Recruits

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guy, but like a Kevin McHale, kind of a face-up shooting kind of kid." DeChellis said. "Can run the floor, can shoot the ball from the perimeter, can do stuff around the basket.

DeChellis describes Alexis, a 6-foot-11, 250-pound Wilkes-Barre native, as a "thick, strong guy." ESPN ranks him as the 51st best center in the nation.

"He's a tough kid," the coach said. "Very aggres-sive, and that's something we needed."

Travis, a forward from Chaska, Minn., is a guy DeChellis said can make plays and affect a game. He is the highest-rated recruit in Penn State's class this year receiving a three-star evaluation from Scout.com. For Travis, who verbally committed to Penn State in September, actually signing the letter of intent on Wednesday was a major relief.

It's just like a huge weight lifted off my shoulders because it's what I've been working for and dreammg of doing since I was a little kid, and that's signing Division I for a big school for college basketball," Travis said. "I know its a school far away from where Hive, but when I got there, I felt that I could be comfortable there, with these players and these coaches. I felt like it was a family."

Rounding out the group is Lewis, a 6-foot-1 guard from Garfield Heights, Ohio.

He's a Scout.com two-star prospect, and can play either guard position.

At his press conference, DeChellis described lowis as an "unbelievably vocal kid," and the most mergetic player out of the four.

They Lewis is a tremendous shooter, ball-handler, and leader out there." the coach said. "A kid who can aid a team

DeChellis said in all, the coaching staff is "ecstate about the four guys.

They all bring something different to the table,' ne said. "But all very, very important to what we are rying to do.

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Center

as one. Washington said the Lions needed a taller slayer to compete with some other centers in the Bie Ten

There are a lot of teams in our conference that are staning really tall post players," Washington and to one of the things we wanted to do was add another player that could combat that. That was the -thing we knew we needed."

The Penn State coach referred specifically to dichigan State's freshman Madison Williams and Minnesota's redshirt freshman Amber Dvorak. With each standing 6-foot-7, they could pose a problem for the Lions for the next four seasons.

Aside from the center's ability to match up with opponents' size, Washington believes Waldner possesses a high basketball IQ. The coach said Waldner mas quick feet and moves very well.

Recause Waldner played with several skilled commates in high school. Washington doesn't believe the future Lion's offensive skills are fully developed.

"Her offense is a little behind her defense at this point because she's played on teams that have had any strong guard play," Washington said of Woldner's high school team. "I think she has the ools to be, definitely, an offensive threat for us once she gets here.

At this point. Washington said the Lions are still in the canning for some other recruits, but she isn't surveyhat to expect in the coming days. Other than center she said Penn State has been putting some boots on a player who can play as both a point guard and shooting guard. For now, Washington is happy to have Waldner set o play for the Lions next season.

Tournament

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should have beat a team and you get another shot at them. you obviously want to beat them even more," Cost said.

"The circumstances are already great for us to just want to win, to come out here with some enthusiasm and intensity and try to get the W.

Despite the game being played in the afternoon, the players are hoping for a strong student presence at the games. In previous matches against Indiana. Ohio State and then-No. 1 Akron. the

Freshman

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ball Hall of Fame, had at Cincinnati.

"Roger was one of the great 3-point shooters in the game." said Tony Yates. Roger's coach at Cincinnati, who added the 6-foot-5 shooting guard was one of the best players he's ever coached. "He was a tremendous shooter. He had the green light from me at all times.

It has been about 22 years since Roger stepped off the court for the last time, and a new chapter in collegiate athletics has begun for the McClendon family. Deja, an outside hitter on the No. 8 Penn State women's volleyball team. has emerged as one of the best Nittany Lions as a mere freshman.

Eleven weeks through the season. the explosive 6-foot-1 outside hitter is second among all Nittany Lions with 280 kills.

"She's a very happy positive kid." Penn State coach Russ Rose said earlier this season "She always has a smile" on her face and is just a wonderful kid to be around. You feel great to have her in your program

But for longtime college basketball fans in Ohio who remember watching **Roger emerge** as a freshman standout. Deja's early success may not be as much of a surprise. Roger was the Bearcats' leading scorer in not only his freshman season, but in his first three

And the ways in which Deja has followed in her father's footsteps in her young career are extremely similar. In fact, it's almost Deja vu.

Simple modesty

There is a simple explanation as to why Deja, her younger sister and two younger brothers didn't know about their father's success for awhile he didn't talk about it. Deja still admits she doesn't know the tall extent of her father's career.

"Their dad is very modest about his accomplishments." Sald John McClendon, Roger's father and Deja's grandfather. "Bragging about himself was never something that was a part of his makeup, even as a young high school player and even as a college player.

Instead, John and his wife, Deborah. have taken it upon themselves to Danny Manning. inform their grandchildren about the family history. John recalled a time. American just had been alone with the when Deja's brother, Marquis, saw a rest of the national clipping from a 1986 Sports Illustrated - school volicybali playees article that highlighted the nation's top. shooters. The players featured were **shown in photo** illustrations shooting a ball from outer space. Roger's alustration shows him in the air in front of the - in Champaign III, where he was the moon, mid-shot, about to release the ball.

