

Sporting View

Lion's bowl chances diminish with tie

by John Musser
Collegian Sports Editor

So much for the 1989 football season.

That was the thought that entered my mind after watching the Penn State Nittany Lions football team battle to a draw against the unranked and unimpressive Maryland Terrapins this past Saturday afternoon. Maryland entered the game with an underwhelming 2-6-1 mark.

After winning five consecutive contests, the Lions have managed to only win one of its last three. Granted, one loss was to fourth ranked Alabama on a blocked field goal attempt at point blank range in the final seconds. And the win, it was against West Virginia's one-man gang, Major Harris.

Because of State's inconsistent play, their record has dropped to 6-2-1 and their bowl chances have worsened from stable to critical condition.

The Lions are now faced with the unenviable task of facing No. 1 Notre Dame and No. 12 Pitt (although considering they've only beaten some creampuffs, the Panthers may be overrated) in their final two games. Another loss and State can forget about a major bowl bid. Two losses and a minor bowl bid might even be out of their reach.

This week's game with the Fighting Irish is the most important one of the season for the young Lions. After Saturday's games, the major bowl invitations will be sent out. Unless JoePa's boys can derail Notre Dame's train to the national championship this weekend in Happy Valley, well, people will be saying "so much for '89."

If there is just one positive aspect coming out of Penn State's tie with Maryland, it would be the return of quarterback Tom Bill.

In case you had forgotten, Mr. Bill was suspended from the team on September 18 for violating team rules. The redshirt junior had received his third alcohol-related citation since enrolling at PSU.

The former starting QB was reinstated two weeks later, but has done nothing more than throw warm up passes whenever Paterno told him to.

Bill didn't get to throw an actual pass until the second quarter of Saturday's game, almost two months after JoePa announced Bill's suspension. Although his play was less than inspiring, the fact that he has the guts to play after all of the media attention, not to mention the feeling that he let his teammates down, is.

By this time next month, barring a miraculous turnaround, Pittsburgh Penguins Coach Gene Ubriaco should be standing in the unemployment line instead of behind the Pens bench.

Those of you who doubt this should refer to Saturday night's horrendous game against the St. Louis Blues. The Pens were outplayed, outclassed, and out hustled, much like they usually have been in almost every game this season. Not to mention that they have been playing like they just got another knit sweater for Christmas from Aunt Judy (in other words, listlessly and unexcitably).

Lately, stories out of Pittsburgh have reeked of team dissension and trade rumors. Nine times out of ten in this situation, the coach gets fired, whether the coach was part of the problem or not. The rest of the time, the general manager gets canned. Tony Esposito, are you listening?

In case you missed the Steeler's game against Chicago on Sunday, don't worry. Pittsburgh gave their usual pathetic performance.

Speaking of pathetic, how can the Redskins lose to the Cowboys one week and beat the Philly Eagles the next?

Here is some sports news that's sure to quicken your pulse: The Baltimore Blast of the Major Indoor Soccer League entered the week with a spotless 4-0 record.

Although they have started out the year in a less than auspicious manner, the Cleveland Cavaliers still have the talent to challenge the NBA's best.

This may be a lot to expect from a team that has lost to the expansion Orlando Magic and four of their first five games. Besides, after last years heartbreaking first round loss in the playoffs to the Chicago Bulls on Michael Jordan's buzzer-beater in the fifth and deciding game, one might expect the Cavs to fold this year.

Not quite. Until Saturday's game with the Celtics, the Cavs were playing without three of last years starters. Guard Mark Price returned and sparked the offense with 19 points, including three treys.

The only thing Cleveland will need after their health returns is the development of a championship attitude, ala Detroit and the Lakers. Until then, the Cavs are just playing ball.

So much for this weeks column. I think I'll go review those MISL standings one more time.

Men's hoop squad to open season

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their ability to win games on the road. Another obstacle for Behrend is the presence of more NCAA Division II schools on the schedule. Behrend is a Division III school.

Despite the tougher schedule, Zimmerman feels his charges will be much stronger this year. It is too early to tell whether or not this will translate into more wins. The success of the Lions depends upon the health of the team, their road success, and the amount of hustle and determination they play with. These factors must all work in Behrend's favor in order to improve upon last year's success.

The play of the Lions in the pre-season has pleased Zimmerman, but he knows that teams will now be gunning for the Lions. It will be difficult for the men to surprise other teams like they did last year.

The regular season starts with Behrend on the road at The Slippery Rock Tournament this Friday night. The tourney features teams from Slippery Rock, Geneva, and York.

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