

# SPORTS

## PSU Sports @ Glance

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Two items I want to talk about in "PSU Sports at a Glance."

First, obviously the football team is still playing games, even though none of them will be played at Beaver Stadium the rest of the year. The Nittany Lions won't be competing for a Big Ten title, but should still receive a New Year's Day bowl game.

Of course Joe Pa's squad must defeat Temple, which should be easy enough, but Michigan State as well. The Spartans may provide a tough task since the game will be played in East Lansing.

Penn State hasn't been very good on the road. However, I think the Lions will step up and finish the year with two away wins.

As for how they will fare in their bowl appearance? We will have to wait and see who they play.

The second topic I want to shed some light on is the possible emergence of the Penn State men's basketball team. For years now, the men's basketball team has been finishing at the bottom of a solid Big Ten conference.

The past two years however have led us Nittany Lion fans to believe there may be hope for this team sooner than later.

Two years ago, Penn State went on the road and defeated Illinois. A stunning upset to say the least, it was PSU's biggest win in quite some time.

Last year, the Lions almost pulled off the impossible. The Ohio State Buckeyes came to Happy Valley and barely escaped the Bryce Jordan Center with a win.

Then junior Mike Walker missed a three point shot at the buzzer, which would have given Penn State the victory. However, Walker would redeem himself in the Big Ten tournament, where he set a record for most three pointers in a single game.

So why do I think the Nittany Lions will improve this year, given their tough out of conference schedule? They actually have some decent talent throughout the lineup.

Yes, they play South Carolina and Virginia Tech, along with their conference foes, but they seemingly have guys who can play ball. There are a few guys returning who contributed last year and should do the same again this season.

Mike Walker provides a three point threat and can hit shots from anywhere on the floor. Danny Morrissey had big games, in which he scored over 20, multiple times last season.

He should be able to repeat those performances in the upcoming months. Geary Claxton is their star. If this senior played at a bigger program, you would hear his name mentioned in the NBA talks.

What is different this year is the recruiting. Head coach Ed DeChellis received commitments from Jeff Brooks, a "Mr. Basketball" finalist in the state of Kentucky, and Talor Battle from New York.

Brooks provides an all around game the Lions desperately needed, while Battle gives Penn State some speed at the point guard position.

Last year, I would say guarding opposing team's guards on the perimeter was their most difficult challenge. Battle should provide help in that department once the season tips off.

While I don't think the Penn State men's basketball team will contend for a Big Ten title this year, I do think they will have a much better record than last season.

In addition, look for the Nittany Lions to upset a ranked team and possibly pull off a couple victories in the Big Ten tournament. I hope one day the BJC can get packed like Beaver Stadium and the "white out" makes its presence felt on the hardwood. Until next time, stay proud and stay loud.

## McComas picks the best: week 4

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**Cleveland Browns @ Baltimore Ravens:** The "Dawg Pound" is rowdy again in the state of Ohio. Both the Browns and the Ravens are in the hunt to win the AFC North and make the playoffs. Baltimore was expected to be a contender, but Cleveland has been a surprise. At season's start, head coach Romeo Crennel wasn't sure who the starting quarterback would be. He quickly found out Derek Anderson had the capability to handle the role. For touchdowns, Anderson has connected often with wide receiver Braylon Edwards and tight end Kellen Winslow. The Browns' offense is in overdrive and rolls into M&T Bank Stadium this weekend. The Ravens are a very inconsistent team this year, even on defense, where they are usually the league's best. Both sides of the ball have been above average, but have yet to reach that higher level. *I think the Browns' offense will outplay Baltimore's defense and allow Cleveland to keep pace with the Steelers.*



**San Diego Chargers @ Jacksonville Jaguars:** The "Bolts" started off slow, but it seems head coach Norv Turner realized that running the ball with LaDarian Tomlinson is the key to success. The Chargers acquired wide receiver Chris Chambers from the Miami Dolphins for a second round draft choice to improve their passing game. Quarterback Philip Rivers now has another target: Go along with tight end Antonio Gates. San Diego should be able to use that offense at full force against the Jags. Jacksonville has been able to beat the poor teams, but has yet to achieve that signature win to put them in the top tier of teams. *Look for that trend to continue, as San Diego will be too much for Jacksonville.*



**Kansas City Chiefs @ Indianapolis Colts:** The Colts are no longer undefeated, but are still an impressive team. Indy will probably win their division and get a rematch against nemesis New England Patriots. The Chiefs haven't been as impressive, but still provide a playoff contending record. Given their weak division, Kansas City may win the AFC West with an 8-8 or 9-7 end mark. Rookie receiver Dwayne Bowe has been a nice surprise, and running back Larry Johnson is finally rushing the ball well. However, I think the blue and white will have too much horsepower for KC, especially inside the RCA Dome. *Look for the Colts to ride running back Joseph Addai to victory.*



