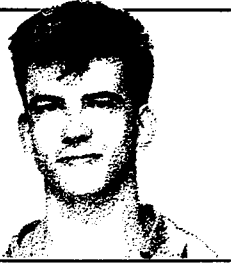


My Opinion

Dave Stevenson



Eagles go on minus Randall

Green Bay Packer Bryce Paup has earned himself an endearing place in the hearts of many Philadelphia football fans.

He is, and will forever be remembered to Eagles fans as the linebacker who broke free from the block of Philadelphia center David Alexander and slammed right into the left knee of star quarterback Randall Cunningham, completely tearing two ligaments.

He is the man who put in question the career and future of the most prolific quarterback in the NFL today.

He is the man who, with one clean shot on an autumn-like day in Wisconsin, many feel has put an end to the Eagles' season just 15 minutes and change after it had began.

Yes, the outlook on the season has changed and yes, things will be different, but not necessarily for the worst. The cries and claims of a season already in despair before the ink has dried on Week One are senseless.

Already, four days, and even one play, after Cunningham was wheeled into the locker room and backup Jim McMahon stepped under center, people have written the Eagles off — given them an excuse, a perfectly reasonable excuse, I might add, to fade into the parity of the NFC. To make games against the New England Patriots and Dallas Cowboys the league's most closely-contested battles to the wire, to make games against the Giants and Redskins complete mismatches.

What the Eagles have actually been dealt is a chance, a gift, albeit wrapped in strange paper, to step up and show the league the kind of team they are — a playoff contender, one whose balance lies on both sides of the ball, not just on the shoulders of No. 12.

And for what it's worth, I believe they can, and will, do it.

Philadelphia has lost its number one offensive threat in the 28-year-old Cunningham, last season's team leader in rushing with 942 yards and the NFC's second-ranked passer, but it's not as bad as it seems.

Since the Eagles opened camp in West Chester on July 15, questions have plagued the team. Defensive holdouts precipitated a feeling of doom, a fear that the defense, under the direction of Bud Carson, would not be able to 'gel' and learn the new system quickly enough for the season. The most heralded of these holdouts was the slimmed-down Jerome Brown, who signed a 3-year deal just days before Sunday's season-opener in Green Bay. People said the lack of practice and conditioning would hurt the veteran players — but so far, once again, people were wrong.

Anyone who watched the Eagles defense methodically shut down the Don Majikowski-led Packer offense, knows that the same Gang-Green defense that held opponents to 73.3 yards per game on the ground, tops in the NFC in 1990, is here this season — possibly better and more stable than it has ever been with Pro-Bowlers Brown and Reggie White poised for great seasons.

Whether Philadelphia can continue that pressure throughout the season remains to be seen.

Time will tell how backup-turned-star McMahon will handle the Birds' offense on his own. After replacing Cunningham, McMahon performed well, considering the limited action he has seen in two years. The former Bear completed 17-of-25 for 275 yards and 2 touchdowns. Given a chance to start every day he might be able to regain the form he had with Chicago.

But injuries have been McMahon's downfall and the Eagles can't take any chances. With that in mind the Eagles announced last night the signing of former New York Jet Pat Ryan, a QB with more than 10 years experience, to back up McMahon. Ryan, who was cut from Cleveland in the preseason last year, will be in uniform Sunday.

Doctors said Monday that full recovery will be possible for Cunningham and in all likelihood, he will be the same scrambling quarterback as he always was. But for now don't jump ship — just sit back and enjoy the Eagles as they push toward the Super Bowl.

Dave Stevenson is a junior majoring in journalism and an assistant sports editor for the Daily Collegian.



Collegian Photo/Chris Gaydos

Fullback Sam Gash sprints away from Georgia Tech's Ken Swilling in the Kickoff Classic last Wednesday. Gash had a strong game against the Yellow Jackets with 80 yards rushing and figures to be a big part of the Lion's running game for the duration of the season.

By STEVE CARELLAS
Collegian Sports Writer

Coach Charlene Morett hopes the field hockey team will become the second Penn State squad to knock off a defending national champion by way of the pass.

With just four practices left until Sunday's season opener with No. 1 Old Dominion at Norfolk, Va., the Lady Lions' focus has been primarily on generating a potent passing attack.

"We've been caught up in one-on-ones and they really need to . . . look to pass earlier," Morett said, "so that we can get the ball in scoring position."

"Right now, we're getting caught in possession instead of passing the ball."

