

# Eye on Sports

## Penn State Football Update: Nittany Lions Pick Up Two Wins

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In a season that was labeled from the start as a "transition year" for Penn State, they seem to be taking strides into finding their identity. Although it might not have been seen while the team was getting pounded by Alabama, the team is getting there. The offensive line is holding up as expected, and the defense is starting to come together as one unit. Young quarterback, Robert Bolden, is developing and beginning to look better along the way. The team is playing smart football and is the nation's leader in average penalty minutes per game. With a current 3-1 record, the Penn State Nittany Lions' offense, defense and special teams are all getting better with each game.

The offense is generally good at moving the ball, but struggles when reaching the red zone only managing six touchdowns in fifteen opportunities. Robert Bolden is effectively spreading the ball around to his receivers and senior tailback, Evan Royster, recorded a career best 182 rushing yards against Temple last week. The offensive line is doing a fine job of supporting Bolden; however, losing right tackle, Lou Eliades, for the rest of the season will undoubtedly leave a void to be filled. Whenever there is a new signal caller, especially a true freshman, there needs to be time for the offense to adjust.

Penn State's defense is supporting the transitioning offense. The Nittany Lions are not letting up big plays and always keeping the team in the game. They are beginning to force turnovers and younger players are beginning to find their game. With two fantastic games against Kent State and Temple, the Penn State success hinges on the defense.

As far as special teams goes, Penn State looks fantastic. Kicker Collin Wagner is helping out with the offense's struggles in the red zone, making ten field goals in his twelve attempts. Also, the Nittany Lions are getting solid kickoff and punt returners from special team players



Joe Paterno and the Nittany Lions walk off of the field following their 24-0 win over Kent State (Photo courtesy of sports.yahoo.com)

providing the offense with great field positioning much of the time.

### Recap: Penn State vs. Kent State

A week removed from a disappointing loss to top ranked Alabama hosted unranked Kent State. In their last meeting, Penn State took advantage of a below average football team and picked up the easy win. The Nittany Lions looked to do just that again.

In the opening quarter, Penn State took control from the get-go and intercepted Kent State's Spencer Keith on just the third play of the game. The offense took advantage of the turnover and scored on a Robert Bolden one yard sneak. The offense added another touchdown courtesy of a three yard run by Evan Royster to put Penn State up 14-0 at the end of the first.

Following a third quarter field goal and a 48 yard touchdown pass from Robert Bolden to Devon Smith, Penn State went on to defeat Kent State 24-0. Robert Bolden went 17-27 for 217 yards accompanied with one passing touchdown, one rushing touchdown and two interceptions. He was able to build his confidence

against a struggling defense and continues to prove that he is "the guy" not only for this year but for the remainder of his time at Penn State.

Aside from the offense looking strong, the defense forced two turnovers and kept Kent State off of the scoreboard for the entire sixty minutes.

### Recap: Penn State vs. Temple (All U Day)

Having not winning on "All U Day" in a few years, Penn State had as much to play for as the up and coming Temple Owls. With over a hundred thousand fans on hand to support the blue and white, the Nittany Lions looked to extend their winning streak against the Temple Owls to 28 games and counting. It wasn't pretty but they did just that.

Early on, Penn State could not move the football on offense and could not prevent the Heisman Trophy candidate Bernard Price, from rushing into the end

zone twice in the opening quarter. Luckily, place kicker Collin Wagner and the special teams were able to keep the team in it heading into half time, trailing just 13-6.

During the ensuing half time, Penn State was able to put its game face on and came out in the second half ready to win. The defense held Temple's offense at bay and kept them from scoring another point for the rest of the game. Evan Royster went on to a career best in rushing yards with 187 in 26 rushes and Robert Bolden threw for 223 yards, but it was still the special teams that was putting points on the board for the Nittany Lions. Collin Wagner successfully kicked two more field goals in the third quarter, which tied a school record. Running back, Michael Zordich, did find the end zone late in the game to secure the 22-13 win for Penn State.

With the win, Penn State is now ranked at #22 and will play Iowa next Saturday at 8:05pm .