**Carolina Panthers @ Green Bay Packers:** Legendary Lambeau Field will host this NFC match up. Packers quarterback Brett Favre is playing at a high level again and Carolina's quarterback... Well, who will the Panthers line up behind center this week? Anyway, Green Bay should be able to win this game with ease as the Panthers' receiver Steve Smith has been underutilized since the quarterback carousel has arrived in Carolina. *I'm taking the "cheese heads" to win by a couple of touchdowns.*



**New York Giants @ Detroit Lions:** A very interesting game to say the least. Each team has been playing well and come in to the contest with winning records. The Lions do most of their damage on offense, while the G-Men do most of their damage on defense. Something has to give as Detroit is an aerial first team and NY leads the league in sacks. *In a game that can go either way and provide a blow out or a nail biter, I will pick the Giants to win on the road.*



**Washington Redskins @ Dallas Cowboys:** The Redskins could have folded or bounced back after their shellacking brought upon by the New England Patriots. The team has chosen to put the game behind them and move forward – not surprising since the head coach is Joe Gibbs. Though a division title is not likely, a Wild Card berth may be. If the offense can score in the twenties, the defense should be able to keep most teams under that mark. However, the Cowboys are not most teams. Dallas is quite good and will score more than 20 in this game. Their "D" needs to step it up in order to make a Super Bowl run, but as far as this game goes, easy pick: *The 'Boys win in Dallas and create more separation in the NFC East.*



**Chicago Bears @ Seattle Seahawks:** This game is more a "must win" for the Bears than for the Seahawks. Seattle has the luxury of playing in a weaker division, where Chicago is most likely playing for a Wild Card spot at best. This should be an ugly game with multiple turnovers due to the fact that neither team establishes the run. *"Da Bears" win despite the "12th Man."*



**Tennessee Titans @ Denver Broncos:** My, how quickly Denver has turned in favor of the Rockies instead of the Broncos and they didn't even win the World Series! Unfortunately I can't blame them. The Broncos are not very good, but are surprisingly still alive because of the division they play in. The Titans on the other hand are winning though they look about as good, or should I say as badly, as the Broncos. *Vince Young plays for Tennessee, so I'll pick them to beat Denver on the road.*



**Ohio State @ Michigan:** Always one of the biggest games of the year with a Big Ten title usually awarded to the winner. The "Big House" is making noise again and the Buckeyes are looking for more than a Big Ten championship. A spot in the national title game could be at stake for Ohio State. I think you will see a similar high-scoring, close game as we did last year. *In the end, head coach Jim Tressel leads his Buckeyes to victory over head coach Lloyd Carr's Wolverines.*



**Boston College @ Clemson:** A couple weeks ago, The Golden Eagles were in the national title picture. Now they need some help as well as taking care of their own games. The Tigers are once again a good, but not great, team. Head coach Tommy Bowden may want to rub "Howard's Rock" a few times before the game. However, along with a little luck, I think the crowd in Death Valley will push the Clemson team to a win and drop BC further down the polls. *I'm taking the purple and orange in an ACC upset over Boston College.*



**West Virginia @ Cincinnati:** Upset alert! The Bearcats have the fire power to knock off the Mountaineers at home. Cincy has flown under the radar most of the year and with WVU climbing back toward the top of the rankings, I think this is a perfect trap game for West Virginia. Quarterback Pat White is overrated, so the Mountaineers' best bet is to hand the ball off to running back Steve Slaton. *Slaton must have a big day for WVU to win, but I'm going with the upset and rolling with Cincinnati at home.*



**Kentucky @ Georgia:** Two teams heading in opposite directions. Everyone knows who KU quarterback Andre Woodson is, but not a lot of people can name a player from the Bulldog's roster. It is true that Georgia is very young, but they are very good as well. *At home in an SEC battle, I am taking Georgia to defeat the Wildcats and continue onward to an impressive finish.*



**Miami @ Virginia Tech:** This game is usually an epic battle between two heavyweights. This year is a bit different. The game has seemingly lost its mystique due to the poor performance of the Hurricanes and to some degree, the Hokies, more specifically the VT offense. In the ACC however, this game is important. The winner is looking at a shot to play in the ACC's championship game, while the loser should still receive a lesser valued bowl bid, but will have their fans talking about next year. *"Beamer Ball" is alive and well in Blacksburg, and don't be surprised if specials teams is the difference in this win for the Hokies over the "U."*



**Louisville @ South Florida:** I will admit that I may have put too much stock into the Bulls. I had them winning the Big East Conference and possibly contending for a national title. Those days are gone. The Cardinals had high hopes as well, but their dreams were squashed from the get go. So who wins a game where both teams have now fallen from the mighty mountain top? *I am finally going against USF and picking Louisville because quarterback Brian Brohm will have a far better game than quarterback Matt Grothe.*



**Penn State @ Michigan State:** This game is a big test for the Nittany Lions. They are not road warriors to say the least, but beating a decent team like the Spartans in East Lansing will definitely give them more credibility heading into the bowl season. MSU on the other hand is searching for its own bowl bid, and a victory over PSU would solidify that quest. *I'll go with the Lions, but be weary; they aren't playing in front of a "white out" at Beaver Stadium.*