

N.C. State loss earns Cotton Bowl invitation

Collegian sports

By DAVE MORRIS
Collegian Sports Writer
RALEIGH, N.C. — As the Penn State players and coaches filed into the dressing room following Saturday's game at Carter Stadium, three strangers brought up the rear of the line.

The three men wore bright green blazers with blue and white Nittany Lion lapel pins. Their purpose was clear, as the blazers were inscribed with the name "Cotton Bowl Classic."

They were ushered in with the team and presented Penn State with a 1975 Cotton Bowl bid. Not bad, considering that minutes before the Lions were beaten, almost shut out, by North Carolina State.

But the loss didn't matter. Before the game an announcement was made in the press box. In effect, writers were told the bid would be presented to Penn State immediately following the contest. Winning or losing didn't matter.

The Cotton Bowl Classic in Dallas has had a streak of bad luck. In each of the past seven years, at least one team competing in the Classic has suffered a regular season loss after agreeing to compete.

This year was no exception. The Lions, of course dropped an early season game to Navy, and Texas, Texas A&M and Baylor have been less than spectacular in action.

When the doors to the dressing room were opened to the press, the actual bid had been signed, sealed and delivered. The Cotton Bowl officials, Paterno and the Penn State players were smiling. It was as if the Lions had won the game.

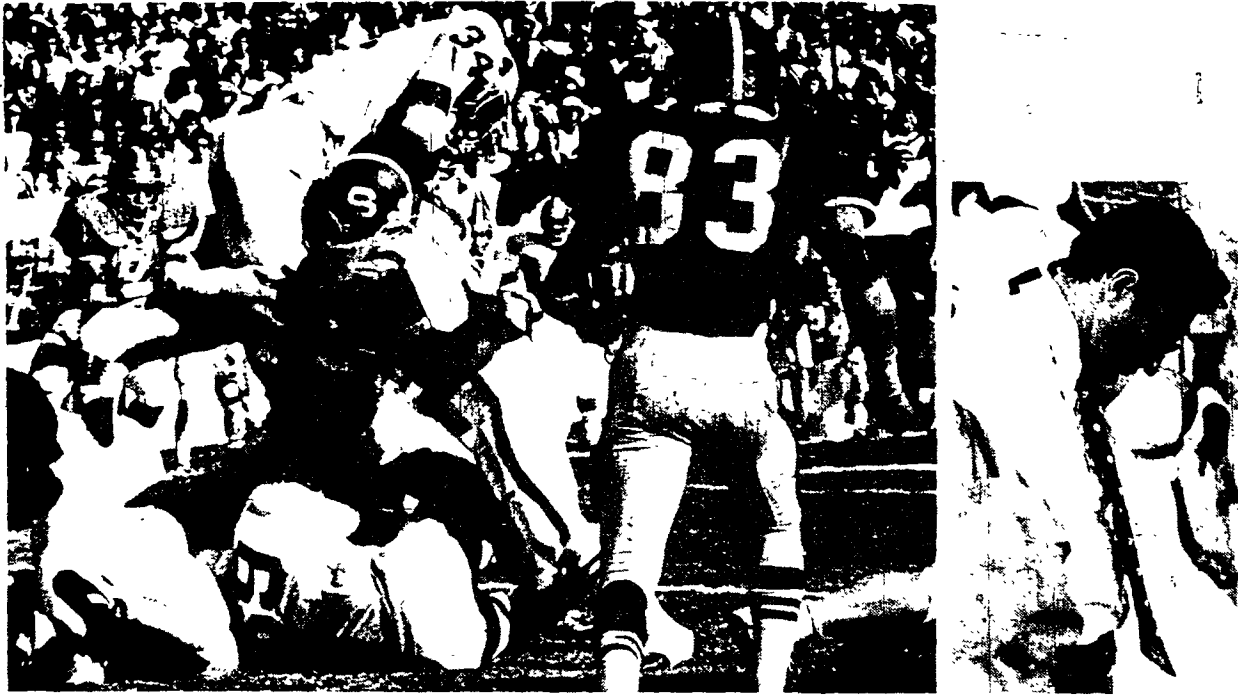
According to one of the officials from Dallas, the loss wasn't all that threatening to the Cotton Bowl.

"I can't see any way this will harm the Bowl," he said. "We'll have as good teams as any other other bowls."

