

John Giblin

Brown kept in shadows of Arrington

By this point in the season, it should be fairly clear who the top player on the Penn State football team is.

Granted, Rashard Casey has played superbly as a backup, and might even crack the starting line-up tomorrow against Purdue.

But this year's MVP lines up on the other side of the ball.

While everyone has hyped linebacker LaVar Arrington to be the second coming of Jack Ham, Dennis Onkotz or Ed O'Neil, it is defensive end Courtney Brown who has anchored a defense that has held opponents to under 16 points per game.

Granted, Arrington is a superb athlete. Last year he showed the college football-watching world his immense potential with the "LaVar Leap" against Illinois, in which he nudged two tacklers and demolished fullback Elmer Hickman three yards in the backfield.

And this season he has come through in the clutch, again using his superhuman leaping ability to block a last-minute 52-yard field goal attempt by Pittsburgh that could have tied the game.

But while Arrington might be the flashy, highlight-reel player that draws fans to the stadium, Brown has been a steady, dependable performer play after play.

Going into this season, both players were featured in Sports Illustrated's "Five guys the NFL wants now." But who was on the front cover of the college football preview, donning the Blue and White in a menacing pose? You guessed it — Arrington.

From that moment on he was a marked man. His brash play, flamboyant style and bouts with punters have led teams to send more players out against the linebacker.

For example, on the great "LaVar triple takeout" against Miami, a play in which Arrington supposedly took on three Hurricanes defenders at once on a kick-off, it looked as though Miami went after Arrington rather than him making a great block. Teams single out No. 11 for punishment, and when three Canes saw him alone and free, they went after him. It was one of their legs that knocked the return man off balance.

Brown, on the other hand, has played consistently and put up superior numbers this season.

Brown led the Lions with 23 tackles for losses last year (tying the school season record) for negative-113 yards and 11.5 sacks in 1998. His sack total was the third-highest in school history and third in the Big Ten.

The Penn State career leader in tackles for loss has added 15 more this season, punishing opposing teams for negative-81 yards. As if that's not enough, he also has 7.5 sacks for negative-61 yards.

Both athletes were named pre-season first-team All-Americans by The Sporting News.

Both have been nominated as

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Brees taking steps from injury to superstar

By WILLIAM KALEC
Collegian Staff Writer

The memories of Drew Brees' first interception against Notre Dame last season would not leave his mind.

The feeling of uneasiness as he fiercely ripped off one side of his chinstrap and stared at the scoreboard, with the mural of Touchdown Jesus looming in the background, still lingered with the Purdue quarterback every morning at 6 a.m. this summer.

Then Brees pushed the pedal his foot was resting on as far down as possible on the Stairmaster.

Next, the Boilermakers' captain recalled the feeling of seeing Fighting Irish safety Tony Driver stepping in front of one of his intended passes. Once again, Brees tore off his chinstrap and looked up at the scoreboard.

Seconds later, his interception had handed the Irish a chip-shot field goal attempt to win the game by a single point. The time remaining was not enough to redeem Brees' two mistakes.

Remembering that day, Brees pushed down on the other pedal, ignoring the pain offseason surgery caused to his right foot.

This process would repeat several times in these early morning rehabilitation sessions — pushing down with one foot and then the other on an apparatus lost in a sea of exercise equipment in Purdue's Mollenkopf Athletic Center.

One morning, Purdue wide receiver Chris Daniels walked in on one of Brees' memory-erasing rituals.

He watched his starting quarterback grimace through each step as he continued to climb imaginary steps.

He watched Brees' toughness get him through the long road to recovery that last season's Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year had to endure.

Standing there, shortly after 6 a.m. in the morning, Daniels watched his quarterback become a leader — one step at a time.

"I'll tell you what, I have never seen somebody work so hard on a Stairmaster as this guy," Daniels said. "He gets on the Stairmaster and I thought he was going to puke for

about 30 minutes. You see the other guys doing the same thing on level one. Drew was on the hardest level.

"You want that kind of guy taking you on the field. Taking you on that last two-minute drive in the bowl game."

In his homecoming at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Brees did exactly what Daniels expected from him — lead the Boilermakers on a two-

Taking his first step on the field for his last shot of redemption in 1998, Brees looked up toward the scoreboard, just like he did months before in South Bend, Ind., eager to show what he learned.

Brees only needed 54 seconds to do so.

