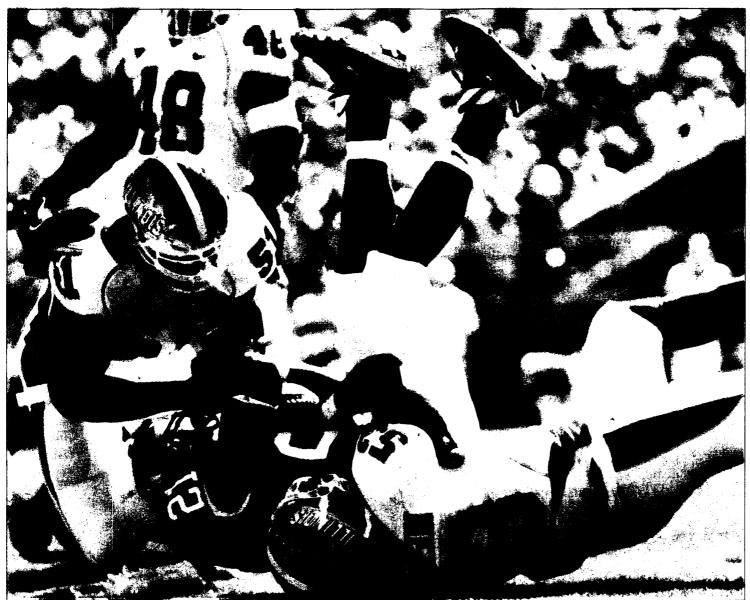
### VRAP-UP



Sarah Finnegan/Collegian

Penn State is at a crossroads after a shocking loss to Illinois and could miss out on a bowl game for the first time since 2004.

## Reality setting in for PSU

By Andrew J. Cassavell COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

It didn't work.

A players-only meeting following a 21-point loss at Iowa made it clear Penn State's season was on the brink. The players were given the option of turning it around or suffering through a long season.

An embarrassing 33-13 loss to the Illini gave Nittany Nation a good idea which of the two directions the team could be heading. Thoughts of top-tier New Year's turned to the Insight or the season at all.

To Joe Paterno, however, the most frustrating part of the season hasn't been the results. It's been the lack of improvement from game to game.

"We're not making any progress," Paterno said. "I Paterno said. "I thought by this stage we'd be a pretty good football team. I didn't think we'd be great, but I thought we'd be pretty good, and we're not getting any better. That's the discouraging part."

Halfway through the season, that lack of progress makes the remaining schedule look far more difficult than it did in August, and Penn State could be underdogs in its three remaining Lions need to put their foot down home games. At Beaver Stadium, the Lions will face control. Day bowl games have instead Michigan State, one of two unbeaten teams left in the Big Texas Bowl — or even no post- Ten, along with Northwestern enough is enough," Ogbu said. and Michigan, who suffered their first losses Saturday.

November to current No. 1 Ohio ate and check themselves and State, and it means the Lions will have to beat at least one of those

four teams simply to become ning on gathering the team this bowl eligible.

"That's obvious," said running back Evan Royster, whose 35 yards Saturday left him 93 shy of breaking Penn State's all-time rushing record. "If we don't start to win games, then we're not going to go to a bowl game, and nobody wants that."

Senior captain Ollie Ogbu isn't looking that far into the future. First and foremost, he said, the before the season spirals out of

"It's just one of those things where enough is enough 'Did you come to Penn State to downs. lose, or did you come to be a win-Throw in a road trip in early ner? Each person has to reevalu- sisting, too. come with a winning attitude."

Ogbu added he wasn't plan-

week, saying, "We're not going to have any more secret meetings or this or that. We've got to come lace it up in practice.

During his postgame press conference, Paterno wondered aloud whether the coaching staff was doing its job of putting the best players on the field. With a slew of injuries, specifically to the defense, that task could become even more difficult in the coming weeks.

Offensively, the answers are a little less clear than simply getting healthier. The Illini dominated time of possession and Penn State managed only seven first

The same problems are per-

Much of the focus has been on red zone offense and the Lions See LOSS, Page 9.

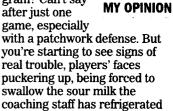
# **leam** falling

By Nate Mink

EVER has a youth movement toward tomorrow looked so stale. Check the label on the

2010 season, expiration date: Oct. 9.

Are we headed back to the early 2000s, the dark ages, a futile program? Can't say after just one game, especially



for years. Predictable, conservative play-calling and an egregious offensive line that can't knock anyone off the ball does not bode well for an offense. Soft zone with slow linebackers hung out to dry in pass coverage and a unit absent of playmakers won't do an offense any

Forget being out-schemed, out-manned, out-executed. Penn State is defeating itself, its staff losing its players that won't believe the boring, outdated propaganda, that see the restrictions on their talent.

