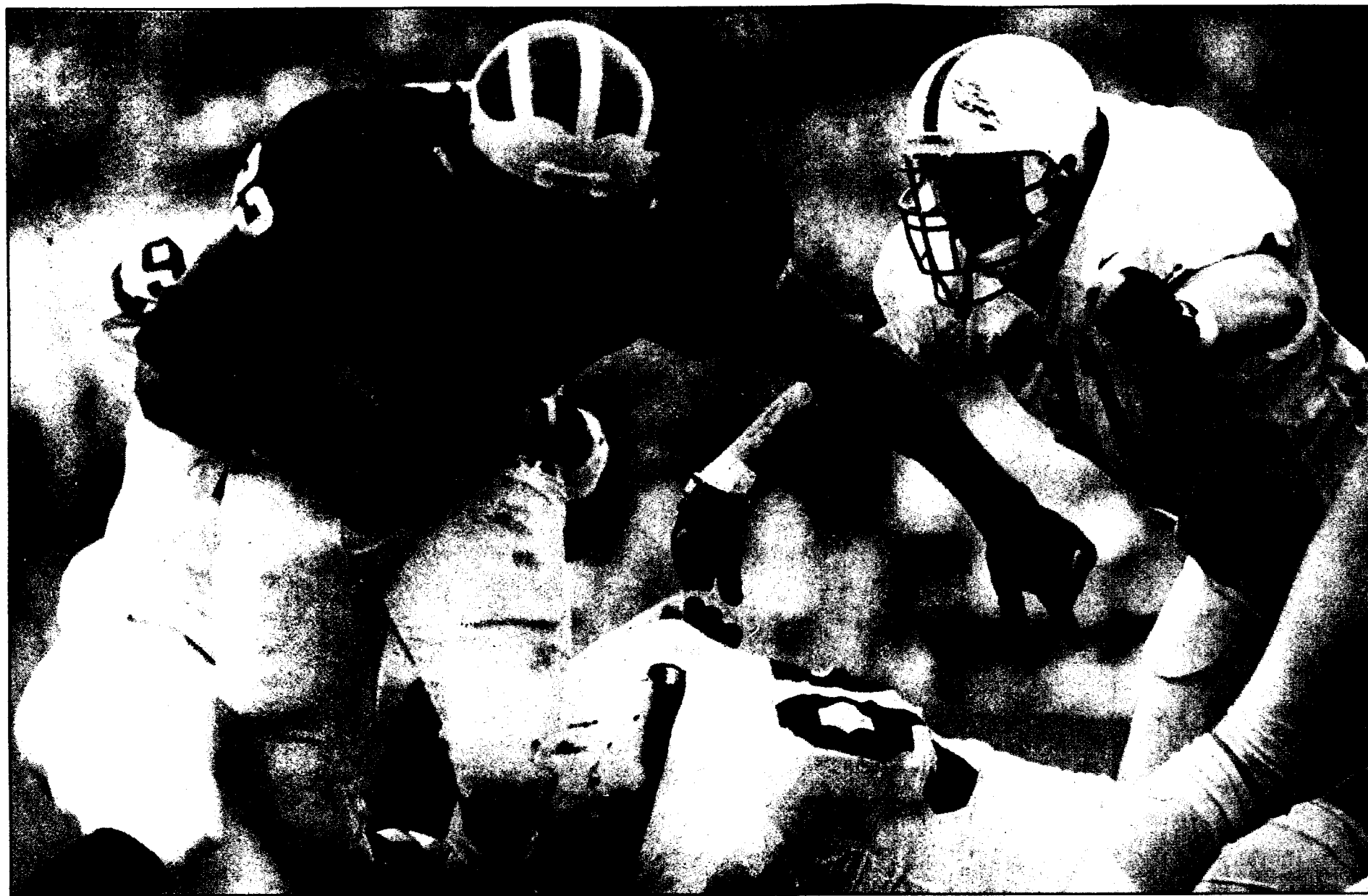


Left behind



Collegian Photo/Mike Morones

Michigan tailback Anthony Thomas breaks away from the Penn State defense Saturday in the Wolverines' 27-0 defeat of the Lions. Penn State, which entered the game with the No. 5 defense in the nation, allowed Michigan to run for 136 yards and did not sack quarterback Tom Brady once.

