

the BLACKBOARD

by Johnny Black
Assistant Sports Editor



NATIONAL RANKING FOR LIONS?

The Nittany Lions nifty 19-8 victory over Missouri in their grid season lidlifter last Saturday immediately caused speculation to arise in local circles about Penn State's chances to finish in the national rankings come the cold wintry blasts of December.

In recognition of their impressive win over the team that had been doomed as the club that would give mighty Oklahoma a merry chase in the Big Eight Conference this fall, the Lions made the top twenty in the first Associated Press Poll. They garnered enough votes to rank 18th in the season's first cross-section sampling of the sports-writers' opinion. But evidently a couple of the writers that viewed the Lions' performance on the gridiron thought enough of the team to rate it as the best in the country, for Penn State received two first place votes. Only four other teams drew nominations for the top spot—LSU, Oklahoma, Southern Cal and Michigan State.

Far be it from us to put Rip Engle and his boys on the spot by suggesting they could attain the top place in the nation, although we thank our benevolent voters for their confidence. But the simple fact is that Penn State does not play a tough enough schedule to warrant top billing. The Lions could run away with these next two games against VMI and Colgate and still not gain an inch of stature in the eyes of the pigskin prophets. The ultimate accomplishment for the Penn State eleven with its present schedule would be to wind up in the Top Ten.

REVERSED LAST YEAR'S START

But Saturday's game did one thing for the lads in Blue and White. It got them off to a good start, in sharp contrast to last year's opener. This year, as last, the calibre of the Lion eleven was somewhat of a question mark till they completed their first inter-collegiate test. It was known that a reservoir of potential existed at Beaver Field. But the depth of that reservoir was uncharted.

In mid-September 1958 a kid by the name of Pat Fischer, wearing a Nebraska uniform, hauled in a fourth quarter kickoff and galloped 92-yards to break the Lions back and allow the underdog Cornhuskers to spoil the opening of a season that Penn State had hoped would lead all the way to a post-season bowl bid. Although they bounced back to drub Penn the next week they couldn't get a sustained drive going and sputtered on the "big games." The Nittanians finished with a respectable 6-3-1 slate, including a soul-satisfying win over Pitt on Thanksgiving Day, but it was not enough for the coveted bowl bid or national ranking.

Faced by the question mark again this year, at least two of the football magazine editors were willing to go out on the limb for dear old State and ranked it in the top dozen. Street and Smith put the Nittanians 11th, one slot ahead of Notre Dame, to whom they devoted their entire cover, and Look prophesied a 12th place finish and a trip to the Cotton Bowl.

FOUR KEY GAMES

But once again the success of the season depends on the outcome of a few key games—"the big games." With the exception of Pitt, these are the games the Lions lost last fall. This year the boys have already reversed the trend by emerging unscathed from the Midwest.

But four other tilts loom as obstacles on the Lion's path to national prominence as a grid power. The four key games this fall are Army, Illinois, Syracuse and Pitt. Of course the Nittanians cannot afford to blow any of the other games with VMI, Colgate, BU, West Virginia and Holy Cross. These are musts.

Army, with "Mr. Lonesome End" Bill Carpenter, quarterback Joe Caldwell, a pint-sized but pin-point passer, and "Bullet Bob" Anderson set to operate behind a husky young line, has been consistently rated among the nation's top five.

Army should be the toughest test for the Lions this year. At the same time, the Cadets, who are also known for having breathers on their schedule, will probably be facing their roughest duel of the early season when they are thrown to the Lions in Mitchie Stadium on October 10.

Illinois will be the first Big Ten team the Lions have met since they knocked off Ohio State in 1956. The Illini have been tabbed to finish somewhere around the middle of the Big 10 Conference. But when three or four of the Big 10 clubs are rated among the nation's ten best, this takes on a more significant meaning. The encounter in Cleveland will give Rip Engle's boys a chance to show what they can do against a club from what is generally conceded to be the toughest conference in the country, and their showing that Saturday will have an important bearing on the esteem they hold in the minds of the crystal ball gazers.

The top home game will be November 7 against the Big Orange from Syracuse. Rated as the second best independent in the East by several pre-season predictors, Syracuse stock took a nose-dive when QB Bob Thomas and star end Dave Baker incurred injuries which may sideline them for the entire season. But with runners like Art Baker and Ernie Davis, the Orange is still a potent threat that could pose serious problems on Beaver Field.

Pitt is expected to be weaker this year than last and for the first time in a while Penn State may enter the season finale as the favorite, but traditional rivalry has a way of discounting all other factors in this annual fray, e.g., last year's upset by the Lions.

This fall the Lions make another bid for national pigskin eminence. We've been thinking it all along but, remembering previous years, cautiously waited till after their first action under fire to say it, but "this could be the year." If the Blue and White eleven can come through in the "big games" and escape the upset scourge, we'll send you a New Year's card from the sunny South.

Starting Squad Could Provide Booters With Winning Season

By BILL BARBER

Although severely hampered by the losses of captain Bill Fiedler for the season and forward Gary Miller for the Bucknell opener, Coach Ken Hosterman has managed to come up with a team, which by the standards of experience and ability, could provide Penn State with its 16th consecutive winning soccer season.