"The cirumstances are already great for us."

Drew Cost senior

Lions enjoyed a loud, energetic student section the players said lifted their energy on the field.

Unlike regular season matches, all Big Ten Tournament games required paid entry, but Hertzog said the first 100 students to the game will receive free tickets.

Cost said he doesn't know what to expect as far as crowd size but the sen-

She played sports so much, in fact. that the first word to ever come out of her mouth was "ball."

Despite all of his feats, though, Roger didn't force basketball upon Deja or her siblings. Instead, he let his children trymultiple sports and decide which one stuck.

Deja, who was born in Cincinnati and lived there until her family relocated to Lousville, Ky when she was about played basketball briefly, but it didn't last past fifth grade. Deja said she isn t a pushy kind of person and didn't like the contact.

"It was to make my dad happy because he loves the came? Delesaid "And we'd show all the time, jump shots, free throws, and Ed perv with him.

She played a variety or other spons. including gymnastics, soccer, velacybaliand tennis, which she admitted was actually her best sport. Depuplicand tennis up until high school, when showed at for volleybalt because of the attraction - senior sensor. of a team sport atmosphere

She was pretty good at it too

Eventually, she garnened interestfrom competitive cash case best by the Louisville area. She started targing for Kentucky Indian. the Academy (KIVA) when she way 14 and needless to say, die loved it.

All in the family

The similarities seem endless

Whether it's their lean invites great jumping ability or their explosiness there are many thanks do McClendon sees when the watches hi granddaughter plat of the solid court that remind hard bis soft's total ing days on the hardwood.

It's almost meaners. McClendon, who is a philosophyraet and sor at Michigan State. The contain ways in which they take the first step. their vertical loap, timing, and balance and quickness that he used at basic ball that we see her doing phased have similar way in voltes ball."

But their manderisms doe by do means the only subdarines. And someof the correlations are just corre-

Roger was a McLonald's American in 1984 alongside the best high school basketball playars and yean including the likes of Kunsale are at

Deja was an Under Arus Roger was named the off Stars Player of the Veral by the value as a start of the order matches, despite a busy Times and the The News Greetle htsenior year at Contemnal (Informated that the suppressed Deja's teammates, time leading secrements have seen

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

ior hopes he is pleasantly surprised by the tunrout.s

For Hertzog, the team's leading goal scorer, he is hoping the tournament reignites his scoring touch.

The junior has gone four games without a goal, but won the 2009 Big Ten Tournament Offensive Most Valuable player.

"I haven't scored in four games and it's hard as a striker because that's your job." Hertzog said. "But, I'm just trying to finish in practice and put it out on the field tomorrow and hopefully some go in the back of the net."

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Being back in that facility, Roger said, "brought back memories."

Roger, who is third in Cincinnati history in field goals made, said he sees a lot of himself in Deja, athletically. The most noticeable similarities, he said. are her intense focus on the court. her ability to make her teammates feel relaxed with her constant smile, and her explosiveness. Like him, Deja is also very team-oriented, Roger said.

"I think most great players, if you think about it, put the team ahead of themselves," Roger said, adding that in high school he was always a "pass first" player "That's a trait I think that Deja Audes

The "Student" athlete

Though Roger had a great collegiate career, he never played in the NBA. Reger said the draft had recently been reduced from seven rounds to three and his year was guard heavy. Roger moded that he had just an "average"

To go along with that, Roger had one our remaining in his five-year electriand computer engineering proeram Roger's parents had always emphasized the importance of academas in their children and Roger always book that to heart.

After he wasn't drafted, he had a difreall choice to make

He ould go over and chase the NBA $< 11 \chi$ Continental Basketball vs adation), overseas professionally, or some back and finish my engineer able Tegeos" Roger said. "And that was . 1 sub-choice for me at the time. I put in energy into the engineering in a that I wanted to finish it out."

though Boger admits it was tough to (i) gethe sport he loved, the decision be made was for the long-term. And it

Absect was recently promoted to Calet Su-tamability Officer for YUM! Brasse Inc., a restaurant company the oversees KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Unit and Long John Silver's. He travels the mole and is responsible for reducand the environmental impact and how one company, based in Louisville, grows IN DRIVENSING SINGLASS

Deja has been raised on similar princombox as Roger, stressing the imporstates of the "student" part of the term stadent athlete

The McClendons also value family. when is why Rogen along with his wife connectaid their other three children

SPORTS

I'm just thrilled," Washington said. "She gets long so well with our players. She's just a really and person and good kid. I think she's going to thrave in the Penn State atmosphere.'

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Offense

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shed. They have four or five kids that can play for arough, four or five guys, that could go right into prosouball or very good athletes."

He offered high praise for this season's Ohio State erense, specifically the front seven. That unit turns defensive end Cameron Heyward, whose 11 achies and two sacks carried the Buckeyes to a 24-7 victory in Beaver Stadium last year.

