

# Lions to take advantage of defensive depth

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Andres Casais considers all of his teammates his brothers, a group that plays for each other and wins as a team.

But the senior centre back has an even closer bond with his brotherhood on the back line of defense.

"We have brilliant players back there on the back line," Casais said. "It's a brotherhood within a brotherhood, the defense. We want to get a record of shutouts, we want to win every tackle, it's that mentality that everybody has."

Aside from Casais, a 2009 First Team All-Big Ten selection, the Penn State men's soccer team has a deep core of defenders that have been pushing for time on the field

during the preseason. The defense should provide a formidable wall in front of redshirt sophomore goalkeeper Warren Gross this year after posting five shutouts in the team's five spring games last year.

Saturday night in an exhibition against Hartwick College, Casais started alongside junior Mark Fetrow in the middle, flanked by sophomore John Gallagher and junior Matt Smallwood on the outside with junior Justin Lee in a holding midfield role. Junior Pat Krispin and redshirt senior Andy Parr came on as reserves while sophomore Brian Forgue, redshirt junior Marco Ciarla and freshman Sepp Dasbach are also fighting to contribute.

"We have essentially just two full lines of defense," Krispin said. "It's good to have that sense of

security and a sense of competition in practices. There's a bunch of people going for your spot so you have to keep it up."

Krispin and Forgue were both starters last spring when the Nittany Lions used a five-man defense with three backs and two wide players that served as wingers and outside backs. With the arrival of first-year Lions coach Bob Warming, the team switched formations but the roster is the same.

Casais said the competition in practice has been very intense among the defenders. The senior co-captain added that every defender is talented and could easily be a starter.

"The guys that aren't playing as much are as much a part of the team as the guys who are playing," Casais said. "They're the

ones making everybody who's starting a better player, and everybody on this team has an equal shot and everybody's doing the best they can."

Not only does the depth give the Lions options, it provides an insurance policy. In the past few seasons, injuries have struck the back line and put Penn State in tough spots.

Krispin said despite the on-field competition, the players on the defense are still close off the field. The junior said he and Gallagher are close friends and hang out all the time, but when they cross the line onto the field, "it's all business." "It's fine, it's something that as soccer players you have to deal with," Krispin said. "Going from pretty much being a starter in the spring and a couple games last year to starting on the bench

is fine because that means that Gallagher has been doing really well in practices. And it gives me more motivation to work harder and get back on the line."

The team rallied from a one-goal deficit Saturday, with the defense leading the charge. Behind constant pressure, starting in the back line, the team rallied and Gross was pleased with the way his teammates rebounded.

"We've been working very hard this whole preseason about getting after the ball, no matter the situation, and putting pressure on the other team," Gross said. "We know that if we put a ton of pressure, starting with a strong defensive pressure, that we're going to get the ball back and our offense can kick into gear."

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# Damon rejects claim, stays with Detroit

By The Associated Press

DETROIT -- Johnny Damon is staying in Detroit.

The 36-year-old outfielder decided to pass up a chance to return to the MLB Boston Red Sox, and rejecting their waiver claim and choosing to remain with the Tigers.

"These guys really like me here," Damon said Tuesday, adding he spoke to each of his teammates individually to be sure he was wanted in the Tigers' clubhouse.

Damon was popular in Boston when he helped the Red Sox win the 2004 World Series to end an 86-year drought.

With his long hair and beard, he was part of the group of Red Sox players who called themselves the "Idiot."

He fell out of favor, however, with many Boston fans when he later became a free agent and joined the rival New York Yankees.

"Considering the buzz that Johnny created for many years here, one of the original 'Idiot' of the World Series champions here, I thought it would be a great idea. But sometimes the ideas of others are not the same as the person who actually has to be in the situation," Red Sox outfielder Mike Cameron.

Damon's contract gives him veto power over trades to all but

eight teams.

Because the Red Sox weren't one of those clubs, he was able to block the move.

Damon said he was leaning toward staying put from the beginning.

He texted former Red Sox teammate Jason Varitek and talked to David Ortiz, and both tried to convince him to return to Boston.

"They told me they wanted a spark," Damon said.

Said Varitek: "I reached out to him, as a friend, as a teammate, and ultimately, he's obviously had some decisions to make."

"I can only speak for what Johnny has meant here and what he has done as a player and what he is as a teammate. He would have been a big addition to our team with what he can do," he said.

