

Weather and injuries hampering Lions' preseason

By JORDAN HYMAN
Collegian Sports Writer

Joe Paterno does not know how good his football team is, and he has 10 days to figure it out.

At his weekly press conference yesterday, Paterno said sweltering practice temperatures have taken a toll on his team, adding that player fatigue has prevented him from taking a full account of his team's talent.

"I think we've done about as well as we can do," Paterno said. "These are always dog days. We had a long scrimmage on Monday and took off yesterday and took off today because we're really dog tired. The kids have worked hard. They've been out there all business. But I really don't know how good we are because we're so tired."

Lame Lions

The impact has been felt the



most on the offense, where certain key players have had injury problems.

Third-string quarterback Rashard Casey pulled muscles on his right side and has not thrown a pass since the third day of practice. An MRI done this week showed no damage, and Paterno is optimistic Casey will throw today or tomorrow.

"(It's) along his side and under his right arm. There's nothing there except it's a muscle problem," Paterno said. "He's way behind."

Casey has continued to run through drills without throwing passes, but the injury has slowed his challenge for the No. 2 quarterback position.

The fullback position for the Lions is also in question. Senior Jason Sload has not practiced at all because of a lingering knee injury and might not play against Pittsburgh this weekend.

"I think he was working out and he twisted it a little bit. When they scoped it they thought it would be fine," Paterno said. "Sload could not play a football game tomorrow, or next week."

Third-string fullback Anthony Cleary is banged up as well. The junior missed three practices with a pulled hamstring. Paterno said senior tight end Bob Stephenson played some fullback in practice in case Sload and Cleary are unable to back up starter Aaron Harris

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against Pittsburgh Sept. 6.

Also yet to play a down in practice is tailback Kenny Watson. Watson, who returned kickoffs for the Lions as a freshman, has been out with an ankle injury.

"He had an ankle injury that was not responding," said Paterno of Watson, who has been home in Harrisburg receiving treatment. "We may end up, if he hasn't come around, we may end up redshirting him."

Paterno said he will wait a few weeks to make that decision.

Ennis on target

Ideally, Paterno would like to see his star tailback Curtis Ennis weighing in at 230 pounds. Yet, at 232 or 233, Ennis is anything but overweight.

"Curtis ought to be under 235. He's about 232 now, 233, 231," Paterno said. "He'll go up and down. He doesn't have a lot of body fat on him. He'll eat two hamburgers and go up three pounds."

Starting quarterback Mike McQueary said Ennis has looked quicker on the field, and more like a leader off.

"He's doing a great job not only as a player," McQueary said, "but with leadership qualities on the team right now."

Can you spare any tickets, Joe?

Tickets are all sold out for the season opener against Pittsburgh, but don't tell some of Paterno's friends.

"It's amazing the demand I've had for people who want tickets for the Pitt game. I've probably had as many people after me for this game as any game on our schedule," Paterno said about all of the requests he has received.

"I mean all of them are Pitt fans. And all are friends. Hey Joe, you remember you said come up and see a game?"

Running wild

Ennis expected to carry Lions' backfield

Editor's Note: This is the third story in an eight-part series previewing Penn State's football team. This story previews the running backs.

By TIMOTHY HYLAND
Collegian Sports Writer

Penn State running backs Aaron Harris, Chris Eberly, Anthony Cleary, Kenny Watson, Jason Sload and Cordell Mitchell understand the situation in Penn State's backfield quite clearly.

They don't expect too many carries and plan on doing lots of blocking. With that in mind, they hope to make the most of their offensive opportunities.

Opportunities are going to be hard to come by, they know, because of this simple fact — Curtis Ennis is "the man" this season.

"Everybody knows who he is," said Nittany Lion coach Joe Paterno. "He is going to go out there and people are going to be gunning for him."

Ennis, a junior from Union City, Ohio, is already hyped as a Heisman candidate in the wake of an outstanding sophomore season. The tailback ran for 1,210 yards and scored 13 touchdowns, averaging 5.4 yards per carry and 110

yards per game to lead Penn State's offensive attack.

With a relatively unproven corps of receivers and a suspect passing game, Ennis will again be asked to carry the offensive load for the Lions. After such a successful season in 1996, Ennis doesn't plan on changing his running style this year.

