

Lions looking good after late rally beats B.C.

By MARK ASHENFELTER
Collegian Sports Writer

As the song says, the important thing is how you look. To many, including those who vote in the major polls, the football team looks like the best team in the nation today.

Although the Lions felt worn and battered at halftime, they rebounded for 13 second-half points to defeat Boston College 16-12 in front of 82,000 fans Saturday at Beaver Stadium.

The Lions (8-0) were ranked second and third in the wire service polls entering the contest and should vault past No. 1 Iowa, a 22-13 loser to Ohio State, and into the top spot in United Press International's poll. Florida, however, may stand between the Lions and the top spot in the Associated Press poll.

However, for the first half and most of the third quarter it looked as if the Eagles were going to knock any hopes of a No. 1 ranking from the Lions' grasp.

Penn State trailed 12-3 in the final minutes of the third quarter, but a D.J. Dozier 42-yard scamper on fourth down set up one score and defensive tackle Mike Russo returned an interception 21 yards for the winning score.

Once again, the Lions were dominated statistically but managed to come away with a victory. The Eagles outgained the Lions 226-251, but tri-captain Rogers Alexander said Penn State has more than statistics working in its favor.

"I believe we're lucky," the senior linebacker said. "A lot of things went for B.C. in the first half — they got a lot of breaks. And I think we got a lot of breaks in the second half. We believe we're a lucky team and we're going to keep on believing it."

That belief could have easily been shattered during a first-half performance in which the Lions gained just 90 yards and converted one of nine third down attempts. In fact, a smattering of boos followed the Lions into the locker room at intermission.

The teams exchanged field goals in the first half, but Boston College led 5-3 thanks to Karl Kreshpane's sack of Lion quarterback John Shaffer in the end zone. The safety came one play after Bob White recovered Ken Bell's fumble on the four.

Head Coach Joe Paterno said that trailing at the half gave him an opportunity to learn something about his squad.

"We were behind at halftime and we knew we were going to get the football (to start the half)," he said. "But you don't know what kind of football team you are until you can come from behind at halftime and that's the first time we were behind at halftime."

What Paterno saw in the second half just changed what many had been saying about the Lions all season. It has been said that this team could find a way to win any game and this was no exception.

After Bell's 54-yard scoring run gave the



Penn State's Mike Russo (87) returns an interception 21 yards for the winning touchdown Saturday against Boston College. Tim Johnson (55) tipped the pass to Russo. The Lions' offense struggled early, but big plays by the defense proved to be the decisive factor in the game.

Eagles a 12-3 lead with 10:41 remaining in the third quarter, Penn State's defense held B.C. to 104 yards (44 on one drive) for the remainder of the contest.

The Lion offense posted its lone touchdown with 1:40 remaining in the third quarter when Shaffer scored on a one-yard keeper. The 74-yard, eight-play drive was keyed when Paterno sent the offense out to try for the first down on a fourth and one from the Lion 46.

Punter John Bruno was on the field when Paterno called a timeout to evaluate the situation.

"I thought we had more to go when I first sent the punt team in there," Paterno said. "When I looked in there it was a yard. At that

stage of the game we'd better take a couple of chances if we're going to win it. I just said 'what the heck — let's go.'"

And go is exactly what Dozier did as he cut to his left and went down the sideline before cutting back toward midfield at the 20. Eric Lindstrom caught up with Dozier at the Eagle 12, but the play provided the Lions with the best they needed.

"It was a little sweep designed to go up inside," Dozier said. "Fortunately the fullbacks and the line did a great job knocking those guys down, and away I went."

Shaffer said it was a group decision to go for the first down in that situation.

on the play, but Shaffer's pass to Eric Hamilton in the back of the end zone fell incomplete.

"We felt that we could put points on the board," Shaffer said, "but if Mike wanted to do it by himself then that was fine with us."

While the offense tried to run out the clock, it was up to the defense to come up with the key plays in the closing minutes of the contest.

