

Conference coaches ponder instant replay

Shaky officiating has led some Big Ten coaches to weigh the pros and cons of video replay.

By Dustin Doprak
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The guys in black and white stripes haven't been having an easy year in the Big Ten.

Four officials have already been dismissed for their officiating in the Purdue-Wake Forest game Sept. 21, and Penn State football coach Joe Paterno ran down one referee after the Nittany Lions' game against Iowa to tell him how bad two of his cohorts were doing. Even so, the Big Ten coaches are split as to whether the conference should allow the officials to correct mistakes with instant replay.

With as much importance as there is riding on every game in a college football season, some coaches want to make sure that everything possible is done to assure that officials have all the tools

to make the right rulings to decide those games.

"I think if it's at all feasible that we could do it, we certainly should look into it," Wisconsin coach Barry Alvarez said. "As much as is riding on these games, if you lose a game because of a call it really hurts. You hate to take that away from the kids. You want kids who are playing to decide the game."

Others think that the referees do well enough on their own not to subject the college game to some of the adverse effects of instant replay.

"I'm not a big fan of instant replay," Penn State football coach Joe Paterno said. "You just have to live with some calls. Some go your way, some don't. [Instant replay] just makes the games longer ... As long as the officials are hustling, and getting into a good position to make calls, fine."

Of course, no one's opinion matters if the bills can't get paid.

"It's a huge financial commitment," said Michigan State coach Bobby Williams. "Every school

probably could not afford to have it at every game because not all games are televised and teams would have to provide their own systems."

Time Off

Three conference teams are coming off bye weeks, including Michigan, but every team is in action this week. Ohio State, the lone team not playing a conference opponent, is playing San Jose State.

When asked about the virtues of bye weeks, many coaches agreed that the most deciding factor is when they

come in the schedule.

"The best time for a bye week is when your team is a little banged up and you see that the emotional energy of your team is not at the level it needs to be," Ohio State coach Jim Tressel said. "When you have momentum, the worst thing you can have is a bye."

Though every team has an off week on the schedule, Iowa doesn't actually have a bye, they

just end their season a week early. That suits them just fine.

"I hate bye weeks," Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said. "The only value it has is that it gives your team a little rest, but they throw off your routine, and I think that's tough to deal with."

Watch the meters

The Big Ten and the SEC are the only conferences with five teams in the top 25 in both polls. Both also have two squads in the top ten in the ESPN Coaches poll. No one in the conference is celebrating yet. No Big Ten team has finished in the top ten in both polls since three teams did so in 1999. Iowa, the most unlikely squad in the top 25, is also trying to avoid putting importance on its ranking. The 5-1 Hawkeyes, the only conference team in the poll that was not ranked at the beginning of the season, hasn't finished in the top 25 since 1996.

"This is just temporary parking right now," Ferentz said. "It's premature to get excited with the conference or national race ... We're going to do what we can, give an honest day's effort and let the chips fall where they may."



W. volleyball following Smith's lead

By Chris Adamski
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Having the No. 9 women's volleyball team in the country usually implies individual accolades as well.

Middle hitter Cara Smith is leading the nation in hitting percentage, with 157 kills compared to only 20 errors in 275 chances, an astounding .498 clip.

"She's a unique player in the fact that she doesn't even have to go up and swing every time," sophomore outside hitter Ashley Pederson said. "She's learned the wipe shot, she uses the whole court. She just has a lot of different shots so that's why I think her hitting percentage is so high."

The junior is recognized as a team leader, and her work ethic and game smarts are rubbing off on those around her.

"She's got such a court sense about her, and that's why she is such a great hitter," Pederson said.

Smith has led the nation in hitting from the beginning of the season, a statistic bolstered by a perfect 11-for-11 performance Sept. 14 against Army, making her only the eighth player in NCAA history to hit 1,000 with as many as 11 attacks.

