

Change won't affect Minnesota's circumstance

By Brendan Monahan

Two teams meet at a crossroads in Minneapolis this Saturday. Minnesota is breaking in interim coach Jeff Horton after the firing of Tim Brewster. The change could be a spark plug for the Golden Gophers, who have posted a 1-6 record with home losses to South Dakota and Northern Illinois.



MY OPINION

Penn State also has a new look, one completely different than the image created from 5-1 and 6-0 records at the halfway points in the last two seasons. The Nittany Lions have just as many wins as losses with six more games to go.

The last time they posted a .500 record or worse at the season's midpoint was 2004. Penn State was 2-4 at that point in a

season that featured no bowl game. The coaching change shouldn't give Minnesota a boost past one game, and even picking up that one-game momentum swing will be hard to come by.

"Maybe this week it will provide a benefit because of the emotion that the players are feeling," ESPN.com NCAA football columnist Ivan Maisel said. "Generally speaking, they can only ride that emotion for a game, and then it all begins to dissipate."

NCAA football coaching changes in mid-season are a rarity, but finding success with a new coach in place at a season's midpoint has been done before.

Clemson's Tommy Bowden stepped down in 2008 with Dabo Swinney becoming the interim coach. The Tigers improved from a 3-3 first-half record to 4-2 in the second half and received a Gator Bowl bid.

Minnesota radio commentator Darrell Thompson believes Brewster's firing won't necessarily hinder the Gophers.

"It takes pressure off the kids,"

Thompson said. "They're playing with a bit of a loaded gun. Now there is a little different idea of how to lead this program."

The two situations, though, are more dissimilar than similar.

The Golden Gophers aren't at the caliber of 2008 Clemson. All of the Tigers losses came against Division I-A teams, two of which — Alabama and Wake Forest — were ranked.

Minnesota lost to a Division I-AA team, South Dakota, and suffered six-straight losses.

More concerning to Penn State fans is whether this change warrants a cause for doubt Saturday. The Lions have lost two straight contests with Illinois recently dominating Penn State at home.

One team will face the public displeasure of another loss after Saturday, while the other will save face for at least one more game, and Minnesota may have just

received the boost it needs to win its first home game this season.

"Minnesota obviously is down, but I think in a strange way, they're going to be galvanized a little bit," ESPN.com Big Ten blogger Adam Rittenberg said. "Their fans got what they wanted. They got a coaching change, and I think players could come out real fired up — and they could come out real flat."

Flat or rejuvenated? Saturday will show which term applies to which team. But a coaching change to a 1-6 team causing a win? That is somewhat premature, especially for Minnesota, which has yet to prove it can win on the BCS-conference stage this season.

"In the past, it's rare that if there is a benefit, that it lasts more than a week or so," Maisel said.

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Eagles' DeSean Jackson out following concussion

By Dan Gelston
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA DeSean Jackson can't remember the vicious collision that left him with a concussion.

That's a typical consequence for anyone who suffers such a violent head injury. So is missing playing time.

Jackson, the dynamic Eagles wide receiver, will almost certainly sit out Sunday's game against Tennessee after he was injured in a nasty head-on collision with Atlanta cornerback Dunta Robinson. Jackson had soreness in his neck and shoulders a day after the blast, but was otherwise in good spirits and receiving treatment Monday in the training room.

"I will tell you that it would be a stretch for him, a real stretch for him to make it this weekend," coach Andy Reid said.

Jackson and Robinson were knocked out of Sunday's game after a frightening collision in which Robinson launched himself head first. Robinson also sustained a concussion.

Robinson was flagged for hitting a defenseless receiver. Both players stayed on the turf for several minutes before being helped from the field.

"He got a pretty good jolt, now,"

Reid said. "That was a big hit. I'm not sure I've seen one here quite like that one in our stadium. That was a big hit for both guys."

Jackson had scored both of Philadelphia's touchdowns and the Eagles led the Falcons 14-0 at the time of the collision. Philadelphia won 31-17.

Not surprisingly, Jackson told Reid he didn't remember the hit that knocked him out.

"It's not like amnesia set in," Reid said. "He remembered his touchdowns and all the things that happened."

