



Collegian Photo/Laura Chiles

Travis Berger receives a pass from Sebastian Gouverneur in a game against Wisconsin-Green Bay two years ago. Berger, an All-Big Ten selection in 1995, returns from a leg injury to give the Lions an offensive spark.

# Offense key for booters

By MATT BELLUCCI  
Collegian Sports Writer

If the Penn State men's soccer team was a site on America Online, the keyword would be offense.

This year's team will need to score goals to win until the defense has a chance to settle in.

The Nittany Lions, ranked No. 18 in the NSCAA/Umbro coaches poll, have a bevy of offensive talent led by last year's leading scorer Phil Karn. A major cog in Penn State's offensive machinery, Karn filled the void left by Travis Berger's leg injury. He led the team in goals, assists and points and was a key factor in guiding Penn State to the Big Ten championship game.

But coach Barry Gorman thinks Karn can become even more of a threat this season.

"We thought he had a very good spring," Gorman said, "where he contributed more in the all-around performance rather than just looking to stay up front and be handed, so to speak. He's working

harder off the ball. He's working harder on defense."

Gorman feels Karn needs to improve his shooting percentage and take better advantage of his opportunities. Gorman said it is simply a matter of concentration and focusing on the task.

"He's a typical goal scorer," Gorman added. "If he scores, he's happy. If he misses he's very, very moody."

Now that Berger returns to the lineup, the Lions boast more weapons than ever before. Berger, a former first-team All-Big Ten, led the team in goal scoring during the 1995 season with 15. It's understandable he might be a little rusty coming off a 12-month layoff.

Berger hasn't seen game action since an Aug. 19, 1996, preseason game in Germany where he broke his fibula and ruptured four tendons in his left ankle. Being out of training for so long, this summer's training camp has started to take its toll on him.

"I knew that I was going to run

into some situations 'cause I haven't played in a year," Berger said. "My muscles aren't used to being trained. I knew I was going to be sore and my feet weren't going to hold up to the test. I felt fine, so I think my ankle is going to hold up fine."

But the loss of Berger last season allowed others to enter the spotlight. Junior midfielder John McClay stepped up and finished second on the team in scoring with eight goals and one assist.

Midfielder Justin Evans will be looked upon to increase his goal production. Evans scored just one goal last season and has looked good so far in the preseason.

Senior forward Frederik Guster will also contribute to the offense as well.

"We're definitely going to be strong up front and in the mid-field," Karn said. "We're sound offensively, we just have to worry about our defensive shape as a team. That's probably what we're worried about most."

# Nye hoping Santa Clause comes early

By MATT HOUGHTON  
Collegian Sports Writer

Although Christmas is still about four months away, Penn State golf coach Greg Nye has already written his wish.

Nye hopes Santa will answer his request early for leadership and experience in time for the start of the Nittany Lion golf team's fall season.

For the first time in nearly three years the Lions could begin competition without a definite No. 1 player. With the loss of District II Player of the Year Adam Decker to graduation, Nye made it clear he is looking for someone to step into the No. 1 spot and consistently pound out a low score.

Someone like Brad Kittsley or Brian Clift. "We are certainly hoping that Brad or Byron, either one or the other, will pick that up and become the new No. 1 player or collectively get the job done," Nye said.

Both Kittsley and Clift were voted Academic All-Americans by the Golf Coaches Association of America last season and both bring experience to a relatively young lineup.

"I have a more positive outlook than I've ever had before," said Kittsley, the 1997 Rutherford Intercollegiate Tournament champion. "I'm really excited to get back and I'm looking forward to the tourney down in Seton Hall."

According to Nye, Kittsley and Clift are the only two players who have secured a spot in the starting lineup for the Sept. 6-7 Seton Hall Invi-

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— Brad Kittsley  
Nittany Lion senior golfer

tational, the team's first match. Both are capable of being leaders, Nye said, but neither had to assume the pressure that comes with the leadership role last season with Decker consistently turning in top finishes.

Should these two seniors fail to provide consistently low scores, senior Joe Chuasiriporn could also step up as one of the team's marquee players, Nye said.

"I would look for some emergence out of Joe," Nye said. "He showed great promise late last season and when he got out of school he qualified through the first leg of the U.S. Open qualifier and he qualified for all his State Amateurs, State Open and did a nice job."

Aside from Kittsley, Clift and Chuasiriporn, the only other player who consistently appeared in the starting lineup last spring was junior Scott Phillis.

Phillis struggled toward the end of the season, but Nye said he still expects him to have a good fall, especially after his recent 10th-place finish in the Pennsylvania State Amateur Championship.

Experience may be lacking in camp this season, but Nye remains very optimistic about the development of some of the team's younger players.

"Probably the most exciting thing in the development of this squad would be the three recruited freshmen from last year who are now sophomores," Nye said. "And we now have four in what, I think, is a very exciting recruiting class coming in."

"So there's seven guys who are going to represent what happens over the next decade at Penn State golf."

Sophomores Matt Abbott, Mike Saporito and Bryan Burns headline this list. Though they saw only limited playing time last season, Nye believes this group will play an integral role on this team.

"If I were to describe the group collectively — soft spoken, compliant, hard working, goal-oriented and excellent students," Nye said.

Abbott already seems to be proving Nye to be prophetic with an impressive victory in an amateur tournament near his home town of Endwell, N.Y.

"I think the team is more complete and I think the team is deeper this year than it's been since I've been here," Kittsley said, despite the overabundance of underclassmen on this year's squad.

"The future of this program is going to just keep getting better and there's a lot of quality young players," he said. "It's going to be a pretty competitive season in house."

# Bulls sign Jordan for one more year

By RICK GANO  
AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO — Michael Jordan, who led the Chicago Bulls to five NBA championships over the last seven years, agreed yesterday to return for one more season.

"I'm delighted and excited to be back again. I look forward to helping bring another NBA championship to Chicago," Jordan said in a statement released by the Bulls.

Jordan, a nine-time scoring champion, four-time regular-season MVP and the MVP of the NBA Finals all five times the Bulls have won, made a record \$30.14 million last season.

Terms of the contract were not revealed. Reports said Jordan was seeking a contract worth at least \$36 million.

Earlier this summer, the Bulls met one of Jordan's

demands for returning by re-signing coach Phil Jackson to a one-year deal worth \$6 million.

Another consideration for Jordan, 34, was the status of sidekick and good friend Scottie Pippen, whom the Bulls were ready to trade in June.

Reports have said Jordan was seeking a promise that the team would not trade Pippen.

Pippen will make \$2.7 million next season in the final year of an eight-year contract. It is his future free agency, as well as the fact that he turns 32 in September, that had the Bulls considering a trade.

Jordan made a strong plea after a six-game victory over Utah in the finals to keep the Bulls together for another shot at a championship.

He said they had earned that right and encouraged owner Reinsdorf not to break up the team, whatever the cost.

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