

WHILE YOU WERE GONE

Paterno's health in question

Joe Paterno's health was the biggest question surrounding Penn State this offseason after he missed three speaking functions because of intestinal issues.

In his first appearance of the summer in early August at Big Ten Media Days in Chicago, Paterno looked weaker and spoke softly to reporters.

Paterno is entering his 61st season at Penn State and his 45th as the head coach of the program. Seemingly every year he is bombarded with questions about his retirement. The first question in Chicago was whether or not he'll coach until he dies.

This year, however, with the missed appearances and the health issues, questions about a possible retirement seem more well-founded.

But former Penn State quarterback and current ESPN analyst Todd Blackledge said he isn't sure Paterno's health concerns could be based upon his appearance at Big Ten Media Days.

Several players and coaches have backed up Blackledge's theory, saying Paterno has been his usual fiery self in practices.

"As long as I enjoy it, I'll continue to coach," he said. "Right now I have no plans whatsoever as far as whether I'm going to go another year, two years, five years."

— Andrew J. Cassavell

Big Ten adds Nebraska

The addition of the Cornhuskers was the first since the Nittany Lions joined the Big Ten in 1990, and even though Nebraska won't compete until next season, the move signaled big changes.

"It's been a very exciting year," Delany said at the Big Ten Kickoff in Chicago. "I think a productive year, a year in which we made a historic decision to expand the conference. We feel great about it."

Adding a conference championship game, which will take place at Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium in 2011, was another decision that came out of the expansion process. However, in order to have a championship game in 2011 and beyond, the Big Ten plans on implementing two divisions.

Delany expects to align the divisions within the next month, but making sure the competition is fair and rivalries are maintained are two aspects he said he'll keep in mind.

Big Ten teams will need to readjust their schedules to fit Nebraska in for 2011, and Delany said he would like to expand the Big Ten's schedule to nine games within three-to-four years.

With plans to follow through on his original 12-to-18 month timeframe, the Big Ten could undergo more change. For now, Delany said he'll pause but not turn his back on further expansion, adding Notre Dame is likely out of the picture.

— Audrey Snyder

Lions participate in summer workouts and start practice

Fall practice started August 5, marking the first official day the Lions were able to participate in mandatory workouts with coaching.

But even before camp began, player-led practices and drills dominated June and July. Linebacker Michael Mauti and safety Drew Astorino, who were held out of the Blue-White game with injuries, participated during the offseason.

At Big Ten Media Days in early August, cornerback D'Anton Lynn said those workouts were vital in the team's progression.

He said the camaraderie, combined with the competition, provided a game-like atmosphere that allowed the players to help each other improve.

"First we rub it in a little bit and talk a little trash," Lynn said of the seven-on-seven drills, which he noted specifically helped the young quarterbacks. "But then we'll definitely help each other out. We progress a lot."

Since camp began, wide receiver Curtis Drake went down with a broken left foot, but the Lions have faced no other serious injuries.

— Andrew J. Cassavell

Bolden opening eyes

Penn State freshman Robert Bolden is quickly picking up Penn State's offense. The four-star recruit arrived on campus in May, but just three months later, is contending for the starting quarterback job.

With sophomore Kevin Newsome and redshirt sophomore Matt McGloin in the competition as well, Bolden, it seems, already beat out fellow freshman Paul Jones.

Jones, the darling of the Blue-White game, enrolled early in January but was reportedly asked to take a redshirt, keeping Bolden right in the thick of the competition.

The Saint Mary's Preparatory product is known for his intelligence, an attribute his high school quarterbacks coach Don Buchanan said is one of his best skills. Add his 6-foot-4, 208-pound body

to the mix,

and Bolden

isn't any ordinary

freshman

quarterback.

The coaching

staff sent him

installments of the

playbook through the

mail since signing day in

February, and his ability to

make collegiate-level throws

when he was still in high school

was something that initially excited the Lions.