"I just continue to run hard," Ennis said. "Like the old saying, 'If it isn't broke, don't fix it.'"

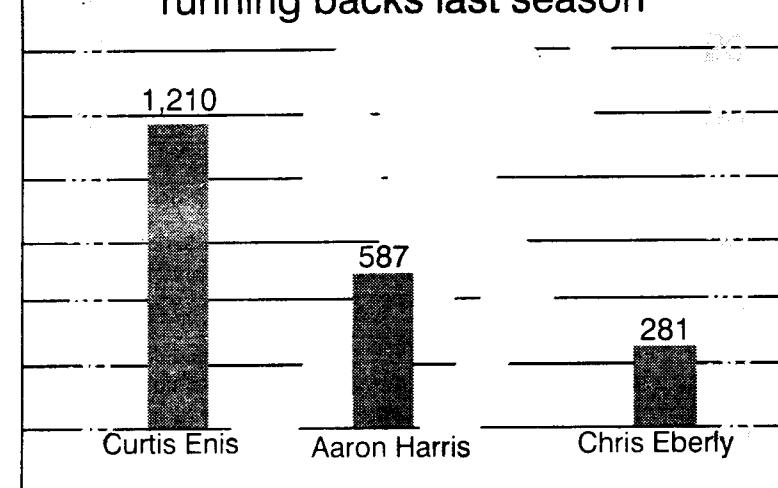
Though Ennis will undoubtedly get the most offensive opportunities, the Lion backfield has several other weapons — most notably fullback Harris.

"I think a lot of kids are going to play in the backfield," Paterno said. "Curtis should be the leader of the group, but Aaron Harris, in his own way, is a big time running back."

Harris rushed for 587 yards on 105 carries last season — second-best on the team — and he scored 11 touchdowns. In Penn State's 31-14 victory over Purdue, Harris led the team with 88 yards rushing, and proved to opposing defenses that Ennis is not the sole threat in the backfield.

"Our backfield has a lot of talented people," Harris said. "We have three good people at both

Yards gained by Penn State running backs last season



spots, so we should be able to wear some people down."

When Ennis needs a breather, Paterno has at least one proven backup in Eberly, who came to prominence with an impressive performance against Indiana last season.

With Ennis sidelined due to injury, Eberly stepped in and picked up where Ennis left off. Eberly tallied 110 yards on just 15

