

# Change in jerseys doesn't prove anything

By Andrew J. Cassavell

**P**ERSONNEL changes were supposed to be coming. We heard as much from multiple coaches after the last two games — a pair of humiliating conference losses that left it painfully obvious the 22 starters thrown onto the field simply weren't good enough. During last week's bye week, it finally looked like the staff was putting that plan into action. Following a day off last Monday, the coaching staff took away the typical first- and second-team jerseys. Like preseason camp,



MY OPINION

everyone on offense was in white, and everyone on defense was in blue. And the players took notice, too. "The point did get made to players," cornerback D'Anton Lynn said. "Last week, it was the most intense week of practice that we've had. Everyone really stepped their game up a lot." Practice was fiery — kicker Collin Wagner said there were skirmishes at the ends of plays, and the week culminated with an intense scrimmage last Thursday. Then Monday came, with it the depth chart for Saturday's game at Minnesota. The results? Aside from a few shifts because of injuries, nothing changed.

FOOTBALL

If anything, the play is almost laughable now given everything we've heard. Perhaps the most troubling part is that even though the starting jerseys were stripped from first teamers, did anyone really expect a significant change? And if the coaching staff made the switch simply to get passion and excitement out of its team, it's going to have to do a little more in the coming weeks to right the rest of the ship. Sure, the emotion wasn't up to par with Penn State teams of old, but that wasn't all that was lacking in three losses, each by at least 20 points. Passion alone won't cure poor blocking and slow defense. Maybe the change in jerseys motivated players and the practices will translate onto the field

in the next few weeks. But it's more likely the threat of change without actual change will just lead to more of the same. Reports out of practice are that coaches still used the phrases "first offense" and "second offense" and aside from the jersey colors, the routine wasn't severely altered. The players get it. The backups thought they were given a chance, but in the end, they feel they never really were. Deception doesn't go over well in an organization, whether or not it was intentional. If the players feel they were deceived, there will be negative repercussions in future weeks of practice. The starters, on the other hand, got one week of spirited practice, and intensity

is certainly a good thing. But Minnesota will match that intensity. Former Golden Gophers coach Tim Brewster was fired Sunday, shifting national focus to the poor performance of his 1-6 squad. Now, the Gophers are hungry to prove people wrong. It doesn't matter if Penn State is intense. Both sides are. It's football. A loss in Minnesota will kill all that, making that week of practices and switched jerseys meaningless. There's a funny thing about passion and practice. When winning is involved, they seem to go together a lot more often. Andrew J. Cassavell is a senior majoring in journalism and is a Collegian football writer. His e-mail address is [ajc5238@psu.edu](mailto:ajc5238@psu.edu).

# Junior Womack ready to return from knee injury

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Last season, Jan. 17 to be precise, the Lady Lions lost one of their most important role players to a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). But when Penn State's women's basketball team takes the floor for its Nov. 7 exhibition against Gannon, it will have junior guard fence Womack back. And Womack is looking to pick up right where she left off — shutting down the opposition's best perimeter players. "I definitely think I'm a step behind right now, but I haven't lost that spark on defense," Womack said on the team's Oct. 11 media day. "I think I'll be good once season comes and we're a couple games in then I'll get the rhythm back and I'll be getting steals." Womack played in 13 games last year before going down in the Lady Lions 68-60

home win over Michigan State. While the junior averaged just 2.8 points per game last year, she shot .405 from the floor and a respectable .333 on 3-pointers. But Womack has found her place on the defensive end. Despite coming off a long rehab on a serious knee injury, the junior isn't playing with any hesitation though her left knee will be encased in a black brace for part of the year. Despite having to wear a red non-contact jersey the first time she returned to the floor, Womack said being overly cautious isn't going to help her and she doesn't think about her knee when she's playing. "My mom actually asked me if I'm worried about tearing it again, and I'm not," Womack said. "There's people who tear once maybe twice, and there's other people who tear it once and are fine for the rest of their career so hopefully I'll be that person." Many times, it takes an athlete around a year to fully recover from an ACL injury and Lady Lions coach Coquese Washington said at media day she will

