

QB's to take advantage of extra practice

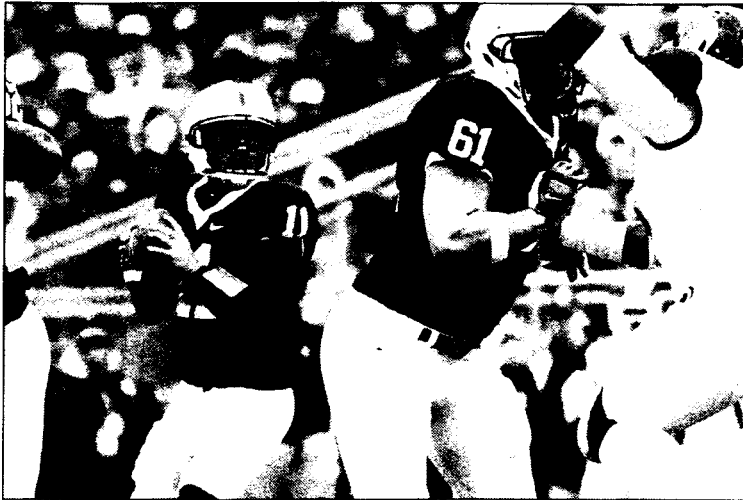
By Audrey Snyder
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

In the mind of 83-year-old Joe Paterno, the best way to respond to what he deems to be a "dumb question" is with a "dumb answer."

And that's exactly how Paterno chose to address the Nittany Lions' quarterback situation.

When asked to assess quarterback Matt McGloin's performance after Saturday's game — where McGloin had one of his worst outings after he completed 23-of-43 passes for 312 yards with two touchdowns and an interception — Paterno was mum about the future of the position.

FOOTBALL



Matt McGloin (11) looks for open targets Saturday vs. Michigan State.

"One of the guys said walking in with me ... 'Somebody's probably going to ask about [Rob] Bolden,'" Paterno said.

"And I said, 'Well if they ask a dumb question like that they'll get a dumb answer.'"

While opening up the quarterback position heading into the bowl game seems unlikely at this point — considering the team has gone 4-2 with McGloin at the helm and the offense has been much more productive — it's hard to tell who will be under center next season.

The additional practices leading up to the bowl game will be instrumental for all four of the quarterbacks and Jay Paterno said he always expects there to be competition at practice.

"It gives you 15, 16, 17 more practices," Jay Paterno said. "It's like a spring practice, which Rob has not had. And the first eight or nine practices next week we probably won't even know who we're playing yet."

"It gives you a chance to back up off the game week gameplanning and start to work on fundamentals."

Going back to the fundamentals is something several Penn State coaches and players talked about emphasizing during the practices leading up to the team's bowl game.

After McGloin said he missed some "throws you can make in your sleep," he expects to return to the basics as well.

But the players don't expect the usual competition and focus on fundamentals to mean a different quarterback will start for the bowl game.

"Yeah, I would [be surprised]," running back Evan Royster said. "I think Matt's done well for us and Rob's done well for us too. But I don't think there's any reason for us to open it up right now."

Bolden hasn't returned to the lineup on a regular basis since suffering a concussion Oct. 23 at Minnesota, but with an extra month to practice for the bowl game, he could use the practices to move up on the depth chart heading into the spring.

Even freshman Paul Jones, who was redshirted, and true sophomore Kevin Newsome, who's attempted just 13 passes this sea-

son, should expect to receive as many practice reps as possible, Jay Paterno said.

Though McGloin said he's aware the bowl game practices will be important in determining where the depth chart stands heading into spring practices, he's more concerned with his team learning how to turn in a 60-minute performance.

With either sluggish starts or second-half meltdowns being a reoccurring theme during the regular season, McGloin said the team needs to take the next step toward becoming a program that can win a big game.

Though the uncertainty of the quarterback position will again be a question the Lions will address after the bowl game, McGloin isn't looking too far past Jan. 1.

"Hopefully, throughout this next month before the bowl game we're gonna learn how to play a complete game," he said.

"If we're able to do that, we'll come out victorious against whomever we are playing in the bowl game."

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Lions look to contain Terrapins inside and out

By Alex Angert
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

When asked about their perimeter defense, the Penn State men's basketball players all said the same thing — containment.

After Mississippi exposed Penn State's defense on the road Friday, the Lions went back to the basics against Furman on Sunday, only allowing 49 points.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

With a tough matchup Wednesday night at the Bryce Jordan Center against Maryland, coach Ed DeChellis has been stressing the importance of each player guarding their man on defense to make sure the Lions don't get beat on the perimeter or in the paint.

The team is hoping Sunday was a sign of things to come.