Before he was sidelined by the hit, Jackson was unstoppable. He gained 78 yards on three first-quarter touches, scoring on a 31-yard run and a 34-yard pass from Kevin Kolb. Then came the brutal hit that left him flat on the turf, motionless. Robinson was just as immobile.

"This was like a 'Rocky' movie," Reid said. "Very seldom do you see two guys collide and they're on the canvas there."

It's not the first time Jackson, who has 19 catches for 395 yards, was seriously flattened on the field.

He also suffered a concussion last season against Washington. He was injured then on a hit after running a short crossing pattern in the third quarter.

He didn't lose consciousness and left the field on his own. He

missed the next game, though.

Eagles wide receiver Riley Cooper suffered a concussion two weeks ago and still has not returned for a game. Reid said it wasn't fair to compare potential recovery times for each player.

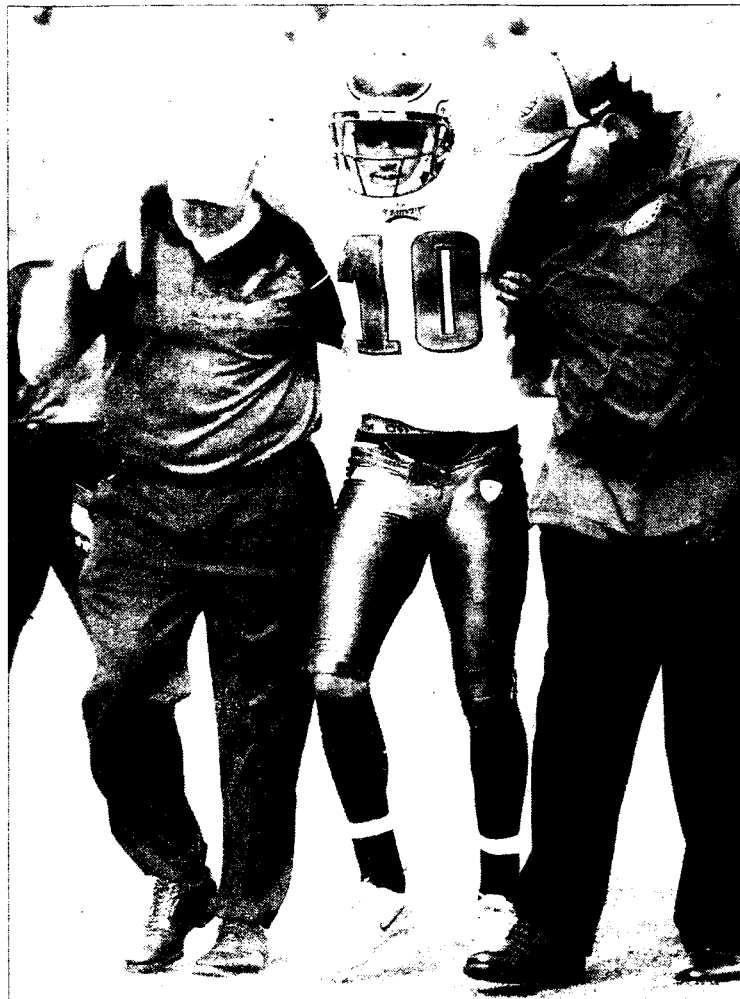
"I think they're all different, and so you just have to go on the symptoms and see what happens, and listen to the doctors, and listen to the player and the trainer," he said.

Jackson may be out, but Kolb is staying put. Reid said Kolb will likely start at quarterback against the Titans. Michael Vick was the third QB against the Falcons and still hasn't fully recovered from injured rib cartilage that he sustained two weeks ago.

While Reid didn't totally rule out Vick, he said "there's a pretty good chance" Kolb will get his third straight start. Kolb hit 23 of 29 passes for 326 yards with three touchdowns and an interception vs. Atlanta.

Kolb opened the season as the No. 1 QB only to lose his job to Vick in the first game after his own concussion. Reid handed the job to Vick and insists it's still belongs to him — a sticky situation if Kolb continues to thrive.

"You're dealing with one of the most competitive guys you're ever going to meet, so does he want to play? Absolutely, he wants to play," Reid said.



DeSean Jackson (10) is helped from the field following his concussion.



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