Moving the ball effectively will be key in Penn State's plans to overload inside its attacking end. Because of the losses of Chelle Frates and Lynette Kidder, who led the team last season with 21 and 17 assists respectively, the Lady Lions are in need of play-making candidates to step up.

But for now, the team is simply trying to sharpen and quicken passes in preparation for its game with the Lady Monarchs, who yielded just 12 goals in 26 games.

"Sometimes we click, sometimes we have

a harder time with it," senior co-captain Eleanor Stone said. "We hold onto it an extra second too long sometimes and that's when the defense comes up with it."

Junior Jen Stewart is expected to be a capable ballhandler at the center midfield position, where she replaces All-American Kristen Winters.

Stewart, who played right midfield last season, dished out nine assists last year — including game-winners against Maryland, St. Joseph's, Pennsylvania and Bucknell.

"Jenny has really improved her level of fitness," Morett said. "She has very good stick work and she's been a two-year starter. So she has the experience to hold down that center midfield position."

Stewart will be complimented nicely on the attack by forwards Susann Bisignaro, Stone and sophomore speedster Kirt Benedict, who moves into a starting role at left wing.

Last season, Stone's 23 goals tied her with Candy Finn for the highest total ever by a Penn State junior. She also tallied eight assists and was an All-America selection.

Despite losing Winters and Frates on the attack, Morett said, Stone won't assume any greater brunt of the scoring load this season. Bisignaro, a senior, Stewart and Benedict are all expected to increase their goal production.

Connors still charming at U.S. Open

By JIM LITKE
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK — You would have thought he'd stay in bed the whole day. And like all the other people who tried to guess what Jimmy Connors would do when the U.S. Open began nine days ago, you would have been wrong.

"I was drained last night, but I'm OK today," Connors said yesterday, still flashing the sly, wearied grin that has been his signature at this tournament.

"I actually feel better than I thought I would."

Some 20 hours after finishing off Aaron Krickstein in one of the most dramatic matches in memory, Connors arrived at the National Tennis Center for a half-hour practice session yesterday in a rock-star mode.

He was more than an hour late, leaving one crowd of several hundred people hanging around the practice court where he was supposed to show up, then gathered another crowd of almost equal size as he stepped out of the players' facility and made his way to a different court. Once there, he hit with former English star John Lloyd for a while, then spent almost as much time shaking hands and signing autographs as he had while tuning up for his next performance.

And when asked whether he had formulated a plan for tomorrow night's quarterfinal match against equally surprising Paul Haarhuis, Connors looked almost surprised and replied, "I can't do anything about it now. Besides, I don't worry about that stuff any more."

"I passed that stage a long time ago. I never took my tennis home with me. I didn't worry about it, when I was the best player in the world,"

he continued, "so why worry about it now."

Why, indeed? Last October, Connors had surgery to reconstruct his left wrist and hardly figured to be here in the first place, let alone playing on his 39th birthday with a chance to slip into the round of eight at a tournament he had won five times previously, but not since 1983.

And so when he was asked whether he had surprised even himself, Connors shot back, "That's an unfair question to ask me. There was a time when I thought I would never play tennis again."

But the more he thought about it, the more he had to admit that "maybe I did surprise myself a little bit with the pace I came back at." And a moment later, the youthful, more willful side of Connors began to emerge.

"If I didn't think I could do it," he said, "I would have stopped last year."

Connors body still requires the balm that modern medicine can provide: He spent nearly 15 minutes being iced and taped before his brief practice session Tuesday and nearly an hour after his Monday night match on an intravenous hookup, replacing depleted minerals lost in the 4½-hour match with Krickstein. But his spirit apparently has all the nourishment it needs.

More than once, Connors said he tracked down a voice in the howling New York audience and seen a familiar face. The words are different, but the result is the same.

"The thing is that when they were rooting against me, I could produce my best tennis. And now that they're rooting for me," he said, "it's pushing me to do it again."

Paterno wary of Cincy

By PETER ZELLEN
Collegian Sports Writer

It doesn't matter what the writers or the fans thought of Penn State's performance against Georgia Tech, Coach Joe Paterno said there is still a need for improvement as the Lions go up against Cincinnati on Saturday.