The job of minding the Lion nets this year will fall to either one of two players who both have the potential of becoming the top goalie in the country, according to Hosterman.

Larry Fegley is currently the leading candidate for the job, but close on his heels is last year's frosh goaltender, Dave Grubb. Fegley suffered a slight charleyhorse during practice yesterday and Grubb will most likely get the starting nod at Bucknell. But Hosterman added that Fegley will see service in Saturday's game.

The fullback unit received a boost with the addition of Al Nieto from Venezuela. Nieto is

eligible to play this fall. Hosterman said Nieto could receive a starting job.

Veteran letterman Wayne Rodgers will probably be at the other starting position, Hosterman added.

Two sophomore candidates, Ken Link and Phil Gum, are giving Rodgers and Nieto the biggest fight for the starting assignments. Four other players pushing for the job are Dick America, John Miller, Ed Naujoks, and Don Davidson.

At halfback Hosterman is faced with a tough dilemma—no depth. While the Lion coach has two seniors and three juniors he is left with no replacements at a position which calls for frequent changes.

Seniors, Mike Ackley, will get the starting nod at center-half while juniors, Carl Astaz and Bill Rierson, will take over right and left half respectively.

Backing up this front-running threesome will be senior, Fred Kochey, and juniors, Igor Bak and Burnan Bounds. Both Bak and

Bounds, according to Hosterman, are of equally good caliber and could push either one of the starting three for their job.

Ed Hebbel, who has been considered by Hosterman as a top candidate for a halfback slot, has not reported as of yet.

On the forward line Hosterman finds a host of talent to work with but not enough positions to fill.

Several lettermen have had to take backseats to make way for the promising sophomores and transfers.

Filling in the vital center forward spot will be Loren Kline. Kline is the third man assigned to this post and should he follow a path similar to that of his predecessors, Bill Fiedler and Gary Miller, the job would fall to Julius Besoushko, a fullback turned forward.

Lou Van Rafelghem, who returned this season from Argentina after a year's absence will be at left wing. On the right wing will be two-year letterman, Pete Wadsworth.

Left inside is claimed by sophomore, Howard Farner, while right inside is manned by Gene Raiford, up from his halfback slot.

Among the aspirants working for jobs as starting forwards are Fred Tappert, Tony Mattei, Dick Cuplan, and Jim Hockenbrock.



KLINE

Braves Rated Favorites To Win Third Pennant

Milwaukee's champion Braves, back home for their final three games against the last place Philadelphia Phillies, today were rated 5-8 favorites to win the sizzling National League race.

The home park edge and an extra day of rest for the cripples were some of the factors that made the Braves the favorites over the raveling Los Angeles Dodgers and the reeling, all but dead San Francisco Giants.

The Giants, trailing the co-leaders by two games with three left to play and losers of five straight, were all but written off at 30-1 odds. Las Vegas odds quoted the Braves at 5-8 and the Dodgers at 6-5.

IM Football Entries Due

Entries for intramural football must be turned in at the intramural office in Recreation Hall by 4:30 p.m. today. League games will begin Tuesday, Sept. 29.

IM Tennis Deadline

Entries for intramural tennis must be turned in at the intramural office in Recreation Hall by 4:30 p.m. today. Play will begin September 28.

Fans Honor Chisox

CHICAGO (AP)—The American League champion White Sox yesterday continued to savor the fruits of victory, getting an official civic accolade for winning the club's first pennant in 40 years.

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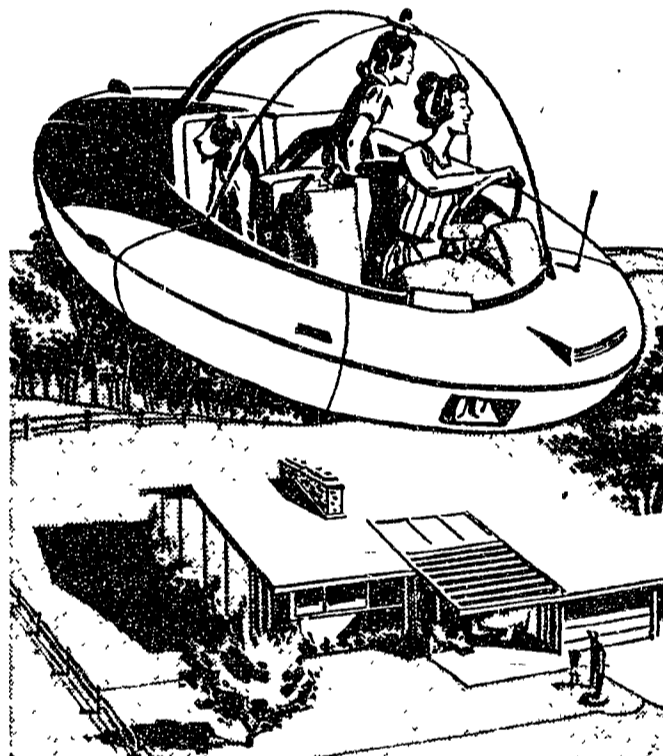
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