# PSU outlasts Wisconsin in 34-31 shootout

By Pete Strella **Assistant Layout Editor** 

Did you see Joe Paterno running to catch the referee after Penn State's loss to Iowa? WOW! That had to be a 4.5 40. Give that guy an ESPY for most hilarious post-game antics. Or better yet, give him a Penn State uniform, the ball, and point him to the end zone. Who would've known that a 75 year-old guy who wobbles up and down the sideline could probably beat me in a footrace.

After seeing JoPa's post-game display, you could sense that the Nittany Lions would come out strong against Wisconsin on Saturday. They did, opening up a 28-14 lead by the third quarter. Wisconsin's offense started to heat up toward the game's end, but Penn State held on for a 34-31 victory over the Badgers. It was a huge win. Beginning the Big Ten season 0-2 would have been detrimental to Penn State's season.

Unlike past triumphs, this victory was a total team effort. This was the defense's best performance of the year and, although they played too softly on Wisconsin's last drive and allowed them a touchdown, they manhandled one of the best offensive lines in the country.

Defensive Tackle Jimmy Kennedy was the spark that the defense needed. He recorded three sacks and three tackles for a loss, many of which came on third downs and halted Wisconsin drives. This could be the breakout game he needed to dominate for the rest of the year.

The offense was it's usual self, posting 436 total yards. Larry Johnson put up 171 all-purpose yards despite missing the fourth quarter with a mild hamstring injury. Fullback Sean McHugh scored his first touchdown of the season with a one-yard run in the third quarter.

But you can't say enough of what Zack Mills means to this team. He completed 21 of 37 passes for 276 yards and one interception. On a pivotal play in the fourth quarter, it looked as though Mills was going to be sacked by Wisconsin's defense. But he scrambled to the sideline, avoided a couple defenders, and completed a 12-yard pass to back-up Fullback Paul Jefferson for a first down. Spectacular.

In the end, it was Robbie Gould's four field goals that made the difference. His career-long 51-yarder in the fourth quarter was a huge lift for the Lions, who looked like they might give the game away shortly before.

The Lion's played well but also got some breaks. Penn State fumbled on the 1-yard line, but fortunately the ball bounced right to Zack Mills, who ran it in for a touchdown. Late in the game, Wisconsin's young receivers dropped at least three passes from Quarterback Brooks Bollinger that should have been caught. PSU should count its blessings that Wide Receiver Lee Evans was not able to play for the Badgers.

As for the previous week? If there was one thing I got from watching Penn State lose to Iowa 42-35, I saw how much heart the Nittany Lions have. They undoubtedly deserved to lose that game after three horrific quarters of football, but their 23-point comeback in the fourth quarter showed that this team never quits on the field. That's a good sign. PSU over Michigan 31-28.

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