Wolverine attack finds success

By VITO FORLENZA
Collegian Staff Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The Wolverines came out and marched 28 yards on five plays before the Nittany Lions realized what they were up against.

The Penn State defense, which came into the game tabbed as the fifth best in the country, looked like the swarming unit it has exemplified all season on the next two plays of Michigan's opening drive.

But then the No. 15 Wolverines (7-2, 6-0 Big Ten) struck. After mixing plays between the air and ground, Michigan caught No. 19 Penn State (6-2, 3-2) on a play action.

Following a fake, Wolverine quarterback Tom Brady rolled right and hit fullback Aaron Shea for a 26-yard score, and the Wolverines had all they needed after only seven offensive plays.

"Our game plan was to have a balanced attack," Brady said. "We ran the ball well. And that's what you have to do — you wear a defense out and take the heart out of them."

Nearly two minutes later, Wolverine Jay Feely hit an 18-yard field goal. With 8:44 left in the first quarter, the Lion defense had allowed seven more points than it had in each of its previous first quarters combined.

"The key going in was we knew we had to win up front," Wolverine coach Lloyd Carr said. "We've had trouble with second-and-longs and third-and-longs, but we didn't have that problem today."

Just a week removed from a rushing performance that netted minus-23 yards in a 15-10 win over Minnesota, the Wolverine offensive line bounced back to create running lanes enabling Wolverine backs to amass 147 yards.

But it was the Michigan passing game that proved most fatal to Penn State. The Lions, who came into the game ranked second in the nation with 34 sacks, failed to get that kind of pressure on Brady.

The Michigan quarterback was given the utmost protection for most of the afternoon. Brady, who finished 17 of 30 with an interception, used that cover to find 10 different Wolverines for 224 yards and two touchdowns.

"I don't think we had trouble getting pressure on (Brady)," Lion linebacker LaVar Arrington said. "I just don't think we went that much."

Arrington added that he didn't think the Lions blitzed as often as they had in previous weeks. But the Lion defensive ends, Brad Scicoli and Courtney Brown, also were kept from getting significant pressure on Brady.

On top of that, the Wolverines seemed to be making the right calls throughout the game.

"We didn't expect for them to move the ball against us like that," Lion linebacker Brandon Short said. "They're Michigan. They went out there and showed to the world that they're still Michigan."

Lion defense struggles vs. Michigan

By DON STEWART
Collegian Staff Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — It wasn't supposed to be like this.

Entering Saturday's game at Michigan, Penn State's defense had been playing like one of the best in the nation. Coming off a shutout of Illinois, it was ranked No. 5 in the nation with just 11.4 points allowed per game.

Key to that success was a swarming pass rush and a stonewall run defense.

The Lions were ranked No. 2 in the nation with five sacks per game, and were tops in the Big Ten with 35 sacks. Surrendering just 89 yards per outing on the ground, they were also No. 8 in the country against the run.

The Wolverines, meanwhile, were an offense struggling in all aspects of the game. Coming off a 15-point performance against Minnesota, they were averaging just 24.5 points per game.

Michigan was particularly struggling to run the ball. Featuring a different tailback each week, the Wolverines were tied for No. 68 in the nation with 136.8 yards per game on the ground.

"I thought we'd go out and things would go a little bit

more our way," Penn State cornerback David Macklin said, "but they didn't."

Against all odds, Michigan moved the ball on the ground and prevented the No. 19 Lions (6-2, 3-2 Big Ten) from sacking the quarterback for the first time all season as it upset Penn State 27-0.

The Wolverines used a frequent shotgun offense, plus standing tight ends and fullbacks to slow down the Lion pass rush. With quarterback Tom Brady having all day to throw, Michigan's offense enjoyed its best scoring performance since its 29-17 win against Michigan State Sept. 29.

After last week's minus-23-yard rushing performance against Minnesota, the Wolverines had something to prove this week.

"There was a personal challenge," Michigan fullback Aaron Shea said. "No one wanted their guy to beat him. We knew it was going to be a dogfight. We wanted to take the will out of them."