After B.C.'s Ken Kanzler missed a 31-yard field goal attempt the Lions were unable to move the ball and were forced to punt. Halloran completed passes on the first two plays and Darren Flutie was at the Lion 48 when he was hit by Michael Zordich.

Flutie caught up the ball and Trey Bauer recovered. After another Lion punt, Alexander ended the Eagles' hopes of victory when he intercepted Halloran at the B.C. 37.

As always, Paterno was pleased with the play of his defense.

"Obviously the turnovers on both sides was a big factor in the football game," he said. "But we hung in there tough and we got a couple of things going and the defense kept us in the football game until we could do something. We had the one drive and got the interception by Russo and that was it."

"I thought (the defense) played well. I don't think they can play much better than they played today."

Despite the statistics, which showed the Lion offense struggling throughout the contest, Paterno said the offense did not do a bad job against B.C.'s defense.

"Our offense has worked very, very hard. Once again, I think you have to give the other guy a little credit," the veteran coach said. "I thought their down people played well."

"We could not run the football quite as well as we would like to. The biggest problem with our offense today was the turnovers. That's not the way we're supposed to play. We're not supposed to turn the ball over that much."

While the defense has been making the game-saving plays, Johnson said the defense does not believe it is doing more than its share of work.

"The offense has been in some tough situations, but I don't think the defense is carrying the team," Johnson said. "We're a team and we just have to stay that way."

"If one guy starts saying that then people will start picking on those guys and it'd be bad for their confidence. We've got to stick together. I wouldn't say we're carrying anybody — we're just doing our job."

LION NOTES: Penn State will visit Cincinnati next weekend. Shaffer completed nine of 22 for 114 yards while Halloran went 24 for 48 for 245 yards and the two crucial interceptions. . . Dozier led all rushers with 104 yards on 22 carries. . . Bauer led the Lions' defense with six tackles and six assists. . . B.C. All-America nose guard Mike Ruth had seven tackles, one assist and one sack.

"We felt that if an offense can't produce a yard or half-yard then it isn't much of an offense," Shaffer said. "It's just one of those things that happened. They blocked everybody very well and D.J. had a hole and he was able to run through it. Sometimes when you're looking for one yard the big play will happen for you."

The defense started making the big plays happen in the fourth quarter. Just 53 seconds into the final stanza the Lions regained the lead on Russo's touchdown. Tim Johnson got a piece of Shawn Halloran's pass at the line of scrimmage and it fell into Russo's arms at the B.C. 21.

The Lions tried for a two-point conversion

Storied defense propels Lions

By CHRIS RAYMOND
Collegian Sports Writer

There are times when a storyline works so well, scriptwriters keep going back to it, changing only the names and faces of the characters to keep from undermining its effectiveness.

To add a little color, they might alter the role of the villain just a bit by adding different strengths and weaknesses to his character.

If that same technique could be applied to college football, the storied performance of the Penn State Nittany Lions would certainly fall under that category.

In seven of the Lions' eight performances this season, the grand finale has revolved around the big-play character of the Penn State defense.

Against Maryland, a last-minute fumble deep in Penn State territory rescued a 20-18 Lion victory. A similar fumble in the game vs. Syracuse gave Penn State possession on the game-winning drive and a goal-line stand late in the second quarter saved the day against Rutgers.

In that respect, Saturday's 16-12 victory over Boston College was no different.

