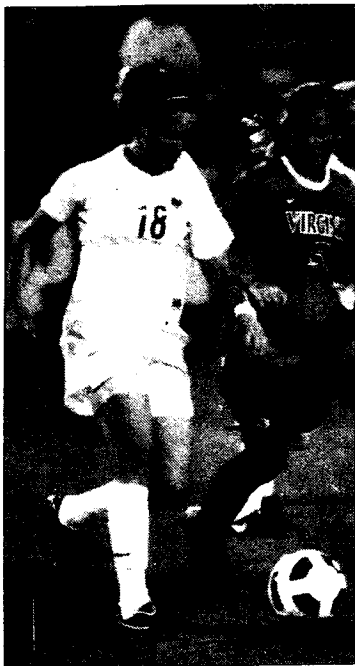


# Women's soccer eyes weekend turnaround



Sarah Finnegan/Collegian

Maddy Evans (18) dribbles the ball down the field against Virginia.

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Nothing about it seems positive. Fly across the country, play a solid team Friday night, then take on the No. 4 team in the country Sunday afternoon — all while trying to rebound from a three-game losing streak.

Yet, the Penn State women's soccer team thinks this weekend's trip to the Portland Invitational in Oregon will help turn their season around.

"Our expectation is just for us to perform at a better level," Penn State coach Erica Walsh said. "We showed some good video [Wednesday] of things we need to be doing better and for them to put that into play and just get rid of some of the foolish mistakes and play better soccer."

The Nittany Lions play the University of Washington at 7:30 Friday night, then will meet No. 4 Portland at 4:30 Sunday afternoon. Washington is off to a 3-1-1 start

and is coming off its own cross-country trip to Boston, while Portland is 6-0-0 and is giving up only 0.33 goals per game.

During their three-game slide that dropped them out of the rankings, the Lions have been inconsistent, but the team has spent the last week trying to eliminate this season's shortcomings, which include lapses in intensity, reliance on long passes and slow starts to halves.

Preparing to face Penn State, Washington coach Leslie Gallimore hasn't taken the Lions' 1-3-1 record into consideration. With the caliber of Penn State's schedule, Gallimore said teams can't assume the Lions are having a down year.

"They've been tested obviously, the opponents they play are no pansies," Gallimore said. "It's a young team Penn State has, but it's a talented team and with soccer it takes time to get things clicking."

Containing Penn State's speed

will be a key for both teams this weekend, but Gallimore said her focus is on letting her team play to its strengths.

The Huskies coach said if she focused on shutting down specific Penn State players, the other players would just step up and beat her team.

All week, the Penn State players have talked about how excited they are for this weekend and the chance to turn their fortunes around. Sophomore midfielder Maddy Evans said it's a great opportunity and the team is lucky to have it.

"Especially with where we are right now, it's what we need," Evans said.

"I think people are excited for the challenge and it's a great chance for us to come back and show who we really are and make up for some things. Hopefully this weekend will be when we do finally click."

Portland coach Garrett Smith said Penn State's struggles aren't

uncommon at this time of the year for any team and he, like Gallimore, is paying no attention to the Lions' record. Smith said at this point in the season, coaches can't plan around opponents and it's all about how teams finish the season that matters.

Regardless, he is still expecting a tough game with the Lions and he sees Penn State turning its season around.

The Lions have won 12-straight Big Ten titles and Smith said there's too much history and talent stemming from State College to expect anything less.

"Unfortunately they're on a three-game slide but I don't think that's indicative of where they're going to wind up this season," Smith said. "That's a team we expect to be in the playoffs, a team that's going to win games and probably win the conference and a team you never take lightly by any means."

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## Forwards offer different looks

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Corey Hertzog is proven, dynamic, unpredictable and a flat-out goal scorer.

But he's not the only forward the Penn State men's soccer team has turned to this season. The junior has meshed his talents with the other forwards so far this season, and is quickly building chemistry with the whole unit.

"He's been doing well, he's definitely the leader up there," senior midfielder and captain Drew Cost said. "When he's in, it's something for other guys to work hard and match his work rate and his intensity and his runs. He's been awesome with them trying to push the other guys to be as good as he is."

Last year, Hertzog played most of his minutes alongside Jason Yeisley, now in the MLS and senior Trevor Gelsinger. This year, Hertzog combined with freshman Jordan Tyler and sophomores Daniel Burnham and Rafael Faria while Gelsinger is serving a suspension for off-field conduct this summer.

Each forward has a unique skill set that helps Hertzog in different ways. Gelsinger and Tyler are big, physical players who can keep possession, while Faria has a wide array of technical skills and Burnham is a high-energy player in Hertzog's mold.

"You adapt when they come in and they know their roles," Hertzog said. "Usually I just hang up high and they play their roles underneath."

