

OPINION

Another record broken, another reason to stay

ELESE MERKOVSKY
sports editor

At 83, our society considers people old. We often applaud those who are able to walk around and live on their own. But at 83, Joe Paterno has a different life path. After this week's win over Northwestern, JoePa has hit the milestone of 400 wins.

This feat has never been accomplished before in Division I football, and it seems fitting that JoePa would add this on his list of achievements. However, in the light of such a huge milestone for

PSU, the ongoing argument that Paterno needs to step down from coaching because of his age continues.

Being a third generation Penn Stater, and having grandparents who have been season ticket holders for the past 30 years, I grew up going to PSU games.

I can remember tailgating, going to the creamery, shopping, and back when security was not a huge issue getting into the fourth quarter and watching the Blue and White win (usually).

This ritual would not be complete without JoePa. To

any dedicated Penn Stater, Paterno seems synonymous to the program. After 66 years on the coaching staff at Penn State, and 45 years in

Mr. 400

the head coaching position, it is obvious that he is dedicated to the position.

I am not oblivious to the fact that he is old. Hell, 83 is old for the average person, let alone the coach for one of

the most well-known football programs in the country. And we've all seen him spend seasons up in the box, coaching through a headset due to in-

jury or illness. But he hasn't had a terrible season yet.

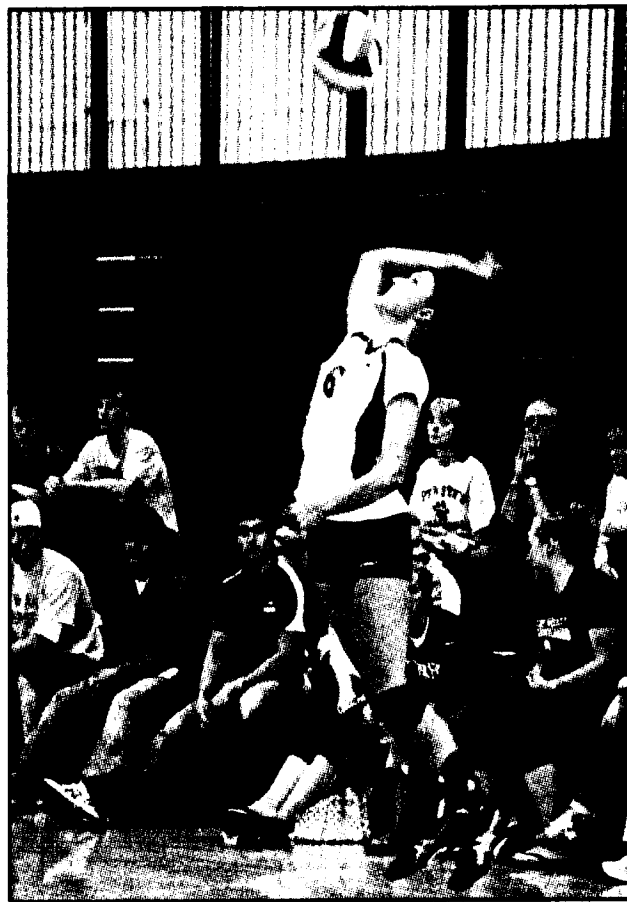
Yeah, there have been some losing seasons, but that happens in all programs. Even as he has gotten older, he leads the Blue and White

to bowl game after bowl game, winning season after winning season. He may not be the young coach many teams are graced with but to have the audacity to ask him to step down would be a crime against Penn State.

JoePa is graced with a wonderful staff that, lets face it, helps him a lot. But that staff would be nothing without Joe in the head position. Though his involvement in the team strategy and such may not be the same as it was when he started 66 years ago (not that I know for a fact it hasn't), the fact that he is the face of the

program helps to solidify his excellence and the excellence required by the Penn State team. I for one, think it would be a crime to ask him to step down. I would be content watching the man lead the Blue and White as long as he would like.

My family often jokes that Joe will die on the field, but it seems like there is nowhere else he'd rather be. And as JoePa said, "believe deep down in your heart that you're destined to do great things," it is evident that he lives by this, as he reached his 400th victory.



Eric Dye / The Behrend Beacon

Senior Danielle Woods has recorded 1,716 career digs, and ranks third on the all-time list.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Woods leaves legacy at Behrend

ALEC ITALIANO
sports editor

Soccer, gymnastics, cross country, volleyball; very few people can say they play any of those sports, let alone all four of them. However, for her efforts on the volleyball court in helping the Lady Lions extend their winning streak to eight straight games, senior marketing major Danielle Woods has been named the Enterprise Rent-A-Car Athlete of the Week.

Woods has been playing soccer since fifth grade and even started playing junior Olympic volleyball that same year as well as participating in all her other sporting endeavors as well. Eventually Woods, like so many other gifted athletes, was forced to pick a sport, and she picked volleyball to play for Baldwin high school.

"Volleyball is most definitely my passion," Woods said. "I can remember in my high school days when it was game day, I would have a hard time concentrating on my classes because all I could focus on was

the game that night; especially when it was against one of our rivals."

While at Baldwin High, Woods found success on the court and lettered in the sport all four years and was named to the WPIAL all section second team as a junior, and was named to the WPIAL all-star, all-section first team as a senior.

Woods continued her winning ways at Behrend and received the Penn State Behrend Rookie Award as a freshman. Through her years playing for head coach Phil Pisano, Woods has received four All Tournament Team awards over her tenure here at Behrend, one of them being at the 2009 Behrend Invitational.

Truly an athlete at heart, Woods is extremely competitive at her sport and took her volleyball career seriously, while having fun with it at the same time.

"I am not only passionate about playing but winning was everything to me," Woods said. "I never took losing very well. When I'm out there playing it gives me an adrenaline high and I love being out on the court." Woods attributes much of her success to

her family and coaches as well, especially Pisano who helped hone her defensive skills and ultimately into a top-notch volleyball player at the collegiate level.

"I think Phil and I share the same passion for the game," Woods said. "His desire to win and be the best is evident by the amount of time and effort he puts into the program. I would also like to thank Gerry Vensel for her words of encouragement and support. In addition to the Behrend coaches, I would like to thank all the coaches that I've had throughout my volleyball career who have helped to mold me into the player I am today. Lastly, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family who has been there to support me through it all."

Though Woods can look back at a successful college career here at Behrend and leaves the team in the very capable hands of her fellow teammates and coaches.

"To my Behrend Lion teammates, remember to 'Hold the Rope,'" Woods said. "I wish you the best of luck next year; you were a great group of girls to play with and I will miss you. God Bless."

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