## Philadelphia Flyers Update: Putting the Pieces Together

By David Hoffer - Lion's Eye Sports Editor- deh5081@psu.edu

Thanks to new signings and a couple of trades, the Philadelphia Flyers will enter this season armed with of the most potent and potentially dominating lineups in the team's 43 year existence. As the Flyers begin their 44th season in the NHL, let us take a look at the potential line combinations Coach Peter Laviolette may form to run roughshod over the Atlantic division.

### On offense:

Scott Hartnell (Left Wing) - Danny Briere (Center) - Ville Leino (Right Wing)

Assuming Ville Leino will start the season healthy, after recovering from offseason surgery on his left hip, there is no reason this line should not enter the season intact. Formed during last year's remarkable playoff run, this line was very instrumental to the Flyers reaching the Stanley Cup Finals. Hartnell, who has a disastrous regular season, came alive and went on to record 17 points (8 goals 9 assists) after being pair with Briere and Leino. Briere, who had a good season finishing 4th on the team in points, exploded in the playoffs netting 12 goals and 18 assists for 30 points. He led both the Flyers and the NHL in playoff points and in the minds of many was robbed of the Conn Smythe Trophy for MVP of the playoffs. Speaking of exploding in the playoffs, Ville Leino, who was slated to be a healthy scratch before Carter and Gange went down with injuries, went on tie the NHL record for most points by a rookie (21) joining NHL Hall of Famer Dino Ciccarelli. His 7 goals and 14 assists were a very pleasant and exciting surprise. I look for big things for this line for the upcoming season.

Nikolai Zherdev (Left Wing) - Mike Richards (Center) - Bill Guerin (Right Wing)

I will go out on a limb and predict the Flyers will sign free agent winger Bill Guerin. The 39 year old is a proven winner with 2 Stanley Cups to his resume with the most recent one coming with the Pittsburgh Penguins in 2009. He will sign a cheap deal to play for a winner and his signing would be a win-win situation. Guerin's veteran play and leadership could do wonders for Flyers captain Mike Richards, both on the ice and in the locker room. Richards looks to have another strong season after finishing first on the team in points last year. To round off the line, I will look for Nikolai Zherdev to be matched with Guerin and Richards. Zherdev is a sniper and an amazing puck handler who will benefit from two smart, tough and playmaking forwards.

James van Riemsdyk (Left Wing) - Jeff Carter (Center) - Claude Giroux (Right Wing)

Much like the aforementioned line of Zherdev, Richards and Guerin, I look for the Flyers to pair the shot taking machine Jeff Carter with a couple of play makers and crisp passers in van Riemsdyk and Giroux. JVR will look to build off a disappointing season last year where he struggled much of the year after a strong start. He will do well using his big size to be the grinder for the speed and finesse pair of Carter and Giroux. Speaking of Carter and Giroux, they look to have another strong season, coming off a year where they finished second and fifth in points on the team respectively.

Dan Carcillo (Left Winger) - Darroll Powe

(Center) - Ian Laperrière (Right Wing)

Forming the final line may be difficult. We know that winger Blair Betts will not be ready for the season, as he is still recovering from summer shoulder surgery. We know fan favorite, penalty killing and shot blocking extraordinaire Ian Laperrière will take his place on the right side. I look for Darroll Powe, who played well on the penalty kill last year, to be the final center for the Flyers. This leaves the final spot on offense up for grabs between Dan Carcillo and newcomer enforcer Jody Shelley. Carcillo had a good season last year finishing with 22 points, mostly coming when paired with Mike Richards on the first line. Shelley, who was brought to Philly to replace the now retired Riley Cote as the number one enforcer, contributes little offensively but brings a lot of toughness. I see Carcillo and Shelley rotating in and out of the lineup much of the year.

### On Defense:

I foresee Chris Pronger reunited with Matt Carle as the top pair for the Flyers. For the second pair, look for veteran Kimmo Timonen to be paired with newcomer Andrej Meszároš, who has had great success when matched with veteran defensemen (Zdeno Chára) in the past. Rounding out the defense I'll go with Braydon Coburn, who had a great postseason last year, most likely being paired with newly signed veteran Sean O'Donnell. This leaves Oskars Bartulis and Matt Walker as backups.

Overall, the Flyers defense is the deepest in the NHL and big reason the duo of Michael Leighton and Brian Boucher should have a strong season.