

By Eric Thomas
Assistant Editor
et112@psu.edu

Joe Paterno was asked recently if he was confident that quarterback Zack Mills could shove aside the problems he has had lately and become a good quarterback again.

Paterno thought about the question for about five seconds, and gave a simple response.

"Yes," the veteran coach said, and moved on to the next question.

One problem, Mills won't stop fumbling the football and he won't stop throwing interceptions, because, frankly, Mills isn't that good.

And if Penn State is successful this season, it won't be with Mills at quarterback.

Turning the ball over six times against Central Florida is one thing. Do that against Ohio State, you lose by 31. Do it again at home against Purdue, you can kiss that game goodbye as well.

In fact, the time is now to bench Mills in favor of true freshman Anthony Morelli.

Why not? Morelli can do no worse than Mills has to this point in the season. The right handed gunslinger from Pittsburgh has shown signs of potential in the brief time he has played in the first handful of Nittany Lions game.

He throws the deep ball well, and has reportedly picked up the offense extremely quick. Not to mention Michigan State, Michigan and Tennessee all play freshman quarterbacks and Miami and Florida State are both looking at the possibility a red shirt frosh and a true freshman stepping in at some point in the season.

And then there are the Calvin Lowry comments.

Lowry at the same press conference was asked about how opponents feel when they are playing PSU now.

"People don't respect Penn State, they don't fear Penn State like they used to," Lowry commented. "When you step on the field, there's not that fear in people's hearts like there used to be."

Maybe it is because even though Paterno had major staff changes in the off season, the team itself is same old Penn State. There is no flare, no showmanship, and many still cannot find a reason to get excited.

No one likes an anemic quarterback who throws a game away like it is a useless pizza box.

"You can just tell how players talk during the week of the game," Lowry continued. "When they had the great teams here at Penn State, people wouldn't do that stuff. They'd keep their mouths closed and play. People come with the mindset, 'We're going to beat Penn State' now. They don't care about our history. People don't fear us. That's what we need to get back."

Getting it back is not an issue, it is totally possible, but the method by which Paterno continues to try to get it is the issue.

When the Lions beat Akron in the season opener, everyone jumped back on the bandwagon, they marveled at how well the offense looked.

Then in week two against Boston College the offense

Please see PSU on 8

Green juggles loyalties

By STEVE WILSTEIN AP
Sports Columnist

Shawn Green is anguishing over the same conflict that confronted Hall of Famers Sandy Koufax and Hank Greenberg. The game or the synagogue? A pennant race or prayers?

In Green's case, he's torn about missing two critical games for the Los Angeles Dodgers against the San Francisco Giants on the holiest of the Jewish High Holy Days, Yom Kippur, from sundown Friday night to sundown Saturday.

Should he play one game and

"I've bounced back and forth and am just trying to do the right thing."
-Shawn Green

abstain from the other, seeking a compromise in his commitments to his team and his faith?

Should he play both games or attend services, fast and refrain from work in solemn observance of The Day of Atonement?

Will he be criticized one way or another? No doubt, but he has to answer only to himself.

"It's a really tough deal," Green said before a recent Dodger loss to San Diego.

"I've bounced back and forth and am just trying to do the right thing. It's hard to know what that is. I've really been toying with two different options: Play one of them or not play at all. I will miss at least one game."

To play or not to play on Yom Kippur is a personal decision for

a Jewish ballplayer that can have a larger impact.

"It strikes a chord with each one of us who has to wonder, 'What do I do in this situation? Do I go to work? Am I going to observe my faith in a very visible way? Or do I just go with the flow?'" said Rabbi David Fine, Pacific Northwest regional director for the Union for Reform Judaism.

Koufax and Greenberg won the everlasting affection of American Jews, and the respect of many non-Jews, by observing Yom Kippur rather than playing in big games — Koufax in the 1965 World Series as pitching ace of the Dodgers, Greenberg in the 1934 pennant race as the home run slugger for the Detroit Tigers.

"It's not quite a profile in courage, but it's still a courageous stand," said Fine, who grew up in Detroit hearing about Greenberg long after the last of his 331 home runs and his 58 in 1938. "It's when baseball players really become heroes in the eyes of those of us who watch them. It's when they go beyond good players to being real examples and role models."

