

SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

The Nittany Lions traveled to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, losing to the No. 1 Crimson Tide 24-3 in the teams' first meeting since a Lions victory in 1990.



Chloe Elmer/Collegian
Joe Paterno (left) greets Alabama coach Nick Saban.



Chloe Elmer/Collegian
Penn State captains Ollie Ogbu (85) and Brett Brackett (83) walk onto the field of Bryant-Denny Stadium.



Chloe Elmer/Collegian
Darius Hanks (15) outruns the Penn State defense.



Chloe Elmer/Collegian
Joe Paterno (center) and members of the Nittany Lion football team stand on the sideline. The Lions committed four turnovers Saturday night in the loss to No. 1 Alabama.

Run game

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have to make plays for him," Green said of Bolden. "O-line, they blocked their behinds off today. Just the skill guys, we have to make more plays than what we did [Saturday]."

Right guard Stefan Wisniewski thought the offensive line was productive this week. But with a rushing attack slipping in the yards-per-carry category, the failures of the Penn State rushers are due in part to a line still searching for consistency.

Left guards DeOn'tae Pannell and Johnnie Troutman rotated at

the position again. Pannell started the game, but Troutman took control of left guard at the end.

The offensive line had the task of going up against a quick Crimson Tide defense. Alabama's blitz packages and pressure from the front-four defensive linemen translated into run stoppage and errant Bolden throws, several of which were low or in and out of defenders' hands or thrown for interceptions.

"That is a really tough physical football team we played," Jay Paterno said. "I think they probably out-toughed us a lot in some situations."

Royster has yet to break 80 yards combined in two games this

season, and the most productive Penn State tailback has been true freshman Silas Redd, who averaged almost six yards a carry in his first two games.

Wisniewski spoke of the rushing attack comparatively and said he thought the Lions ran the ball better against Youngstown, though the combination of Royster, Redd and Green averaged one less yard per carry on Saturday when compared to the Youngstown State game.

"I know we were moving them at times, opening some holes at times," Wisniewski said. "We drove the ball well a lot."

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Bolden

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capitalized right away with a touchdown drive to go up by two scores. The Lions would never get any closer.

Joe Paterno characterized Bolden's performance as "good and bad, which you expect with a tough crowd and tough football team."

Senior receiver Brett Brackett, the offensive captain, said Bolden had no troubles managing the huddle or the hostile environment. Brackett said the game could be a learning experience for Bolden, who

"He did a great job handling the noise."

Brett Brackett
receiver

made some easily correctible mistakes.

"You've gotta look back on the film and just try to learn from every little thing you can," Brackett said. "I thought he did a great job handling the crowd noise, handling the pressure and all that kind of stuff."

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Lions

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the roster, and its stallion cut up Penn State's front seven for more than six yards a carry.

Rarely was Trent Richardson tackled by one defender, too cool for that, so natural changing direction, knows patience yet wants to get upfield and deliver the blow. He dragged Chris Colasanti into the end zone on his one-yard touchdown run. No back in State College could simulate the combination of speed and power.

"He doesn't stop running," said Penn State defensive coordinator Tom Bradley. "You see he keeps going, and we gotta knock him back, and we did too much arm tackling and didn't hit him in the mouth."

Frankly, Alabama's offense worked at its leisure Saturday night, pound Richardson against a defense with no difference

maker, throw the ball to anybody and challenge a passive defensive backfield to tackle in the open field.

It's got to be a sickening feeling for Bradley and his defense, a unit that prides itself on fundamentals, positioning, pursuit, tackling, to be outmanned. It wasn't going to hold up over four quarters, not with humidity that felt like a hot rag on your forehead.

No satisfaction

The sweat was still dripping off Stephfon Green's face after a shower and change of clothes into his suit, topped off with a gold cross dangling from his neck.

"We got our behinds kicked, and it's unacceptable," he said. "As a whole team, we just need to get back in this film room, and somebody needs to step up. I'm not saying we don't have leaders, but somebody has to step up when we're down and make a play."