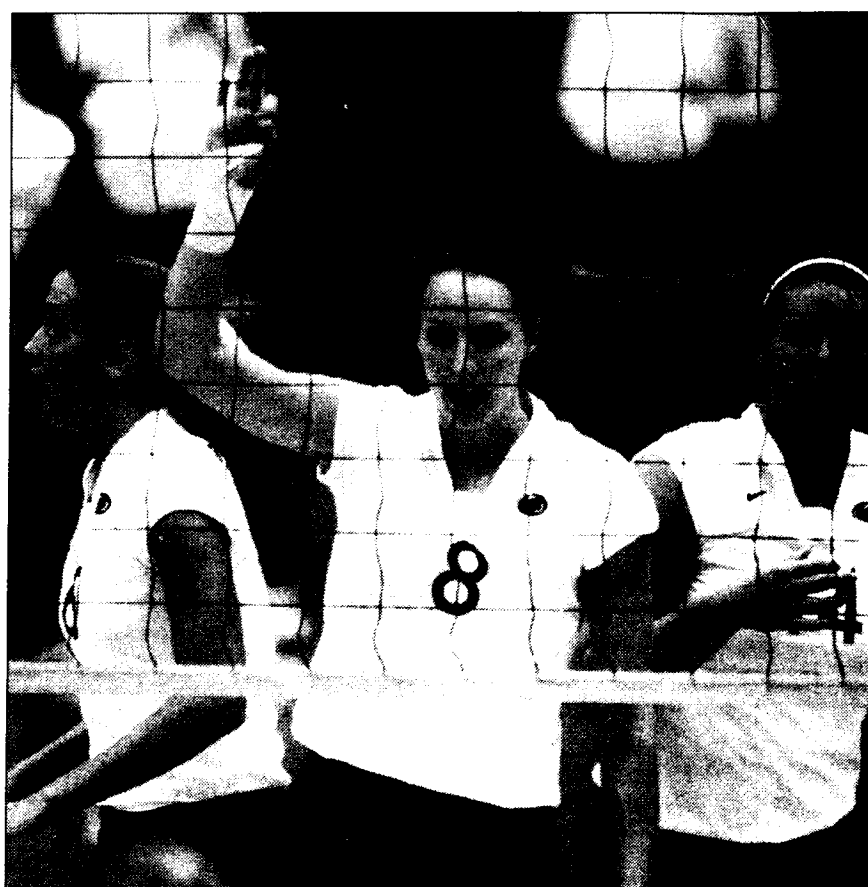
Yet Smith (or any other Nittany Lion, for that matter) has not won conference player of the week honors, despite the fact that Penn State has the league's best record and a No. 2 national ranking.

What makes the lack of Lions honorees even more troubling was that this week Ohio State sophomore Stacey Gordon — admittedly a very good middle hitter — was named player of the week despite her Buckeyes going 0-2, a fact that irked Penn State women's volleyball coach Russ Rose.

"In all my 11 years [in the Big Ten] I don't think that has ever happened," Rose said.

"You wouldn't give the national player of the year award to someone who went 0-24, would you?"

But Rose remains confident Smith's day will come.



Adam R. Harvey/Colegian

Cara Smith (8) signals to teammates during Penn State's game against Army.

"Hopefully she'll have some more big matches in the Big Ten, so we can get some recognition," Rose said.

But, for her part, Smith doesn't seem to mind the lack of accolades.

"I really don't think about it too much," Smith said. "I just go out every game same as normal and help us win. Whatever I hit, I hit, I just want to help the team."

Iceman cometh

Junior opposite Erin Iceman

returned to the Penn State lineup two weeks ago at the American University tournament, seeing action in four games. Iceman had been returning from a torn anterior cruciate ligament she suffered in the spring. However, Iceman

has only seen very limited action since, getting in three of the last 14 games the Lions played.

"She's been out for a pretty long time, so it's going to take some time for her to get back into the flow of the game," Rose said. "I have hopes that Erin will be able to continue to improve and be a player we can get into the rotation."

Iceman said she is physically just about back to 100 percent, and that it was just a matter of getting game reps in.

"I'm feeling pretty confident, ready to go," Iceman said.

"It's been a long five months. Jumping and moving abilities are pretty much equal right now between the two legs."

Rose gushes about the work ethic Iceman displayed as she went through physical therapy to get back on the court.

"She's a committed player and she's doing everything she can to get back where she can play, and it's not about her, it's about the team," Rose said.

"Those are just some of the things I've always recognized that make her a really special kid."

Injuries taking toll as season rolls on

By Jeff Frantz
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Like Tom Sawyer whitewashing Aunt Polly's fence, starting the Big Ten season seemed like such a good idea for the Penn State football team.

However, just like Sawyer tired of toiling with the paintbrush, the Nittany Lions are starting to feel the grind of playing in the physical conference. But unlike Sawyer, Penn State football coach Joe Paterno can't get neighborhood kids to fill in for his

squad (at least not with desirable results).

Already, the bumps and bruises are starting to take their toll, as quarterback Zack Mills and tailback Larry Johnson were injured during Saturday's game at Wisconsin, adding to the previous list of wounded Lions which already included linebackers Sam Ruhe and Deryck Toles, who is still questionable for the Michigan game.

Paterno said that both Mills, who sprained his acromioclavicular joint, and Johnson, who pulled a hamstring, should be ready to play Saturday at Michigan. Still, Paterno said he is giving both key members of his offense light treatment this week in practice.

"Zack practiced a little bit [Monday], we told Larry to take it easy," Paterno said. "I think they'll both be fine, we'll know a little bit more after today."

Figuring how hard to push players in practice is also a concern for Paterno. He said the team went through a light workout Monday but would do hitting drills yesterday, explaining that some things must be done at close to full speed to be effective.

