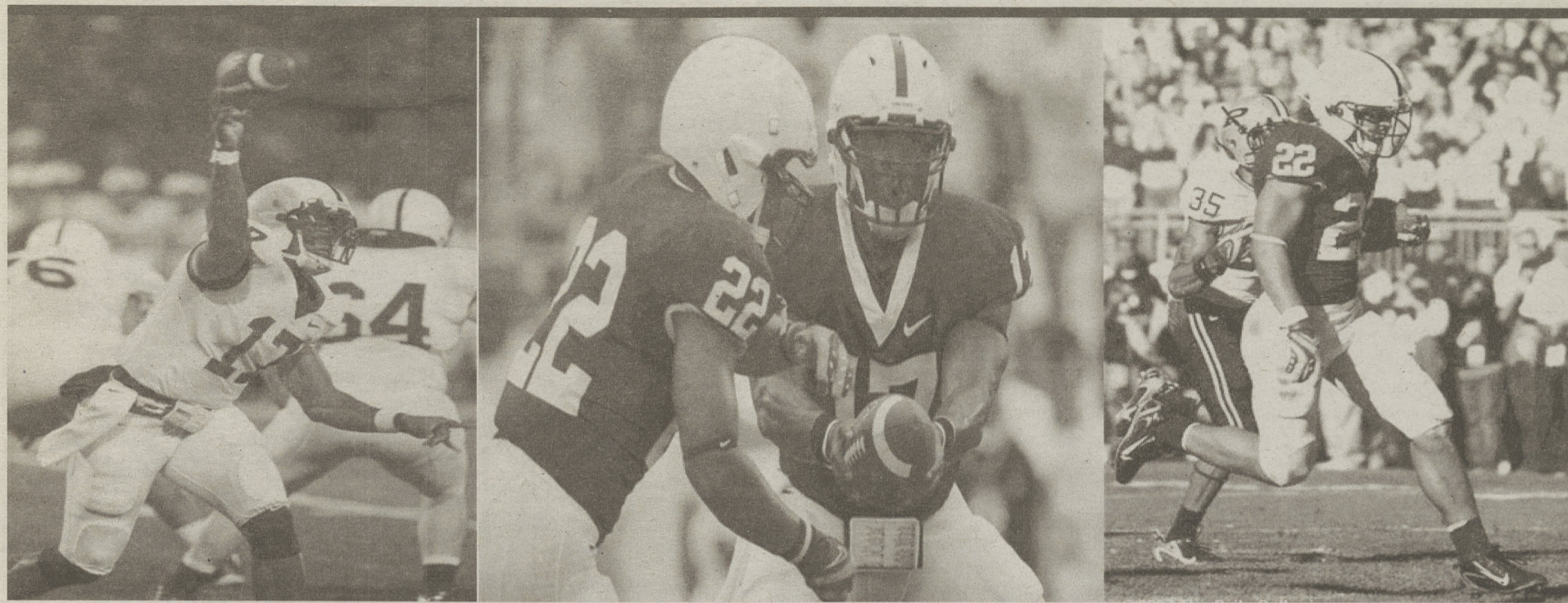


# Eye on Sports



## Road to Pasadena: Penn State Nittany Lions

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The Penn State "Football" Lions were on a road to the 2008 National Title this season.

Before the season started, the Nittany Lions were ranked # 22 in the BCS (Bowl Championship Series) standings. Also, Joe Paterno was second in the win column for a head coach, behind Florida States' Bobby Bowden. Paterno started the season one win behind Bowden with 372 career wins. Many would see that this would no longer be true.

The first game was a blow out, as most of the games in the beginning were. The Lions beat up on unranked Coastal Carolina, and Paterno was right on the door step of tying Bowden, but Bowden and the Florida State Seminoles won their game that kept Bowden ahead for now. In the Penn State game, junior Daryll Clark was the powerhouse quarterback that many thought he would be. According to espn.com, Clark completed 11 of his 14 passing attempts which earned him 146 total yards and 1 TD (touchdown). Stephfon Green, a freshman, led the Penn State rushing with 10 carries for 89 yards, and 2 TDs. Although, star running-back Evan Royster, sophomore, had 3 TDs in the game. The team dominated the Chanticleers 66-10. With this win, the Lions moved up in the BCS standings from 22nd to 19th.

In the second game against Oregon State, Clark had another stellar performance against Oregon State, going 14 for 23, with a 2 TDs, and had 5 rushing carries for 61 yards and a touchdown, information courtesy of espn.com. He was outshined, in the running game, by Royster, who had 17 carries and 3 touchdowns. The Lions destroyed the Beavers 45-14. Paterno tied Bowden with 374 wins and this time he was tied for good, for now. This win brought the Lions closer to the top going from 19th to 17th. Next up for the Lions was Syracuse.

The Lions headed to Syracuse to face the Orange and were dominant. According to espn.com, the two stars of the back field, Royster and Clark were still having stellar games on the field, but they were joined by two senior receivers Justin Norwood and Deon Butler.