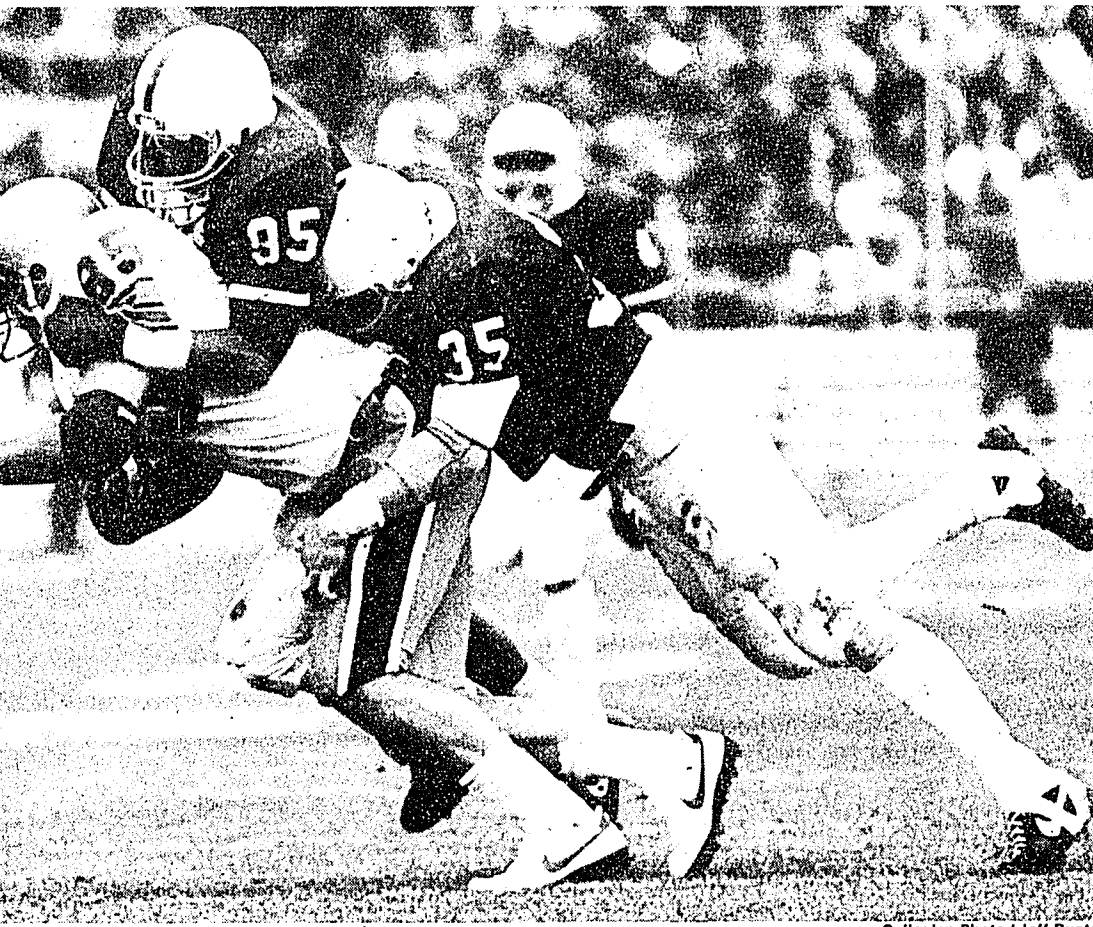
The Lions relied on four key Eagle turnovers, including a 21-yard interception return for the go-ahead touchdown to effectively eliminate a threat to their unblemished record.

In an uncharacteristic turn of events, however, the offense started working against the defense instead of the opponents.

"Up until now, the offense has been very careful with the football and really hasn't created a lot of pressure for the defense," Head Coach Joe Paterno said. "Today, the offense had at least three, maybe four turnovers (two fumbles, one interception) at the middle or in our territory and our defense just played superb under those conditions."

In fact, the only time the defense appeared to lose control of the game was on a 54-yard touchdown run by fullback Ken Bell on the Eagles' first possession of the second quarter. The Lions more than made up for that slipup with a touchdown of their own 12:35 later with Penn State trailing 12-3.

On a third-and-four call from the Boston College 26-yard line, Eagle quarterback Shawn Halloran stepped



Penn State's Rogers Alexander (85) and Trey Bauer (35) crush Boston College's Peter Casparirello during Saturday's game at Beaver Stadium.

into the pocket and fired a quick pass over the middle. Before the pass crossed the line of scrimmage, tackle Tim Johnson deflected it over his shoulder and into the hands of teammate Mike Russo who scooped it up and marched 21 yards into a wide open end zone.