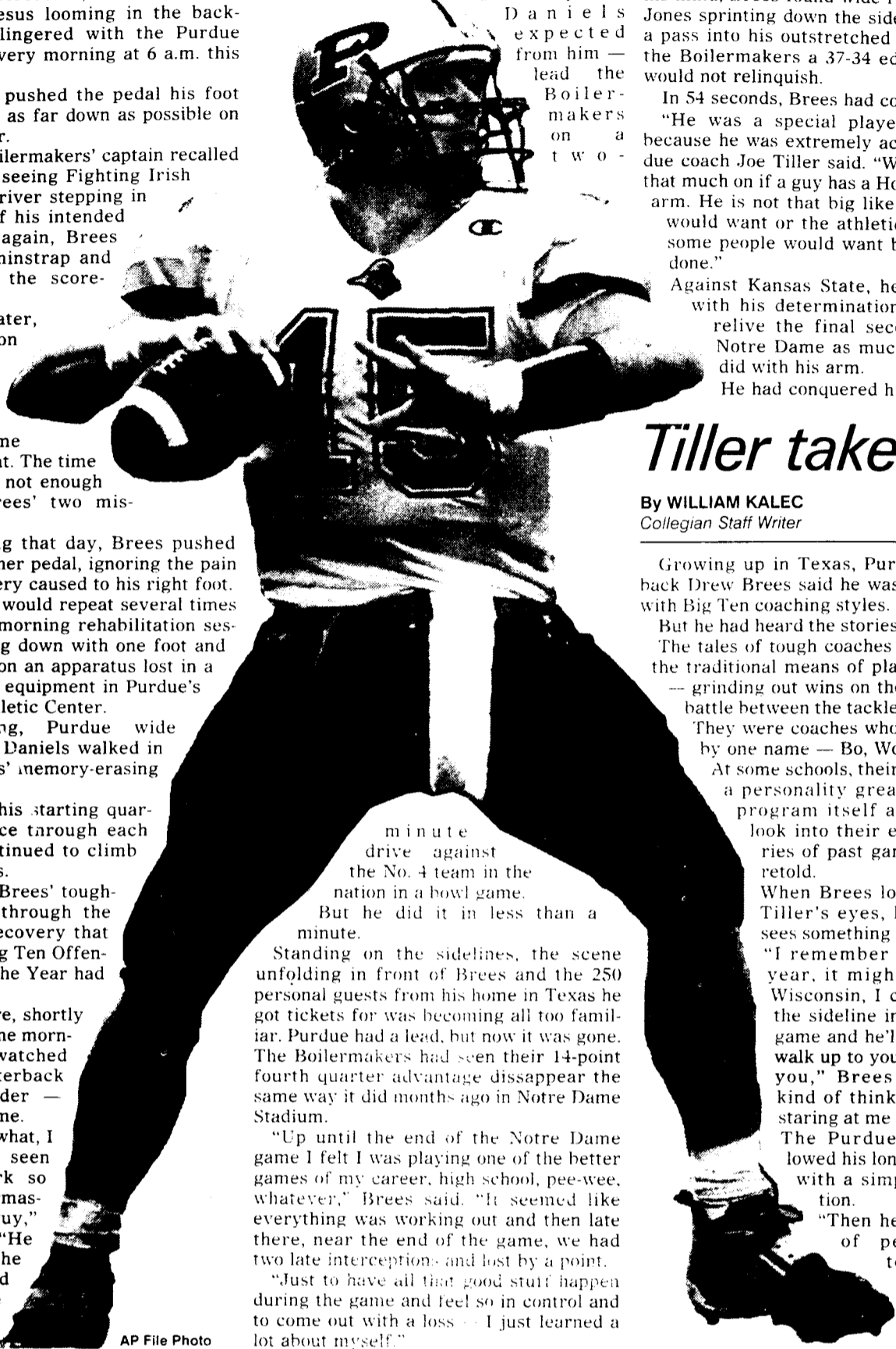
With the painful memories of the Purdue-Notre Dame game still embedded in his mind, Brees found wide receiver Isaac Jones sprinting down the sideline and laid a pass into his outstretched arms, giving the Boilermakers a 37-34 edge that they would not relinquish.

In 54 seconds, Brees had come of age.

"He was a special player coming in because he was extremely accurate," Purdue coach Joe Tiller said. "We don't place that much on if a guy has a Howitzer for an arm. He is not that big like some people would want or the athletic ability that some people would want but he gets it done."

Against Kansas State, he got it done with his determination. But not to relive the final seconds against Notre Dame as much as what he did with his arm.

