

sports

PSU takes second victory of the season

By GENARO C. ARMAS
AP SPORT WRITER

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) — Another week of off-field drama couldn't slow down No. 19 Penn State.

The Nittany Lions shoved aside the distraction created by the suspension of two defensive starters, then rolled over Oregon State, 45-14 on Saturday.

Evan Royster rushed for 141 yards and three touchdowns, Daryll Clark threw two TD passes and the Nittany Lions defense didn't miss a beat when it counted.

"We got to go out and focus on football," said Josh Gaines, a defensive end and team captain. Penn State has had to deal with a string of off-field concerns since April 2007.

"We got a good team here, great players. It showed today," Gaines said. "If we really want to get something done, we can get it done."

In surprisingly easy fashion, too.

What was supposed to be Penn State's toughest nonconference game of the year turned into a laughter early. Oregon State fell to 0-2 for the first time since 2004.

Clark looked poised in the pocket in his second career start, finishing 14-of-23 passing for 215 yards, while also running for an 18-yard score. Jordan Norwood finished with a career-high 116 receiving yards on eight catches, including a 22-yard touchdown reception.

Royster had 112 yards and all three of his touchdowns with 11-plus minutes left in the second quarter.

"We didn't tackle well. We didn't get off the field on third down," Oregon State cornerback Brandon Hughes said. "When that you happens, you can't win a game like that."

Mickey Shuler tiptoed the sideline in the end zone for an acrobatic 5-yard touchdown catch to give Penn State (2-0) a 14-0 lead before the Beavers sputtered on their next drive.

Gaines tackled tailback Ryan McCants for no gain, before fellow defensive end Aaron Maybin leveled the Beavers' Lyle Moevao just as the quarterback released the ball to force Oregon State to punt from their own 37.

That didn't go well either.

The snap to punter Johnny Hekker was wide. Hekker tried to run but was tackled by Penn State's Nate Stupar for a 9-yard loss.

Two plays later, Royster went off tackle for an easy 28-yard touchdown run to give Penn State a 21-0 lead with 14:41 left in the second quarter.

Three-plus minutes later, Royster got terrific lead blocks from receiver Brett Brackett and fullback Dan Lawlor to score easily from 4 yards out on a sweep for a 28-0 lead.

"Everything seemed to go well for us early, and it put them on their

heels," coach Joe Paterno said.

By that time, the biggest concern for the giddy student section was whether they could twirl their white rally towels in the air in unison while cheering "We are ... Penn State!" They were headed for the exits by early in the fourth quarter, with the Nittany Lions up by 38.

It was Paterno's 374th career victory, temporarily putting him one ahead of Florida State's Bobby Bowden for most wins among major college coaches. The Seminoles were to play Western Carolina later Saturday.

Regardless, Saturday's win made

Paterno feel good about his defense after the Hall of Fame coach didn't play pass-rushing end Maurice Evans or fellow starting defensive lineman Abe Koroma because of an unspecified off-field issue.

Paterno had initially said he would hold out a third player, Andrew Quarless, for the game for the same issue, but the second-string tight end did suit up Saturday. He took part in warmups, but did not play.

Paterno after the game didn't disclose why he changed his mind on Quarless, and said he wasn't sure about when Evans or Koroma would play next.

He was happy, though, with the guys who stepped up to fill the void.

"You got some good (assistant) coaches, and some good kids who realize there's an opportunity for them," Paterno said.

Oregon State had a few highlights, including Jacquizz Rodgers' 12-yard scoring run late in the second quarter, when the freshman broke three tackles up the middle and tumbled into the end zone. Rodgers added a fourth-quarter TD run and finished with 99 yards on 22 carries.

Moevao finished 25-of-41 for 250 yards and two interceptions.

Gas prices affects college tailgating

By GENARO C. ARMAS
AP SPORT WRITER

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) — Like the coach of a team losing at halftime, college football fans banged around by high gas prices are changing their game plans.

They are cramming into sedans and leaving the RVs at home, speeding by hotels where they stayed in the past and, in some cases, making the hard decision to go to fewer games.

