

Okoli excited for starting opportunity

By Andrew J. Cassavell
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Standing on the sideline for the first four weeks of the season, Chima Okoli watched Lou Eliades, envisioning what he would do if he were in the starting right tackle's shoes.

FOOTBALL

When Eliades went down with a season-ending knee injury in the third quarter of Saturday's win over Temple, Okoli thought one thing from his spot on the sideline: "It just got real."

Eliades' anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear, which Okoli called "gut-wrenching," clears the way for Okoli to make his first start, which will come Saturday against an Iowa defensive line that is arguably the best in the nation.

It's happening fast for Okoli, who last season was fighting for time as a defensive tackle. The redshirt junior switched to the offensive line in the offseason, and Saturday he'll be blocking defensive ends Adrian Clayborn and Broderick Binns.

But Okoli is making sure he doesn't let Eliades or anyone on the Penn State offensive line down.

"Lou looked at me with a look like, 'Here it is, here's your opportunity, what are you gonna do with it?'" Okoli said. "I told him, 'I'm not gonna let you down. I feel like I'm in his spot right now. Me not honoring the spot is a disservice to him. He's obviously given up so much.'"

Okoli said he didn't get to talk to Eliades before he was carted off the field. But after the game he met Eliades in the training room,

gave him a hug and let him know how sorry he felt for the senior, who saw his college career end Saturday at Beaver Stadium.

Okoli added he will "fill in to the best of his abilities," — abilities he's only had a few short months to sharpen, given his switch to offense. At 287 pounds, Okoli is also 23 pounds lighter than Eliades.

"Everything that I knew on defense is wrong," Okoli said. "Imagine teaching yourself a brand new language from the summer to right now. Obviously I still don't have everything down, but I'm in the film room every single night."

The hardest part about the switch to offense, Okoli said, was picking up the audibles before every play. He said he is used to a different defensive mentality that "is more of a go-get-it" attitude.

But senior right guard Stefan Wisniewski said Okoli did a great job adapting to the offense and to the adjustment to the first team.

"It's definitely tough," Wisniewski said.

"And Chima did an excellent job stepping up there. I was really impressed by it ... He's really progressed fast and really looked good in there for his first big-time game action."

Joe Paterno made no guarantees during his postgame press conference that Okoli would start in Iowa, but Okoli was second on the depth chart at right tackle and has taken reps there all season.

"I'm gonna make sure I secure the spot up," Okoli said.

"I worked very hard transitioning from defense to offense. I want this spot, and I'm



Chloe Elmer/Collegian

Lou Eliades (on cart) gets carted off the field Saturday after tearing his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL).

gonna make sure it's mine."

The offensive line recently took a solid shape with Johnnie Toutman winning the battle for left guard over DeOn'tae Pannell.

Now, with Eliades out, Troutman said the line is facing yet another reshuffling.

"It's a big blow, most definitely," Troutman said.

"He's a big player, and we're

gonna miss him, but we're gonna rally around Chima, the new right tackle, and try to get him better so we can get better as a unit and we can push forward."

Okoli wishes his chance didn't come because of Eliades' injury but is thrilled his first opportunity will come on the road in a hostile environment against Iowa's front seven.

"It makes me feel great, man," Okoli said about facing Binns and Clayborn.

"That's what football's about. You don't want to be killing everybody by 60 every game. Some games it's gonna be adversity, and you really have to grind it out with the best."

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Improving Lions feel better prepared for Iowa

By Brendan Monahan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Heading into Big Ten play, the Penn State football team has grown up a little since it first took the field against Youngstown State.

The Temple win was another step toward the right direction. The Penn State running game stepped up, as did quarterback Rob Bolden.

The Nittany Lions responded to adversity, in particular the defense, shutting out the Owls' offense in the final three quarters on Saturday.

Penn State travels to Iowa this week in its second road test of the season, a game that could reawaken the Alabama ghosts — as the Lions play another experienced

and heavily favored ranked team — or could highlight improvements made by the team since that game.