He had conquered his first neme-



minute drive against the No. 4 team in the nation in a bowl game. But he did it in less than a minute.

Standing on the sidelines, the scene unfolding in front of Brees and the 250 personal guests from his home in Texas he got tickets for was becoming all too familiar. Purdue had a lead, but now it was gone. The Boilermakers had seen their 14-point fourth quarter advantage disappear the same way it did months ago in Notre Dame Stadium.

"Up until the end of the Notre Dame game I felt I was playing one of the better games of my career, high school, pee-wee, whatever," Brees said. "It seemed like everything was working out and then late there, near the end of the game, we had two late interceptions and lost by a point."

"Just to have all that good stuff happen during the game and feel so in control and to come out with a loss — I just learned a lot about myself."

Tiller takes offense skyward

By WILLIAM KALEC
Collegian Staff Writer

Growing up in Texas, Purdue quarterback Drew Brees said he was not familiar with Big Ten coaching styles.

But he had heard the stories.

The tales of tough coaches who stuck to the traditional means of playing football — grinding out wins on the ground in a battle between the tackles.

They were coaches who were known by one name — Bo, Woody and Joe.

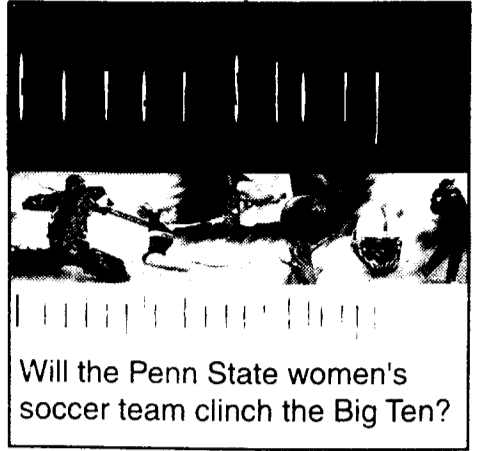
At some schools, their aura took on a personality greater than the program itself and with one look into their eyes, the stories of past games could be retold.

When Brees looks into Joe Tiller's eyes, however, he sees something different.

"I remember a game last year, it might have been Wisconsin, I came over to the sideline in a real tight game and he'll just kind of walk up to you and stare at you," Brees said. "You kind of think 'What is he staring at me for?'"

The Purdue coach followed his long stare down with a simple observation.

"Then he said, 'A lot of people here today,' or, 'This is a good game,' or something



Will the Penn State women's soccer team clinch the Big Ten?

sis — a nationally ranked opponent.

Months later, he would add to that list of conquests. For years, Brees and his mother Mina played tennis — competitively.

Each time Brees would leave the court with a memory similar to the one suffered in the shadow of the golden dome at Notre Dame. But recently Brees halted that

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like that," Brees followed by saying.

After those remarks Tiller walked away — his coaching was done for the time being.

But since his arrival at Purdue, Tiller's style of coaching has cracked the mold Big Ten football usually has been typecast with.

He likes to throw, throw and throw. And when Tiller is stuck as far as calling a play is concerned, odds are the ball soon will be in the air. The days of "three yards and a cloud of dust" have not been present in West Lafayette, Ind., for the past three seasons.

And with Tiller at the helm of the Boilermakers attack, that trend will not change anytime soon.

"Throwing is our motive by first choice," Tiller said. "So I guess when you play Purdue there is no secret."

It was nearly impossible for Tiller to keep his secret after his first year with the Boilermakers.

In 1997, Purdue set school records for points scored in a season, passing yards and touchdowns.

The following year, even with a new starting quarterback, Purdue would break all of its newly established feats.

Those aerial statistics have collected two consecutive bowl victories and changed the attitude surrounding the Purdue program.

"One of my teachers had a joke when I first came here," Purdue wide receiver Chris Daniels said. "Instead of a cop giving you a speeding ticket, he would give you four tickets to the football game. So I guess that was kind of the atmosphere when I got here."

"But it's different now"

Boilermakers' running game eager for second shot at Lions

By RYAN HOCKENSMITH
Collegian Staff Writer

A year ago, Purdue came to Beaver Stadium with a slew of wide receivers eager for a challenge.

Penn State cornerbacks David Macklin and Anthony King gave them that challenge.

The pair paced a Nittany Lions secondary that bottled up Purdue's pass-catchers in a 31-13 Penn State victory.

A year later, the catching crew hasn't changed much, and neither has its opposition.

