

Penn State Sports

Brandywine Baseball: EXCITING NEWS FOR SPRING!

By Robert Ripson - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - rlr283@psu.edu

As you may know by now, the Phillies are contending for the World Series this fall by securing both a play-off berth and a Division Championship for the 5th consecutive year. Exciting times for baseball fans everywhere! This sentiment also extends to the Brandywine Campus team of go getters who take to the diamond and ply their skills. Although there will be no season of games to speak of, this is a time where student athletes are evaluated and chosen for the spring campaign of 40 games.

Finding Director Gasten wasn't difficult. I stopped by his office and there he was studiously perusing stats, agenda and team profiles for all the campus activities that he passionately guides through their natural paces throughout the year.

I had been under the assumption that there was a fall season, but was gently reminded that under Division - 3 guidelines, fall baseball is for training and evaluation purposes only with only three play dates for scrimmage and player development.

Director Gasten is excited about the prospects that the spring season will bring. The pitching staff has three returning fire ballers and a core set of fielders who bring stability and passion to the lineup. At this time he suggested I speak with Coach Tom Celvechio at 4:00pm when practice was taking shape.

I approached the playing field, which is located left of the Commons building when looking out to Rt. 352, and there was Coach and a multitude of eager players ready to begin their warm ups. Eager, because they finished a campaign last spring ranked ninth in the nation, consisting of a 14-4 conference record and came within one game of competing in the national championship.

Asking Coach Celvechio, what he thought of the prospects for the coming season, he eyes lit up as if Christmas was happening next week. Sensing his excitement, I asked what new and exciting things were happening with the team. Coach responded, "We have 16 pitchers vying for 12 spots; this is a position that needed shoring and we think we recruited well."

Of the sixteen pitchers, Coach highlighted Tre Herman, Sophomore from Downingtown East High School and Rajean Daily, a transfer from Cerritos, California. Herman commands a fastball,

curveball and a changeup. Led the league in strikeouts, carried a 4.50 ERA, was an All-Conference selection and was scouted for Division 1 possibilities. Daily, sports an impressive fast ball that reaches into the upper 80's, very impressive for a young arm. With these two outstanding pitchers and the great competition of the competing arms, the rotation looks like it may assist the team to great heights.

The team has four Captains, Bobby Harper, Jordan Mayer, Matt Vrabel and D.J. Gallo. I was lucky enough to be introduced to Matt and D.J., (unfortunately, Bobby and Jordan were still attending class). Speaking with Vrabel that same look of Christmas coming soon was evident. Last year's group of freshman and this year's transfers has him excited and chomping at the bit to swing the bat and get that ball in play! Gallo, affectionately called "Chooch" by some, (there is a strong resemblance to Phillies catcher, Carlos Ruiz) also carried that wide eyed optimism that is permeating the team.

Here are some of the reasons for this great enthusiasm. Gallo, catching, will guide the pitching staff to another stellar performance as he had during the last campaign. Some of the fielding and batting prospects that were mentioned are Chris Keenan, Travis Krammer, and Anthony Kine. Keenan, infielder, a graduate of Strath Haven High, led the central league in home runs last season and looks to continue that trend. Krammer, led the conference in steals with 36 in 39 games also carrying a .422 batting average. Kine, third base, is looking to break into the lineup and start as he hit .286 as a spot starter last year and touted as a good situational hitter and RBI producer. These infielders seem to be the front runners for a great core and can only be supplemented by other enthusiastic team members vying for a spot on the team.

The outfield is anchored by two players, Bobby Harper (Left Field) and Jordan Mayer (Right Field), both team captains with exceptional defensive attributes and superior batting skills which will only add a deeper dimension to this exciting team.

After concluding the interviews, I could not help but think that this team has all the tools to get to that next level, competing and winning the CHAMPIONSHIP!

Opinion:

Set 'Em Up, Joe.....

By Troy Ballard - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - twb5261@psu.edu

Let me open with this -- I have nothing but respect for Joe Paterno. I think the man is a living legend, and is one of the best coaches to ever grace the sideline. He is a true icon of longevity, and has been the driving force behind one of the most successful college football programs of all-time. I really think that without Paterno, Penn State would be nowhere near the caliber of school it is today, both with their fan base and athletically speaking. Paterno is everything you would want embodied in a head coach, and is often referred to as a model for new coaching staffs.

With that being said, let me proceed. Paterno as most know is the oldest coach in all of college football, and also the longest tenured, at 84 years-old. When Coach Joe took the reigns at Penn State it was 1966. Soak that in for a second. Paterno took over as head coach in the heart of the Cold War, before the invention of cell phones and even the internet. Keep in mind that in the 1960's and beyond, football was not what it is today. We are talking an entirely new style of players, play-calling, and coaching.

I would go as far as to say that Paterno's most impressive feat as a head coach is adapting with the game. Even looking back in the last 10 years, college football has come a long way, and has made serious bounds in originality and base talent on the field. The entire time, Paterno has kept pace, and has been ever open to adapting to new styles and brands of play, while still keeping modest and true to his base values.

