

# Romano's shirt blue once again

By TOM VERDUCCI  
Daily Collegian Sports Writer

Two freckle-faced girls, barely eye-level to his knee pads, held their small notebooks and pens without saying a word.

Romano could have spent last season acting out the same bit part, but instead he and Lion coach Joe Paterno agreed it would be wiser to sit out Penn State's 1980 production and strut his talent upon the stage in 1981.

an unbeaten regular season and a No. 1 ranking.

But in 1979, Romano found himself in the role of a backup again, this time to center Bob Jagers.

"I'm older, stronger, smarter and a better football player"

Practices were no easier. After all, who in his right mind would go head-to-head with the first-team defense every day in practice, run the opponent's plays and realize you'd never play in the games?

But Jim Romano is no crazier than your average football player. His "pay now, play later" theory seems to be working out.

"I'm older, stronger, smarter and a better football player," he says. "I was only 17 when I played my first college game."

—Jim Romano

"True, the name Jim Romano might not be all that familiar to Penn State football fans no matter what their age. But that's because Romano sat out last season as a redshirt."

Come this fall, young and old alike will know who Jim Romano is, for the senior is working in the Lions' spring drills to claim the starting center position.

Actually, Romano has already made a name for himself at Penn State. He backed up former Lion center Chuck Correal in 1977 as a freshman and started at guard in 1978 when the Lions rolled to

That decision was exactly one year ago from the day he gave out his autograph to the two girls.

Romano says making the decision to delay his final year of eligibility wasn't too difficult. ("Hey, I like it here. I don't mind staying an extra year."), but it wasn't easy being on the sidelines or next to his radio when the Lions played.

Romano says he hopes to be starting at center, a position he prefers over guard because "you're more or less in the center of things. You get to handle the ball, and you have more responsibility."

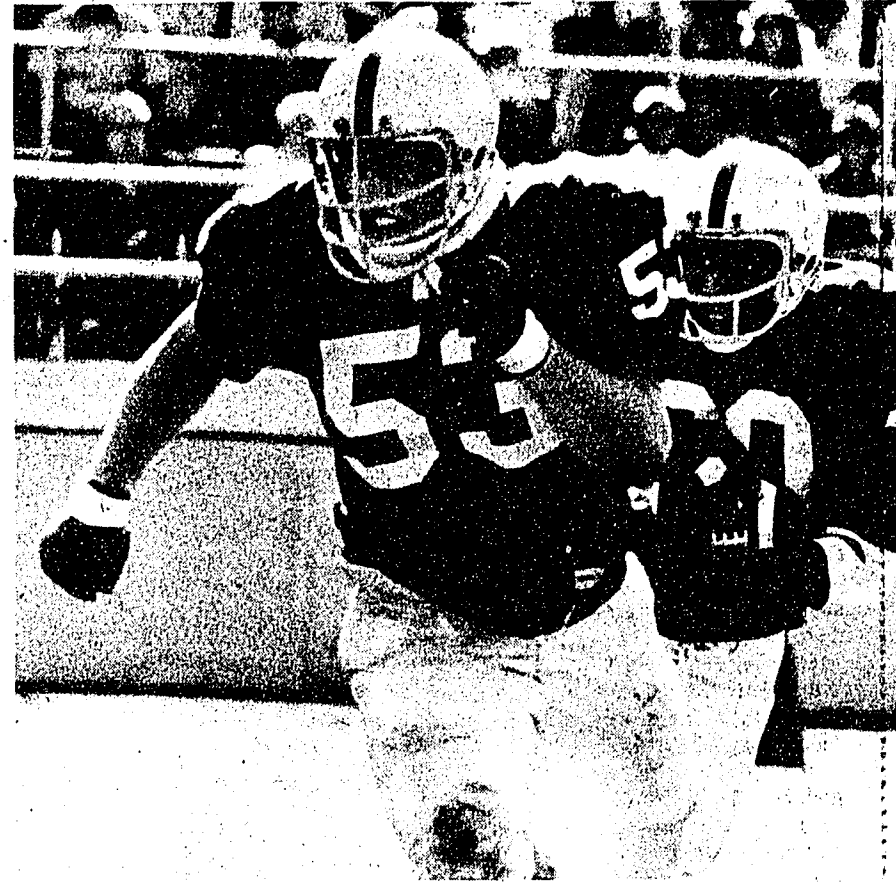
Right now Romano is working with Mark Battaglia — Jagers' understudy last year — at the No. 1 center slot. One day Romano will work with the first-team offense, and the next day it will be Battaglia's turn.

