

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT
SPORTS

PSU pounces on Purdue

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On Saturday, October 29, a resilient Michael Robinson led Penn State to a 33-15 victory over Purdue. Robinson was under pressure all day but still managed to throw for 213 yards and run for 96 yards and a touchdown. That gave Robinson his tenth rushing touchdown which is the most by a Penn State quarterback in a single season. With that victory Robinson has guided Penn State to 5-1 in the Big Ten and 8-1 overall.

As impressive as all those statistics are, fans continued to shower Robinson with boos after a slow start against Purdue. I had to ask myself, when will people respect Robinson as the great quarterback he is? If I asked you who is the best quarterback in college football today, most people would probably say Matt Leinart of USC or Vince Young of Texas. A few ignorant Notre Dame fans may even say Brady Quinn. It's no coincidence that those are 3 of the top 4 Heisman candidates according to ESPN. Leinart has thrown for 19 touchdowns and rushed for 3 for a total of 22 touchdowns. Young has thrown for 16 touchdowns and rushed for 8 for a total of 24 touchdowns. Quinn has thrown for 20 touchdowns and rushed for 1 for a total of 21. Now ask Joe Paterno and he will answer Michael Robinson emphatically. Not only that, Paterno will tell you Robinson is quite possibly one of the greatest all around players he's ever coached, and he is not too far off.

Robinson has thrown for 13 touchdowns and rushed for 10 for a total of 23. One other little statistic to consider, the top Heisman candidate according to ESPN, USC running back Reggie Bush, has 10 rushing touchdowns. Yes, Robinson is currently tied with him. So by the numbers Robinson has to be considered one of the best quarterbacks in college football and a frontrunner for the Heisman. However, it is what he's been able to get this young Penn State team to accomplish that really sets him apart from the crowd. USC, Texas, and Notre Dame all came into this season ranked in the top 25 nationally, with USC and Texas at one and two respectively. They had all the pieces in place for championship seasons. Penn State came in with loads of young talent but no proven leader. Robinson has filled that hole putting the swagger back in Penn State and vaulting them to national powerhouse status, just ask Minnesota safety Brandon Owens.

No, he's not Kerry Collins; he's better than that. He is the first Penn State player to rush for 1,000 yards and pass for 1,000 yards. He is a double threat quarterback who draws as much attention with his arm as he does with his legs. He is the extension of Coach Paterno on the field. The unquestioned leader of the team Robinson continues to deliver week in and week out. To put it simply, Robinson just knows how to win. He has carried Penn State in each of their victories and will be the key this weekend against Wisconsin. So with senior day approaching this weekend I have one request, recognize this is Michael Robinson's football team and be very thankful it is yours. Until next time, Let's Go State!!!

By GENARO C. ARMAS
Associated Press Writer

STATE COLLEGE, Pa.—With a favorable conference schedule and an offensive scheme that proved to be potent in the past, Purdue was a chic preseason pick to surprise in the Big Ten.

Surprise! It's Penn State instead that has turned heads in the conference.

After handing the Boilermakers their sixth straight loss, the Nittany Lions (8-1, 5-1) moved up a spot to No. 10 in the Associated Press poll released Sunday. Penn State can win the conference's BCS bid with victories in their last two regular season games, starting with this weekend's showdown against No. 14 Wisconsin.

"Next week is huge," defensive end Tamba Hali said Saturday after the 33-15 win over Purdue. "Everything is on the line."

Purdue's losing skid might be just as big a surprise.

The Boilermakers (2-6, 0-5) had a Top 25 ranking and lofty aspirations before the season started. A Big Ten title was a reasonable goal, especially since Purdue didn't have to play conference powers Ohio State and Michigan this year because of a scheduling quirk.

Instead, Joe Tiller is now assured of his first losing record and bowl-less season in his nine-year tenure as Purdue coach.

"I only think about who we're going to play this week. For me, I've been to a number of bowls and we'll go to bowls again," Tiller said. "Our football team needs to win a football game more than they need a bowl game."

Purdue's defense had some success in disrupting the Nittany Lions' potent offense by blitzing quarterback Michael Robinson early and often. But Penn State succeeded on short passes and, in the fourth quarter, went almost exclusively to the run to thwart a

late Purdue rally.

Tony Hunt ran for 52 of his 129 yards in the fourth quarter. Robinson was 13-of-29 for 213 yards passing in the game, while also running for 96 yards and a touchdown. The straight-ahead, bull-rushing style of running shared by Hunt and Robinson excited the homecoming crowd.

"We feed off each other," Hunt said. "We complement each other well."

Penn State's defense was solid and frustrated both Purdue quarterbacks, though senior Brandon Kirsch had a little more success against the Nittany Lions after entering the game in the second half when redshirt freshman starter Curtis Painter was pulled for ineffectiveness.

