

Penn State crushes Alabama in 23-3 win

Tide bobbles bowl chances as Lions recover

By MARK ASHENFELTER
Collegian Sports Writer

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — There's still a long way to go before it can be called a Cinderella season, but the football team went from a wallflower to the belle of the ball here Saturday.

From being undefeated and unregarded by the media, the Lions became a national power in just under three hours. All it took was a 23-3 no-doubt-about-it thrashing of No. 2 Alabama.

The No. 6 Lions (7-0) hadn't gained any real respect because of what was called a soft schedule. It was agreed they'd finally be tested against the Crimson Tide, but many skeptics expected them to fail.

Instead, the Tide receded under the brunt of Penn State's attack.

Alabama gained just 216 yards of total offense, and the stunned crowd of 60,210 watched the Lions gain 378 yards against a defense that was supposed to be airtight.

Not only did the Lions hand Alabama its worst setback in 10 years, but they also the Tide's third loss in Bryant-Denny Stadium — in the last 25 years.

Joe Paterno, the Lions' head coach, took his team's success in stride. He wasn't surprised by the outcome, despite beating a team Alabama Head Coach Ray Perkins said had "touched greatness" after several earlier victories.

"I thought we had a good football team coming down here," Paterno said. "I really thought we were better than Alabama. I felt we might be a little bit stronger and probably just as quick in a lot of key spots."

"I knew we were going to be ready to play, we had been looking forward to this game for a long time... There were two good football teams and we were just a little bit better than they were."

Paterno may have been pleased with the win, but quarterback John Shaffer was absolutely ecstatic. The key to Penn State's offense, Shaffer connected on 13 of 17 passing attempts for 168 yards. More importantly, he led a balanced attack — the Lions rushed for 234 yards — that kept the Tide from focusing its defense on one area.

"This was a very big game in our season and in Penn State's history," the senior said. "We played one of the finest football teams I've faced up until this point in my college career. We feel very fortunate to be able to beat a team like that."

Perkins, who saw his team lose the longest unbeaten streak (12-0-1) in the nation, lavished the Lions with praise.

"Give Penn State's football team a lot of credit," Perkins said. "I said during the week they were a great team and they went about things today like a great team."

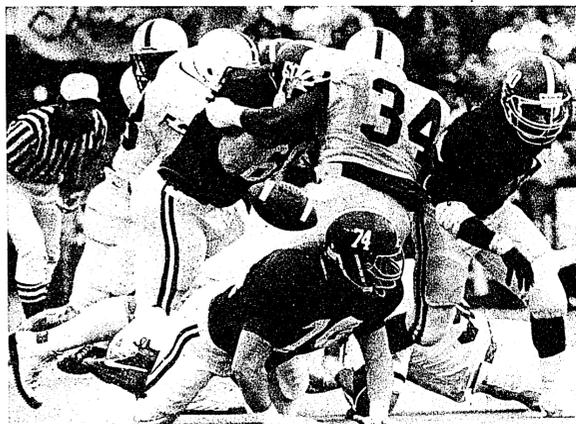
"I said they deserve to be in the top five teams in the country and I think there's no question about that after today. They're by far the best team we've played."

The Lions haven't looked this good since winning the national championship in 1956. Linebacker Shane Conlan said it's the best defense he's looked in five years and the offense was at peak efficiency after a slow start.

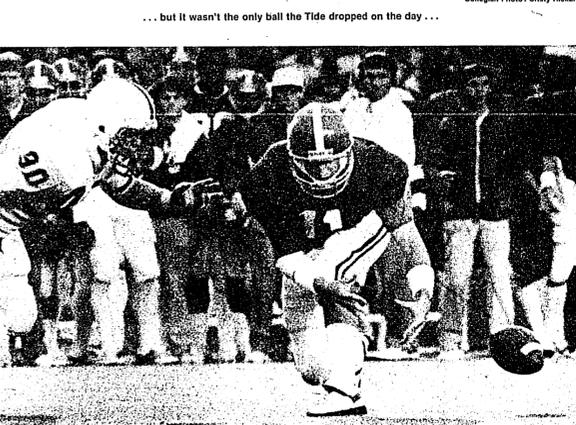
Coupled with Colorado's upset of No. 3 Nebraska, the Lions could be ranked as high as third this week. And with scouts from nine bowl Please see LIONS, Page 12



Penn State's Don Grahaf forces Alabama quarterback Mike Shula to cough up the ball...



... but it wasn't the only ball the Tide dropped on the day...



... Three Alabama fumbles and two interceptions cost the Tide heavily.

Defensive line leaves mark on Tide's rushers

By CHRIS RAYMOND
Collegian Sports Writer

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — The official program for Saturday's game billed the Penn State-Alabama matchup as the biggest clash ever staged in Bryant-Denny Stadium.

And although the program cover sports in a full color photo of Tide kicker Van Tiffin, much of the hype surrounding that statement centered around the opposing backfields.