The results are there as well. Hertzog leads the team with three goals in two games, while Faria has one goal and Tyler is second on the team with seven shots. Gelsinger, a senior, led the team with six goals in 2008 and Burnham scored 28 goals last fall for Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario, Oregon.

Hertzog already leads the team in shots with 11 and Penn State coach Bob Warming said he'll never stop the junior from shooting.

"Corey's terrific around the goal and I'm never going to criticize him for shooting," Warming said. "The kid can shoot anytime he feels the need or urge and even more often."

Warming added he wants Hertzog to work



Ryan Uish/Collegian

Corey Hertzog tries to get the ball behind the goalie at a men's soccer game at Jeffrey Field last year. Penn State beat Hofstra 5-1.

on keeping the ball and using his teammates more when he gets the ball in the midfield. Hertzog has been working on playing with his strike partners and Warming said if the junior can hold the ball in the midfield as the team comes out of the back, it will involve more players in the attack.

Without Gelsinger, Hertzog is the most experienced forward and has taken more of a leadership role with younger forwards.

"They look up to me as a sort of, I don't want to say role model, but something like that," Hertzog said. "They just try to mimic what I do."

Hertzog credited the strong play in the midfield for playing him good balls he's turned into chances.

At the same time, the players around Hertzog are impressed with the way the junior has learned to change his game based on which forward he's partnered with.

"Corey's a guy who can easily adapt to anyone," Braga said. "He plays well with everyone. It's just easy for him and anyone that plays with him up top is going to have an easy day because he does a great job up there."

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## Cross country gears up for Saturday Invitational meet

By Zack Feldman  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Few members of Penn State's cross country team put any stock in the national rankings.

The women's team began its season ranked No. 24 in the United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association rankings, less than a year after concluding its season with a No. 11 ranking and a trip to the NCAA national championship.

The ranking is lower than members of the team are used to. The women are now ranked third in the Big Ten, even while the team earned a Big Ten championship last year.

But both head coach Beth Alford-Sullivan and assistant coach John Gondak said preseason rankings are an inaccurate measure of what a team's future success might be since they cannot take into account new components to the team.

"Preseason rankings are based on what happened last year, because no teams have opened up yet and nobody really knows who has what, who is healthy and who isn't," Gondak said. "[The rankings are] a guesstimate of where people think the teams could end up. I think we have a heck of a team on the women's side, and we have room to go forward in the rankings from there."

And while the USTFCCA tries to order teams as it sees fit, sophomore Brooklyne Ridder said the strong class of newcomers lets the team collectively ignore its ranking when preparing for and running a race.

"We have girls like Maura [Ryan] who just came from soccer. She's a fifth-year, but she'll be helping the team. She placed seventh last week. We're expecting a lot from her," Ridder said.

"And it's hard to point out the fresh-

men, there's such a big group of them. Our team is so interchangeable, I think that's what makes us great. Any week, someone could be having a great day."

The men's team is unranked in the preseason for the second-consecutive year.

Gondak said he believes a first meet as successful as the Dolan Duals was in Lock Haven is the first step toward a push into the top-30 if runners continue progressing.

"I think we have a talented enough team. By the end of the year, when everybody is running at the level we hope they can run at, we can be a team that is a factor in the rankings," Gondak said.

"They went to Lock Haven and showed something important; in cross country, it's not necessarily about having a fast time. It's about competing and racing other people. And they accomplished that at Lock Haven."

Taking their new rankings into the Harry Groves Spiked Shoe Invitational at 10 a.m. Saturday, Penn State's runners are looking to make an impact at home at the Blue-White golf course.

With returning sophomore Nicole Lord, who sat out the season opener at Lock Haven, Gondak said he expects a full roster on the course Saturday.

Ridder, who finished third in Penn State's sweep of Lock Haven, said she is not expecting the same type of results Saturday. Instead, the team is expecting to give highly-ranked rivals a run for first-place in front of its home crowd.

"There's going to be better competition this weekend. [No. 11] Georgetown and [No. 7] Princeton are coming, and the plan is to try to stay together as a group for the first half of the race," Ridder said.

"From then on, we're just going to see how much we have left. We just want to get out there and have our pack near the top."

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## A classic game awaits Saturday, even without proper context

By Andrew J. Cassavell

THE goal line stand. The first Sugar Bowl in the Superdome. Bear vs. JoePa. All are a part of Alabama-Penn State lore.

It's tradition, it's history, it's what makes college football.

But, please, forgive the players if they don't care.

All week they've heard questions about the defending champion No. 1 Crimson Tide. They've heard the legends of the '70s and '80s. They've been grilled as about how much Joe Paterno has told them in practice about the good old days.

It's time they put on the pads and play for themselves. They've earned the right by putting up

with all the useless contextualization for the last six months.