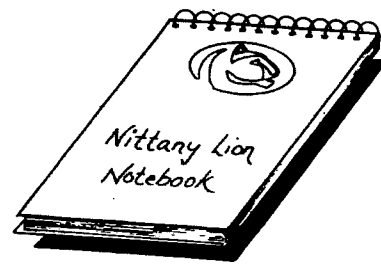
"I don't think that on either side of the ball that we can feel comfortable that we've arrived after the Georgia Tech game," he said.

Paterno's biggest concern was the offensive line and he spoke critically of them at yesterday's press conference. "Our offensive line still has a long way to go. We didn't pick up a couple of things and do some things as well as I thought we would do. I don't think we were as effective at running the football as I thought we would be," Paterno said. "The offensive line has got to come along to do anything, whether you run it or throw it."

Paterno singled out the good play of guard Paul Siever and tackle Todd Rucci but wants more consistency out of the remaining players. "For a bunch of guys that didn't play a lot of football they did alright, but they're certainly not good enough for us to feel comfortable that we've arrived," he said.

While allowing quarterback Tony Sacca to be sacked five times, they also made enough holes that enabled Penn State to rush for 150 yards with a team high of 80 yards from senior fullback Sam Gash.

Paterno said that he was impressed with Gash's play and is pleased that



he is able to play this season without the bumps and bruises that have hampered him in three of the last four seasons.

"This is the best Sam has been. He's worked hard on his speed," Paterno said. "I want to get the ball to him as much as we can give a fullback in the I-formation."

Another oft-injured player that Paterno was pleased with was senior inside linebacker Andre Powell. Powell had three tackles and one assist against the Yellow Jackets and looked to be an important part of the defense.

"He (Powell) and (Keith) Goganious give us two kids in a very difficult position. Not only do they have to be big, strong linebackers but we put them on backs so much. They have to cover backs coming out of the backfield one-on-one so much that he has to be really good, almost good enough to be strong safety," Paterno said.

In looking ahead to Cincinnati, Paterno wasn't necessarily as worried about the game as he might have been against Georgia Tech but he refuses to take the Bearcats, 1-10 last season, for granted.

"Cincinnati may not be in the same league as Georgia Tech but they sure

may be in the same league as Memphis State," Paterno said referring to Memphis State's 24-10 victory over No. 16 Southern California Monday night.

Cincinnati is a young, sophomore-dominated team that is undergoing a rebuilding process under third-year coach Tim Murphy.

"Coach Murphy has gone in there with the idea he's going to be solid and build a solid foundation and I think he has. They played some people very well last year. I think that without having seen them this year, and obviously we did have someone at their Spring game, we know they have some speed in the secondary and a young quarterback who was one of the better freshmen in the country," Paterno said.

After seeing the Kickoff Classic, Murphy has his own impressions of the Lions.

"The thing that surprised me most is what we all used to think of Penn State as an impressive and tremendous program and team. They were a little bit different coming into the 90's here against Georgia Tech. I think the thing that was different was that they seem to have evolved philosophically and schematically and to me they look a lot more like Miami, Florida, then they did as the old Eastern independent Penn State," Murphy said. "They're playing a lot of that 4-3 defense that Miami has made famous. They're spreading the field now formationally and they're throwing the ball and doing a lot of the things that probably you have to do to win the national championship."

Stickwomen look to improve pass offense

"We hold onto (the ball) an extra second too long sometimes and that's when the defense comes up with it."

—Eleanor Stone
Women's field hockey co-captain

With a defensive backfield hampered by graduation losses, controlling the offensive side of the ball will be crucial. Last season, Old Dominion stung opponents for a 4.5 goal-per-game average.

However, senior goalkeeper Michele Brennan is not worried about working with a less experienced backfield.

"We're young, but the only thing we're lacking is the experience on defense," Brennan said, a co-captain and 1990 second-team All-American. "They have a lot of talent."

Senior Stacy Gilburg, who was Brennan's teammate in high school, returns to the left back position for her third season as a starter. She will be joined in the backfield by sophomores Sharon Kuntz and Becca Main, whose speed will be valuable both on defense and the attack.

Morett couldn't have picked a better team by which to gauge Penn State's strengths and weakness than the defending national champions.

Regardless of the outcome, Sunday's matchup will be a valuable learning experience for the Lady Lions as they embark on a long season as an independent.

"I think it's good (that we play them now) because we'll know where the team stands," Stone said. "(But) it's gonna make me nervous playing them right at the first game."

Women's soccer on the move

By FRANKLIN BERKEY
Collegian Sports Writer

According to the United States Soccer Federation, about 3.5 million women under the age of 19 play soccer in the United States. Despite this fact, women's soccer at the collegiate level has faced an uphill battle at many universities.