There are not many men in this world that would be able to handle the pressures and responsibilities of coaching a football program the size of Penn State, and let alone do it for 46 seasons like Paterno has. It has been nothing short of extraordinary to watch, as season after season, Paterno is able to jog onto the field with his team, and win ball games like he has done his entire career.

Except with anyone who is at the age of 84, there are a multitude of health problems that start to amount. This is something that comes with age, and most of the time can be eliminated or held at bay with medicine and other treatments. However, I think you would be hard pressed to find any doctor that would recommend an 84 year-old man to stand on the sideline of a college football game.

It's what most would call an occupational hazard. And this off-season, Paterno actually felt the pain of his age, and what it can do to him as a coach. During a routine practice, wide receiver Devon Smith ran directly into Paterno while running a route, knocking him to the ground. Even though Paterno reportedly got up and walked off from the incident, there were serious injuries to both his shoulder and hip when he fell.

Now the season has begun, Paterno has still not healed completely from the run-in. He has been walking with a cane, and for Penn State's first game, called the shots from a press box, instead of the sideline. Earlier this season, in arguably Penn State's most important game against Alabama, Paterno was forced to call the shots from a press box, was not be able to be on the sideline when his team needed him the most.

I understand that Paterno can be hard-headed, and it is tough for him to show any sign of weakness. But this is a situation in which his current physical state is limiting the effectiveness of his job. Now, let's say that Smith didn't run into Paterno this off-season, and that he was still fine and could coach on the sideline. Who is there to stop Trent Richardson from Alabama being tackled out of bounds and landing directly on top of Paterno? The situations are simply exchangeable.

Paterno has reached an age where it is quite simply not safe for him to be coaching. Sure -- He could coach from the pressbox, but he hates it. He hates it, and I am sure that the players don't like it much either. It would be like having a professor in college teach you through a phone, and try to encourage you without actually being there. It doesn't make any sense for Penn State's football program, or Paterno as a coach.

It's the sad truth. But there is no shame in Paterno going out like he would right now. He is easily the greatest coach of all-time in college football history, and will be forever remembered as a Penn State legend. It will be a sad season in Happy Valley without Paterno on the sideline, but at some point another great coach will be hired, and who knows -- They could be the next Joe-Pa. But in the mean time, Paterno should get all the respect in the world, and go out of the game like a true gentleman.

Happy Valley Devastation into Philly Debacle

By Kelly McClain - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - kxm5293@psu.edu

Last Saturday, the Crimson Tide came into Happy Valley and washed away our Nittnay Lions. Penn State faced No. 3 Alabama last weekend with a devastating loss of 11-27. Joe Paterno again was cooped up in the press box watching this team struggle against the Alabama offense.

Both teams came into the second week of the season with unsettling quarterback issues.

Alabama's quarterback issue is between AJ McCarron and Phillip Sims, trying to replace Greg McElroy as starter. AJ McCarron: 19-of-31, 163 yards, one touchdown, zero interceptions.

Penn State's issue is still a problem for the offensive line. Rob Bolden and Matt McGloin tag teamed all game, which clearly did not help us in anyway. Rob Bolden: 11-out- of 29, 144 yards 38 in garbage time- zero touchdowns and one interception. Matt McGloin: 1-of-10, zero yards, zero touchdowns, zero interceptions.

For a couple of seasons now, the defense is forced to pick up the slack from the offense. Penn States offense gave up 359 yards against Alabama. Saturday Silas Redd was on a roll this game with 168 yards with 34 rushing yards.

With the devastation in happy valley against Alabama, Nittnay Lions play the Temple Owls next Saturday at the Linc.

This past Saturday Nittnay Lions traveled to Philly to face the Temple Owls. Penn State

won the game in the last 2 minutes with a last minute touchdown to make the final score 14-10.

Temple came to this game with confidence to change their history and break a drought of 70 victories against the lions. Michael Zordich scored on a one yard run with 2:42 left to stretch Penn State's winning streak against Temple to 29 straight games. Temple has not defeated Joe Paterno and the Nittnay lions since a 14-0 victory on October 14th, 1941; the teams tied 7-7 in 1950.

Players were forced to hear Joe Pa's talk about forcing turnovers all week until their ears burned. Penn State managed to get three turnovers, the last, an interception from Michael Mauti set up the winning touchdown drive to give Penn State the 14-10 victory at the Lincoln Financial Field in front of 57,232 people.

After missing two field goal attempts, Penn State converted a fourth and one on the 3 late in the fourth. Aided by a defensive penalty, the Owls drove to the 34 on their final possession. Mike Gerardi was sacked on fourth down to end the drive and the upset bid. Next Saturday (September 24th) Penn State goes up against the Eastern Michigan Eagles; kickoff is noon at Beaver Stadium. Following week (October 1st) Penn State is away playing Indiana with kickoff at noon again. Tune into ESPN to watch from the comfort of your home.