

Seventeen starters return to Lions lineup

By JOHN HOINSKI
Staff Writer

Penn State will be returning 53 lettermen, including 17 starters, from last year's 11-1 team which came within one game of winning the national championship. Still, coach Joe Paterno is being his usual pessimistic self.

"If we play as well as we did last year we will lose four games this time," Paterno was quoted as saying in a national magazine. The only difference is, this year he is right.

Despite going through the 1985 regular season without a loss, nailbiting victories became as much of a routine as Lion wins. But their luck ran out on New Year's night with a 25-10 Orange Bowl loss to eventual national champion Oklahoma.

This year Penn State fans will have plenty to cheer about once more, however, since the Lions should again be in the hunt for the national title. Paterno has 17 of his top 22 offensive players returning for Penn State's 100th year of football, including the entire backfield, plus 18 of his best 22 on defense.

John Shaffer, last years starting quarterback who completed 103 of 228 passes for 1,366 yards and eight touchdowns, will be pressed once again by Matt Knizner for the starting position. Knizner saw little action last year, but is regarded as the better passer of the two and had a fine showing in spring practice.

At tailback, All-America candidate D. J. Dozier should have his best year ever

if he stays healthy, but if he doesn't, David Clark will be ready to fill in just as he did last year. Fullback won't be a problem, either, with Steve Smith and Tim Manoa returning after strong seasons last year.

No matter which quarterback Paterno chooses, either one will have a trio of good receivers to throw to in flanker Eric Hamilton, Michael Timpson and Sid Lewis. Add Ray Roundtree at split end who caught 15 passes for 285 yards in '85, along with tight end Brian Siverling, and the Lions are well set for a potent passing game.

Four retraining starters on the offensive line should provide plenty of pass protection. Stan Clayton (6-3,255) and Chris

Colin (6-3, 275) will be the tackles while Mitch Frerotte (6-3, 255) will return at guard along with Keith Radecic (6-1, 260) at center.

Defense played a big part in Penn State's fortunes last year and it should be the anchor of this years squad, too. Don Graham (6-2, 240) and Bob White (6-2½, 240) will be the ends while Tim Johnson (6-3, 250) and Mike Russo (6-1,260) will man the tackle slots.

The linebackers, traditionally a talented group, will be no different this year. All-America Shane Conlin (6-2, 225) will play the outside spot and Trey Bauer, a 6-1, 215 junior will play inside. In the secondary, Duffy Cobbs returns at

cornerback and Ray Isom at safety, but after that only question marks remain. The kicking game will be solid once again with the return of placekickers Massimo Manca and punter John Bruno.

The Lions, on paper, will be head-and-shoulders above everyone else in their region, but eastern rivals could dump them on any given Saturday, as they nearly found out a few times last year. But the Lions do have seven home games and that should help.

Their biggest test will come on Oct. 25 at Alabama, and if Penn State gets by that one, the cheering will probably be heard all the way in Miami.

New coach will lead the Irish

By JOHN HOINSKI
Staff Writer

Now that the Gerry Faust era has come to an end, Notre Dame will depend on the skills of new head coach Lou Holtz and a little luck-of-the Irish to turn things around this year after a 5-6 campaign in 1985.

Following a 58-7 season-ending drubbing at the hands of Miami, Holtz's main concern was to restore the morale which seems to have vanished over the past five years, and to return Notre Dame football to the pedestal of dignity it is accustomed to.

It won't be easy, and the transformation isn't expected to take place overnight, although Holtz had done it before at North Carolina State, Arkansas and last year at Minnesota.

Holtz began the task early last winter by having his players arise at 6 a.m. twice weekly for conditioning and weight training programs. Then, following spring drills, his next step was to position players where they would be most effective.

One of those switches involved Mark Green, who will be back at runningback,

and another has been Robert Banks who will move to defensive end from linebacker. Others who will find themselves in different slots are: Mark Nigro and Tom Gorman, from inside linebacker and tight end, respectively, to the defensive line, and Alvin Miller, from tight end to wide receiver.

Unfortunately Holtz doesn't have anybody fully capable of running the option attack he prefers. Quarterback Tony Rice, a freshman from Woodruff, S.C., should eventually be the answer, but for now Holtz will probably go with Steve Beuerlein, and adequate passer but not quick afoot.

The backfield will be a question mark, too. Allen Pinkett has graduated and the two top back-ups, Alonzo Jefferson and Hiawatha Francisco missed spring drills following surgery. That means Green and another wide receiver converted, Tom Brown, could be in the starting backfield. But, Braxton Banks, a blue-chip full back from Hayward, Calif., could step in.

Things don't get any better on the offensive line. Only guard Shawn Heffern (6-5,266) returns. Every place else, with the exception of tackle, where former tight end Tom Rehder (6-7,243) has been

moved, is up for grabs.

Because of a fine receiving corps, Holtz may throw more than he wants. Reggie Ward, Alvin Miller and Milt Jackson could make things exciting if they can get their hands on the ball.

Defense will be the strong point of this year's club. Banks has been moved to the line and should be a big help to Wally Kleine (6-9, 274) who is coming off knee surgery. At linebacker Cedric Figaro (6-3, 235) and Mike Kovaleski (6-9, 218) should see plenty of action. In addition, Holtz also recruited John Foley, named as USA Today's outstanding defensive high school performer of the year in 1985, and is regarded as the best linebacker to come out of Chicago since Dick Butkus.

The secondary appears set with Steve Lawrence, Troy Wilson, Mike Hayward and Brandy Wells, as does the kicking game with placekicker Jon Carney and punter Dan Sorensen.

Although Notre Dame faithful should be happier this year, a murderous schedule should prevent them from shaking down any thunder this year, too. The Irish open up at home with Michigan and then tangle with Michigan State and Alabama in two of their next three games. They close out the season against Penn State, LSU and Southern Cal.


PSU schedule

September 6 Temple (Home)
September 20 at Boston College
September 27 East Carolina (Home)
October 4 Rutgers (Home)
October 11 Cincinnati (Home)
October 18 Syracuse (Home)
October 25 at Alabama
November 1 at West Virginia
November 8 Maryland (Home)
November 15 at Notre Dame
November 22 Pittsburgh (Home)

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