Koufax attended synagogue in Minnesota instead of pitching in Game 1 of the '65 Series against the Twins. Don Drysdale pitched that day and gave up seven runs in 2 2-3 innings. When manager Walter Alton came out to pull him from the game, Drysdale cracked, "I bet right now you wish I was Jewish, too."

Greenberg wrestled with whether to play on Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year. He spoke to his rabbi about it, got a dispensation to play, and hit two homers that day. The Detroit Free Press ran a banner headline, in Hebrew, that read: "Happy New Year, Hank." On Yom Kippur, the pennant not

quite clinched, Greenberg sat.

"Greenberg's decision electrified the American Jewish community, and generations of people remember that with incredi-

"Greenberg's choice (was) how to balance loyalty to parents, religion, and tradition with commitment to his American profession and his desire to fully participate

situation for his team.

"In some ways it's a contribution not only to the American Jewish community but to America to have the spotlight on someone who is publicly responding to a question of his religious obligation," Abramowitz said. "That in itself is a gift for us all."

Green has 27 homers this season and is the most accomplished of 10 active Jewish players. He was among the 143 ballplayers honored at the Hall of Fame celebration. Another, former Oakland pitcher Ken Holtzman, told of his refusal to dress for a game on Yom Kippur in the 1973 playoffs against Baltimore.

He was surprised when a limousine arrived at his Baltimore hotel on Yom Kippur morning to whisk him to a synagogue, where he was escorted to the front row and welcomed by Orioles owner Jerry Hoffberger. Holtzman must have found some blessings because he won the next game 2-1 with a three-hitter over 11 innings.

Ron Blomberg, who won trivia fame by becoming the first designated hitter, was also among the Jewish players celebrated by the Hall. In 1971 at Yankee Stadium against Cleveland, he, too, chose to sit out on Yom Kippur and became known as "the Sundown Kid."

"It was ... nearing sundown at home, tie game, two outs in the bottom of the ninth with a man on third base," Blomberg told the Long Island Press. "I'm up. If I don't do it, we go past sundown, and if we go past sundown, I'm going to have to leave. I hit a single to center field and we won the game. From that day on I was idolized by every Jew in the city."



Photo courtesy of the BaseballXXXL Web site

ble pride," said Martin Abramowitz, who recently helped the Hall of Fame organize "A celebration of Jews in baseball."

The world has changed in 70 years — Green doesn't have to face the same anti-Semitism that Greenberg did. But the issues are the same and it's still a matter of a man examining his principles and conscience.

in American life," historian Peter Levine wrote.

Sitting out on Yom Kippur made Greenberg a model for second-generation Jews struggling with similar issues at work.

Green, who sat out on Yom Kippur three years ago and ended a streak of 415 consecutive games played, is making an impact even as he considers doing it again in a more crucial

NFL suffers pre-season player injuries

By Herb Smith
Staff Reporter
hjs135@psu.edu

Just a few weeks into the 2004 NFL season, storylines are already being written. In a season of just 16 games, where every game counts, injuries and suspensions hurt teams far worse than in any other professional sport.

Losing a key player for even just a few games could cost the team a playoff birth. Such was the case in week one, when members of several playoff contending teams lost major much-needed players. Wide receiver Steve Smith, of the defending NFC Championship Carolina Panthers, broke his leg and is now lost for a large amount of the season. Smith, the leading pass catcher for the Panthers last year, has yet to be declared done for the year however.

Charles Rogers, the second year receiver from the Detroit Lions, was knocked out for the year with a broken collarbone. Rogers played just five games last season before losing the rest of the year to the same injury. This year, he and rookie Roy Williams were supposed to form one of the best, young

receiver combinations, and coupled with quarterback Joey Harrington, lead the Lions back into the playoff picture. Rogers' injury certainly puts that strategy in doubt for this season at least.

Another young wide receiver combo lost one of its members before the season started when Arizona Cardinals top wide out from a year ago, Anquan Boldin injured his knee in practice. Boldin, who caught over 100 passes last season, was supposed to be one half a great receiving tandem along with rookie Larry Fitzgerald, but is expected to miss about 2 months of the season. He hopes to be back by the middle of the season.