Kirsch ran for a 4-yard score early in the fourth quarter to help Purdue close within eight, 23-15. But Penn State safety Calvin Lowry sealed the win after intercepting a Kirsch pass with more than five minutes left.

Tiller said he needed to watch practice before naming his starting quarterback for Purdue's next game, Saturday against Michigan State. The Boilermakers have three games left and cannot finish better than 5-6 even if they win all three.

That means they are assured to be home for the holidays.

"I've got so many mixed emotions right now," said senior defensive tackle Brandon Villareal. "I'm angry, I'm disappointed, I'm anxious at the same time to get out and want to continue to play, and I'm sad I'm going to be home for Christmas."

The Nittany Lions will be traveling during the holidays to a warm locale for a bowl game after having losing records four out of the previous five years. Coach Joe Paterno can cap this feel-good season with his first Big Ten title since 1994 if his team can beat the Badgers on Saturday

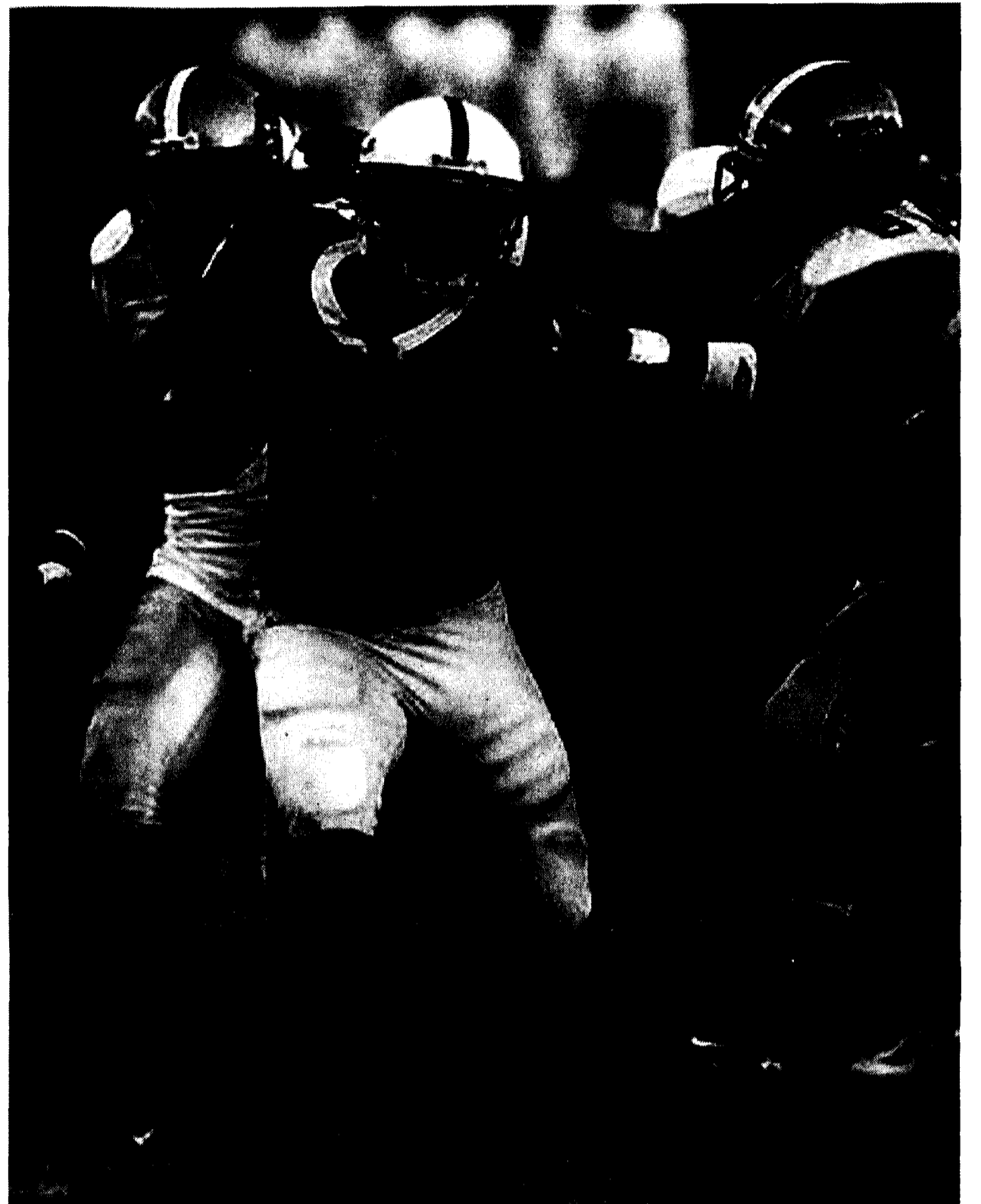


Photo courtesy of AP Sports

Rodney Kinlaw runs 58 yards on a kickoff return to open the second half of the Penn State-Purdue game.

and Michigan State on Nov. 19. "Everyone is always talking about, 'Oh, Penn State is turning things around.' But we never felt like we were that far off," said

Robinson, who, after running for a score against Purdue, became the first Nittany Lion quarterback to have 10 rushing TDs in a season.