Heyward has seen double teams this year and conks eighth on the team in tackles, but the attention he demands has afforded the rest of the defense space to maneuver. The Buckeyes have the confermeets top-ranked defense, allowing 13.6 points per rome

During the Buckeyes' loss to Wisconsin, Paterno aid he thought the unit was subpar. But just as Penn State used a tough loss to Illinois to rejuvenate its offense, the Buckeyes defense responded followand a defeat, Paterno said.

After that they got together," Paterno said. "And I'll teil you, they played really well the last couple of ball games.

In total, Paterno is 2-8 at Ohio State, with his teams scoring an average of 9.2 points per contest. They've only reached more than 10 points twice the two victories

Running back Evan Royster, who went for 77 pards on 19 carries in the 2008 win, pointed to the uoise of Ohio Stadium as one of the biggest reasons any team would have troubles there.

They have a very loud crowd, and when you can't hear the snap count, you're late flying off the ball," Royster said. "That can hurt you as an offense, a lot more than a lot of people think. That's one of those things we really need to learn to deal with.

Penn State's offense hasn't fared well in those environments this season. The Lions dropped a pair of 24-3 games in Alabama and Iowa, where the offense couldn't get going, especially in the red zone.

But since those games, the Lions have put up more than 30 points three times. Senior guard Stefen Wisniewski realizes this challenge won't be easy, but with the way quarterback Matt McGloin has led the offense in that time, he doesn't think the past will matter.

"As far as why we haven't done great there, I think they re always a solid defense and always play well against us," Wisniewski said. "I think maybe that's why we're not at our best. Now our O-Line is playing well, and McGloin is playing well. If we execute, we can put points up.'

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"I remember Marquis said, 'Woah, I didn't know that my dad was a basketball superstar. " John McClendon laughed.

Deja remembered another time when a young far, asked her father for his autograph while the family was at King's Island, an amusement park near Cincinnati.

'I was like, 'I don't understand, why do you want my dad's autograph? Deja recalled with a wide smile

But just because Rober didn't talk about his playing days, doesn't mean they didn't have an influence on his children.

Deja, the oldest of four, was involved in sports at a young age.

T think the fact that his life was always centralized in sports got mestarted early with that mindset." Dejasaid. "We'd play eatch, things kind of like boys do. We'd always be playing sports, always trying new games

Player of the Year her school was a DuPont Manual High School

Roger's white jersev lettened with "Champaign" in blue and gold trans and the No. 12 across the front is refined at his high schoor

A red banner with a packupe of a white volleyball jersey with the No. 5 marks the only retired volleyball persev in the gym at Deja's alma mater-

While at Cincinnati, one of Roger's most memorable performances carac against Louisville at Freedom Hole he January 1986. The sharpshooter beoff for 35 points against the Cardbords marching his fear to the upset we AV the end of the season, in amount Louisville defeated Duke to which the national title. Cincinnable whe of Freedom Hail would turn out to be Louisville's only home loss of the season

Deja helped led her club team to a championship in 2008 at Freedom Hall.

are involved in various sports, has astronomic to a number of Penn State shedule. And in that short time, they

They have great values, morals, see rething." Penn State senior co-cap-Deja was the Kentucas date of this Alyssa D'Errico said. "And they're and great people. The athletic side is a plus and that's something that obviousb we appreciate here. I can't say any thing bad about their family because shey're such incredible people."

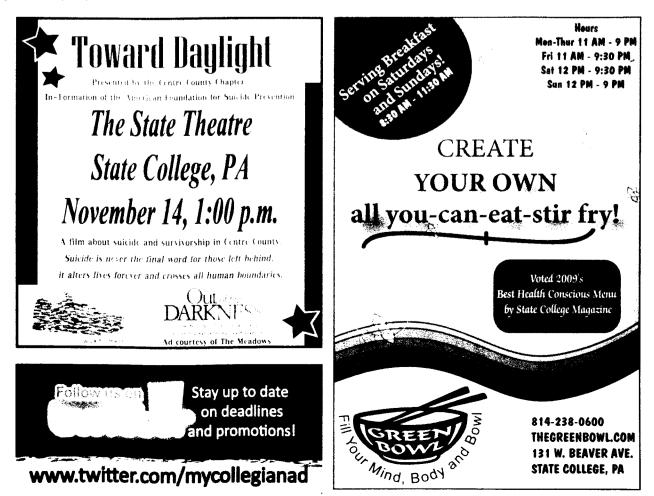
> Deja's play has caught the eyes of any people, as well.

Through 14 Big Ten matches, Deja is Noticin the conference, and first among irestancial in kills. The potential for Penn State to have its second straight Dig Ten Freshman of the Year, and which in nine years, are in no way out a the realm of possibility.

But Deja, just like her father, is mod-When asked to describe the strengths and weakness of her game. Defa began to ponder her many strengths before she replied: "Let's start with the weaknesses?

I ne apple doesn't fall too far from the n ere

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