for the first time since 1931, as Penn State lost to Toledo 24-6, Saturday, September 2, 2000.

occasion, they were hit directly in the hands by Casey's throw.

"Our receivers catch the ball in practice, but then they have problems in the games," Casey said. "But a lot of us are having problems in the game, including me."

Paterno noticed the problems that Crenshaw and Perry were having and decided to bench them in the second half. With Eddie Drummond, his top returning receiver, out with a knee injury, Paterno reached down the depth chart and used Steve Delich, a

sophomore walk-on, and Brian Brozeski, a converted tight end, at the wide-receiver spots in the second half.

"Well, if you can't run the football, you've got to throw it, and if you can't catch the football, you've got problems," Paterno said. "They catch better in practice than they do in the games."

"There's no doubt they're trying. We have no problems there. But we haven't even been competitive in either one of those games. I don't want to be critical, and I don't want to make

excuses, but we haven't played a decent offensive game in two weeks."

Paterno praised the play of Toledo, the first MAC team to beat one of his teams in 12 tries. He said that the Nittany Lions hadn't been able to handle some of the Rockets' linemen and that Bolden had played a superb game.

When the subject returned to his own team, Paterno said: "I don't know what else to say. I wish I could tell you. We shall see."

The Scoreboard

<p>Behrend Scores</p> <p>Soccer Herb Lauffer Championship Games Men 2-0 over Hiram</p> <p>Women 7-0 over Bethany</p> <p>Volleyball Behrend finishes 3rd out of 15 teams at Cortland State Tournament</p> <p>Cross Country Women finished 9th and men finished 11th at Buffalo State Invitational</p> <p>Major League Baseball (As of 9/6)</p> <p>American League East</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Team</th><th>W</th><th>L</th><th>GB</th></tr> <tr><td>New York</td><td>78</td><td>57</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>Boston</td><td>72</td><td>63</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>Toronto</td><td>71</td><td>67</td><td>8.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Baltimore</td><td>63</td><td>75</td><td>16.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Tampa Bay</td><td>59</td><td>79</td><td>20.5</td></tr> </table> <p>American League Central</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Team</th><th>W</th><th>L</th><th>GB</th></tr> <tr><td>Chicago</td><td>82</td><td>56</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>Cleveland</td><td>74</td><td>61</td><td>6.5</td></tr> 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<p>American League--Batting</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Batting Average</th><th>Player</th><th>Team</th><th>Avg</th></tr> <tr><td>.364</td><td>Garcia parra</td><td>BOS</td><td>.364</td></tr> <tr><td>.362</td><td>Erstad</td><td>ANA</td><td>.362</td></tr> <tr><td>.361</td><td>Delgado</td><td>TOR</td><td>.361</td></tr> <tr><td>.339</td><td>Stewart</td><td>TOR</td><td>.339</td></tr> <tr><td>.339</td><td>Segui</td><td>TEX-CLE</td><td>.339</td></tr> </table> <p>Home Runs</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Player</th><th>Team</th><th>Runs</th></tr> <tr><td>Thomas</td><td>CHI</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>Glaus</td><td>ANA</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>Delgado</td><td>TOR</td><td>39</td></tr> <tr><td>Batista</td><td>TOR</td><td>37</td></tr> <tr><td>Justice</td><td>CLE-NY</td><td>34</td></tr> </table> <p>Runs Batted In</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Player</th><th>Team</th><th>Runs</th></tr> <tr><td>Martinez</td><td>SEA</td><td>128</td></tr> <tr><td>Thomas</td><td>CHI</td><td>127</td></tr> 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Lleyton Hewitt (9) Hewitt defeated Clement 6-2, 6-4, 6-3</p> <p>Pete Sampras (4) Vs. Richard Krajicek sampras defeated Krajicek 4-6, 7-6 (8-6), 6-4, 6-2</p> <p>Marat Safin (6) Vs. Nicolas Pietrangeli (14) Kiefer (14)</p> <p>Todd Martin Vs. Thomas Johansson</p> <p>Men's Semi-final action Sampras (4) Vs. Hewitt (9) Match scheduled for Saturday</p> <p>Women's Quarterfinal Lineup Martina Hingis (1) Vs. Monica Seles (6)</p> <p>Hingis defeated Seles 6-0, 7-5</p> <p>Venus Williams (3) Vs. Nathalie Tauziat V. Williams defeated Tauziat 6-4, 1-6, 6-1</p> <p>Elena Dementieva Vs. Anka Huber (10) Dementieva defeated Huber 6-1, 3-6, 6-3</p> <p>Serena Williams (5) Vs. Lindsay Davenport (2) Davenport defeated S. Williams 6-4, 6-2</p> <p>Women's Semi-final Action Martina Hingis (1) Vs. Venus Williams (3)</p> <p>Lindsay Davenport (2) Vs. Elena Dementieva</p> <p>Both matches scheduled for today.</p>
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Thomas	CHI	127																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			
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Sirotko	CHI	3.79																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			
Mussina	TEX	3.85																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			
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Mussina	BAL	175																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			
Colon	CLE	168																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			
Clemens	NY	158																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			
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Hampton	NY	3.22																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			
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Classifieds

Now Hiring
Bus and dish workers
\$6 to \$8 an hour to start
Also: cooks with experience
Applications will be accepted
for all other positions.
Please apply in person
between 2 to 4 Monday
through Friday at the Red
River Roadhouse in the
Millcreek Mall.

**Students and faculty of
Penn State Behrend are
welcome to place free
classified ads.
Please send ads to
BehrColl4@aol.com**

Wanted!
Spring Breakers!
Cancun, Bahamas, Florida, &
Jamaica. Call Sun Coast Vacations for a free brochure and ask how you can organize a small group and Eat, Drink, Travel Free & Earn Cash!
Call 1-888-777-4642
or e-mail
sales@suncoastvacations.com

Spring Break! Delux Hotels, Reliable Air, Free Food, Drinks and Parties. Cancun, Jamaica, Bahamas, Mazatlan & Florida. Travel Free and Earn Cash! Do it on the web! Go to StudentCity.com or call 801-272-1443