

Sports Page

No. 1 Lions Sugar Bowl Bound

By Michael Cocciardi

At long last the Nittany Lions are on the threshold of a No. 1 season. The Penn Staters hold within their grasp their own destiny of being this Nation's finest in collegiat football for the '78-'79 year. A crucial win over cross rival Pitt has left the Lions one game away from the reality of being college football's best, and the first Penn State team in history to finish atop the UPI and AP Polls.

The Lion team closest to being number 1 previously was the 1969 team, which also went undefeated, but ended up 2nd behind Texas, at least to everyone outside of Pennsylvania. If 2nd ranked Alabama can get by pesky Auburn this weekend, the Lions will have the opportunity to prove who is the best once and for all. The Grimson Tide is not going to be an easy opponent but Joe Paterno and his players wouldn't have it any other way.

The heart of this year's team is the defense. The Lion defense is the toughest in college football to run against. The twosome of Millen and Clark or salt and

pepper as they are sometimes called, anchor the middle of the defensive line and give opposing quarterbacks something to think about with a ferocious pass rush. Safety man Pete Harris leads the team in interceptions with nine, and sticks to receivers like blue lines on notebook paper. This defense is the main reason for the Penn Stater's 19 game winning streak, the longest among major college football teams in the nation.

The team's present record of 11-0 includes wins over bowl bounded Pitt, N.C. State, Maryland, and Ohio State, with shut-outs coming against Kentucky and Ohio State.

The teams offense has at times been sluggish inside opponents 20 yard line, and settled for field goals instead of touchdowns. But when it has had to, the Lion offense can move menacingly. The offense is spearheaded by quarter back Chuck Fusina, with an impressive backfield of Mike Guman, Matt Suhey, and Booker Moore. All three backs possess the the ability of making the big play when it is needed most. Guman scored the

go ahead touchdown at the Pitt 2 yard line late in the fourth quarter in last week's win, and was also the only one to score a touchdown in last year's Pitt game. Suhey's punt return run back in the N.C. State game ignited a Lion comeback to win a tight ball game. Moore is capable of breaking a big gainer from scrimmage at almost anytime in a ball game, and is always a safe bet in 3rd and one situations.

The kicking game has also

played a major role in the Lion's success this year. Place kicker Matt Bahr broke the NCAA record for field goals in season. His field goal in the last few seconds provided an opening game victory over Temple 10-7, and he

is a perfect 31 for 31 on extra point attempts. Scott Fitzke's punting is adequate, but he is capable of booming them deep at times.

So with a Sugar Bowl victory over Alabama, the Penn State Nittany Lions can rightfully acclaim themselves No. 1, but then as I said after the Pitt game, "We had em all the way."

This Week In Pro Football

By Michael Cocciardi

PHILA at MINN - Both teams find themselves in a must win situation to get a playoff birth. The Eagles are tough, but the Vike have more experience when it comes to a big game. Minn by 10

ATL at CINN - The Falcons are struggling, but they're winning. The Bengals still haven't left the starting gate. Atl by 4

BALT at NY JETS - This one looks to be a tight one, probable overtime. Young Matt Robinson gives Jets edge. New York by 3

GREEN BAY at TAMPA BAY - The Pack is fighting for a playoff spot. The Bucs are fighting for respect and a .500 season. In a tight one Green Bay by 4

MIAMI at WASH - The Dolphins need

this one bad, but the Skins are a tough bunch in their own backyard Wash by 6

LA at NY GIANTS - In a battle of the coasts, look for an ambush. NY Giants by 3

BUFFALO at KC - In a mean-nothing game look for a lot of mean-nothing scoring. KC by 7

DETROIT at STL - With Jim Hart at the trigger, look for the Cards to deal the Lions a blowout. STL by 17

SF at NEW ORLEANS - The Saints have something to prove, unfortunately the 49er's don't. New Orleans by 13

PITT at HOUSTON - When these two get together its like 2 dogs fighting over a bone. The Oilers

look to have the sharper teeth. In a nail biter, Hou by 4

NEW ENGLAND at DALLAS - The Super Bowl Champions have finally come into their own, and as the song says "nobody does it better", but the Pats are a high spirited bunch. Dallas by 9

CLEVE at SEATTLE - The Seahawks are flying high, but the Browns are no quitters. Seattle by 1

DENVER at OAKLAND - Showdown time and it looks like the Bronco's are going to bite the dust, the hard way. Oakland by 17

CHICAGO at SAN DIEGO - Monday Night Football has seen better days, but at least the halftime highlights should be good, even with Howard. Chicago by 7