Romano admits he's "a little rusty," and he's still getting acclimated to the drills and techniques he missed out on last year.

But Jim Romano is optimistic, and much of his optimism springs from Penn State's schedule that includes such notables as Nebraska, Alabama, Notre Dame and Pittsburgh.

"I'm excited about the schedule," Romano says. "In order to be of national change, you have to be showcased. We'll probably be on TV three or four times, and if we can come on strong in those games, who knows what can happen."

What probably will happen will be a showering of accolades for Penn State. And amid all that attention, maybe Jim Romano won't feel so guilty about signing autographs.



Jim Romano

Collegian photo

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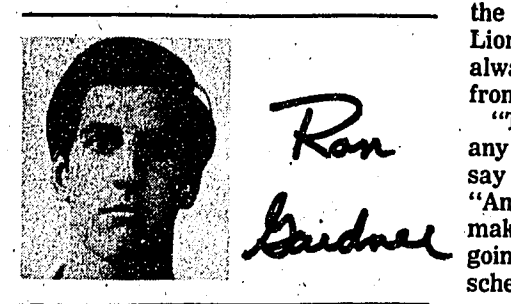
# Gymmen beware, here comes da judge

Minutes before the men's gymnastics meet between Arizona State and Oregon began on Feb. 13, 1981, in Tempe, Ariz., a Sun Devil graduate student emerged from the home team's locker room. He calmly walked onto the floor and prepared himself for an evening of officiating an NCAA-sanctioned dual meet.

By the time the meet was over, his scores for Arizona State were thrown out 12 times for being too high. And 14 times his scores for Oregon were thrown out for being too low. The Sun Devils, of course, won.

assistant coach was biased, he would have been thrown out and would not have affected the score anyway. I think subconsciously the thing that would hurt us is the guy knows our routines better and would be more strict on us."

Unfortunately, this was not the only incident questioning the integrity and impartiality of NCAA men's gymnastics judges that arose this year. Even Penn State has not been spared the trauma of having to compete in a meet where the judges were, shall we say, less than impartial.



After a 269.80-267.55 loss at LSU Feb. 6, Penn State coach Karl Schwenzfeier said Tiger coach Armando Vega was controlling the judges' scores by gesturing his approval or disapproval or by yelling at the judges when scores were flashed. In addition, LSU employed alumnus Mike Gadawa, a former Tiger top all-rounder, as a judge for the meet.

"The actions of the coach (Vega) on the floor were certainly not above reproach," Schwenzfeier said. "It seemed obvious that the head judge would respond to just about anything he was being gestured or being spoken to from the coach."

But Vega said he did nothing illegal or in conflict with any ethical guidelines.

"If I had any of those judges in my pocket, our scores would not have been so low all year round," Vega said.

"Isn't it funny that Penn State scored a 277 at home (in the Lions' last regular-season meet against PHU)? I've seen Penn State, and they're not a 277 team. Now you tell me who has the judges in their hip pocket?"

But Bob Stout, the Eastern Regional Technical Director of the National Gymnastics Judges Association and the official who assigns the judges for Lion home meets, said Penn State has always tried to remain as isolated from the judging process as possible.

"They have never tried to influence any of the judging, ever, and I can't say that strongly enough," he said.

"And believe me, I'm the one who makes the judgments about who's going to be there. I look over the schedule to see which meets are the most pressure meets, I instruct the judges ahead of time, and they're completely above-board."

The list of questionable incidents involving judges goes on. At this year's Ohio State-Illinois State meet in Columbus, Ohio, which the Buckeyes won 268.20-262.25, Ohio State coach Mike Wilson recruited two nationally certified judges out of the stands when a full contingent of four judges failed to appear for the meet. One of those judges was named Michael Wilson, Jr. — the coach's son and a member of the team.