Wideouts Chris Daniels and Vinny Sutherland are back for another shot at Macklin and King, and that shot starts at 3:30p.m. tomorrow when the Lions travel to

West Lafayette, Ind., in a clash of Big Ten titans.

While Macklin, King and corner company hope for a sequel, Daniels, Sutherland and quarterback Drew Brees are looking for an original script.

And cornerback against wideout, part two, is shaping up as just as intriguing a matchup as it was a year ago.

The Penn State secondary comes into the game on a roll after choking Ohio State receivers Ken-Yon Rambo and Reggie Germany for only four catches and 50 yards combined receiving last week in Penn State's 23-10 win.

Daniels and his crop of wideouts, meanwhile, wreaked havoc on then-undefeated Michigan State as the Boilermakers cooked the Spar-

"We didn't have any guys with the kind of speed to get behind people in the secondary. We're a little better this year."

— Joe Tiller
Purdue coach

Daniels said of his sterling showing. "Everything was hurting, but it was a great feeling."

"He's a real good receiver," Macklin said of Daniels. "He knows how to get open. He really gets the offense going."

The two Boilers bring different talents to Purdue's versatile air attack. Sutherland, a flamer with sub-4.5 speed, perfectly comple-

ments Daniels, a shifty possession receiver. Purdue coach Joe Tiller points to Sutherland's speed as a major improvement over last year's passing game.

"We really didn't have, last year, a home-run guy, either," Purdue coach Joe Tiller said. "We didn't have any guys with the kind of speed to get behind people in the secondary. We're a little better this year."

Tomorrow's opponent, 7-0 Penn State, thinks just as highly of the Boilers air-raiding offense.

"They are great," Penn State coach Joe Paterno said, comparing Purdue's offense and receivers to Kentucky's wide-open passing attack. "They run great patterns and the Purdue people do a great job with the pass game."

Making life interesting Purdue's Daniels threatens Lions cornerbacks

By RYAN HOCKENSMITH
Collegian Staff Writer

They were the kind of statistics that keep cornerbacks up at night and pacing during the day.

Chris Daniels, Purdue's senior wide receiver, hauled in 21 passes last week against Michigan State. The Big Ten's Offensive Player of the Week blitzed Spartans defensive backs for 301 yards and three touchdowns.

Now No. 2 Penn State and its two corners, David Macklin and Anthony King, get a shot at containing Daniels and the rest of the Boilermakers fastbreak offense.

Both Nittany Lions seniors pace the third-best pass defense in the Big Ten, allowing less than 200 yards per game and snagging 10 interceptions in Penn State's first seven games.

But when the Lions walk into Purdue's Ross-Ade Stadium for their clash at 3:30 Saturday, they will step onto the field

against the nation's No. 2 passing offense.

The Boilers offense, headlined by junior quarterback and Heisman Trophy contender Drew Brees, ran up 509 yards passing in a 52-28 upset of then-No. 5 Michigan State.

"We saw what happened against Michigan State, and we know what they're capable of," Macklin said. "I knew all year they were going to be a good team."

When asked how his defense will contain the Purdue passing game, Penn State coach Joe Paterno smiled and delivered this startling answer.

"It is a very tough job to stop that offense," Paterno smirked.

It might not be as difficult as Paterno suggests, however.

Last season, the Boilers brought the same offense with basically the same personnel into Beaver Stadium. The potent passing game turned limp, however, when Macklin and company "limited" Brees to 361 yards passing, almost all of

which came in the second half with Purdue trailing badly.

Penn State cruised to a 31-13 throttling. "They are an aggressive defense and well-coached and actually got after us," Purdue coach Joe Tiller said of last year's loss. "I thought our young offensive line had problems with them and really got us out of sync."

"They just did a really good job of playing defense and playing up for 60 minutes."

Against one of the most-heralded pass-catching duos in the Big Ten last week, Macklin and King stuffed Ohio State wideouts Reggie Germany and Ken-Yon Rambo. The two receivers combined for only four catches and 50 yards.

A week later, Macklin expects an all-out assault on the Lions secondary, namely from Daniels.

"I just think we're going to have to be on our toes," Macklin said. "We most certainly don't want him catching 20 passes on us."

Pigskin Pick'ems

Predictions



Penn State 35, Purdue 27



Penn State 38, Purdue 20



Purdue 28, Penn State 24



Purdue



Penn State

Quarterbacks

Running Backs

Wide Receivers

Offensive Line

Secondary

Linebackers

Defensive Line

Special Teams

Intangibles

Source: The Daily Collegian football writers

Collegian Graphic: Stacy Olenoski