"The quarterback was scrambling outside and Tim Johnson tipped the ball," Russo said. "Then as I was coming off my block, I saw the ball coming end over end and I just caught it in my lap and turned around and took off."

Russo's touchdown was greeted with a jubilant defensive celebration in the end zone and several gasps of relief from the sidelines.

In recent weeks, those gasps have become much too commonplace to the chagrin of the Lion offense, tailback D.J. Dozier said.

"We've had to (rely on the defense) in certain wins and it shouldn't be like

that," Dozier said. "The offense should put points on the board and the defense should keep teams from putting points on the board but it hasn't worked out as equally as it should."

Fortunately for the Lions, the added pressure hasn't affected attitudes on the opposite side of the line of scrimmage.

"We have a lot of confidence in our offense and we proved it during the West Virginia game," Russo said. "But if it comes down to the defense having to do a little more to win the game, we're going to do it."

On Saturday, "a little more" translated into two interceptions and two fumble recoveries including one on a first-and-goal play from the Penn State one-yard line.

With the Eagles trailing by a slim 3-0 margin, Bell took a handoff from Halloran and hurried himself toward the Penn State goal line. He was stopped in midstride by linebacker

Past isn't enough to make Eagles soar

By CHRIS LODER
Collegian Sports Writer

Maybe last year they would have found a way to pull it out.

Somewhat, one could picture Doug Flutie hitting Gerard Phelan with a 48-yard bomb with no time left and Boston College pulling another rabbit out of its hat.

But that was last year. Flutie and Phelan are gone and B.C. is not on its way to the Cotton Bowl.

This year, the B.C. football program has fallen on hard times. Struggling with a 3-7 record, the Eagles have been snakebit all season.

Saturday's 16-12 loss at the hands of Penn State was evidence enough of the season B.C. is going through — a team that is just not getting the breaks it used to. Boston College Head Coach Jack Bicknell said "This was our chance."

"I feel that this would have been a great lift for our kids," Bicknell said. "We're struggling, and we know we're struggling . . . this would have been a great victory."

For a few hours Saturday, it looked like Boston College was going to pull off an upset over the No. 3 Lions. Led by an aggressive defense, Boston College clamped down on the Penn State offense, yielding only 251 total yards.

When tailback Kenny Bell dashed up the middle for a 54-yard touchdown run, B.C. took a 12-3 lead that seemed too large to overcome.

But, as has happened all season, B.C. could not hold the lead.

One of the areas where Bicknell saw a key to the game was the running of Penn State quarterback John Shaffer, who scrambled for an important first down and scored the Lions' only offensive touchdown. Ironically, Bicknell said Shaffer's running reminded him of last year's contest between the two teams, a 37-30 win for Penn State when quarterback Doug Strang ran through the B.C. defense.

"The big difference was that in

the first half, thinking that the quarterback wouldn't run and in the second half he did. It gave me a wierd feeling of last year's game, the whole game," the coach said. "Kenny Bell running a long touchdown run on a draw, Kenny Bell fumbling ball on the two yard line going in. It was scary."

"The second half last year that guy Strang, trying to keep the ball out of our hands. It just gave me an eerie feeling from my standpoint."

Bicknell said Boston College had a ray of hope midway through the fourth quarter. On a third and four at their own 22, Penn State's Steve Smith rambled for nine yards and a first down, but coughed up the ball. B.C. recovered at the Penn State 31.

"When they fumbled that ball in the fourth quarter, that was like saying 'This was our chance,'" Bicknell said.

But the chance dwindled when Shaffer had a pass interference call put on the 14. B.C. quarterback Shawn Halloran threw three straight incompletions. The Eagles opted for a field goal, but placekicker Ken Kanzler's attempt was wide left.