Coming into the contest, Penn State had averaged 272.8 yards per game on the ground behind the explosive running of D.J. Dozier, Blair Thomas, Steve Smith and Tim Manoa. Alabama, meanwhile, had rushed to a 265.8 yard-per-game average on the legs of Bobby Humphrey, Gene Jeltz and Bo Wright.

When the title bout drew to a close, however, one side of the lineup was poorly represented on the scorecard. The Humphrey-Jeltz-Wright tandem had combined for a paltry 44 yards rushing on 33 carries. Penn State, on the other hand, had racked up 210 yards on 51 attempts.

In the end, it wasn't the backfield superstars who made the difference in the contest, but the defensive line on the other side of the ball — the humble quartet of Don Graham, Tim Johnson, Bob White and Mike Russo.

"Those guys just took off," outside linebacker Shane Conlan said. "I think that made the difference in the game. We controlled the line of scrimmage and that made a lot of things happen for the linebackers so we could come up and make some big plays. I think that was the key to the game."

Johnson led the linemen with eight tackles and two sacks on the day. He was followed by Graham who recorded five stops and two sacks, White who had four stops and one sack and Russo who registered four stops. Graham and White were also responsible for recovering two of Alabama's three fumbles.

"Coming into this game we knew we were going to have to

could've been different — if he didn't practice against great linebackers on a daily basis.

"We know that he's just another player, he can be beat and that's what we tried to do," the Cherry Hill, N.J., native said. "We just tried to go at him. He's just another football player, we go against guys every day — on our football team — that are All-Americans."

Shaffer was sacked just once on the afternoon in which he completed 13 of 17 pass attempts for 168 yards. He credited the line's ability to stop the Tide's rush as a key to his performance.

Long guard Dan Morgan said the Lions concentrated on running into the heart of the line, the one area where Alabama appeared vulnerable. Noseguard Curt Jarvis and tackles Derrick Slaughter and Cliff Thomas are smaller than the Tide's linebackers and the Lions thought they could have success running at them. But Morgan said it still wasn't easy.

"They really battled us the whole game," he said. "They're a good football team."

Jarvis wasn't surprised to see the Lions coming his way. "I guess all year we've wondered when someone was going to really challenge us up front with the running game," he said.

"Penn State was definitely the first team this year to challenge our defense running the ball over and over. When you think about it, they would have been stupid not to check us out."

Center Keith Radeck, the leader of the experienced group, agreed that the line had a great day. But he knows that there are still areas for improvement.

'I think this was the best performance overall from the defensive line all year.'
— Bob White, defensive end

have a good effort from the down people taking care of the guys inside because we had the speed outside to run their backs down," White said. "We played pretty decent all year against the run so we wanted to take care of the run first and force them into their passing game so we could do some other things."

"I think this was the best performance overall from the defensive line all year," White added. "I was glad to see that because we're going to need that later on, especially in games like this."

Despite the Lions' overwhelming success in shutting down the same Alabama offense which had squashed Tennessee 58-28 one week earlier, Johnson said the defensive line could still use some work.

"You don't know it and you don't see it but we still made some mistakes today that cost us as far as yardage and stuff like that," he said. "We made some mistakes and I still think that we have to get yet. We just have to go a little further each game."

With upcoming contests against West Virginia, Maryland, Notre Dame and Pitt, the Lions may get an opportunity to do just that. And although their contribution to the game may not always receive the same press as the highly regarded play of the Penn State linebackers, it can lead to a great overall performance by the defense.

"The defensive line has been doing a great job for as long as I've been here and they don't really get the credit they deserve," Bauer said.

Unheralded offensive line keys Lions' win

By MARK ASHENFELTER
Collegian Sports Writer

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — All week long the talk centered on the exploits of Alabama's defense. Wasn't this the unit that had kept the opposition to an average of 287 yards per game, less than 100 of them on the ground?

The Crimson Tide entered the game as all that — and more. Opponents had averaged less than three yards per rushing attempt and had struggled to average 11.7 points per game.

These statistics, in addition to facing All-America linebacker Cornelius Bennett and his equally tough, but underrated, counterparts had Penn State fans wondering if the Lions had any chance Saturday.

After all, how could a team that struggled to score against Cincinnati match up against such a ferocious bunch?

The answer turned out to be simple. "It's hard for even the greatest defender to tackle a tailback while lying flat on the Astroturf."

Due in large part to an outstanding effort by the Lions' offensive line, Penn State gained 234 yards rushing on the way to a shocking 23-3 victory in Bryant-Denny Stadium. Alabama's defenders were constantly blown off the line of scrimmage and Lion quarterback John Shaffer had great protection all afternoon.

Although Bennett ended with 14 tackles, he never really hurt the Lions. The line kept him away from Shaffer and only one of his tackles went for a loss of yardage.

"We tried to do as well as we could with Bennett," Lion Head Coach Joe Paterno said. "We tried to run away from him or run at him."

"We tried to keep him honest with some reverses early in the game so we could run at him (later on)."