try to ease Womack back into play. When the season starts, it will be roughly 10 months since Womack last played. The guard said a positive attitude was a big factor in getting through rehab quickly. "That was a big thing, even right after I tore my ACL," Womack said. "I just tried to keep a positive mind and not think too negatively on it and let it slow me down." Though Womack is healthy enough to practice, Washington said the junior is still a little up-and-down with how much she can do. But for now, the coach is glad to have her defensive ace back in the rotation. "We do not want to wear her out too much now in October so she is sore by the end of the season," Washington said. "But she is doing fine and we are going to need her speed, her defensive intensity, and what she brings to us in that area, the transition area of the game, getting deflections, flying in for rebounds and being a defensive stopper for us."



Tyler Sizemore/Collegian

To e-mail reporter: [adr5079@psu.edu](mailto:adr5079@psu.edu) Womack unleashes a pass at media day.

# Men's basketball lacking experience in frontcourt

By Jared Shanker  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Few teams in the Big Ten boast a more experienced starting frontcourt than Penn State, which returns all three starters from a year ago. Only Illinois, Ohio State and Northwestern join Penn State with that distinction. Unlike those teams, though, the Nittany Lions don't have much experience off the bench. The Lions will have to hope that forwards Jett Brooks and DJ Jackson and center Drew Jones are in top shape, because behind those three, the Lions have a combined 70 minutes of game experi-

ence among its frontcourt. Redshirt freshman Billy Oliver and senior walk-on Steve Kirkpatrick are the only frontcourt players with any experience, playing in just 23 games — none of which were starts — in a combined six seasons in State College. This season's frontcourt looked like it would be a strength at the end of last season with, in addition to the return of starters Brooks, Jackson and Jones, all the Lions' primary reserves. Seven months later, however, the outlook is much bleaker: Bill Edwards, who averaged 16 minutes per game as a freshman last year off the bench, transferred to Miami (Ohio). Andrew Ott, a Villanova transfer, graduated after his redshirt junior season, and 6-

foot-9 Serbia native Sasa Borovnjak suffered a season-ending anterior cruciate ligament tear in his right knee before preseason practice even started. "It affects us a great deal [in the frontcourt]," Brooks said Monday. "For us to lose a guy like Sasa early hurts." The Lions, who have only one healthy player standing 6-foot-9 or taller, do have a number of guys capable of playing multiple positions in the frontcourt. Brooks and freshman Jonathan Graham, who both stand at 6-foot-8, have the ability to slide into the center position when the Lions take out Jones and move to a smaller lineup. Oliver, also 6-foot-8, can play either forward position, and guards Tre Bowman, Jermaine

Marshall and Cammeron Woodyard, all 6-foot-4 or taller, can eat up some minutes at small forward. "There are times without Sasa now," coach Ed DeChellis said. "that we'll have to play a different style of lineup, maybe with two forwards instead of a natural center." Though inexperienced, Graham and Oliver are both potential breakout candidates. Graham was a three-star recruit and ranked the 40th-best power forward coming out of Baltimore's Calvert Hall by recruiting service Scout.com. In a high school game, Graham recorded a triple double with 16 points, 18 rebounds and 10 blocks.

Graham also has strong basketball bloodlines. His father, Ernest Graham, was drafted by the NBA out of Maryland in the 1980s and ranks in the top 15 all-time in scoring and assists in Maryland history. Oliver, in his third year at the program after taking a redshirt two years ago and a medical redshirt last season, earned a nomination as McDonald's All-American in high school. "Bill brings energy and perimeter shooting," Brooks said. "Every time Bill gets it and he's open, it's a knockdown jump shot. Defensively he's all over the place, blocking shots, getting deflections, getting rebounds." To e-mail reporter: [jps5226@psu.edu](mailto:jps5226@psu.edu)

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