

Paterno not worried about 400, thinking about season

By **Brendan Monahan**
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Joe Paterno needs only three wins to reach 400, but that mark isn't on his radar.

"Not right now," Paterno said. "Right now, it's to get a victory. No, I haven't thought of that."

Thoughts instead have shifted to turning around a 3-3 season.

Penn State coaches talked about reevaluating personnel

after Saturday's loss to Illinois, but Paterno said the coaches, including himself, may possibly have spoken prematurely.

The offensive line, which includes only one full-time starter from last season, has taken a lot of heat for its poor play, including failing to give quarterback Rob Bolden enough time in the pocket and establish a rushing attack.

"I think the offensive line is getting a little bit more criticism than they deserve," Paterno said.

"We certainly didn't dominate

the line of scrimmage, but we didn't dominate anything."

Back-to-back losses raise questions on how the coaches can keep their players focused on upcoming games.

Players were off Sunday and Monday but returned to practice Tuesday. Paterno said he hadn't talked to his players since Saturday, but he would try to get his team to focus again.

"We've got to be encouraging," Paterno said. "We've got to get some of these kids to realize that

they still have the kind of potential that we've felt we had."

Dantonio in good health

Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio returned to the field last Saturday against Michigan, though it was only for warmups.

Dantonio suffered a heart attack after the Notre Dame game Sept. 18 and a blood clot was revealed Sept. 30, two days before the Wisconsin game. The Spartans coach hadn't witnessed his team play in person for three

weeks before this past Saturday.

Dantonio said he's recovering from his blood clot and trying to pay more attention to how he feels.

Dantonio said a part of easing into his coaching duties includes watching film at his home and office.

"I'm in very good health," Dantonio said. "My heart is bouncing back, however you want to say it, but I feel very good."

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Sophomore Gallagher making the most of his opportunities

By **Mike Still**
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Bob Warming chose to leave John Gallagher off his team's travel roster when the Penn State men's soccer team ventured to Michigan on Oct. 3.

Leaving the sophomore midfielder behind was something Warming regretted after the Nittany Lions' 2-1 loss to the Wolverines.

"Johnny's the life of the party," Warming said of Gallagher. "Everybody enjoys having Johnny on the trips and I didn't take him to Michigan. We missed having his energy on the bus."

One of the team's most passionate players, Gallagher and his energy have been pivotal to the Lions' success this year.

But lately, the sophomore's contributions on the field have paid dividends as well.

Still in Happy Valley while his team traveled to Ann Arbor, Mich., Gallagher worked on his posses-

sion skills and got more comfortable with the ball at his feet.

His coach noticed a huge improvement in the sophomore's skills.

"Having him stay and making him work extra time on his own with the ball has given him confidence," Warming said.

This past weekend in the Lions' 2-1 victory over Michigan State, Gallagher was given the chance to showcase his improved ball skills.

Heading into the second half down 1-0 to the Spartans, Warming had Gallagher replace

Mark Fetrow at left back.

"It felt good," Gallagher said of getting on the field.

"Coach really wanted me to attack in the second half because we were down a goal so he put me in and told me to go forward. I did that and we were able to get two goals and the win."

Gallagher's experience as a midfielder and offensive-minded playing style was just what the Lions needed to get things going offensively.

"He's got the speed and the natural left foot on the left side,"

sophomore defender Brian Forgue said of Gallagher. "He defended well and helped us get into the attack."

Though he's only seen time as a substitute this season, Gallagher is happy just to get on the field and help his team win.

He knows there's always room to improve and is doing what he can in practice to get better.

"Just keep working hard and keep at it, and hopefully I'll keep seeing my time," Gallagher said.

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Gymnastics

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"Then you hobble around for a couple weeks after that, but I don't want to speculate about these things."

Thompson said the injuries that affect the team the most usually occur during fall training because the gymnasts are working to get back into shape and are working on new routines.

"During the season it's something stupid, like somebody rolls an ankle," Thompson said. "During the fall they're trying to get back. In the season they're all in their routines."

Despite injuries to gymnasts who Thompson expects to be key contributors this winter, he feels his team is starting to come together and is looking for all of his gymnasts to step up in time for the beginning of the regular season.

"Everybody is doing great right now," Thompson said.

"48.7 percent of the scoring was done by seniors [last year] so the freshmen will need to step up especially."

Fans

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now, the group drapes one sign, "Hertzog's Hooligans" but Wrodel hopes to create a bigger student presence at home games.

The core group of the "Hooligans" is composed of Wrodel, his four roommates and two other friends, but they actively prowl both sidelines for students before every home game. While the student section hasn't been around that long, the players have been supportive of a consistent group of support.

"It's awesome, it gets us

pumped up," defender Brian Forgue said. "It may only be four or five guys at a time, Villanova it was raining out and they were still over there without shirts on."

