



Poise, confidence, ... luck

By PETE DOUGHERTY
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RALEIGH, N.C. — Senior flanker Jimmy Cefalo called it "the greatest feeling I've had at Penn State."

Sophomore defensive tackle Matt Millen said "I was praying the whole time" it happened.

Junior quarterback Chuck Fusina said it made him feel "the whole season was worth the effort."

Senior defensive end Bill Banks said it just plain "feels good."

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Whatever the feelings, "it" was what turned a 17-14 deficit into a 21-17 Penn State football victory over North Carolina State here Saturday, sending the partisan Wolfpack crowd of 44,800 home mumbling about what could have been.

With 2:35 remaining in the closely played contest, it appeared the Lions, now 8-1, were on the verge of another defeat that would have ruined Penn State's chances of a major bowl berth faster than a N.C. State fan can say "Y'all."

But unlike their earlier defeat (24-20 to Kentucky), the Lions were able to come from behind, driving 83 yards to the

winning touchdown on a Fusina to split end Scott Fitzkee pass.

"Joe (Paterno, Penn State head coach) always talks about poise," fullback Matt Suhey said, "to keep plugging away, and I think we did that today."

A lot of that poise was shown by Fusina, who masterfully and confidently directed the offense's winning march, and — thanks to a generous supply of luck — used just a minute and 37 seconds of the clock in doing so.

The series contained many big plays, the first of which was a 24-yard pass to Cefalo that put the ball at the 41. The Lions then got their first break timewise when the clock was stopped because of an injury to Bob Bassett.

An incompletion preceded a nine-yard strike to tight end Mickey Shuler, with the clock again stopped — this time to measure. It turned out to be the first of three measurements during the drive, after which Fusina lined the squad up quickly and ran off a play.

"He (Fusina) called a lot of first downs on the last drive," Paterno said. "He was verbalizing on the line of scrimmage because we didn't want to call time out."

As it turned out, Shuler was short of the first down, so after Fusina threw out of bounds to stop the clock, Suhey was given the ball on fourth and one to get the

first down. It was the first of only two running plays on the march.

The other came on a second and 10 after a 11-yard toss to Cefalo had taken the ball to the Wolfpack 37 two plays earlier. It was a draw to Suhey and caught the N.C. State linebackers in a blitz.

"The draw play, I think, was the big play in the drive," Fusina said of the delayed run which netted 16 yards.

"Fran Ganter (Penn State assistant coach) told me I had been running the draw wrong," Suhey said. "He told me to wait a second or two and let those guys (linebackers) run by me."

A two-yard pass to Shuler was followed by another bullseye to Cefalo, his third catch of the march, to set up the winning 11-yard aerial to Fitzkee.

"They were giving us those short patterns," Cefalo said. "But I thought inside the 40, they would tighten up, but they didn't. That part surprised me."

"The prevent is not that hard to pass against," Fusina said, explaining about the defense the Wolfpack used in an effort to hold off the big play. "It's going to the long bomb that's tough."

So Fusina short-passed his way down field, hitting 6 of 11 passes at the end for 65 yards, plus ended up calling the winning play.

"Fusina improvised on the touchdown play," Paterno said. "We ran the same

play we called to Fitzkee earlier, but he (Fusina) told Scott to change his lane."

"He (Fusina) told me to change and run a flag pattern," Fitzkee said. "So I faked a post, cut out, and Chuck just put the ball on the money. But what do you expect when you've got a passer as good as Chuck?"

Through it all, the Lions bubbled with confidence — not only on the field but in the lockerroom afterward.

"We knew we could win," Banks said. "It was just a thing where we had to go out and play our best."

"It was very important game for us. We wanted to win."

Fullback Bob Torrey added, "There was a job that had to be done and we went out and did it."

With the final chapter of this game's story a happy one, the victorious Lions began to wonder what this victory meant to the team.

"Joe told us at halftime, 'You need a game like this to see how good you really are,'" Suhey said.

"It's a hard feeling to describe," Fusina said. "I felt the whole season was worth it, all the practices and stuff. But five seconds after it happened, I realized we have Temple to worry about next week."

"But I know the team needed it (the victory)," Fusina concluded. "A game like this turns our whole season."



Scramblin' in North Carolina

Cheering and scrambling at North Carolina State (counterclockwise from upper right): A N.C. State fan waves a confederate flag in hopes his Wolfpack will get even for the Civil War; a group of Penn State proves there were some Nittany Lions prowling in Raleigh; Lion coach Joe Paterno explains the narrow victory; Paterno and Fran Ganter, moments earlier, relate the next play to Chuck Fusina as the Lions scramble for the winning score; Fusina follows instructions and unloads another completion; and N.C. State's Ted Brown, in one of his lesser moments, gets a rude awakening from the Penn State Defense.

Photos by Ken Kasper