Paterno thought along the same lines: "I wouldn't let one loss bother us. I'm looking forward to it. I'm excited about it."

But Paterno is not in favor of the bowl system. If he had it his way, a playoff system would be established and existing schedules would be abolished.

"I've always liked the playoffs," he said. "We should tell them (NCAA) we want a playoff by 1980 and cancel all schedules. Right now we don't know whether we can do it or we can't."



Photos by Ed Palau

Wolfpack "D" mauls Lions sputtering "O"

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RALEIGH, N.C. — "The eyes of Texas are upon the cotton-pickin' Wolfpack."

Over and over again the words flashed across the scoreboard in Carter Stadium. Below the message was another set of words and figures which told the story equally well: State 12, Penn State 7.

Almost an hour after the final gun sent thousands of Wolfpack fans into a frenzy, the Red and White band played on and hundreds of fans still sat in the sun-drenched bleachers, not able to believe what they had seen.

What they had seen was 60 minutes of action between two nationally-ranked, bowl-bound teams. They had seen a defensive struggle to the very end. They had seen the Wolfpack defeat the Lions for the first time ever.

"I was proud of our team," Penn State coach Joe Paterno said. "I'm not ashamed we got licked. We got licked by a good team."

Down the hall in the Wolfpack dressing room, winning coach Lou Holtz puffed on his pipe, leaned back in his chair and said the first thing that

came to his mind. "It was a super one, wasn't it?"

As the defenses from both squads dug in and prevented any meaningful drives, the 47,700 fans reacted with standing ovations. Other than a botched field goal attempt by John Huff, the name of the game was defense in the first quarter of play.

Penn State had the ball when the teams traded ends of the field and the crowd noise had died down substantially. But soon after Brian Masella punted the ball away Stan Fritts and the Wolfpack offense brought onlookers back to life.

Quarterback Dave Buckey, who along with his twin brother Don celebrated his 21st birthday Saturday, got the offensive machine rolling by sending Fritts, N.C. State's leading career rusher, barreling up the middle.

By mixing Fritts' slants with triple option tosses to Roland Hooks, the Pack managed to camp deep inside Penn State territory. Fritts crashed into paydirt on the 14th play of the 80-yard drive and the Pack was on top.

Mike Hartenstine slapped down the extra point attempt. Tom Shuman continued

having problems moving the Penn State offense, and at the half the score was 6-0.

But N.C. State and coach Lou Holtz wanted more points on the board. The wish was granted just seven plays into the second half when Fritts took a handoff, rolled to his left and fired a touchdown strike, his second of the year, to tight end Pat Hovance.

Again the PAT attempt failed. At that point, with a comfortable 12-point lead, Holtz was content to sit back, and take it easy.

"As long as our defense was playing we just wanted to get some first downs and some field position," he said.

When Penn State touched the ball on the ensuing kickoff, the offense looked like it was part of Gen. Sherman's Civil War march through Atlanta. It appeared that they weren't going to be stopped.

Then with a third and goal from the 3, the blitzing Pack caught Shuman and Company by surprise. What started out to be an end around with Dick Barvinchak totting the pigskin turned out to be an eight-yard loss.

The next play was also a big one. On fourth and 12, Shuman dropped back to throw. Split end Jerry Jeram was open in the corner of the endzone but Shuman threw out of his reach.

"It was supposed to be to Natale across the middle, but there was no way to get it to him," Shuman offered after the game. Jerry was down there in the corner. I was ready to get hit so I just let one go."

From there on in the Pack wore down the clock and came close to handing the Lions a shutout for the first time since a 14-0 blanking by Oklahoma

in the 1972 Sugar Bowl. Finally, with 4 seconds left in the contest, Shuman hit Barvinchak with a short toss in the end zone and the Lions were on the board.

Everybody in Carter Stadium knew Chris Bahr would attempt an onside kick. As the squibbler rolled free on the ground one of the Pack linemen fell on the ball. A few falls to the ground later, time expired and the Wolfpack had its first win against Paterno and Penn State.

For some of Holtz's charges the win was more than the average, run-of-the-mill victory.

"The Pennsylvanians on the team who had never beaten Penn State had to take a lot of grief when they went home," punter Johnny Evans said. "I'm beginning to catch the fever. I don't ever want to lose to Penn State or lose in Carter Stadium."

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