Defensive line hopes to get ends back healthy

By Audrey Snyder
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Joe Paterno spent a lot of time waiting for his first string defensive ends to get back on the practice field.

With injuries keeping Jack Crawford (foot) and Eric Latimore (wrist) out of the lineup, the defensive line might be one step closer to getting both players back on the field.

Crawford, who missed the last three games, worked on running straight-ahead drills during Monday's practice but did not participate in contact drills, defensive tackle Devon Still said. The junior will continue to test the injured foot during this week's practices, but Paterno said he's still unsure of Crawford's status for Saturday's game.

As for Latimore, who missed the last two games after having pins inserted in his dislocated wrist and seemed unlikely to return at all during the regular season, he may have a better shot of playing after participating in full contact drills during Monday's practice.

Paterno didn't say much on the status of both players other than they would continue testing their injuries in practice. However, he didn't shy away from what their return to the lineup would do for his defensive line.

With the line recording just nine sacks through eight games this seas[illegible] – a far cry from the 26 it recorded through the same number of games last year — Paterno is hoping his playmakers return soon.

"Hopefully we don't have any more injuries and we don't get a setback," Paterno said.

"I hope we can stay healthy and we can have some intense practices so that they can get a little bit better."

With Northwestern junior Dan Persa completing 74 percent of his passes this season, the Nittany Lions will need a steady pass rush to surprise him.

The Lions' line is already thin because of the injuries, and if Crawford and Latimore can't play Saturday, the unit will have to try and keep pace with an uptempo Wildcat offense.

Still said Northwestern is probably trying to get off 85 plays a game, much like the hurry up, no-huddle offense Michigan ran last Saturday.

"Coach Johnson can't substitute that much because the game is moving at a rapid pace, so you don't have time to get subs in," Still said.

"By us running around in practice and getting in shape it's going to help us a lot on Saturday."

While Still's three sacks lead the unit, having Crawford return to the lineup would most likely draw a double team.

If Crawford takes up an extra defender, it could allow the rest of the line to focus [illegible] matchups in [illegible] pressuring Per[illegible]

Though Still [illegible] unsure why [illegible] been there th[illegible] improved sense [illegible] the unit. [illegible] better."

[illegible] The kids have [illegible] they are starting to feel a little better about themselves. A little bit more confidence. And so I think hopefully we were – we'll go from there."

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Defensive tackle Devon Still [illegible] in offensive lineman Stephen Schilling.

Childress, Vikings need to regain control from Favre

By Jared Shanker

MY OPINION

How much longer do we have to watch this? How many more weeks will we be forced to watch Brett Favre captain a rudderless ship heading straight for an iceberg in Lake Minnetonka? How many more times will we see Favre hobble off the field after yet another interception?

And last — and this day can't come soon enough — how much longer will we have ESPN shove Favre down our throats? (How bad has it gotten? During Monday's halftime show, ESPN highlighted Favre's check-down pass to the Patriots' 1-yard line and not the ensuing play, a fourth down goal-line stand of Pro Bowl running back Adrian Peterson.)

The answer: As long as Favre wants, because it's clear Minnesota Vikings head coach Brad Childress, the man who is supposed to be in charge of his team, is below the 41-year-old quarterback on the Vikes' chain of command. It's Favre who has the final say, not Childress.

After sufffering two fractures in his ankle on Oct. 24, it appeared Favre's unfathomable consecutive starts streak would come to an end at 291. Despite being well below 100 percent, Favre extended that streak one more game, starting this past Sunday against the Patriots, who proceeded to knock him out of the game.

Leading up to Sunday, all we kept hearing was that even at 75 percent, Favre is still the Vikings' best option at quarterback.

Really? The [illegible] in the NFL wi[illegible] ing and 10 inter[illegible] seven touchd[illegible] Sunday's gam[illegible] than Tarvaris [illegible]

Favre trick[illegible] when he led th[illegible] NFC Champi[illegible] threw 33 tou[illegible] Favre wasn't [illegible] had seen the [illegible] was a supern[illegible] star that left o[illegible] mouths agape [illegible] from all of the [illegible]

But do you [illegible] to a supern[illegible] awe-inspiring [illegible] phenomena? [illegible] hole, destroyin[illegible] its gravitatio[illegible]

Just like Fav[illegible]

As the Vikings [illegible] black hole Ran[illegible] Homie" Moss, [illegible] part ways with [illegible] gives the [illegible] chance to win in [illegible] worse, the Vikes' [illegible] with every [illegible] over Jackson, [illegible] back who could [illegible] as the team's [illegible] two years [illegible] out of the picture [illegible] future looks [illegible] stars Percy [illegible] Peterson (25) [illegible] (24) are all enter[illegible] their careers. [illegible] Jared Allen [illegible] (27) and [illegible] a little [illegible] at least five [illegible] season.

[illegible] the Vikings develop [illegible] this point it [illegible] Jackson is their [illegible] too late. It will [illegible] possible for the Vikings [illegible] Peterson and Rice, who will all demand big contracts. As for the defense, there are only so many hits the body can take.

In all, the Vikings have 15 players who are major contributors that are 30 years old or younger. If it takes a few years for a franchise quarterback to step in, the Vikings' window of opportunity goes from six or seven years to two or three. With Favre, that window is already shut and boarded up.