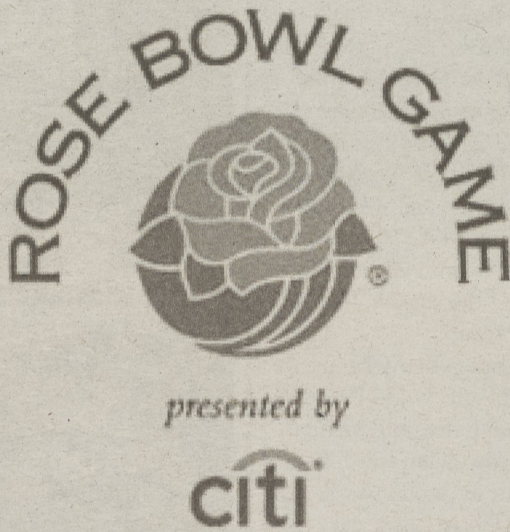
Norwood and Butler shared the load in the passing game scoring 4 TDs between the two of them. The Lions defeated the Orange 55-13, and gained more spots in the standings from 17th to 16th. This win kept Paterno in a tie with Bowden for the overall lead in career wins with win # 375.

in NCAA history with his 376 win. The Seminoles lost that week, which also helped. Paterno has said of the hype over the race to 1st that he could care less of who was number 1, and that it meant not a damn to him, that he could call himself that person.

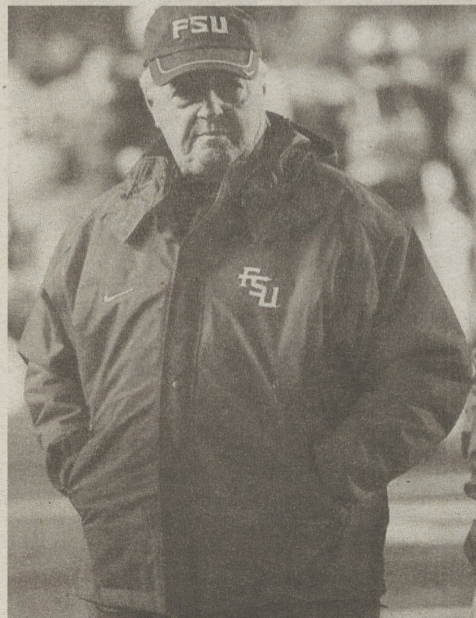
The following week was the Lions first game against another ranked team, the # 22 Illinois Illini. This game was deemed the "White Out" game of the season. What is the "White Out" game? It is a game where everyone in the stadium is decked out in white, and the aerial views are amazing during the game because of the sea of white that is shown. This game, though, had a few people that did not get the memo to wear white and instead they wore orange. The stars of the game were not the usuals of the season. Yes, Clark completed 14 of his 20 passes and had 2 TDs, and 1 rushing TD, and Royster carried the ball 19 times and had 139 yards. The star of the game was a receiver that had done something that no other Lion had ever done, according to espn.com. This individual scored a passing touchdown, a rushing touchdown, and returned a kick 94 yards for a score. This person is senior Derrick Williams. The game was not a blow out as the previous games were; this game started the Lions drop back to Earth. The Lions let up the most points of the season, giving up 24, but they still won the game 38-24, and kept Paterno ahead of Bowden by one game. The Lions jumped from 12th to 6th with the win.

Next the Lions traveled to Purdue, to face the Boilermakers. The Lions were looking to notch their 6th win of the season. The Lions dominated the game scoring 20 points. Mr. Clark was dominant again as he had been all season long, completing 18 of his 26 attempts. Mr. Royster also took over the game having 18 carries for 141 yards and a touchdown. The Boilermakers scored 6 points in the 4th quarter, but the game was well in hand for the Nittany Lions. They went on to win 20-6 and jump to 3rd in the BCS standings. This win also kept Paterno ahead of Bowden for a second week in a row.

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The team to face the Lions in Happy Valley next was the Philadelphia Owls from Temple. The game was another blow out as expected. Clark threw an interception in this game, but was still able to complete 13 of his 20 passes, and the Lions pulverized the Owls, 45-3. The "future" of the team, Royster, was outshined in this game by Green who had 132 yards to Roysters' 73 yards, according to espn.com. This placed the Lions 12th in the rankings. The Lions and Lionesses all over the state were ecstatic that their football team was destroying the competition. The Temple win also had a career implication, as it helped Joe Pa reach the pinnacle of the coaching world, giving him the sole possession of the "winningest" coach



Going from Left to Right: Upper: Penn State Quarterback Daryll Clark (photo courtesy daylife.com), Handoff from Clark to Penn State Running Back Evan Royster (photo courtesy of daylife.com), Evan Royster (photo courtesy of collegian.psu.edu) Lower: Florida State Head Coach Bobby Bowden (photo courtesy of coacheshotseat.com), Penn State Head Coach Joe Paterno (photo courtesy of pennlive.com) Center photo: 2009 Rose Bowl logo (photo courtesy of point-spread.com)