"Coach Paterno has been telling you guys all the time that we were only a few plays off from winning most games."

Women's v-ball sets the ace

By Katherine Davis
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The PSH Volleyball team finished its season with a record of 7-8, not bad considering that this is the first intercollegiate team since 1993. The season ended with the Penn State University Athletic Conference Tournament, which was held at University Park from October 22-23. PSH competed in three games, winning against Hazleton and losing to Fayette and Beaver.

The double elimination tournament included fifteen teams from all over Pennsylvania. The teams were divided into three divisions, two eastern divisions and one western division.

"At the tournament, we ran into the best team from the western conference, Fayette, and then played a close match with Beaver before losing in the third and final game 15-13," said Kevin Larkin, head coach.

Eight players came out for the team. The members included Jayme Michael, Vera Kanova, Byard. Although most had

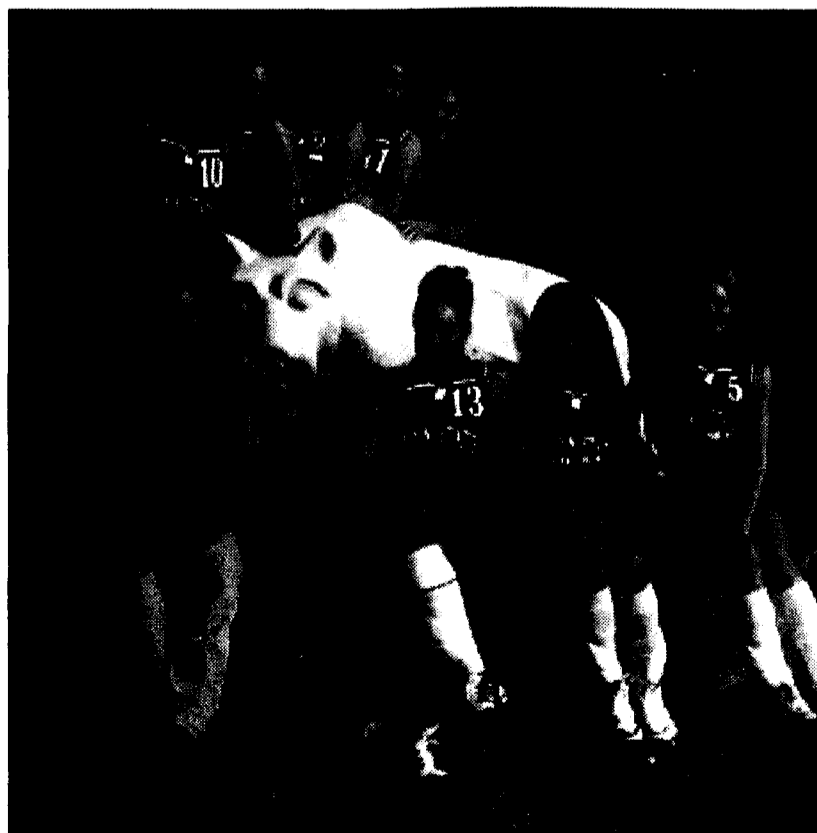


Photo by Katherine Davis/Capital Times

The PSH volleyball team smiles proudly with the Nittany Lion mascot..

Alexis Campbell, Katie Howe, Danielle Kumar, Alexis McFall, Emily Salness and Janessa Byard. Although most had

competed in high school, none had ever played at the college level.

"I played for four years in high

school but I didn't have the opportunity to play in college until this season," said Michael, captain of the team.

The season opened on Sept. 15 with a match against Mt. Alto, which Harrisburg lost. The team was defeated in four out of their first five games. They lost to York, Schuylkill and Delaware County. "We started slow," said Larkin. "That's mostly because we didn't have much pre-season practice. The players weren't familiar with each other."

With the conflicting schedules of the various teammates, it was difficult at first to organize practice times. There were four practices a week until the games began. The team's schedule was quite rigorous, with twelve regular season games crammed into only one month.

As the season went on, the team progressed and began to accumulate some victories. Midway through the season, they defeated Scranton, Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton.

The team has been aided by the knowledge and experience

of Coach Larkin. "He has played volleyball for 12 years and held the position of assistant coach at Penn State Abington for both the women's and men's teams. Along with coaching the volleyball team, he is a graduate student.

Larkin plans to continue coaching next season. However, many of the players will be graduating or transferring to University Park.

"The team will be comprised of a lot of new faces," Larkin said, "but returning starters Jayme Michael and Vera Kanova will bring with them experience and leadership."

Be sure to
congratulate the
women's
volleyball team on
an excellent first
season. Way to
go Lady Lions!!