

# Paterno needs to keep players at one position

Bad loss to Northwestern proves position-changing hurts Penn State's consistency

By **PETER STRELLA**  
Editor in Chief

As I sat on the couch, I slapped myself in the face repeatedly. But after each contact between face and hand, the numbers on the TV remained the same, Northwestern 17, Penn State 7. Shouldn't those numbers be reversed? I said all week long that this game would not be a guaranteed victory, but in the back of my mind, I had no doubt that the Nittany Lions would ultimately pull out the win.

You could sense disaster was coming when Penn State failed to take advantage of first half scoring opportunities. David Kimball missed field goals of 34 and 27 yards and redshirt freshman Maurice Humphrey dropped an easy touchdown pass from quarterback Zack Mills. Instead of being up

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by twenty points, the Nittany Lions could only manage a thin 7-0 lead at the half.

What followed was the most pathetic half of Penn State football I've seen in a long time. Nearly every offensive possession was three-and-out. Second string Northwestern running back Noah Herron pounded the Nittany Lion defense, helping his offense sustain long, methodical drives that tired the opposing defense and kept the Penn State offense out of rhythm.

Penn State special teams continued their struggles. Along with the missed field goals, Calvin Lowry inexplicably nailed the Northwestern punt returner before the ball arrived, leading to a costly 15-yard penalty. When Northwestern failed to capitalize, Lowry unbelievably signaled for a fair catch at his own 5. What followed was a Penn State three-and-out, giving the Wildcats a short field that helped them score their first touchdown.

The scary part is that Northwestern should have won this game by a lot more than they did. Several perfect passes from quarterback Brett Bosanez were flat out dropped, including one that would have certainly led to a touchdown. The Wildcats were then stopped on a fourth-and-1 at the goalline. Their next possession saw the black and purple drive deep into Nittany Lion territory, only to fumble the ball at the 9.

In short, Penn State lost badly to a bad team. A team that can't sell out its home stadium. A team that wears purple and black uniforms (I'm no fashion expert, but that's ugly) A team that was predominantly using their second string running back.

What the Nittany Lions need is stability. This season they have had none. There have been three quarterback changes and, though this could be attributed to Mills' injury, these changes have made the team more inconsistent than they already are. The running back situation has yet to be figured out. First it was between Ricky Upton and Austin Scott, and now Michael Robinson has been

thrown into the mix. Robinson has played so many positions this year I wouldn't be surprised if he were also the team waterboy.

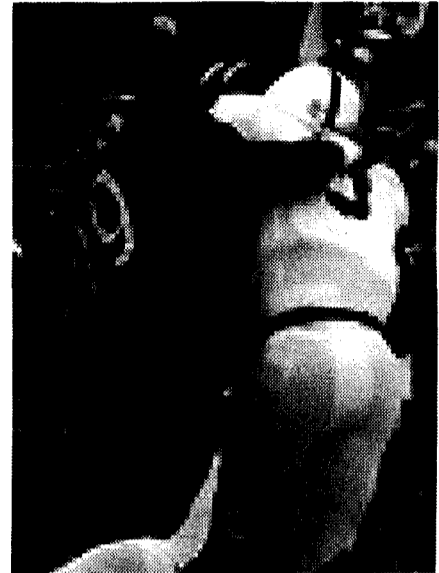
In addition, Kimball took the field goal kicker position from Robbie Gould. This change obviously didn't work with the two misses this week. It shouldn't have happened in the first place because most of Gould's misses were from 40-plus yards away.

Then there are those lovable wide receivers. They are loved by opposing teams across the country because they couldn't catch a cold if they were running barefoot in the Artic. While Tony Johnson's problems would confuse even the likes of Issac Newton, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that the other wide outs are new to the position. Maurice Humphrey was recruited to be a defensive back and Donnie Johnson was a running back. This has hurt their consistency.

Joe Paterno has been old reliable for almost 40 years, but not anymore. His team is in total disarray and the cries for him to step down have reached a fever pitch. I can't imagine that the outcry that would ensue if PSU lost to Indiana at home next week.

Paterno needs to stop shuffling his players around and abandon the five-coach play calling system he has adopted. Abandoning the special teams coach by committee wouldn't hurt either.

This team has potential if Joe keeps his players in their respective positions and allows them to mature. But that's looking to far ahead. Penn State needs a win over Indiana and a good showing against Michigan State.



ABOVE: Maurice Humphrey catches an 8-yard pass from Zack Mills. Humphrey dropped a couple passes against Northwestern.

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## Penn State Trivia

In what year did Joe Paterno have his first losing season as head coach of Penn State?

## Answer from last issue

Joe Paterno was captain of Brown University's football team in 1949 and was recruited to Brown's All-American team. What other sport did Paterno play when he was in college?

Basketball