Penn State, similar to many large schools, does not sponsor women's soccer as a varsity sport. However, the Lady Lions, under the direction of Coach Denny Hall, have made great strides despite the fact that they are considered a club team.

"We can basically play with anyone in the nation," Hall said. "Our recruiting class is among the best in the nation. We are three-fourths of the way there (to a varsity program)."

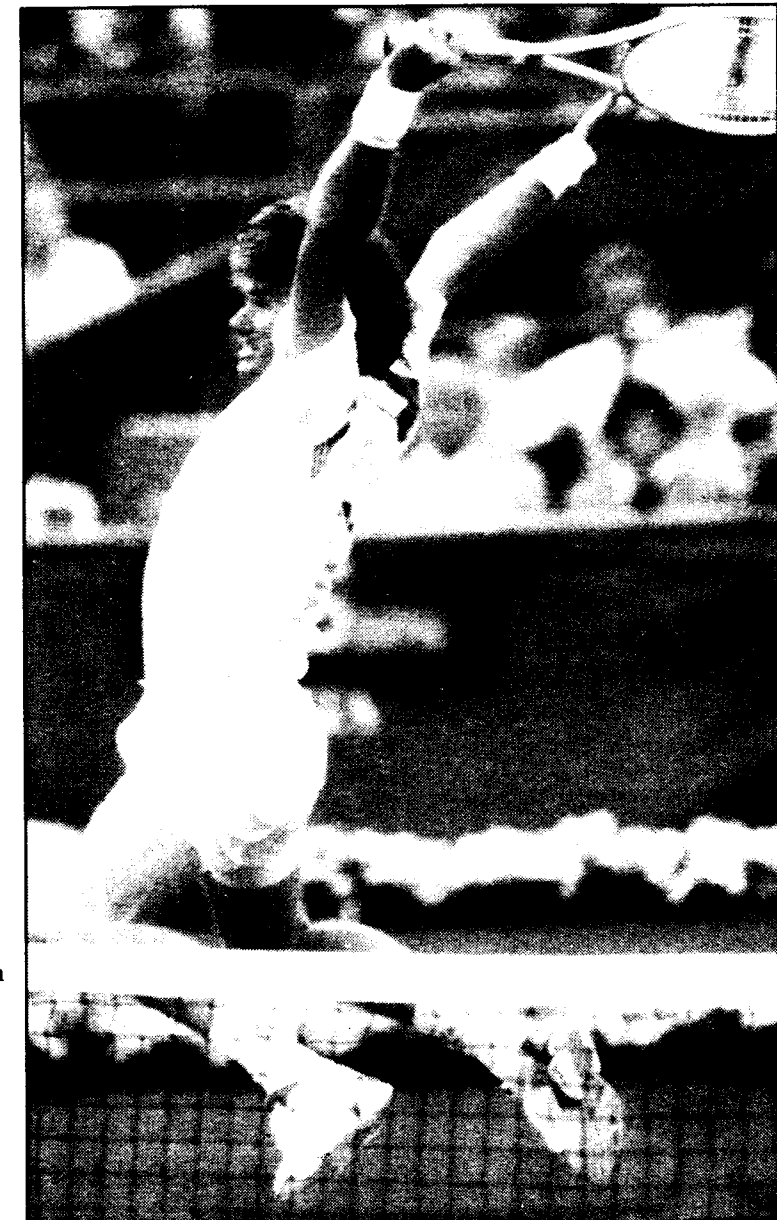
The women's program belongs to the National Collegiate Club Soccer Association

(NCCSA). Because it is not a member of the NCAA, the team has difficulty formulating a "class schedule," Hall said.

"We play a very attractive schedule, but the teams will only play us for one year," Hall explained. "If the team beats us, it does not help the opponents in the rankings. But, if we beat them, it is really going to hurt them. They will only stay on our schedule for one or two years. It is really problematic for us. Scheduling is the big handicap that I see in being a club sport."

Last year, the team received over \$5,500 from Puma, its national sponsor. In addition, the team used a number of fund raisers to raise money.

Please see SOCCER, Page 18.



AP LaserPhoto

Jimmy Connors celebrates after winning his fourth round match over Aaron Krickstein Monday afternoon. Connors, who also turned 39 on Monday, takes on Paul Haarhuis tomorrow.