On a big weekend of college football, The Associated Press found fans from the parking lots of Happy Valley to Eugene, Ore., who said they are making concessions yet determined to indulge their passion.

As rain fell Saturday in central Pennsylvania before No. 17 Penn State beat Oregon State, sales executive Dan Wilhelm huddled under a tent next to his SUV after a three-hour drive from Pittsburgh.

His friend and fellow Penn State alum, Bick Remmey, had organized a party in the next parking spot. Burgers sizzled on the grill, while the table featured a commemorative Joe Paterno plate from the 1970s.

To cut costs, the Wilhelm family gave up their big summer vacation — typically to a spot like Hilton Head, S.C. — to be there. "It just felt like we knew football season was coming, and we knew

that was one 12-week vacation," Wilhelm said.

"You don't cut this," he added.

With its spacious lots and overflow parking in grass fields, Happy Valley is a mecca of Saturday tailgating. More than 100,000 fans pack Penn State's enormous stadium every home game — and thousands more without tickets are happy just to be able to hang out at the tailgates.

Greg Stanton and Neil Plotkin made the 300-mile drive from northeast Maryland to State College on Saturday. Stanton, a 1992 Penn State graduate, took his sedan and left the RV at home to save on gas.

Stanton and Plotkin didn't set up picnic tables or camp chairs. Instead, the two security systems workers ate and drank out of the trunk the car.

"We basically let the wife and children not eat for a week so we can do this," joked Plotkin, who was attending his first Penn State game.

In Auburn, Ala., college football Saturdays are a way of life. But even some fans of the No. 9 Tigers are weighing whether to go to every game — especially if the opponent is from outside the tough Southeastern Conference.

High school teacher Brian Grantham, drove four hours from Foley, Ala., in a camper-trailer to watch Auburn beat Southern Miss, but he said he might skip out on other non-SEC games.

"I do a little more planning and have to think about things a little more," Grantham said.

John Schneller, of McDonough, Ga., drove about two hours to get to the Auburn game. Giving up tickets is a no-no — his wife is an Auburn alum.

"Even with gas prices so high, you've still got to have some sort of entertainment," he said. "Spread over three months, this is still the best entertainment you can find."

But they're cutting back by driving home after games instead of spending the night at a hotel. Schneller said hotel rates have just become too expensive.

For many fans, the football weekend is about more than just about the game. It's a brief respite from the everyday worries of balancing the checkbook and paying the bills.

Mike Swaim, a lawyer from Salem, Ore., attends a couple of Ducks games each year with his wife, Kellie. He paid \$3.60 per gallon to fill up for the hourlong trip to Eugene to watch No. 16 Oregon trounce Utah State last week.

"If it's food and rent vs. football tickets, obviously food and rent takes precedent," Swaim said. "But when you're talking about discretionary spending, these games are the moments you look back on and tell your kids about. So it's worth it."

In Clemson, S.C., insurance

agent Danny Marcengill, cut back his ticket allotment this year from five to three before the season started, saving him some cash.

Marcengill spoke before Clemson beat the Citadel last week, with the disappointment of his beloved Tigers' season-opening loss to Alabama still fresh in his mind. He said a victory then would have erased any lingering concerns about the cost of traveling to the game.

"Well, if they had won last week," he said, "I wouldn't have thought about it quite as much."

Others said the cost of gas didn't matter one bit — they were determined to root on their favorite teams regardless.

Eric Linde, a construction company executive, showed up at Penn State on Saturday in a massive RV — complete with satellite hookup and a flat-screen TV mounted on the outside of the trailer, shielded by an overhang.

Driving around the gas-guzzling RV gets costly, he said, "but yet ... there's no consideration that we're not coming to another game because of fuel prices."

A grill swings out from the rear of his trailer, with the words "Serious Tailgaten" emblazoned on the cabinet doors. Linde's son-in-law, Steve Atcavage, hammed it up with friends and family as he took charge of the sausages cooking on the fire.

"People find ways to adapt," he said. "Life is too short."