"According to the assignment chairman for Ohio State," Bill Roetzheim, NCAA rules committee chairman and

executive secretary of the National Gymnastics Judges Association, said, "There were no judges assigned to the meet because it did not show as being a home meet for Ohio State, so naturally he didn't assign any judges."

Usually, a host coach is sent a list of judges that have been assigned to a particular home meet two to three weeks in advance by the assigning official so paychecks can be drawn up, travel arrangements for the judges can be made, etc. So if the assigning official didn't make assignments for the OSU-Illinois St. meet, Wilson would have known that well in advance.

"This meet was scheduled a year in advance, and there's a question whether Mike had forgotten to turn it in or he was going to hire his own judges or what," Illinois State head coach Al Weith said. "Mike kept relating to him (interim coach Bruce Biersdorf) that they should be here, and they never showed."

Wilson had no comment on anything concerning the meet.

In every section of the country this season, there have been reports of schools and coaches taking liberties with the NCAA's ethics code concerning the impartiality of judges. And incidents like the ones at Ohio State and Arizona State poignantly show the need for some action to be taken by the NCAA gymnastics rules committee at a voting meeting this week in Chicago.

"They're violating the spirit of the code," Roetzheim said. "But in essence, when you get right down to the legality of the code, it should have been written much firmer with penalties being assessed."

As the code stands at this point, a

school or a judge violating the ethics code stands to receive nothing more than a reprimand from the NGJA. But that could change after this year's encore performances by some coaches.

"I think situations like this certainly help," Roetzheim said. "There are parts of the country where the coaches are holding out the prerogative of bringing their own officials in, and they're fighting for this because it is a weapon — an offensive weapon."

"And so there'll be a lot of opposition from some coaching factors. But I think because of some flagrant situations this year, the rules committee will overwhelmingly pass a code of ethics that's enforceable."

Those changes might include everything from tighter controls in assigning officials to a suggestion by Oregon's Ballester that schools who violate ethics rules be given a zero for the meet in question.

Schwenzfeier, a member of the rules committee said, "I don't go to the rules committee just to put my hands in my pockets. I had quite a few proposals last year that would have helped the situation either voted down in our committee or turned down the NCAA executive committee."

"And you better believe Penn State's voice will be heard in trying to clean up this situation."

With coaches like Robinson and Wilson around, it's about time.

Ron Gardner is a ninth-term business management major and an assistant sports editor for The Daily Collegian.

# Foli's foul-up fuels Phillies

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Shortstop Tim Foli of the Pittsburgh Pirates has a reputation as a baseball player who doesn't make mental mistakes.

But nobody is perfect.

"I was dumb," said Foli, who forgot how many outs there were on a play which cost the Pirates a run in their 5-1 loss to the Philadelphia Phillies Monday night.

The Pirates, who were idle yesterday, meet the Phils again here tonight.

"There is no excuse," Foli said. "I didn't do that when I was 6 years old. I shouldn't do that now."

Foli's mistake happened in the second inning with Philadelphia's Bob Boone at second base and Steve Carlton at first. Lonnie Smith hit a grounder to second baseman Dale Berra, who under-handed the ball to Foli at second base for the forecourt on Carlton.

Foli thought it was the third out of the inning, so he performed the customary baseball favor of flipping the ball toward Carlton so the Phillies' pitcher wouldn't have to retrieve it for the next inning.

But it was only the second out, and Boone raced all the way home to score.

In Foli's defense, the play followed a seven-minute delay that began when the ball slipped out of Smith's hands and struck plate umpire Joe West in the head, causing some bleeding.

But Foli wouldn't use the distraction as an alibi.

"I don't care if it was delayed five days," he said. "After every pitch, I look at the count and the outs."

In addition to Foli's mental mistakes, the Pirates were also charged with three errors Monday night.

"Teams just have games like this once in a while," Pirate manager Chuck Tanner said.

"It will happen to the Phillies before this season is over."

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