

Success in eye of beholder

By Matt Fortuna

EAST LANSING, Mich. — The captain watched his successor plunge over the goal line for Penn State's final score of 2009 and stood on the sideline with both arms stoically raised over his head.



MY OPINION

The message from Daryll Clark's statuesque pose was as clear as the path Andrew Quarless had to the end zone, back on Clark's first touchdown strike on a day the signal caller rewrote the school's record book.

"This is Penn State football, and we're damn good."

So good, in fact, that it will be playing in a New Year's Day bowl game for the second-straight season.

The Nittany Lions' 10-2 record is a clear indicator that they are a really good football team. The fact that Saturday's 42-14 drubbing of Michigan State clinched back-to-back 10-win seasons for the first time since 1993-94 is a clear indi-

cator of how out of touch people really are.

A national championship was never within grasp of this squad, and the only illusion that it was a testament to just how poor its schedule really was.

Penn State still doesn't have much of an offensive line and remains atrocious on special teams, even if it finally figured out 12 games in that Stephon Green could bring more speed to the kick return team than Jerome Hayes.

This team was no match for Iowa or Ohio State, evidenced by its failure to move the ball 90 percent of the time in double-digit losses to each and by how close the Hawkeyes and Buckeyes played each other two weeks ago.

The idea that Penn State "choked" or "wasn't up" for either game is fodder for cynics and fans who had national-title expectations back in fall camp.

Clark posted on his Twitter account shortly after Saturday's game, "why are fans so impatient!!! it doesn't work out right away all the time," before tweeting a minute later, "just be patient and have some freakin' faith."

Be patient.

You support good players who won the games they were supposed to win, no matter what the lines in Vegas said about the two they lost.

Like Michigan State a year ago, Penn State finished 6-2 in the Big Ten by taking care of business against overmatched opponents and by showing it was just short of elite against big-time ones.

The idea of comparing any Lion team to any Spartan team sounds blasphemous to some until one looks at the numbers from the first half of this decade, which tell a different tale:

From 2000-04, Michigan State was 31-30. Penn State was 26-33.

Have some freakin' faith. "I've been here for two years and I've been blessed with being around a great group of guys that know how to go out and get it," said Clark, who probably would have killed for just two winning seasons — much less two 10-win seasons — when he arrived at Penn State in 2005.

When it was all over Saturday, when the players had thanked the traveling fans and the fans had finished their "B-C-S" chant, Joe Paterno stepped to the podium for a press conference that could



Abby Drey/Collegian

Daryll Clark celebrates with Penn State fans in Spartan Stadium.

be mistaken for any one of his over the past five years.

"You know, I don't even know who makes up the BCS, who's involved in it or whatever," the 82-year-old said. "We're a good football team."

For once, we could all shake our head in agreement.

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HOROSCOPES

By Jacqueline Bigar

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Monday, Nov. 30, 2009:

This year, discover the power of creativity and spontaneity. Others are often jolted, and that could have long-term implications to your stability. Your daily style and your ability to express caring might need some sprucing up. You have an opulent style of communicating, drawing many. If you are single, relating might be easy, but because of your style, forming a long-term bond will take time. If you are attached, the next year invites better communication. Avoid selective hearing, and two people can be found smiling. TAURUS is a good co-worker.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic, 4-Positive, 3-Average, 2-Soso, 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
**** Curb possessiveness. The unexpected stimulates surprising reactions. You barely know which way to go. Develop a style that allows greater fluency and continuity. News surprises you. Tonight: Pay bills.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
**** You smile, and the world responds. You might be hard-pressed to deal with someone's endless demands. With a little discipline, your imagination will move in a new direction. A meeting points you in a certain direction. Tonight: Where the action is.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
**** Know when to back off and handle a matter directly. Do you have the right answer? Reach out for an expert. A door points to a new adventure. Take time to weigh the pros and cons before walking through. Tonight: Get some sleep.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

**** Zero in on what is important and necessary. You could be far more tired than you realize. The unexpected occurs when you least expect it. Excitement surrounds a potential venture that could amplify your income. Is it a risk? Tonight: Find your friends.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
** Take charge and maintain a steady course, as a lot is being tossed in your direction. Please note: Everyone thinks he or she has a better idea. You wonder why. A steady pace allows for a sorting process. Tonight: A must appearance.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
**** Share your thoughts, knowing that others have much more to add. Investigate possibilities with an eye to growth and greater concern. Your ability to add that extra push carries a project to the finish line. Tonight: If others continue their unpredictable behavior, join them. It might be fun!

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
**** Your determination can carry a relationship through the hard times. You might not be sure which way is best, but trust in your ability to move forward, especially with an unerving situation. Perhaps you cannot control all aspects of this matter, but you can make clear choices. Tonight: A tête-à-tête with a beloved friend.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
**** Listen to others, and weigh the pros and cons of their perspectives. Don't demand immediate answers, even from yourself. Many unexpected twists and turns come in from left field. Know that you are on the ride for it all. Relax, and your middle name becomes "Resourceful." Tonight: Sort through your options.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
**** Realize when to pull back and

when to go forward. If you feel that even with the best intentions and suggestions all plans seem to splutter everywhere, this too will change. Allow greater give-and-take in your dealings. Your style will emerge and take you to a new level. Tonight: Squeeze in some exercise and/or downtime.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
**** Your ability to create cannot be stymied, but in communicating your ideas, you could hit a brick wall. Listen to news that is forthcoming. The unexpected jolts you. Know how much you bring to a situation, and watch the news pass. Tonight: Indulge yourself after a day like this.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
**** Though a domestic matter demands your attention, you could be focused on other matters. Could this be an escape from dealing with a problem? Be sure you aren't distorting certain facts by wearing your rose-colored glasses. Tonight: Head on home.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
**** You bring in the unexpected or you act in an unexpected manner. Either way, your handling of a situation might not be exactly right-on. Communication accelerates. Delegate or defer if you don't like the results you are getting. Tonight: Catch up with a friend.

BORN TODAY
Singer Billy Idol (1955), TV personality Dick Clark (1929), Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy (1930) ****

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at www.jacquelinebigar.com

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