

## College Football

# Temple already thinking about Lions

By JOHN F. BONFATTI  
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Temple, the Big East's longtime patsy, is talking tough in the final season of coach Ron Dickerson's five-year plan to make the team measure up to its usual killer schedule.

"Who's Penn State? Nobody," senior defensive end Robert Kelly said yesterday, before the Owls flew to Western Michigan for Thursday's season opener. "We're going to go up there and fight it out."

Dickerson, a former Penn State assistant, said that's a different attitude from his past teams.

"We went to Penn State a few years ago and we flat-out were intimidated by the stadium, not the players," he said, referring to the Nittany Lions' 66-14 rout in 1995. "For the first time, we have seniors who have been there, done that."

Mostly what they've done is lose, in almost every conceivable fashion, from brutal blowouts to go-from-ahead stunners like last year's 53-52 loss at Pittsburgh.

Dickerson was so frustrated after that one that he quit, only to reconsider later in the week.

The Owls are 5-39 in their four years under Dickerson, hired to rebuild a program that was 39-71 under its previous two coaches. They have won only one of their 38 Big East games, losing by an average score of 39-14.

Those are the kind of numbers that get

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— Robert Kelly  
Temple defensive end

coaches fired. Dickerson, a genuinely likeable man with a quiet dignity, seems ready to accept whatever fate lies ahead.

He's not backing off the timetable he established when he was hired in 1993. "It takes five years and this is the fifth year," Dickerson said. "Sit back and buckle your seat belt."

Maybe it's false bravado, but the Owls do probably have more talent than in the past, even with the graduation of quarterback Henry Burris, who left with 20 school and 10 conference passing and total offense records; and linebacker Al Singleton, a fourth-round pick by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

And they have a cohesion that Kelly said they didn't in past years, when the team tended to split up by class.

"This is the first year I've been here where we have a whole team," he said. "We've gotten a lot stronger and faster. What we plan to do is prove everybody wrong."

That's a mighty tall order. After the opening game against Western Michigan, six of Temple's 10 remaining opponents went to bowl

games last year: Penn State, Virginia Tech, Syracuse, Miami, Navy and West Virginia.

Replacing Burris is junior Pat Bonner, whom Dickerson said has shown a new dedication now that he's out from under Burris' shadow.

"He didn't take many things seriously," Dickerson said. "Now that the job is his ... he's worked hard."

But it might not be long before sophomore Kevin Harvey, the team's most talented player, takes over. An academic casualty last year, Harvey was a heavily-recruited high school star whose 656 points and 101 touchdowns are New Jersey schoolboy records.

"Once he starts running the football, he's very elusive," said Dickerson, who will use Harvey as a kick returner before deciding whether he can throw well enough to run the team.

The Owls didn't have much trouble scoring under Burris. With a veteran offensive line and capable running backs, Temple should score this season if they get decent quarterbacking.

Defense has been the problem, and with seniors accounting for half the Owls' tackles last year, it looks like a problem again this year. But Dickerson said his defense will play a different style.

"We have a more urgent approach defensively," he said. "We're swarming to the ball."

Dickerson said this is the biggest, strongest, fastest and deepest team he's had. Given how badly overmatched physically they have been in the past, that may mean little.

# Nehlen sees immediate challenge with Marshall

By MATT HARVEY  
AP Sports Writer

MORGANTOWN, W. Va. — Marshall won by an average of nearly 44-14 in going 15-0 and winning the NCAA Division I-AA title last season.

That ease of victory leaves West Virginia coach Don Nehlen guessing some in preparing for Saturday's game against the Herd.

"They won so easily last year, it's hard for us to evaluate," Nehlen said yesterday. "You look at their scores and it looked like they were playing basketball."

Marshall is making the jump up to Division I-A this season, playing its first game at that level Saturday at Mountaineer Field.

Most I-AA teams jump up with puny linemen. Marshall's offensive linemen average 296 pounds.

"I am surprised at how big they are," Nehlen said. "Offensively, they may be as big as anyone in our league, I don't know. ... And we know their skill is excellent. Their skill is no different than (in the Big East)."

One of Marshall's top players at the skill positions is receiver Randy Moss. He caught 28 touchdown passes last year as a freshman and had more than 1,700 yards receiving.

Moss was quoted in a national sports publication as saying he didn't see how West Virginia could beat Marshall.

His comments have been posted in WVU's facility building.

But Nehlen isn't putting too much stock in them as a motivator.

His players would and should be ready to play anyway, he said.

"It's been my experience that stuff's overworked. ... But that certainly doesn't hurt anything," he said about hanging the comments for his players to see.

Marshall's defense often is all but ignored when talk turns to the Herd. But Marshall held opponents to 123 yards rushing per game last season and 191 yards passing.

"They've won more football games than Nebraska in the '90s," he said.

"You normally do that by being able to play good defense. Their defense is very well schemed. Their defense is similar to ours."

**Notes:**  
Record-setting West Virginia receiver David Saunders had surgery Tuesday to repair damage to two ligaments in his knee, Nehlen said. Doctors said the surgery went well. However, the coach does not expect Saunders to return this season.

Carlos Osegueda, academically ineligible as a freshman in 1996, will start in Saunders' spot, Nehlen said. Converted quarterback Jerry Porter also likely will see action there. Porter also will return punts and kicks

# Expectations not very high for Rutgers football

PISCATAWAY N.J. (AP) — In what has become an annual rite of late summer, no one expects much from Rutgers in the upcoming season except for the coaches and players in the program.

The Scarlet Knights have usually lived up to the outside world's non-expectations, having gone 15-28-1 the past four seasons.

Coming off a 2-9 campaign with a starting quarterback whose experience consists of one season as a redshirt and one season of spring football, the outside world figures Rutgers to finish seventh in the eight-team Big East. As

usual, the Knights are thinking much bigger as they prepare for Saturday's opener at home with Virginia Tech.

"These guys are tied into the hip with me in terms of a relentless pursuit of a bowl championship," said second-year coach Terry Shea, "and they won't accept anything less."

Since its playing days began in 1869, Rutgers has been forced to accept less every season but one. Its only bowl berth was in 1978. Despite four straight losing seasons, the Knights insist they will not be happy with a mere winning record.

"I don't think the success of the team should be based solely on the record," Kelly said.

"If we go 6-5 and play hard every down, if we limit the mental mistakes, we'll be fine. If we get beat by a better team, as long as we leave it all out on the field, that's what should be looked at."

By rights, that is all Rutgers supporters should hope for. With an incredibly tough schedule that features games at Texas, Navy, West Virginia, Army and Miami, talk of steady improvement should override all the hoopla of bowl talk.

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