Yet another receiver fell in week one when Tampa Bay lost Joey Galloway for 4-6 weeks with a groin injury. Galloway, who came to Tampa in a trade for Keyshawn Johnson, was expected to be a key member of the Bucs offense while Keenan McCardell continues his contract holdout.

Sometimes healthy players can be absent from games thus hurting the team. The major story in the NFL heading into training camp was the sudden retirement of Miami Dolphins star running

back, Ricky Williams. Williams abruptly left the team just days before camp was scheduled to open. This left the Dolphins in a tough spot, with only a few unproven running backs on the depth chart.

Another star running back who could miss significant time during this regular season. Jamal Lewis, who last year eclipsed 2,000 yards rushing, is facing a cocaine conspiracy charge, with the trial set to begin in November. If Lewis is convicted, he could face jail time, affecting his playing time in the future.

As the season continues, fans will continue to watch these storylines progress. And they can count on many more storylines to develop in the coming weeks. It should be a very interesting season.⁴⁵

Watch for continuous coverage and NFL game picks from The Capital Times staff in the near future.

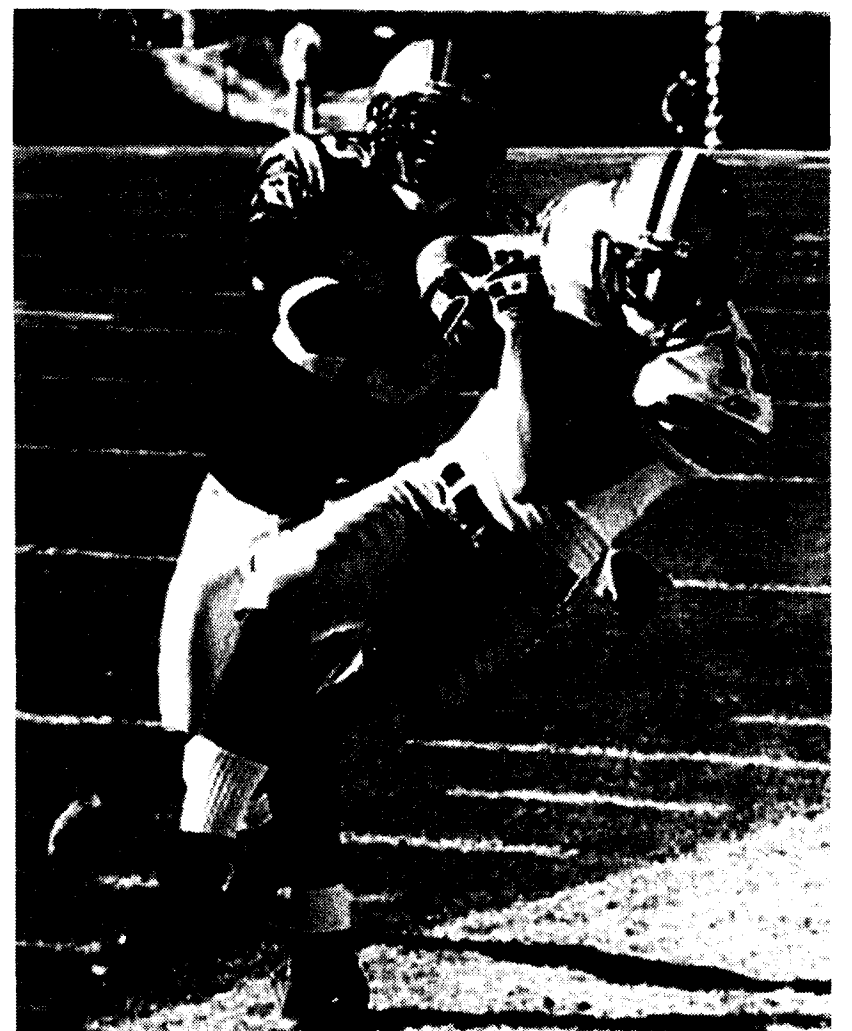


Photo courtesy of Google images

Charles Rogers, Detroit Lions wide receiver, is being knocked out of bounds during a game last season. He will be for the duration on this season with a broken collarbone injury.