Thankfully, this looks like the end of the line for Favre, and the Wild West gunslinger from the Deep South will ride off into the sunset. The name of the donkey he'll be riding: Brad.

Jared Shanker is a senior [illegible] history and journalism and is the Collegian's sports columnist and [illegible] basketball writer. His e-mail address is jps5226@psu.edu.

Freshman guard Lucas standing out during practice

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Everybody knew Maggie Lucas could shoot.

What the freshman guard's teammates on the Lady Lions are discovering however, is Lucas can make some plays to match her lights-out shooting.

"In recruiting Maggie, one of the things that she wanted was the opportunity to go somewhere and play some point guard," Lady Lions coach Coquese Washington said at her weekly press conference Tuesday. "She felt for her that was something that she needed to continue to develop and grow as a player. We told her then she was going to have that opportunity if she came to Penn State."

Lucas is just the second McDonald's high school All-America to play for the Lady Lions and comes to Penn State after averaging 23.0 points, 4.5 assists and 3.8 steals per game as a senior at Germantown Academy in Fort Washington.

The guard's knack for shooting comes from her release, which unlike many women's basketball players, doesn't start at her waist. Lucas said at the Lady Lions' media day on Oct. 11 that her father was the one who taught her how to shoot.

"My dad has always wanted me to shoot like a boy. He never wanted me starting my shot down by my waist, he wanted me to have the strength to start my shot up high," Lucas said at media day. "When I was younger, we never focused on the three too soon, we knew that would come. We really focused on my form and once I got that down, I was more comfortable moving out."

While sophomore guard Alex Bentley will see the bulk of the minutes at point guard, inevitably the third team All-Big Ten player from a year ago will have to take a seat on the bench. Junior Zhaque Gray looks to be Bentley's primary back-up, but Washington said at medi[illegible] could get look[illegible]

Point guard [illegible] most challeng[illegible] ketball, and W[illegible] tough role for [illegible] What makes [illegible] ferent is the [illegible] adapt to the [illegible] different posi[illegible]

Washingto[illegible] ble of handli[illegible] point guar[illegible] range, which [illegible] "ridiculous," [illegible] ment.

"If she's sta[illegible] thing its her ab[illegible] own shot [illegible] Washington s[illegible] range, but [illegible] enough to go b[illegible] blazing speed [illegible] Maggie's a [illegible] and you have [illegible] have to honor [illegible] her to make se[illegible] off the dribbl[illegible]

Lucas said sh[illegible] [illegible] shots every week. [illegible] said it's all man[illegible] just 3 pointers. [illegible] Washington said the [illegible] afraid to fire up any [illegible] frantically tries to test [illegible] range.

[illegible] forward Marisa [illegible] Wednesday that she's [illegible] guard that has [illegible] does. Though [illegible] shooter like Lucas [illegible] a source for Wolfe, the [illegible] she likes having [illegible] floor because it helps [illegible]

[illegible] open up a lot [illegible] in, a team is [illegible] defense out." [illegible] may not sag any [illegible] to open the [illegible] on ones or [illegible] plays.

[illegible] being a freshman [illegible] learning how to be a col[illegible] point guard, Wolfe said [illegible] much to expect [illegible] everything. While the [illegible] and Lucas has taken the transition well, having experienced players on the floor with her allows Lucas to play her strengths.

When she was choosing colleges, Lucas said she was looking for a team that hadn't won a national title yet. Not only did Penn State fit that bill, but the Lady Lions are also a young, talented team.

And the drive to State College from her home in Narbeth is short enough that the freshman's family will be able to watch her play with relative ease.

"It's definitely a huge thing. I'm really close with my family, my dad, mom and brothers," Lucas said. "It's really good that I'm staying close to home. They're going to be at all my home games and then my dad is going to fly out to Dayton for that first game. I'm really happy to have their support. Without it I wouldn't know what to do."

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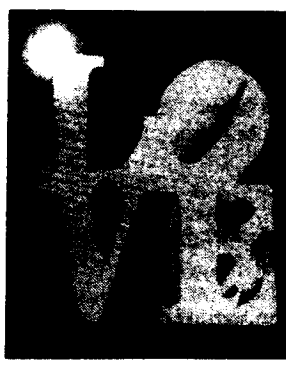
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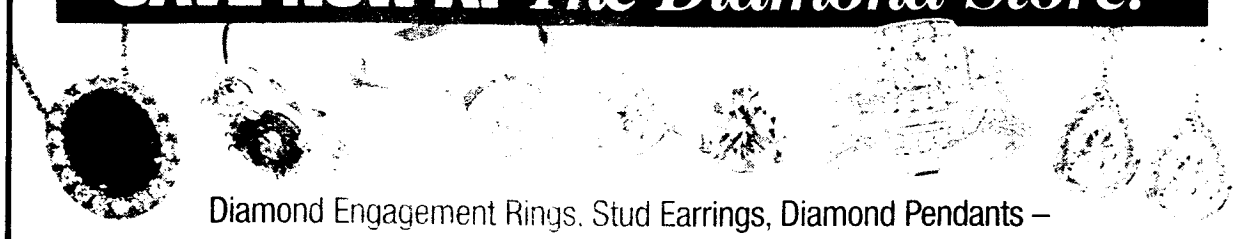
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