Nevertheless, Paterno is always weary of pushing players that see a lot of game action too hard.

"I've got to be careful with a lot of guys like Joe Iorio and all those kind of

guys that play a lot of plays in tough football games," Paterno said. "I've got to make sure we don't run out of gas coming down the stretch."

He's no LJ

Besides stopping what was potentially a career day early in the third quarter, Johnson's hamstring injury served to highlight the gap between him and his backups.

Second string tailback Mike Gasparato played well, picking up 15 yards on the ground, and snagging a clutch pass for 25 yards.

While Paterno was pleased with Gasparato's performance, he made it clear that the sophomore requires a little more seasoning before he can reach LJ's level.

After Gasparato, however, Paterno concedes that the tailbacks thin out.

Sophomore Pete Gilmore, who was thought to be Johnson's logical backup last spring, didn't make the trip to Madison due to the Big Ten's 64-man limit on the number of players that can travel to road games, a policy Paterno dislikes.

"In all fairness, Pete's really made a lot of progress, but he did not come back in good shape," Paterno said. "He started off a bit behind but he's really worked hard and it's really close between him and Gasparato."

The forgotten man

With defensive end Michael Haynes on pace to break the NCAA single-season sack record and defensive tackle Jimmy Kennedy named this week's Big Ten defensive player of the week, things would appear to be going well on the defensive line.

However, Paterno said he wasn't entirely pleased with the play of defensive end John Bronson, saying he got pushed around more than necessary against the Badgers.



Gasparato

Men's club soccer disappointed by two weekend losses

By Chad Reott
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Losing is not something the Penn State men's club soccer team is accustomed to, and not something it plans to make a habit.

The Nittany Lions, a team that won the 2000 national championship and finished ranked No. 3 last season, played host to Cornell, Michigan and Illinois this past Saturday and Sunday behind the Intramural Building. Penn State started out on a winning high by beating Cornell 1-0 thanks to midfielder/forward Jason Reese's goal with around five minutes left in the second half.

Michigan and Illinois, however, would prove to be more formidable foes, both earning 2-1 victories over the Lions.

Midway through the first half, Michigan senior

defender Eric Schueller broke a scoreless tie with a brilliantly placed kick to the upper left corner of the net.

"That kid will never hit a shot that nice again in his life, that's probably the best goal he's ever scored," Penn State defender Elliott Toobin said.

The Lions switched gears after the goal. "I think we picked it up towards the second half of the first half ... then just completely dominated that team," Toobin said.

Midfielder John Hughes got the Lions on the board with a low bender into the left corner of the goal to knot the score at 1-1.

However, shortly after Hughes' goal, Michigan freshman midfielder Scott Holzwarth broke away from the pack for a one-on-one with the Penn State goalkeeper. He buried the ball in the net for a 2-1 lead, the final margin of victory.

"We do need to finish our chances," said Toobin in regards to the Lions' stagnant offense. "In the Cornell game and the Michigan game we had chances to put the game away early and were not doing it."

The Lions faced Illinois early Sunday morning, completely dominating the flow of the first half, but couldn't capitalize on numerous opportunities.

"That first half [Sunday] was as good of a half probably as we've played all year," Toobin said.

However, the floodgates opened for Illinois to start the second half.

Ryan Stotts headed the ball in off a penalty kick, and then, no more than five minutes later, he bustled into the open field and scored again to make it 2-0.

Illinois' goals countered the Lions' aggressive style and dampened their spirits.

"They shouldn't have scored either of them, but that's what happens when you're trying to push people forward trying to score," said Penn State midfielder Esli Feliz.

Feliz finally capitalized on Penn State's ball placement and knocked home a goal, but the Illinois defense locked down and held on for a 2-1 win.

"I think in the second half we got in the mind state that it was okay to just knock the ball around," Toobin said.

"There was just no intensity ... I think we just got too complacent with the fact that we were knocking the ball around."

Consecutive 2-1 losses have the Penn State squad in a difficult position, but it remains optimistic.

"[The season's] been a little disappointing," Toobin said. "We just got to take care of business."

we're taking a break

The Daily Collegian offices will be closed Monday, Oct. 14 and Tuesday, Oct. 15 for Fall Break

Early Deadlines:

4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 10 for Wednesday, Oct. 16
4 p.m. Friday, Oct. 11 for Thursday, Oct. 17



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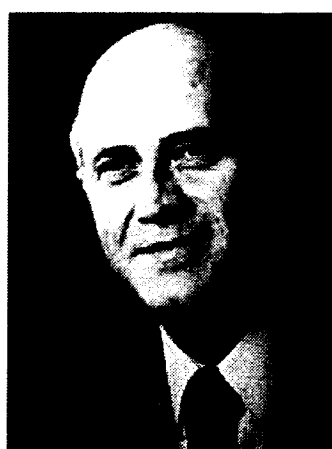
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