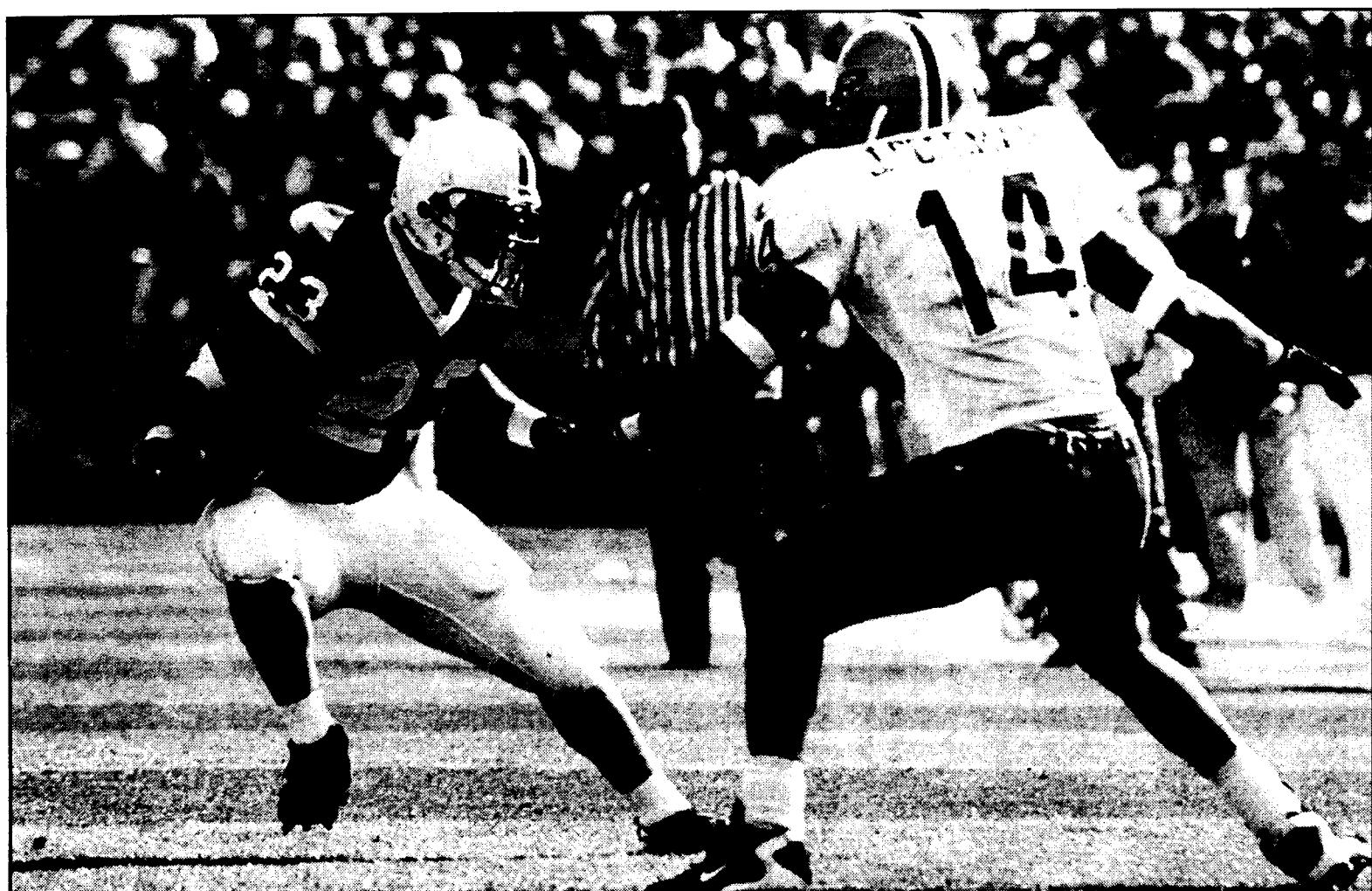
carries, helping the Lions to a 48-26 win.

Eberly said he is comfortable with his position as backup.

"If things are going good, why change?" Eberly said. "I mean, if I get my opportunity, I've just got to go out there and make the most of it."

Cleary and Sload should see a good deal of playing time, but will

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Penn State tailback Chris Eberly tries to avoid Purdue's Jamel Coleman during the Nittany Lions' win last season. Eberly spent part of his Penn State career as a defensive back but now provides a spark off the bench for the Lion offense.

By TIMOTHY HYLAND
Collegian Sports Writer

A struggling Curtis Ennis, in pain and ineffective against Indiana last season, trudged to the sideline and told Penn State coach Joe Paterno to put Chris Eberly in the game.

Paterno listened and Eberly went on to prove he might be the best backup tailback in the Big Ten after running for 110 yards on 15 carries and scoring two touchdowns.

The Penn State offense needed a boost and Eberly provided it. The senior from Beverly, N.J. should be expected to play a similar role

for the top-ranked Lions this season.

"We don't put Chris in a game where he doesn't play well," Paterno said. "I think he has got to be a big player on this team."

After Ennis' outstanding sophomore season, in which he ran for 1,210 yards, there is little doubt the preseasn Heisman candidate will get the majority of the team's carries.

In a backfield that also includes the powerful Aaron Harris, the redshirt junior figures to get four or five carries a game — which doesn't bother him a bit.

"It's just going to go game by game, whatever [the coaches] feel," Eberly said. "I mean,

if they put me in, they put me in. I they don't, I'll just cheer the team on."

Eberly is not the least bit uncomfortable as a backup, which could be attributed to the fact he spent most of his first two seasons moving from one position to another.

He began his career as a tailback, then moved to defensive back in hopes of seeing more playing time.

When former tailbacks Stephen Pitts and Ambrose Fletcher became unavailable, Eberly returned to the backfield. Three days before the season opener against USC last

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Lady booters make history in England

By AARON BASTIDE
Collegian Sports Writer

The Penn State women's soccer team made history Aug. 3 when it became the first American women's squad to play in London's historic Wembley Stadium.

The Lady Lions were defeated 3-2 by the English National Team in front of about 40,000 spectators in the opening game of its European tour.