Tonight, the "Hooligans" test of the Lions face their biggest test of the regular season — No. 1 Akron, who is busing in several hundred supporters. With the magnitude of the game, Hertzog said the hope is to form the student section around the tunnel the players enter the field from.

Hertzog said he and Wrodel have been working extra hard this week, going to Wal-Mart to pick up drums to accompany the vuvuzelas the "Hooligans" bring. The striker said energy from that

side of the field helps in games.

"It picks us up during the game," Hertzog said. "The last two years we haven't had that much of a crowd. Bringing more people in gets you more excited about the games."

After the loss to Indiana, most of the student section stayed to give the players a standing ovation as they left the field. Wrodel said he felt the players appreciated the gesture and Forgue said it meant a lot to see the fans stick around after such a tough loss.

"It meant a lot, we were all down after the game," Hertzog said. "Seeing them staying there, they still believed in us and to come to every game, the main

group of them, it's just great."

Since taking over the team, Lions coach Bob Warming has put an emphasis on promoting soccer on campus. The players helped new students move into dorms in August and the team has served food on campus a few times.

Warming said he enjoys the student section and he hopes that more people will continue making their way over to Jeffrey Field.

"It's part of what we want to do, we've had 100 years of soccer, this is what we want the next 100 years to be," Warming said. "The students, the support, the enthusiasm and the fun."

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Defense

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formation and what defensive lineup will work best.

Though they've been shuffling defenders in and out of the backline all season, the Lions know how fortunate they are to have such depth at the position.

"We've got a deep backline," junior Matt Smallwood said.

"Coach is just looking to find what can work best against good teams."

Against Michigan State on Oct. 10, redshirt senior Andy Parr was given the start over senior co-captain Andres Casais and earned Big Ten Defensive Player of the Week honors for his efforts in the 2-1 victory for the Lions.

Also, sophomore John Gallagher saw playing time in the second half at left back, relieving

regular starter Mark Fetrow.

Allowing some of the substitutes to see the field is something coach Bob Warming hopes will motivate each player to improve.

"If anything else we're trying to get the guys to concentrate," Warming said. "And know that there's another guy that wants to play that position too."

Though they won't know who will start against the Zips, the Lions must prepare for Akron's

aggressive style of play.

Confident the team's defenders will shut down Akron, junior forward Corey Hertzog isn't concerned about what the Zips' offense will bring tonight.

"Our defense is stopping everybody," Hertzog said. "And Andy Parr got Defensive Player of the Week, so our defense isn't going to have any trouble."

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Thomson

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centre back once freshman Bri Hovington and Molinda got healthy again coming off of injuries. Once sophomore Lexi Marton went down with a knee injury, Thomson had to adjust again when Carly Ninness stepped in.

But through it all, Walsh has

seen Thomson keep her composure.

"She's the center of this team right now," Walsh said. "She's our leader and our organizer, and she's been stepping in that role and taking responsibility and accountability for this team. I've been really proud of her response the past few weeks."

Despite the changes, Thomson said the defense is playing at its highest level all year. In its last

four games, the Lions have conceded just two goals while picking up this season's first two shutouts.

Aside from Hovington, Thomson had played with all the other defenders in some aspect before, which she said helped ease the difficulty of the changes. The junior did say, however, it has brought out different aspects in every defender's game.

Thomson is the most experienced defender on the roster, and

the other back line players haven't hesitated to go to her for help.

"We go to her with a lot of questions and she especially helped me and tells me where I need to be and when to move up the field," Molinda said.

Directing her teammates has made Thomson more comfortable in the leadership role, and given her the knowledge she can be the player teammates turn to.

This weekend, the Lions face

Minnesota and Wisconsin at home and Molinda said they're going to need Thomson's leadership to keep them focused in the games.

"I'm looking forward to it personally and I think the rest of the back line is too," Thomson said. "We go into every game wanting the shutout and giving up as few shots as possible and it's good to work towards goals like that."

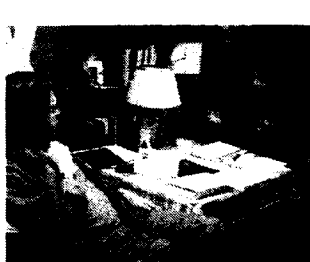
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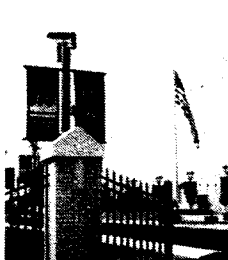
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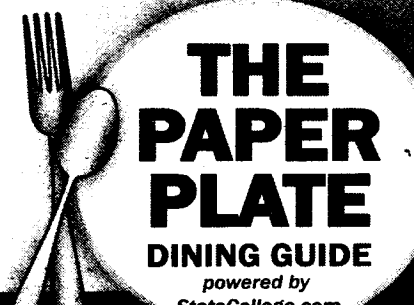


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