Short tackle Stan Clayton saw a lot of Bennett, but was far from awed by the All-American's reputation. Clayton hinted that if

Stickwomen outhustle Senators, 3-0

By MARK FURRY
Collegian Sports Writer

If statistics don't lie, then the truth about the field hockey team's victory over Davis & Elkins was that the Senators were completely dominated. But statistics do lie, at least when it comes to sports.

The Lady Lions may have won the game 3-0. They may have outshot Davis & Elkins 37-4, and Penn State goalie Michele Monahan may have only had to make three saves in contrast to the Senators' goalie's 22.

But statistics can't measure hustle or heart, and according to Penn State Head Coach Gillian Ratray, Davis & Elkins had both.

"Their goalie, Donna Burns, played brilliantly," Ratray said. "She kept them in the game. The game was not as lopsided as the stats would indicate. Davis & Elkins really hustled. They're a good team."

According to Penn State's senior co-captain Mary McCarthy, the Lady Lions had trouble finding the back of the net.

"We took a lot of shots, but couldn't get it in," McCarthy said. "I think we passed better in the Ursinus game (played last Thursday) than we did against Davis & Elkins."

The Lady Lions' first goal came 15 minutes into the first half. Stacia Palahnuik notched her fourth goal of the year on an assist by Tracey Neave. However, the Lady Lions did not get on the board again until late in the second half when sophomore Tami Worley scored to give the Lady Lions a 2-0 lead.

Mary McCarthy added an insurance goal two minutes later to give Penn State the 3-0 win. The Lady Lions are now 13-3-2, while Davis & Elkins drops to 4-10-2.

The only bad news to come out of the game was that defenseman Becky Vaughan injured her finger and pending the doctor's word, is questionable

for Wednesday's game with Princeton. With Vaughan out, the Lady Lions are left with only two healthy defensemen and three slots to fill.

If needed, Sue Sommers, who is listed as a forward, will fill in for Vaughan.

"Sue Sommers played for Becky against Davis & Elkins and got some valuable playing time at defense," Ratray said.

"We played well defensively (against D&E)," McCarthy said. "But if Becky is out for a while, it could be a problem. It will be interesting in practice with only two defensemen healthy."

The Lady Lions have now played two teams in a row that were not in the top 20 — Ursinus and Davis & Elkins. Before those two games, the schedule read like a who's who in field hockey. But McCarthy sees a danger in playing unranked teams.

"When you lose to a team in the top 10, it doesn't seem as bad as when you lose to a team that is not in the top 10," McCarthy said.

consider a future power in the A-10.

"We played well when we had to," Rose said. "I think UMass is the second best team in the conference and I won't be surprised if we see them in the championships."

UMass added another potential problem for the Lady Lions with a noisy crowd. Co-Captain Vida Kerich said the house was rocking in Amherst.

"At one point we couldn't even hear the referee blow his whistle," Kerich said.

For Kerich, who has recently been struggling in and out of a hitting slump, things seem to be getting back on the right track. She said that she thinks the worst is over.

"I started coming out of it (the slump) against Pittsburgh," Kerich said, "and I was feeling better this weekend."

With former starter Heidi Pilecki out with a sprained ankle, Samantha Johns is filling in on the left side. Rose said Johns has contributed with solid performances in Pilecki's absence.

"Samantha Johns is doing an outstanding job," he said. "She plays all the way around (not coming out on back row rotations) and is playing well."

All-American setter Ellen Hensler is having another banner year as she continues to dominate the opposition. "After three plus years under Rose, he is still amazed at the quality of Hensler's play."

"Ellen had an exceptional weekend," Rose said. "She elevated her play so that it was clear she was the best player on the floor in both matches."

Freshman middle blocker Bessy Ramirez is rapidly making a name for herself in the A-10, as she has the best hitting efficiency in the conference. The Mayaguez, Puerto Rico native had another strong showing this past weekend as she registered 18 kills, four blocks and two service aces.

Right side hitter Lisa Leap contributed in typical form with 20 kills and two blocks on the weekend. The hitting combination of Leap and Johns has been successful thus far for the Lady Lions, and with Izetta Phillips at the middle-hitter spot, Rose is pleased with his team.

"Izetta Phillips is starting to swing more and more on the court," Rose said.

Next weekend, the Lady Lions will host Temple, Virginia Commonwealth and Pittsburgh in the Penn State Open.

Lady Lions remain perfect in Atlantic 10

By MARK S. McWHIRTER
Collegian Sports Writer

With one conference match to go in the season, the women's volleyball team's Atlantic 10 record remains perfect. After blanking A-10 rival Rhode Island and newcomer Massachusetts over the weekend, the Lady Lions have only Temple left to beat to ensure a No. 1 ranking at the conference championship in November.

The Lady Lions played only six games this weekend, three in Amherst, Mass. and three in Kingston, R.I. After it was all over, Penn State had rolled to a 15-0, 15-4, 15-7, 15-4 win over Rhode Island.

Despite the one-sided scoring, Friday night's match against UMass saw Penn State up against a team that Head Coach Russ Rose

considers a future power in the A-10.

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