And it's ruining the psyche of this young, fragile team. Players are discreetly questioning coaching, they feel the shackle and bolt of unimaginative play calls and they're losing patience, desperately reaching for a reason to care when a coaching staff handicaps their potential.

Twice Illinois cornerback Jack Ramsey fumbled a punt, which Penn State recovered deep in Illini territory. On the first chance, creativity budded for a second with a shotgun pitch to Silas Redd that let him operate in space and pick up eight yards. On second down running coordinator Galen Hall calls for Redd up the middle. No gain. Third down, passing coordinator Jay Paterno has Rob

See MINK, Page 9.

#### Offense doesn't improve

By Brendan Monahan COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Frustration reached its peak in the Penn State media room after Saturday's game.

Joe Paterno was frustrated at his team's effort, frustrated at the mounting injuries, but notably, also frustrated at himself.

The head coach said he did a poor job coaching in the 33-13 Illinois win. The Nittany Lions' offense, which has struggled converting short-yardage and red-zone opportunities, didn't consistently convert in those situations. On third downs, the stagnant Lions' offense was only successful in gaining first downs on two of 14 chances.

aside from the players not execut- Paterno said. ing, was the coaches.

the finger at anybody else," Paterno

"But I think [the coaching staff] could've probably done a better job somewhere down the line.

predictable to the appeared Fighting Illini defense when the Lions got into the red zone. The stale Lions' offense is one of many major concerns for a 3-3 team with the potential of missing out on a bowl bid if it keeps on its current

"If you're going to be honest with yourself, you got to start with the

Part of the reason for the failures, coaches," quarterbacks coach Jay

Joe Paterno said going into the "Any time you lose you can point game, he felt his team was prepared for the red zone. Both opportunities inside the 20-yard line came after Illinois' return man, Jack Ramsey, fumbled two punts.

The first Penn State attempt Penn State's play calling started at the Illinois 23-yard line, and the Lions made their way to the Illini five-yard line on three run plays and a pitch to running back Silas Redd. An illegal procedure penalty due to wide receivers Justin Brown and Derek Moye mixing up the play call and an incomplete pass attempt resulted in three points and no touchdown.



Sarah Finnegan/Collegian

See OFFENSE, Page 9. Devon Smith has been one of the few bright spots for the offense.

#### ye week comes at great time

By Audrey Snyder **COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER** 

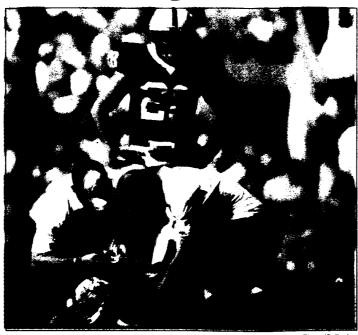
AST WORD

Penn State did not see this one coming.

Joe Paterno said he expected his football team would be pretty good by this point in the season, but his team enters the bye week with the harsh reality of a 3-3 record staring it in the face.

The Nittany Lions head in to the off week with an offense that's struggled to score on just about every opponent and a defense that still hasn't been able to turn in strong first-half performances. Add in mounting injuries and continuing red zone miscues and the Lions said the bye week is a time for reflection for both players and coaches.

"If you told me a couple weeks ago that we would be in this position I probably would've laughed at you," co-captain Ollie Ogbu



said. "It's just one of those things Eleven defensive players who played significant downs this year did See LAST WORD, Page 9. not finish Saturday's 33-13 loss to Illinois.

**COMMENTS POSITION** 

Quarterbacks **D** 

Running backs C-

Wide receivers C

Offensive line F

**Defensive line F** 

Linebackers

Secondary D

Special teams B+

Report Card: Illinois 33, Penn State 13

Take away the 80-yard TD and Bolden was 7for-20 for 62 yards and a pick. Saturday marked his worst performance yet.

Royster and Redd found a few holes, but they weren't on the field enough to make a real difference in the game.

Another big day for Moye, but overall, the routes were too sloppy to help out a young

quarterback. Most of the reason for the difference in time

of possession was the line's inability to get a push. It halted several PSU drives. Because of injuries, the D-line of Jones-Terry-Still-Latham was getting significant minutes

late. Not exactly the "Sack Exchange." Khairi Fortt impressed with 11 tackles in his first start, but the Illini still ran all over the Penn State defense.

More missed tackles from the unit, and they couldn't intercept a young Nathan Scheelhaase. The RS freshman was 15-for-19.

Wagner made both his field goals, and the kicking teams forced three fumbles - the lone bright spot on the afternoon.