"We basically just said, 'Let's contain the ball,'" guard Tim Frazier said. "When we went into [the Mississippi game], we didn't do a great job of perimeter defense or rebounding. But now we are trying to focus on both of those."

On Friday, the Lions scored at will for most of the game. The only problem was

Mississippi came back on the offensive end and sliced through the Penn State defense by finding open looks from 3-point range.

En route to their only loss of the season, the Lions gave up 29 shots from downtown — 13 of which found the bottom of the net.

Opponents have averaged more than seven 3-pointers made per game against Penn State through the first six games of the season. With Maryland next up on the schedule and a grueling Big Ten season only a month away, protecting the perimeter and not giving up too many clean looks is going to be essential in the next few weeks.

Instead of making any drastic adjustments to their outside defense, the coaches have just re-emphasized playing containment defense to make sure the Terrapins don't have the success Mississippi had from downtown. Though Furman nailed nine 3-pointers Sunday, the players said that game was a positive sign and the effort shown in the previous game won't happen again.

"We just got back to doing the same things we did before. I think we forgot about that in the Ole Miss game," guard Talor Battle said. "We didn't contain the ball and we got back to our fundamentals, which is to contain the ball and defend your man."

Wednesday's game will be a good chance for Penn State to improve on its perimeter defense since Maryland averages less than four 3-pointers per game so far this season.

Nevertheless, the Terrapins still average more than 80 points per game as they have many different ways to score — most notably near the basket.

"The biggest thing will be to play great defense on the perimeter and in the post," forward Jeff Brooks said.

"That was something that we did well against Saint Joe's, and that was something we did not do well against Ole Miss. So that's something that will definitely be a key to the game."

So far this season, Penn State has faced teams that rely on their outside shooting on offense.

While the Lions' outside defense has been inconsistent this season, Wednesday's game against Maryland will pose a new challenge with a much more physical team.

To avoid their second loss of the season, the team will need to find the right balance defensively — on the perimeter and in the paint — to pick up what would be a signature home win.

Though Maryland doesn't have a great long range shooting team, Penn State can't



Jeff Brooks (25) attempts to block a shot.

risk giving its upcoming opponent too many clean looks from the outside.

"We're going against a pretty good ACC team," guard Cameron Woodyard said. "They're run and gun, and that's how a lot of teams play at those major schools. I feel like the only thing that they may have is an inside game. That is something most teams that we've played so far don't have."

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With Roethlisberger, Steelers fare well against Ravens

By Alan Robinson
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH — Ben Roethlisberger is the great equalizer in the Steelers-Ravens rivalry.

Of the last eight games between the division rivals, the Steelers have won five — all with Roethlisberger at quarterback. The three he didn't play, they lost.

Detect a pattern? Despite spraining his right foot against the Bills, Roethlisberger is expected to be in the lineup when the teams meet Sunday night in Baltimore for first place in the AFC North. Roethlisberger was suspended when the Ravens beat the Steelers 17-14 on a last-minute Joe Flacco to T.J. Houshmandzadeh touchdown pass Oct. 3 in Pittsburgh. He was out with a concussion during Pittsburgh's 20-17 overtime loss in Baltimore last season.

Roethlisberger is 7-2 as a starter against the Ravens, with both losses occurring in 2006. He is 162 of 287 for 2,104 yards, 16 touchdowns and 10 interceptions in 10 career game against them, including his NFL debut as an injury replacement for Tommy Maddox in 2004.

No doubt the Steelers (8-3) want Roethlisberger ready to go for what could be their biggest game of the season. Win, and they're a game up on the Ravens (8-3) with four games to play. Lose, and they're effectively down two games because Baltimore would own a one-game lead and the tiebreaker should the teams finish with the same record.

The Ravens have won their last eight at home. "You don't want to miss that one," wide receiver Hines Ward said. "This is going to be a heavyweight fight, champs

for our division. It always is, every year regardless if one team's struggling or the other team is having success. This is the one you circle."

The importance of having Roethlisberger when the Steelers play their biggest rival was illustrated in 2008. Then, the Steelers won three tight games against the Ravens by scores of 23-20 in overtime at home, 13-9 in Baltimore and 23-14 again in Pittsburgh in the AFC championship game.

During the 13-9 game, he drove the Steelers nearly the length of the field during a decisive 12-play drive that ended

with his 4-yard touchdown pass to Santonio Holmes with 43 seconds remaining. He was 7 of 11 for 89 yards on that drive alone.

He also found Holmes on a 65-yard touchdown pass play in the AFC championship game, which preceded the Steelers' win over Arizona in the Super Bowl.

Despite his sore foot, Roethlisberger led his 22nd career game-winning scoring drive in the fourth quarter or overtime as the Steelers beat Buffalo 19-16 in overtime on Sunday. Roethlisberger stayed in the game despite the sore foot.

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