Junior Carole Dutchka became the first American woman to score a goal at Wembley when she tied the score 1-1 late in the first half.

"It was by far the single greatest experience of my soccer career," Dutchka said of playing at Wembley. "There was so much to take in, the crowd, the fans, ... it was just awesome."

Sophomore Shari Pickett tied the score at 2-2 midway through the second half, but a late goal by the English squad sealed the win.

Wembley Stadium is undoubtedly one of the world's most famous sporting arenas. The stadium is to English professional soccer what Lambeau Field, Boston Garden and Yankee Stadium are to their respective sports. In England, Wembley is treated almost as a religious landmark. One would have a hard time locating a young boy in England who doesn't dream of one day scoring a goal on its halflawed pitch.

Senior tri-captain Lauren Miller described playing at Wembley as an incredible experience.

"It was breathtaking. The grass is nicer than carpet," she said. "We just tried to go out there and have fun. It was an honor to play there."

The Lady Lions' English debut was a prelude to the Charity Shield Cup, a match featuring Manchester United and Chelsea, two of England's top professional teams. At the beginning of Penn State's game, the stadium was nearly empty. However, by the end of the match, most of the seats were filled with rowdy, soccer-hungry fans.

"It was a pretty responsive crowd," Miller said. "They were kind of curious and interested to see how we played."



Carole Dutchka
Lady Lion forward

Senior Malisa Sallade noticed a difference between American and English soccer fans.

"Here people just cheer when you score a goal. Over there they cheer just to get you going," she said. "To play in front of that gives you so much energy."

Besides playing in its most revered stadium, the Lady Lions learned a great deal about the culture of England, where soccer is king.

"We have so many sports over here, over there it's just soccer. They call it football, and that's all there is," Miller said. "We just enjoyed being there. They do soccer right over there."

The purpose of the European tour was to prepare the Lady Lions, who enter the 1997 season ranked No. 8 according to the NSCAA Umbro coaches Top 25 poll, for their Aug. 31 opener against James Madison.

In addition to its match against the English national team, Penn State notched a 4-2 win over the Millwall Football Club, the top-ranked club team in the English Premier League. The team also participated in an exhibition match against a league champion from Belgium and a tournament in Germany.

"It was absolutely amazing to have an opportunity like that," Sallade said. "It was a great experience."

Bump decides to stay another year with Lions

By ANDREW DEBES
Collegian Sports Writer

Nate Bump had a feeling he would pitching at Penn State again this year when Wayne Britton, the Boston Red Sox head of scouting operations, left the stands during the third inning of a Scranton Wilkes-Barre Twins game in late July.

"He left the game early and never even introduced himself to me," Bump said. "I realized then, I didn't want to play for someone who wasn't interested in me."

Bump, who started the Atlantic Collegiate Baseball League game for the Twins, was not in top form that night. The night proved to be the beginning of the end of his contract negotiations with the Red Sox.

Boston drafted the Nittany Lion ace in the 23rd round of the 1997 Amateur Baseball Draft. Bump and his family were disappointed with the outcome of the draft.

"It was a shock," said Bump's father, Louis. "We were told by different teams that he would probably be taken between the third and eighth rounds, so we were pretty surprised."

During Bump's sophomore season, he was one of the best college pitchers in the country. Bump's 8-5 record and 93 strikeouts helped earn him Big Ten Pitcher of the Year honors.

However, last season was not nearly as successful. Plagued by problems with mechanics, Bump struggled through the season, posting a 5.12 ERA.

The lackluster season dropped Bump's value, leaving him unselected until the second day of the amateur draft. Negotiations with Boston were hindered when the two sides could not find common ground.

"It's a tough situation for a scout," said Phil Rossi, the Red Sox scout that followed Bump. "You obviously believe in the guy or you wouldn't have drafted him."

"I think Nate was a little sour after he didn't get drafted during the first day. He was waiting for steak and lobster, and got offered hamburger instead."

The Red Sox said Bump showed no real interest in signing with them, but the 6-foot-3 Lion pitcher felt it was Boston which left him with no other choice but to return

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Collegian Photo/Michael L. Palmeri

Eberly is not just a Lion reserve

By TIMOTHY HYLAND
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