The Penn State players remember Alabama, and they said they've learned things about playing against a top-tier team that the inexperienced Lions weren't aware of before traveling to Tuscaloosa.

"I think the biggest thing that we came away from the Alabama game is we got to come out right away from the start," defensive tackle Jordan Hill said.

Learning from a slow start in Alabama should help prepare Penn State for the Hawkeyes, though the Lions have failed to lead after the first quarter in three of their first four games.

The Penn State defense also

learned to pick up its intensity since Alabama.

The Lions' defense has a lot of potential, but inexperience and hesitancy led to poor tackling against Crimson Tide tailback Trent Richardson before the defense had a breakout third quarter against Temple.

This weekend, the Lions face the Hawkeyes' solid rushing attack behind tailback Adam Robinson, who rushed for 385 yards in his first four games. The Lions' defense had no prior experiences to learn from before facing Richardson.

Now tackling seems to be a past issue.

"We've been waiting to see our potential as a defense, and I think we're going to take that into this week of practice," linebacker Nate

Stupar said. "We are good. We are good tacklers. We are physical. We are tough. We are fast. And that's what we're going to take into Iowa."

A win, though, is in no way an easy task and the Lions are the heavy underdog.

In three games at home, Iowa has won by at least four touchdowns in each contest, and the Hawkeyes only loss came on the road to No. 14 Arizona.

The Hawkeyes' defensive line also presents mismatches for the Penn State offensive line, and the Lions' defense will face an experienced quarterback in Ricky Stanzi, who has played in big games and has already thrown for 999 yards and nine touchdowns. Stanzi gives the Lions' defense its second real quarterback test,

something Penn State hasn't faced since Alabama and Greg McElroy's interception-free, two-touchdown performance.

Iowa's offense is a step below Alabama's though, and Penn State defensive tackle Ollie Ogbu believes the team is better prepared for the Hawkeyes because the Lions' defense has already faced similar zone offenses against Temple and Kent State.

Ogbu's teammate Stupar, who stepped up with seven tackles against Temple, feels the same preparedness.

"They're a great football team," Stupar said. "They're poised. They're tough, and it's going to be a challenge, but we're ready for them."

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James speaks on eve of Miami Heat camp

By Tim Reynolds
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — In one breath, LeBron James insisted that he's moved past the venom directed his way after he chose to join the Miami Heat. In the next, the NBA's two-time reigning MVP said all those naysayers out there are his fuel.

Which rings true? Apparently, both.

"I don't want to keep harping about what people have said about me," James said.

"But personally, I'm motivated by what has gone on this summer."

Music to the collective Heat ears, right there. Donning his new Heat home uniform and spending the afternoon flanked by fellow star teammates Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh, James began a new Miami chapter Monday, hours before his team was to fly north for training camp in Florida's Panhandle.

Since "The Decision," as it's known, James has been called a quitter by Cleveland owner and former boss Dan Gilbert, had his competitiveness questioned by the Orlando Magic, heard Dallas owner Mark Cuban say he made a bad business deal, and found himself taking note of what was written and said by countless pundits.

It's all made James feel like he has something to prove again.

"It's funny how things happen in life and how people react," James said. "It seems like a lot of people try to tell you what to do with your life and most of the time they don't even have their own life in order. That was just funny to me. So I'm really excited for this opportunity for this franchise, getting an opportunity to bring my game to this city."

James signed a \$109.8 million, six-year deal with Miami on July 9, one day after starring in an hourlong TV special to announce he was leaving Cleveland.

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Approval for conducting this study in human subjects has been granted by the Penn State University Institutional Review Board. This study, under the direction of Dr. Mary Jane De Souza and Nancy I. Williams, will take place in The Women's Health and Exercise Laboratory and the Department of Kinesiology, will take place in The Women's Health and Exercise Laboratory and General Clinical Research Center on the campus of Penn State University, University Park, PA.

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