

# With a closer look, 17-point spread is fair



Terrelle Pryor warms up before his game vs. Penn State in 2008.

By Andrew J. Cassavell

**T**HE joyride is over. Like it or not, it's time the Penn State football team got a reality check.

Saturday, in a trip to Columbus, that will almost certainly come, all courtesy of quarterback Terrelle Pryor and the Ohio State Buckeyes.

Two wins and two monumental records falling in the Nittany Lions' last two games have fans sitting on cloud nine.

Throw in the fact that both games were classics — one a shootout for the ages against rival Michigan and one a historic comeback for a milestone win — and the sentiment around this team features no negative vibes.

Except, of course, the fact that Penn State enters Saturday's game as 17-point underdogs. The



MY OPINION

players seem giddy about everything going on with the program — the revamped offensive line, the new-found intensity on defense, the suddenly ruthless ground attack and a quarterback who is having a good time in the huddle. The only hint of animosity during this week's player interviews came when the spread was brought up.

"It's kind of insulting," said running back Evan Royster, whose recent turnaround typifies Penn State's season. "I think we've proven that we can put points on the board and we can win games. I think a lot of people will take offense to it and it'll make us work even harder."

It should motivate the players being underdogs by that much. But it shouldn't come as any sort of surprise.

This isn't Beaver Stadium. This is Ohio Stadium, where a Joe Paterno-coached quarterback hasn't thrown a touchdown pass or scored more than one touchdown since 1964.

Replace white-clad Happy

Valley with the scarlet and gray of The Horseshoe.

Replace the calm in the stands during offensive possessions with more than 100,000 not-quite-as-kind screaming fans, similar to the environments in Alabama and Iowa. How'd the offense fare in those games? A total of six points.

But most importantly, replace the porous defenses of Northwestern and Michigan with Ohio State's Big Ten-leading unit featuring Ross Homan, Chimdi Chekwa and Cameron Heyward.

Obviously a large spread doesn't mean a team can't win.

It's sports and anything can happen. But to think a gap of 17 points isn't fair is ridiculous.

The Nittany Lions lost by 17 points last year. That game was at home and with a better, more experienced Penn State team.

Now, the team has a quarterback making his first road start, playing in a hostile environment — also for the first time — against the conference's top defense.

Oh yeah, and the Buckeyes

offense also puts up 42 points per game.

Penn State captain Ollie Ogbu is eager to prove critics wrong, but even he understands the reasoning behind the gap.

"No," Ogbu replied simply when asked if the thought the number was unfair.

"We haven't played well against really good teams this year, so there's no reason for anyone to have any type of confidence in us. But that's a good thing. It's a chip on our shoulder."

Ogbu has it absolutely right.

If anyone outside of the Lasch Building says Penn State is on par with No. 8 Ohio State, they're still riding the emotional high of the last two weeks.

And for them — the same people who are pointlessly trying to figure where Penn State falls in the Rose Bowl mix, there's a good chance the fall will be a hard one.

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# Lady Icers dominate at Consol Energy Center

By Christine Newby  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Lady Icers assistant captain Dana Heller, a Pittsburgh Penguin fanatic, was in class Thursday morning and couldn't stop thinking about traveling to the Consol Energy Center — the Penguins' home arena — for her team's game against California University of Pennsylvania last night.

Penn State dominated the Vulcans in a 5-1 win, improving its overall record to 5-4.

"We walked past the Penguins locker room [before the game]," said Heller, a junior forward and a Collegian photo staff member. "There was a giant mural of Pens players from the past."

Penguins center Tyler Kennedy and defenseman Deryk Engelland were part of the pregame festivities before Kennedy dropped the ceremonial first puck — to Heller.

Heller began the scoring for the Lady Icers six minutes into the

first period on an even-strength goal, with sophomore defenseman Julie Horn and sophomore forward Kirsten Evans recording assists on the play.

With 15:35 remaining in the second period, freshman forward Carly Szyszko tallied a power-play goal from Evans, making the score 2-0.

"Evans took the initial shot, and there was a rush to the net," coach Mo Stroemel said. "The puck went to the right of the goalie and Carly backhanded it into the net."

California's Tiffany Juha put the Vulcans back into the game with 14:11 to go in the second.

At Tuesday night's practice, Stroemel said Juha is a very good player, and one the Lady Icers had to watch out for.

Evans notched her third point of the game by scoring with 5:40 remaining in the second period to put the Lady Icers ahead, 3-1.

"It was a pretty power play goal," Stroemel said. "It was a give-and-go down low from Heller to Evans."

During the second intermission, Associate Athletic Director for Ice Arena Operations Joe Battista, who coached the Penn State Icers for 19 years, visited the locker room.

Battista had some encouraging words to say, according to Stroemel.

From then on, Penn State controlled the scoring.

With 4:37 remaining in the third period, Szyszko scored her second goal of the game, putting the Lady Icers up 4-1.

Assistant captain Michelle Clarke scored Penn State's final goal just one minute and 14 seconds later.

"Michelle made a little move around the defense to the net, and backhanded the puck behind the goalie," Stroemel said.

Captain Sara Chroman said "it was really fun and incredible" to play at the Consol.

Stroemel said his team played

"In the beginning [we were nervous] because it was such a big rink and there were a lot of distractions. But as the game went on, we weren't nervous."

Carly Szyszko  
forward

LADY ICERS

Lady Icers

Vulcans

well overall, and moved the puck efficiently — especially on the power plays.

"Cal U wasn't as aggressive on our power play as other teams that we've faced," he said.

The game proved to be a very physical game with seven penalties called against the Lady Icers, while the Vulcans were charged with six.

"One of [the Vulcans] got tossed out of the game from a hit from behind on Clarke," Stroemel said.

"[Clarke] sat on the bench for a few minutes. But she was OK. She came back later and scored a goal."

Stroemel said there was a lot of excitement going on before the puck dropped, and Szyszko said the

players all had butterflies in anticipation.

But once the game started, it was just another hockey game, Stroemel said.

"In the beginning [we were nervous] because it was such a big rink and there were a lot of distractions," Szyszko said. "But as the game went on, we weren't nervous."

For Heller, a Pittsburgh native, it was exciting for her to have family attending the game.

Heller's parents were in the stands, as well as her brothers — one of whom made the trip from West Virginia.

"It makes me relax when people who believe in me are watching," Heller said.

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