Whatever the No. 15 Wolverines (7-2, 6-0) did up front, they made the much-hyped Penn State defense look rather ordinary. They weren't spectacular in running the ball for 136 yards, but moved the ball when they had to, and helped provide a balanced offensive attack along with the Michigan passing game.

Clarence Williams rushed for a game-high 83 yards on 24 carries and made several key runs on Michigan's scoring drives. Anthony Thomas added 36 yards and a touchdown.

"Overall, we were fairly effective against the run inside," Lion defensive tackle David Fleischhauer said. "They were still able to crack a few, so we were kind of disappointed."

After having allowed just 12 sacks going into Saturday's game, the Wolverines' ability to slow down the Penn State pass rush wasn't surprising. However, their ability to eliminate it was.

After having taken much criticism in the past few weeks, Williams said his offensive line took the challenge of trying to stop the Lion pass rush personally.

"I think they had a chip on their shoulders," Williams said of the offensive line. "They took it personally. They felt like they could come in here and win and push them around."

Lion linebacker LaVar Arrington, who finished the game with nine tackles and a deflected pass, was just one Penn State defender who repeatedly was denied the quarterback. He was noticeably frustrated after the game.

"Basically," he said, "they were exposing everything we couldn't do ... I'm disgusted."

Eberly one positive in bleak Lion loss

By DON STEWART
Collegian Staff Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Finding positives in a 27-0 upset loss can be as easy as finding an X-rated movie with a plot.

For No. 19 Penn State (6-2, 3-2 Big Ten), tailback Chris Eberly's play Saturday against Michigan was a small sparkle for an otherwise dull offense that was shut out for the first time since 1987. Eberly came off the bench to lead the team with 55 yards rushing on 10 carries.

In his second game back with the team since the end of a six-game suspension, the fifth-year senior tailback received added playing time due to the absence of starting tailback Cordell Mitchell, who did not make the trip after injuring his shoulder during practice last Thursday.

Although freshman Eric McCoo got the start in Mitchell's place, Eberly saw significant time as McCoo's backup. Eberly responded to his increased role with an inspired performance against the No. 15 Wolverines (7-2, 6-0).

"I was glad to get Eberly back in there," Penn State coach Joe Paterno said. "He played hard."

Each time he touched the ball he hit holes in the line at full speed,

averaging 5.5 yards per carry.

"It was great," Eberly said of his chance to play. "I got carries in the first half when it mattered. I felt I contributed to the team."

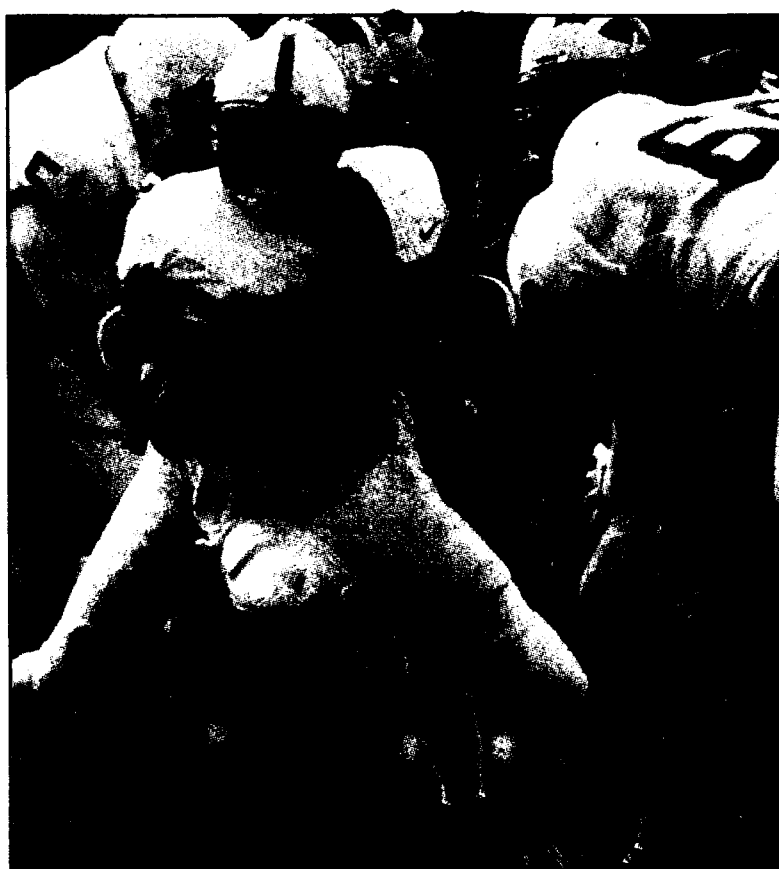
Eberly's biggest contribution came in the second quarter. With the Lions trailing 10-0, he carried the ball five times for 29 yards, including an 18-yard run, and caught a 5-yard screen pass as the Lions drove 44 yards to the Michigan 15-yard line.