Although disappointed that they didn't win, many Boston College players found some positive things about the game. Noseguard Mike Ruth, who finished with eight tackles Saturday, said the B.C. defense played tough.

"The defensive line played a hell of a game. . . I thought we won the last of the trenches," the Outland and Lombardi Trophy candidate said. "I think we played real well for this game. People don't understand that football is a lot of back-and-forth that makes it fun."

When asked whether Penn State deserved to be ranked as high as it is, Ruth responded by saying Penn State has a good, solid football team.

"They're a standard, Eastern power football team," Ruth said. "I love to see an Eastern team ranked that high instead of Notre Dame or the Big 10."

"I think that's something that the defense has been able to get ahead of and maintain. Regardless of the situation, we're not going to give up. We're going to keep plugging away and try to make something happen."

"We know we can make the big plays and we have the confidence to do it," Lion hero Mike Zordich said. "When you've worked as hard as we have and you always hustle the big plays come and I think that's what our defense has been doing."

Booters' playoff hopes still in the air

By CAROL D. RATH
Collegian Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Whether or not the men's soccer team will receive a playoff bid still remains questionable after the Lions tied regional rival Temple 1-1 in double overtime Friday at Temple Stadium.

The Lions are undefeated against this season's regional opponents — West Chester, Fairleigh Dickinson, St. Joseph's, Lafayette, Bucknell, Pittsburgh — but they desperately needed to add the No. 11 Owls to their win column. That win would have assured Penn State of a national playoff bid.

The Lions (13-5-1) are third in the Mid-Atlantic Region behind No. 19 Rutgers (11-3-2) and first place Temple (13-4-1).

For most of the first half of Friday's game, the Lions were probably wishing they were back home at

Jeffrey Field. Penn State had difficulty controlling and moving the ball on the uneven and bumpy Temple turf.

"That's the problem when you're trying to control the ball and pass the ball in closed quarters," Head Coach Walter Bahr said. "You're not only competing against the other team, you're competing against bad bounces on the field and the ball was hopping around."

The field conditions had a direct influence on the 82 fouls called in the game. Midfielder Gerry Moyer said for most of the game, there was a lack of continuous play.

"I think the way the whole game was going, there was a foul every 10 seconds. We just couldn't get any continuity going on the plays," Moyer said. "You usually try to build up in the defense and use the midfield (to move the ball) up to the forwards. Every time the ball was moved from the defense to the midfield, there was

a foul and from the midfield to the forward, there was a foul. We just couldn't get any rhythm."

That lack of rhythm was clearly evident in the first quarter as the Lions allowed Temple to take the lead, 1-0, about 24 minutes into the game. After a series of headballs in front of the Lion cage, Owl defender Doug Shaw emerged to bullet a pass from Steve Jerezenko past Lion goalie Bert Eckelmeyer into the lower right side of the cage.

Before halftime, attempts by midfielder Steve Potter and forwards Thomas Greve and Dave Dabora fell shy of the Owl cage.

At about the 48:29 mark, a pass from forward Niall Harrison to midfielder Kevin Jennings resulted in the ball being fired from a wide angle past Temple goalie Dale Caya to put the Lions back into the game, 1-1.

Less than two minutes later, Harrison received the first of two yellow cards awarded for unsportsmanlike conduct in the game.

With each team failing to secure goals on attempts to score in the last few minutes of play, the game went into overtime.

A Greve-to-Moyer-to-Potter effort five minutes into the first overtime failed to penetrate the Owl cage.

Play in the second overtime resembled the first, as each team failed to capitalize on its attempts. As time in the second overtime wound down, the physical play of the teams showed their frustration as the game ended without a victor.

"All in all, I guess a tie in the run of play was a good result. We came down here for a victory and we're disappointed that we didn't get it," Bahr said. "I felt that we had to beat Temple to have a pretty good chance of getting that bid. Now, it's still up in the air."

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