But surely not many would've predicted a freshman to be a legit contender

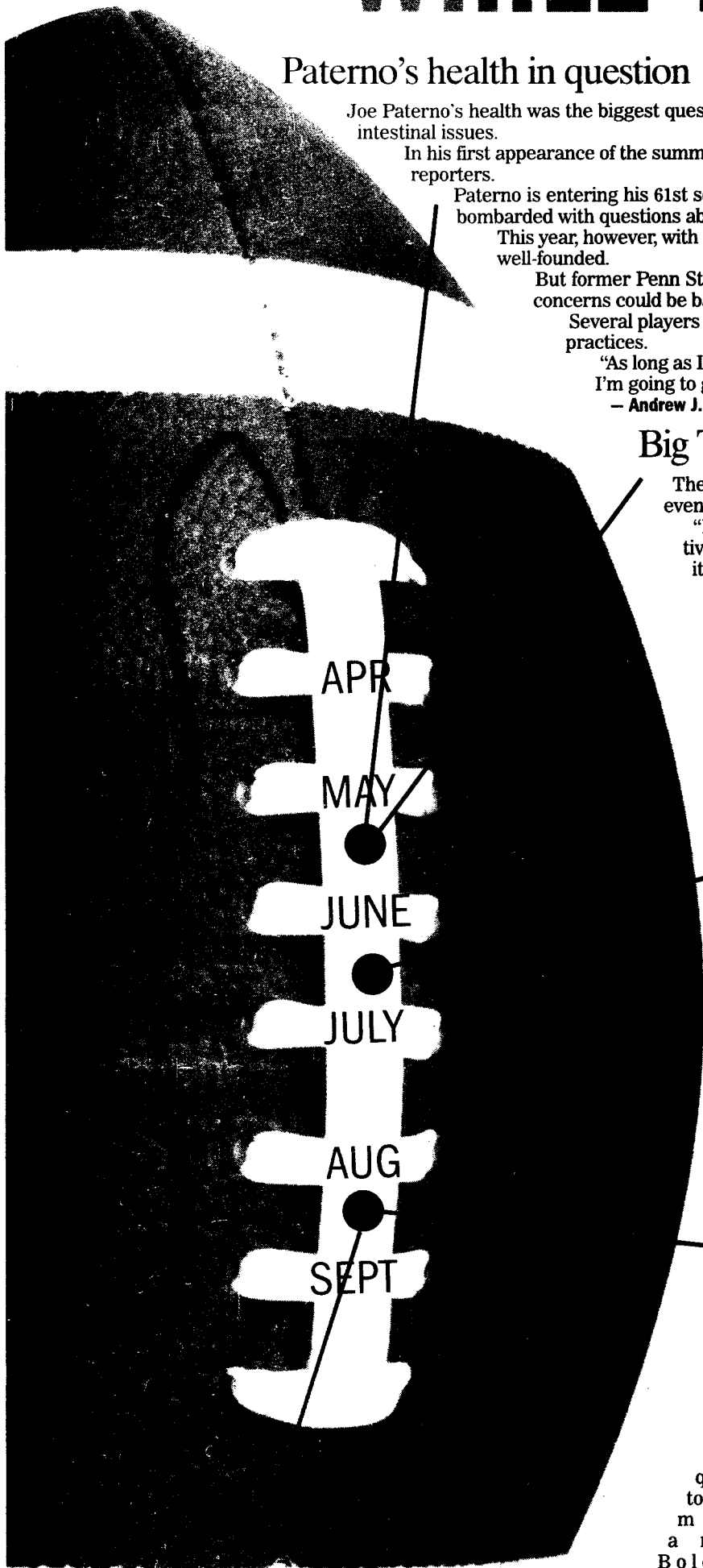
this early.

After all, Joe Paterno didn't even want to admit a

freshman existed on his team last spring. Now, Bolden could drastically alter the landscape of this year's

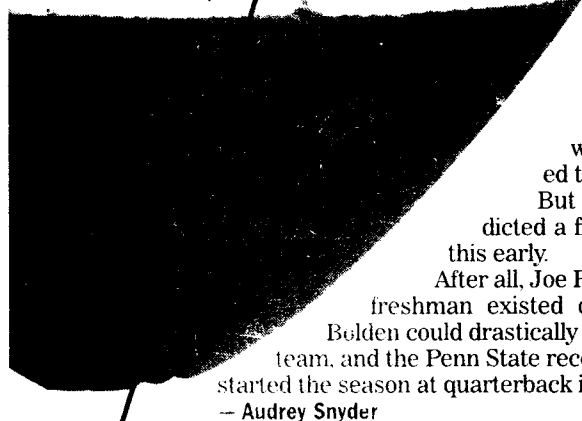
team, and the Penn State record books. No true freshman has started the season at quarterback in the Paterno era.

— Audrey Snyder



AP NO. 19

COACHES NO. 14



Drake out at least a month

Two weeks ago, wide receiver Curtis Drake broke his left leg at preseason practice and is expected to return in four to six weeks.

"That's tough," Paterno said. "Drake is one of the better football players we have."

Redshirting Drake is a possibility. A best-case scenario has him back Sept. 25.

— Brendan Monahan

Hard Work

Collegian Photo/Mike Ghourdjan

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Collegian

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