Penn State reeked of frustration, and rightfully so, botching up three legitimate scoring drives inside the 30-yard line.

Puzzled by his own coach questioning whether he prepared his team for what it walked into Saturday night, Green shook his head, insisting this team was ready.

But how so? State looked a little unsure of itself, unsure if it knew it belonged on the field with the Tide.

An offense capable of putting up points had a very raw Tide defense on its heels but folded when the stakes were raised.

Not ready. Not yet. Strangely, it was the youth who clenched their fists and tried to pop the cork for the Nittany Lions. Si Redd tweeted a "Shock the World" hashtag earlier in the week to galvanize a program. Rob Bolden's poise never wavered, not when Nick Saban, Bobby Bowden and Joe Paterno met at

midfield during pregame, not when he three Tide defender came bearing down on him, causing him to fling the ball up for grabs in a sea of crimson shirts on his second drive, not when he stuck his nose in to recover both fumbled snaps or when his best scoring chance was being returned 75 yards the other way.

Maybe they don't know any better, weren't aware the formula to knock off the defending champs wasn't a mistake-free, vanilla offense, as it was in Columbus in 2008 and years before.

The satisfaction from Saturday night is knowing there's talent to contend with an SEC power, with an upper-echelon opponent.

What then, is keeping the transition from happening, keeping a team flex its muscles and command a stage of its own?

Green candid speak was refreshing. This is an offense of playmakers leashed from making plays.

And you can look no farther

than the two-minute postgame squabble by the coach with the short temper, the short leash, making his return to a town that loves the game as much as he does and isn't afraid to show it. A town where fans dress in a houndstooth hat, a white shirt and tie tucked into crimson slacks.

A stadium where the starters are introduced over the loud-speakers and really are presented as the rock stars their state views them as.

"It's all over now"

"We came down here knowing how good they were, and we didn't rise up to it," Paterno said. "I'm not just blaming the kids. I thought our kids didn't play well, and I don't think we did a good job coaching. Period."

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Absent

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position, Moyer's hustle temporarily kept the Tide out of the endzone.

Moyer was also one of Bolden's top targets as his 69 receiving yards were a game high.

Defense: cornerback D'Anton Lynn

The cornerback was up against one of the best wide receivers in college football and Julio Jones didn't completely have his way with Lynn. The junior limited Jones to four catches for 49 yards

and was also the Lions' leading tackler, making nine stops. But when the cornerback is the leading tackler, there are some concerns with the front seven.

Day to forget

Offense: running back Evan Royster

The senior who has his sights set on becoming Penn State's all time leading rusher, failed to run for more than 50 yards for the second consecutive week.

Royster finished the game with nine carries for 32 yards and caught just two pass out of the

backfield for a paltry -6 yards.

Defense: Defensive tackle Ollie Ogbu

After making a strong impression in the opening game, the senior recorded just three tackles and was the anchor to a defensive line that couldn't stop Alabama's run game. Ogbu was spelled by Jordan Hill and the defensive line recorded just two sacks and couldn't consistently pressure Tide quarterback Greg McElroy.

Did you notice?

The Alabama fans were cheering like crazy for Joe Paterno as

he jogged off into the tunnel after giving ESPN his analysis at the half ... Gerald Hodges was hurt on the first play of the game and spent most of the night on the sidelines on crutches after sustaining what he called a bone bruise on his left leg. Hodges said his injury will keep him out a few weeks

Extra Point

Former Florida State coach Bobby Bowden was on hand as an invited guest by Alabama. Bowden addressed the media before kickoff and spoke about his relation-

ship with Paterno and complimented the job Nick Saban has done as a coach.

The three coaches, who combine for six national championships, met at midfield before kickoff and received a strong applause from the crowd.

Quotable

Joe Paterno when asked why he said he was out coached: "Oh I don't know, I said it. I haven't got the slightest idea. Well tough, get a hearing aid. I'm not in any mood."

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