The banged-up Red Sox began the day 5 1/2 games behind New York and Tampa Bay in the AL East. Detroit started 10 games behind Minnesota in the AL Central and far out of wild-card contention.

"This game's tough enough and when you're in a position and you're in a city and you're in a place where you want to be, a place where you're happy, there's no real reason of doing that," Boston closer Jonathan Papelbon said.

"I've always admired Johnny since I came here in '05 and he

was one of the players that took me under his wing and showed me the big leagues. I wish him nothing but the best."

"I'm not surprised because he's in a situation where he's happy and if he's happy, why not stay? If he's not happy, obviously he would have left."

Damon is hitting .272 with seven home runs and 41 RBIs in 111 games. This is his first season in Detroit.

"I feel like we're not out of it yet," he said. "At least we can make some kind of run."

Damon said he'd like to play in Detroit next year, too, but "there's no guarantee."

Tigers star Miguel Cabrera welcomed Damon's decision.

"It's good for us." "He stays here and we can play more together and see what happens. We can do a lot of things," Cabrera said.

"We can win more games, we can get more support in the lineup. If he stays here for some reason, it's because he likes it here, he believes in us. That's good."

Said Damon: "I've said Miguel Cabrera was the best hitter I've ever seen and I wanted to see it for a whole year."

One of Damon's concerns about remaining with the Tigers was his playing time. He was concerned the team might want to look at younger players.

"Yes, he's going to play," Leyland said.



Elaine Thompson/Associated Press

Detroit Tigers' Johnny Damon flips his bat after striking out in a game this season. Damon rejected a waiver claim from Boston yesterday.

# Pirates drop Cardinals

By Alan Robinson  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PITTSBURGH -- Pirates rookie Neil Walker drove in three runs and last-place Pittsburgh prevented Adam Wainwright from becoming the majors' first 18-game winner, holding off a ninth-inning rally to beat St. Louis 4-3 on Tuesday night.

The Cardinals, down 4-2 when the ninth started, loaded the bases with one out and a run in on Jon Jay's single, but Evan Meek got Matt Holliday and Felipe Lopez to pop up in succession. Meek converted only his second save in eight opportunities.

Wainwright (17-8) took a 2-0 lead into the sixth but couldn't hold it while failing for the second straight start to win his 18th.

He lost 3-2 to Milwaukee on Aug. 18. St. Louis had won three in a row since dropping five straight, but couldn't pick up any ground on NL Central leader Cincinnati or wild-card leader Philadelphia.

Pittsburgh won for only the third time in 16 games.

Wainwright gave up four runs and seven hits in seven innings, or as many runs as the right-hander had surrendered over 30 innings in his previous four starts.

## Spikes

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including two each from three different players. However, State College was held hitless with runners in scoring position, tallying an 0-for-11 mark. None of the Spikes four hits came in the same inning.

State College right fielder Cole White, who went 1-for-4, said the Spikes hit some balls hard but the Scrappers were able to make some plays.

"I think everybody's a little frustrated because we know we have the talent to score," White said. "We have that amount of talent. We have that capability. Right now it just seems like it's so hard to get a run, just one or two runs across the board. It's something we're going to have to overcome these last 12 games."

Aside from the first inning, which turned out to be crucial, the Spikes pitching staff held the Scrappers at bay. State College starting pitcher Zack Dodson allowed six of the Scrappers seven hits in his 4.2 innings on the mound before right-handed relievers Trent Stevenson and Mitch Fienemann

held their opponent to one base knock in the final 4.1 frames.

"Our pitching staff has been absolutely tremendous this entire year and we're going to keep battling for them," White said.

Dodson's record dropped to 2-4 with the loss, while Mahoning Valley reliever Gregorio Rosario earned his first win and evened his record at 1-1. Scrappers reliever James Ehlerth notched his eighth save with a 1-2-3 ninth inning.

The Spikes and Scrappers will play the second game of their three-game series at 7:05 tonight.

The Spikes collectively hope to finally get back on track from the batter's box. In the last four games, all against Mahoning Valley, State College is averaging only 4.5 hits per game.

"The biggest thing is just forget about it," White said. "What happened, happened."

"It's over. Just come out tomorrow with energy. We've only got 12 more games right now and we just need to have fun with it."

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