

PENN STATE FOOTBALL

Williams stars as Penn St. beats Illinois

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AP SPORTS WRITER

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) — Derrick Williams came to Penn State in 2005 as one of the most hyped recruits Joe Paterno had ever lured to Happy Valley.

For the past three years, Williams hasn't quite lived up to his advance billing.

On Saturday night against No. 22 Illinois, the speedy senior put on a show like no Nittany Lion has ever done during Paterno's 43-year tenure.

Williams caught a touchdown pass, ran for a TD and returned a kick 94 yards for another score as the 12th-ranked Nittany Lions (5-0, 1-0) stayed unbeaten with a 38-24 win. It was the first time that trifecta had been accomplished by a Penn State player under Paterno.

"This is the first time he's really had a chance to break out," Paterno said. "Derrick's been in tough games and made big plays ... He's a heck of an athlete."

Arrelious Benn caught touchdown passes of 54 and 33 yards from Juice Williams, who finished 13-of-24 passing for 183 yards. He also threw an interception, one of several mistakes that held back the Illini (2-2, 0-1).

Evan Royster had 19 carries for 139 yards rushing, and Daryll Clark threw for two scores and 181 yards, and ran for another.

But it was Derrick Williams who was the biggest star in tough test for the Nittany Lions, finishing with 241 all-purpose yards.

The humble receiver has had a solid career at Penn State, though he hasn't had the breakthrough game that many fans expected following his tantalizing freshman year in 2005. That's when he and fellow receivers Jordan Norwood and Deon Butler, who have been nicknamed the "Smurfs," added a dose of big-play ability to what had been a vanilla Penn State offense and helped the Nittany Lions win the Big Ten.

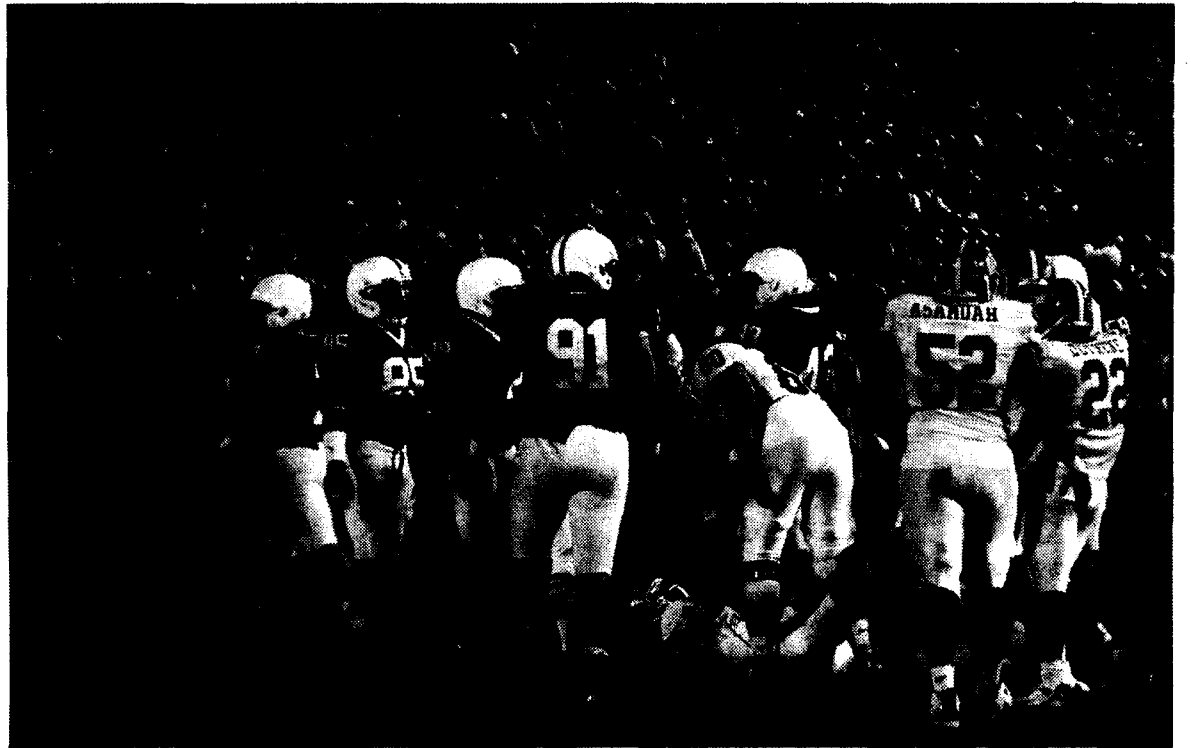


Photo courtesy of KRISTINA TILLOU

Williams dazzled on Saturday night.

Matt Eller hit a 42-yard field goal to pull Illinois within 24-17 before Williams pulled off

a crowd-pleaser, taking the ensuing kickoff 94 yards for a touchdown to put the Nittany Lions ahead by 14.

Williams deflected his attention

to his teammates.

"Oh yeah, it was definitely a big

Please see **ILLINOIS**
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We are ... Penn State!

