

Tough road tests await unbeaten No. 6 Penn St.

By GENARO C. ARMAS
AP SPORTS WRITER

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) — Undefeated Penn State can start thinking big after college football's wild weekend.

Could a third national title possibly be within Hall of Fame coach Joe Paterno's grasp?

Previously-unbeaten Southern California, Georgia, Florida and Wisconsin all lost. Penn State (5-0, 1-0 Big Ten) took care of its end in a somewhat choppy yet decisive 38-24 win over Illinois, allowing Paterno's crew to catapult six places to No. 6 in the latest AP poll.

"We're not going to get complacent at all. We're still in the running for the Big Ten, that's our main goal," linebacker Navorro Bowman said Saturday night.

"Ultimately we want the national championship. There were a lot of upsets today and luckily we weren't one of them."

Ah, but the season is young.

After playing four of the first five games at home, Penn State's schedule takes a tougher turn with four of the next five on the road, starting with a potentially tricky matchup at Purdue on Saturday.

"College football is crazy," wideout Derrick Williams said

after leading the Nittany Lions with a receiving, rushing and kick return touchdowns against the Illini (2-2, 0-1). "Anybody can beat you at any given time."

Then comes a trifecta of Big Ten foes that have presented the Nittany Lions with a ton of trouble in the past: at Wisconsin; home for Michigan; and the dreaded annual contest against Ohio State, this year at the Horseshoe.

Get past those teams unscathed and the Nittany Lions' title hopes get much brighter.

Penn State had to overcome a healthy dose of adversity Saturday night before they could finally smile after falling behind

7-0 and 14-7 in the first quarter. The defense was thrown off-kilter by dual-threat quarterback Juice Williams and Illinois' no-huddle spread.

The Illini rushed for 189 yards on a Nittany Lions 'D' that had allowed just 50-plus a game coming into the night.

"It's hard to get ready for the tempo," Paterno said. "I think that was the hardest part, getting adjusted to that."

Penn State's recent penchant for fumbling continued, with two more cough-ups, including one by Stephfon Green in his own territory that led to an Illinois field goal that sliced the lead to 24-17

heading into the fourth quarter.

The "Spread HD" offense couldn't rely on leading receiver Jordan Norwood, who was sidelined by a strained left hamstring. Starting safety Anthony Scirrotto appeared to suffer from leg cramps in the fourth quarter.

And yet, Penn State pulled through.

The defense clamped down just enough after the frenetic first quarter to take advantage of Illinois miscues, including an interception and a drive that stalled because of two holding

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Paterno coaches from press box in Penn State win

By CLIFF BRUNT
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WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (AP) — It just wasn't the same without Joe Paterno roaming the sideline.

Sure, Penn State's 81-year-old coach notched another victory on Saturday, this one a 20-6 win over Purdue. But he did it from the press box because a lingering right hip injury limited his mobility.

Paterno was hurt while performing an onside kick during practice on Aug. 28. Saturday's game marked the first time this

season he didn't start a game on the sideline. He doesn't know if he'll coach from the press box next Saturday against Wisconsin.

"I'm reluctant to get into what's going to happen next week," he said. "I just think that some days, it doesn't bother me much at all. I've got a little pain."

Penn State's players noticed Paterno's absence during the game.

"It is different, but we don't want him to come down there if he's hurt," running back Evan Royster said.

"We want him to be able to do

the best for our team."

Paterno found the strength to be on the field at the end of the game so he could shake hands with Purdue coach Joe Tiller, a friend who will retire at the end of the season. But such things are a challenge, now that he also deals with arthritis.

"I've taken more pills in the last two months than I've taken all my life," Paterno said.

He prefers pills to the alternative.

"I'm not letting anybody get near me with a knife," he said.

Royster was one of the main

reasons that Paterno's only worry was his hip. Royster ran for 141 yards and a touchdown and had 53 yards on four catches in No. 6 Penn State's win.

Daryll Clark completed 18 of 26 passes for 226 yards and ran for a score for Penn State (6-0, 2-0 Big Ten), which outgained Purdue 422 yards to 241.

Purdue quarterback Curtis Painter finished 13-for-22 for 112 yards. He moved past Mark Herrmann into second place on the school's career yards passing list, but on a day in which the 10,000 career yards passing

milestone was in reach, he fell short and was benched in the fourth quarter. The loss left Painter with an 0-9 record against ranked teams in his career, and Tiller has lost 15 straight against ranked opponents.

Kory Sheets led Purdue (2-3, 0-1) with 59 rushing yards on 18 carries and 25 yards receiving. He broke a tie with Mike Alstott to set a school record with 40 career rushing touchdowns.

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