For fans, context is what drives sports. Otherwise the 2004 World Series was just a boring sweep, and Kobe Bryant's title in June wasn't to pull within one of Jordan, it was just title No. 5.

But do any of us seriously think the players are playing to get Paterno his revenge one more time after he wasn't able to beat Bear Bryant in four tries? Shouldn't they be focusing on explosive running back Trent Richardson and still undefeated quarterback Greg McElroy instead?

When the game ends, historians will rush to make sense of it. If 'Bama rolls, it becomes, "Are they on the verge of running the table and being one of the best teams ever?" If Penn State shocks the Tide, it will be, "The true freshman quarterback beating Goliath in one of the great

upsets in Penn State history."

No matter who wins Saturday night there will be an overreaction. There will probably even be one from the writer of this column. It's in my job description.

For three hours on Saturday, let's shove all that to the side and enjoy what we have.

We have a battle of two top-25 teams in what might be the best nonconference game of the season.

We have a poised freshman quarterback going into a night game in SEC country, where the Big Ten is still looking to earn some respect.

We have Alabama's three-deep running game (yes, even without Ingram) going against Penn State's eight-deep defensive line and five-deep linebacking corps.

Not bad for a week two matchup, huh?

So much has been made of the history between the two sides,

but given what we've got this weekend, can't we just enjoy the game before we rush to add it to the Alabama and Penn State history books?

There's a reason most professional sports wait five years to vote on Hall of Famers: Enjoy it now, make sense of it later.

Five years from now, who knows where these players will be? Most won't still be playing football. Why should they care who played five years ago or who will be playing five years from now.

Let them worry about the current week, which has the chance to be the biggest game many of them will ever play in.

Even Paterno understands what most of the media doesn't.

"A year from now, they stick my picture up, everybody's going to say, 'Who's the long-nosed guy?'" said Paterno, who refused to talk about Bryant at his Tuesday

press conference to avoid taking attention away from the current players.

"And they stick Bryant up there with that hat and they'll say, 'Who would wear a funny hat like that these days?'"

Yes, you should get chills when Paterno brings his team into a stadium with "Bryant" in the name, 27 years after the great coach passed away, and on what would be his 97th birthday. It means you're a college football fan, and it means you have a pulse.

But Bear and Joe won't be putting on any pads this weekend. Those who are shouldn't get any chills aside from those stemming directly from this game.

To them, Bear is just a grumbling man in a funny hat, anyway.

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## Tradition oozing from Penn State/Alabama contest, even before kickoff

By Stephen Hennessey

EXPECTATIONS for Penn State's football team are always high, just like they are at any school with a football program with as rich a history as Penn State's.

In my four years as a student in Happy Valley, though, I cannot recall a game when fans had as little optimism as they do for this year's road contest against the No. 1-ranked Alabama, the defending national champion.

It's odd to hear the winningest Division I college football coach say his team is outmanned this week, but that's exactly how Joe Paterno described his inexperienced team in his weekly press conference.

Maybe it was a way to pump up his Lions before they make their way down to Tuscaloosa for their primetime showdown, beginning with ESPN's College GameDay. Maybe he felt the Lions weren't practicing up to his standards to begin this pivotal week.

Either way, it's really nobody's business to question Paterno — he's been watching football longer than anybody could possibly calculate.

This is a historical battle, pit-

ting two programs with rich history. The historical 1979 Sugar Bowl, a 14-7 'Bama win, was capped by a goal line stand that ESPN named the No. 2 most painful outcome in college football history. Despite the painful loss, Paterno fought through the crowd on the field to shake Bear Bryant's hand. Penn State fans will still argue Matt Suhey scored on this down.

This battle still means a lot for Penn State.

Paterno is in his 45th year as head coach and is approaching the 400 win mark. Nobody knows for sure how long JoePa will coach, so Penn State fans should consider ourselves lucky we're able to watch Paterno trot onto

the field for another year. Still, questions linger that have Nittany Lion fans concerned about Saturday.

True freshman Rob Bolden will also trot into a road environment for the first time, which greatly contributes to these lower expectations. Bolden had a strong, crisp pass in his first start, but how will he fare when he's being pressured by a dangerous defense?

I grew up with winning teams. I grew up watching the winningest college basketball program (University of Kentucky) and the most successful Major League Baseball franchise (N.Y. Yankees) win multiple championships. Penn State football fans also

are accustomed to winning. In the past two seasons, the Lions have gone 22-4. National championship games eluded fans in 2005 and 2008, so there may be a certain envy of the Crimson Tide for winning the title last year.

It would be sweet revenge for Paterno and Co., especially to avenge the '79 loss, to defeat Saban and the Tide in front of a national audience this weekend.

After all, the Tide are 0-5 in home games when GameDay sets up shop in Tuscaloosa.

Those are odds even Paterno might take.

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