



AP Photo/Rogelio Solis

Alabama tailback Shaun Alexander follows a block against Mississippi last Saturday. The Crimson Tide faces Tennessee at home tomorrow.

Crimson Tide to roll into Vols tough defense

By TOM SHARP
Associated Press Writer

No. 10 Alabama is promoting Shaun Alexander for the Heisman Trophy. The tailback has a chance to make the case himself Saturday at Tuscaloosa against No. 5 Tennessee, which has one of the top rushing defenses in the country.

Neither team is expected to do anything unusual. Alabama (5-1, 4-0 Southeastern Conference) will try to run. Tennessee (4-1, 2-1 SEC) will rely on its defense to try and stop him.

"We're going to do what we've done the last five years and see how it unfolds," Tennessee defensive coordinator John Chavis said. "We've got a good defensive front. We're proud of our defensive front. It's a week they'll have to play at their best. We're expecting them to win some battles."

And no doubt lose a few. The Crimson Tide

has run the ball successfully on everybody they've played. Alabama's offensive line, led by tackle Chris Samuels, has cleared the way to the top of the SEC rushing lead at 191 yards per game. Alexander is averaging 155 yards.

"Samuels is probably the best offensive lineman in the country," Chavis said. "He's strong, he's physical and he's nasty."

Alexander ran for 214 yards and three touchdowns last week against a Mississippi defense that went into the game giving up an average of 45 yards per game on the ground. He's had at least 100 yards in every game this year, including 106 against a Florida defense that limited all of Tennessee's rushers to 95 yards.

"I describe him as a skater," Chavis said. "He can make quick cuts because his feet are always close to the ground. If there's a crease, he can accelerate through it. When you see a guy who's in the top three or four for the Heis-

man, he has to be talented and getting the job done."

Tennessee's defense is third in the nation against the run, giving up 64.4 yards per game. "We're not going to do anything different for Shaun Alexander," Vols linebacker Raynoch Thompson said. "We'll just get after him like we have everybody else."

In other games Saturday, No. 1 Florida State will at Clemson, No. 2 Penn State at No. 16 Purdue, No. 3 Nebraska at No. 18 Texas, No. 7 Kansas State at Oklahoma State, Illinois at No. 9 Michigan, No. 11 Michigan State at No. 17 Wisconsin, LSU at No. 12 Mississippi State, No. 13 Texas A&M at Oklahoma, Kentucky at No. 14 Georgia, No. 15 Marshall at Buffalo, No. 19 BYU at UNLV, Tulane at No. 20 East Carolina, Cincinnati at No. 21 Southern Mississippi, No. 22 Ohio State at No. 24 Minnesota, and No. 23 Miami at Boston College.

Lady Ruggers face American at home

An All-American opponent is invading Happy Valley to take on the Penn State women's rugby team.

The Lady Ruggers (5-1) will tackle American University at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow at the West Campus Field. Penn State is coming off a difficult loss last weekend against league rival Navy and hope to rebound versus another league opponent.

"Last weekend was a real let-down for us as a team," outside center Jodie Van Ogtrop said. "We worked so hard for the win, but the loss helped us to realize our weaknesses and we worked on them this week."

This week in practice Penn State focused on defense, tackling and rugging, various weaknesses exposed in the loss to Navy.

Now the Lady Ruggers will take on an Eagles team they have handled rather easily in past seasons. Despite dominating play against American, Penn State is not taking the team lightly.

"We've won pretty convincingly against American in the past, but every team needs to be given some respect," captain Jenny Gawronski said. "We need to win this game."

— by Michael Yoder

M. Tennis sending three to battle in Penn Classic

By KRISTIN DOUGHERTY
Collegian Staff Writer

Tennis players from across the country will flock to Philadelphia this weekend to represent their schools at the Penn Conference Classic.

Sophomore Steven Van Der Westhuyzen and juniors Matt Nielsen and Damon Accardi will represent the Penn State men's tennis team this weekend in the tournament that begins today at the University of Pennsylvania's Levy Tennis Pavilion.

The unique aspect of this tournament is that it is a single-draw tournament, which means the ranking system is nonexistent. In the tournament, the players will not be

limited to only competing against opposing team's players with the same ranks.

"It will be a great experience for the guys in the tournament," Penn State men's tennis coach Jan Bortner said. "It will be great competition for them to see where they are at with their game."

All three Lions will be competing in the singles tournament, and Accardi and Van Der Westhuyzen will be teaming up to compete in the doubles tournament.

Matt Nielsen, the No. 4 seed for the Lions, is 4-2 on the season and won the consolation finals in the Flight C competition at the Penn State Fall Classic earlier in the season.

Van Der Westhuyzen, who has

been playing in the No. 2 position for the Lions in singles, has had a fair amount of success thus far this season. He is 3-1 in singles competition and won both of his matches last weekend in the ECAC Championships.

Accardi has been competing in the No. 6 or No. 7 position for the Lions. Although he did not compete in singles competition at the ECAC meet, he is 2-1 on the season.

This will be the second tournament Accardi and Van Der Westhuyzen will be competing in as a doubles team. This duo played together as the No. 2 doubles team at the ECAC Championships and went 1-1. They are hoping to show improvement this weekend.

"I think we should do well this

time," Van Der Westhuyzen said. "We didn't play that well at the ECACs, but we've had more time to practice together and we hope to do well."

The Lions are coming off the ECAC Championships, in which they fell to Brown 5-2 in the quarterfinals. After a week of intense practice, in which the team concentrated on improving its aggressiveness as well as several other aspects of its game, the players are hoping to have a good showing and be a major force against this tough competition.

"I am looking to play well and have a strong showing for Penn State," Accardi said. "Hopefully the players we send will represent Penn State well."

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