

Berger shines in booters' win

By RYAN JONES
Collegian Sports Writer

Box scores

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FLEETWOOD — The Irish may be talking peace on the other side of the ocean, but they sure weren't doing it on the soccer field in this rural Pennsylvania community Saturday night.

Instead, the weekend scrap between Penn State and Notre Dame was a bitter, mostly ugly battle for which the word "peace" held little application. The Nittany Lions and Fighting Irish battered each other for over 80 minutes before a hometown hero punched in the winning goal to give the Lions a 1-0 win in front of 5,000-plus fans at Fleetwood High School.

Sophomore forward Travis Berger, seizing the opportunity to star in front of the almost-hometown crowd, scored the game's only goal at the 83-minute, 38-second mark. Taking a cross from senior midfielder Kurt Esser, Berger, standing just outside the 18-yard line, had enough time to line up the shot he sent past Irish

goalie Bert Bader and into the far corner of the net.

"I just got goose bumps when I scored," said Berger, who hails from nearby Sinking Spring and attended rival Wilson High School. "It's a great feeling in front of the hometown crowd."

Lion Coach Barry Gorman knew he couldn't have penned a happier ending.

"It was a fairy tale, wasn't it?" Gorman said after the game. "To come back to your own neighborhood and score the winning goal against Notre Dame."

Although the ending was fit for a Disney flick, most of the rest of the matchup looked like something out of a Stephen King screamer. The game was physical, if not dirty, at times, as neither side could establish and maintain an offense and both seemed to resort to taking out their frustration on each other.

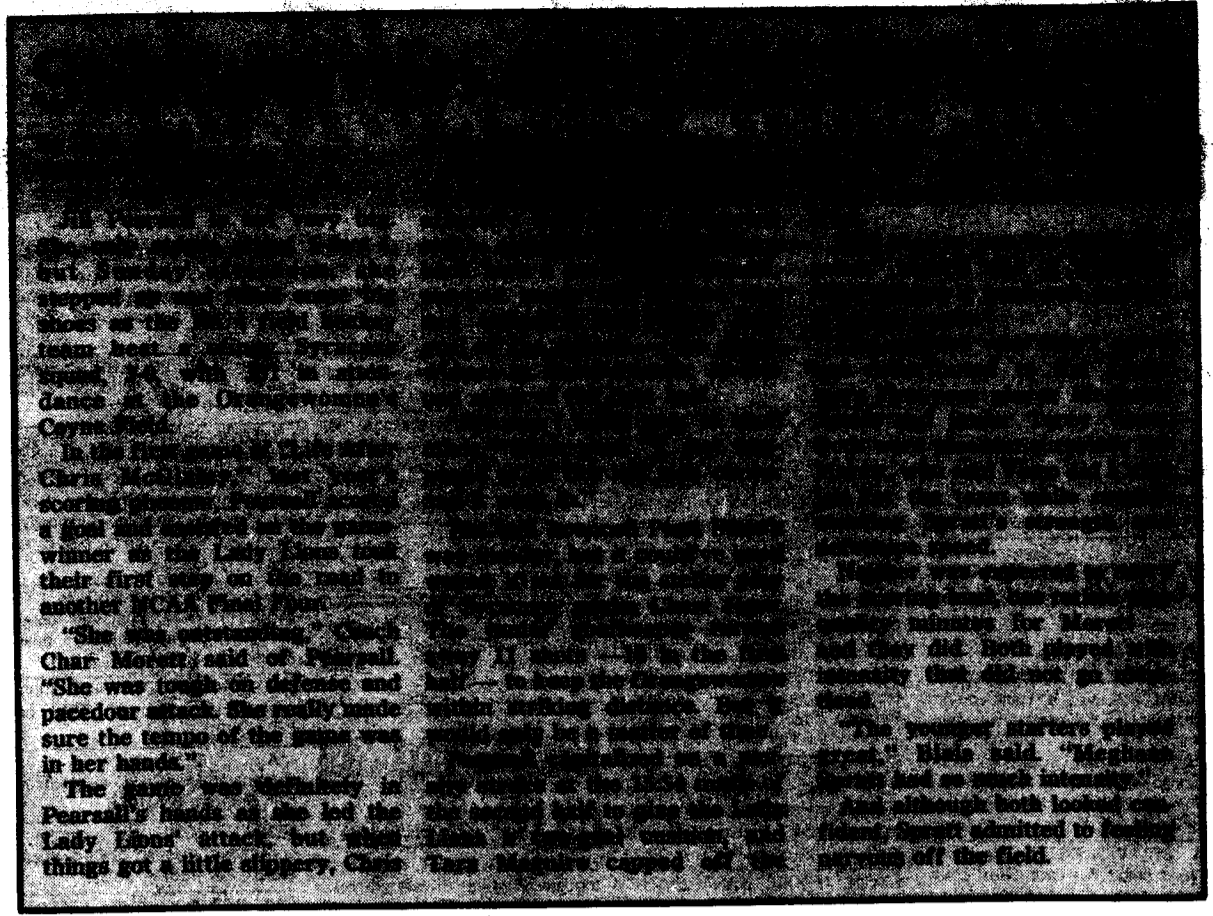
"A win's a win, as they say, and it was a good result from us," Gorman said. "But I'll be truthful with you. I don't think either team really deserved it."

Gorman was mostly content to chalk up the unsightly play to the nerves and anxiety associated with a season opener, but he did see some bright spots. Sophomore Drew Kaufmann played a quiet but solid game at the defensive mid-field spot left open by Gavin Reid's graduation, and redshirt freshman Steve Saunders laid his claim to the starting goalkeeper post with an aggressive and intelligent shut-out.

"In the beginning, I was a little nervous, and then everything seemed to come along from there," said Saunders, who made two saves in his first collegiate start. "I think that they really came out to win this game."

Note:

■ Fresh off their season-opening win, the Lions (1-0) take to the field for their first home contest, hosting Cleveland State (1-0) at 7:15 p.m. tonight at Jeffrey Field.



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