The drive, capped by kicker Travis Forney's 32-yard missed field goal attempt, would prove to be one of Penn State's best drives of the day.

"Chris did a good job," Lion receiver Joe Nastasi said. "He definitely was a spark. We'll use him week in and week out."

Last week, after he carried the ball three times for 31 yards late in the game against Illinois, Eberly said the only thing that went through his mind was "don't mess up." Saturday, he said he was thinking "make no mistakes and help the team."

The fifth-year senior has seemed highly appreciative of his opportunities. After being suspended indefinitely by Paterno during the preseason for failing a conditioning test, it wasn't clear if he'd ever don a blue and white uniform again.



Collegian Photo/Dan Saellinger

Penn State tailback Chris Eberly carries the ball against Michigan.

The longtime backup to All-American Curtis Enis and kick-return specialist was expected to assume a larger role for Penn State this season. Now, after gaining half of his team's rushing yardage against Michigan, it appears Eberly will finally see some of those

expectations brought to fruition. "I'm a good friend of (Eberly's)," receiver Corey Jones said. "Anytime he can do something positive, I'm real glad to see it. I know he's come a long way since the suspension. We've never doubted him. He's a good running back."

Lion offense horrendous against Michigan defense

By VITO FORLENZA
Collegian Staff Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The supposedly developing Penn State offense looked more like a unit in its infancy stage Saturday.

In absorbing a 27-0 pounding from No. 15 Michigan (7-2, 6-0 Big Ten), the No. 19 Nittany Lions (6-2, 3-2) netted only 200 yards, with 111 coming in the first half.

Lion quarterback Kevin Thompson, who set career highs in the Lions' last two wins, was unsettled the entire game. He looked tense, illustrated by jittery feet and over-throwing his receivers.

"I didn't play well at all," said Thompson, who finished 8 of 31 with two interceptions and a fumble. "I missed a couple of our receivers, made some bad reads here and there. I just never got into a rhythm."

Michigan's success started at the line of scrimmage. The Wolverines got to Thompson early, sacking the quarterback for two of their four sacks on the Lions' first six plays.

"We wanted to get pressure on him," Wolverine linebacker James Hall said. "We wanted to take away the running game and force him to make plays to beat us."

The Michigan defense, which allowed a mere 72 points in the Wolverines' six-game winning streak coming in, was supposed to

be the ultimate maturity test for the Lion offense.

"The Lions failed — miserably. "I'm not going to blame anybody but myself," Lion coach Joe Paterno said. "When we don't play well, and take advantage of opportunities, obviously it's my fault ... that's what I'm paid to do."

The Wolverines shut down the Lion ground game, enabling Penn State to gain only 106 rushing yards on the day.

And when the Lions were missing big plays on the ground, Thompson was forced to convert first downs from second- and third-and-long situations. That left Penn State with just one option — the air attack.

But that was just playing into Michigan's play book, as the Wolverines' counterassault consisted of multiple defensive looks.

"They had some effective, well-timed blitzes," center Eric Cole said. "Their defensive personnel is very solid — they're well coached, disciplined and they run their stunts well."

With the Wolverines in the Lion backfield nearly as often as Thompson, he was either being flushed from the pocket or rushing many of his pass attempts.

"We came in here hoping to put some points on the board," Thompson said. "We didn't even manage that."