

News

Glasses be gone? JoePa gets vision surgery

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Joe Paterno's glasses just got a lot thinner.

Penn State's Hall of Fame coach had vision surgery last month, a couple weeks after the Capital One Bowl on Jan. 1, which eliminated the need for those smoky, Coke bottle-thick frames that had become as much a part of his trademark sideline look as his rolled-up khakis and jet-black sneakers.

Paterno, who is farsighted, still needs to wear glasses to read, Guido D'Elia, director of communications and branding for the football program, said Thursday evening.

Otherwise, the thick-rimmed glasses are out for the 83-year-old Paterno.

"He's like Robo-coach," joked D'Elia, who also noted his boss' recovery from hip replacement surgery in late 2008.

Paterno is major college football's winningest coach with 394 victories. He revealed his

vision surgery earlier Thursday while attending a charity function on campus for Center Volunteers in Medicine.

The new spectacles have less-than-stylish frames similar to his old pair, but with much thinner lenses.

"When I don't wear (them) and I put on a sweater, I reach to take the glasses off and I don't have them on," he told Fight on State, a Web site that covers Penn State football which first reported Paterno's comments Thursday.

Paterno said he had been having trouble reading the last six months, so he visited a Philadelphia eye doctor he had known for decades.

Last week, a pair of Paterno's glasses went up for auction to be finished at a charity dinner for Penn State Public Broadcasting on Feb. 20.

The timing of the surgery and the auction was a coincidence, D'Elia said. "They had no idea it was going to be the last remaining thick glasses."



Photo from The Capital Times Archives

Pre-surgery JoePa standing along the sidelines at the PSU vs. Eastern Illinois.

Pa. legislative corruption trial ends second week

By MARK SCOLFORO
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The second prosecution witness was still on the stand Friday as the second week of the public corruption trial of a former Pennsylvania state lawmaker and three of his aides drew to a close.

Jeff Foreman, who was chief of staff to defendant Mike Veon until the Beaver County Democrat lost re-election in 2006, has spent two days telling jurors what he knows about the alleged use of the General Assembly's employees, equipment and cash to wage campaigns.

Foreman admitted that he knew he was engaging in illegal campaign practices during the nearly two decades he spent working for the Legislature. He and six others pleaded guilty last month to related charges and are cooperating with the prosecution.

Veon defense attorney Dan Raynak focused many of his questions on the timing of statements Foreman provided to the attorney general's office since his Jan. 6 guilty plea to four felonies. The newest information implicates Veon and others and has

formed an important component of the case the prosecution has so far put forward.

Raynak said after court that Foreman had contradicted himself on the stand.

"I lost track of how many times he changed the same story again," Raynak said. "My thought has always been, when you're making up the story it's hard to keep your story straight."

Much of Foreman's testimony Friday involved the many e-mails that prosecutors have introduced as evidence — some that jurors have already been shown several times.

Lawyers from both sides expressed some frustration with the pace of the trial after court Friday. Dauphin County Judge Richard Lewis has scheduled a session on President's Day and said the trial may also continue on Saturdays.

Prosecutors have said they plan to call 20 to 30 witnesses, and all four defendants also may put on their own cases, suggesting the trial could go on far longer than the month that had been projected.

"We were hoping that we'd have more witnesses completed by this point in the trial," said Senior Deputy Attorney General E. Marc Costanzo. "We're going to try to keep it moving the best we can."

During the lunch break, a couple of jurors, reporters and prosecutors ate lunch a block away at a deli where Attorney General Tom Corbett was also eating. Corbett, citing his policy about ongoing trials, declined to comment about how he thought the case was going.

Also Friday, Lewis conducted a hearing into whether dozens of defense subpoenas issued to current and former state lawmakers and legislative employees should be thrown out. He gave lawyers on both sides a week to file more pleadings on that topic.

Veon served as the No. 2 ranking House Democrat before he lost re-election in the pay raise backlash election more than three years ago.

He and his former aides Brett Cott, Steve Keefer and Annamarie Perretta-Rosepink are on trial for theft, conspiracy and conflict of interest charges.

Cheney mum on supporting Palin in next election

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Former Vice President Dick Cheney says he has not decided on a candidate to support for president in the next election, sidestepping a question on whether he would support Sarah Palin for the office.

Cheney declined to throw his support behind Palin when asked Sunday on ABC's "This Week" whether he would back the former Alaska governor as a presidential candidate.

Cheney said the person he supports is going to have to prove capable of being president. He did not say whether he thinks Palin is qualified.

Oldest US death row inmate dead at 94 in Arizona

ASSOCIATED PRESS

he oldest death row inmate in the U.S. has died of natural causes at age 94.

An Arizona Department of Corrections spokesman says Viva Leroy Nash died late Friday at the state's prison complex in Florence.

Nash was still on death row, but spokesman Barrett Marson said Sunday he did not know if Nash died in his cell or in a medical facility at the prison.

Nash was born in 1915 and had a criminal record dating to the 1930s.

He spent 25 years in prison for shooting a Connecticut police officer in 1947, and was sentenced to life in prison for shooting a man to death in Salt Lake City in 1977. But he escaped from a prison work crew in October 1982 and fatally shot a Phoenix coin shop sales clerk a month later.

He was sentenced to death for that crime.