

PIGSKIN PREVIEW

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

FRIDAY, OCT. 23, 2009 | 9



**PENN STATE
VS.
MICHIGAN**



GAME INFO

Time: 3:30 p.m. Saturday
Site: Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, Mich.
TV: ABC/ESPN

TEAM FACTS

Head Coaches

PSU: Joe Paterno (44th year, 389-128-3)
UM: Rich Rodriguez (2nd year at UM, 113-73-2 overall)

Records

PSU: 6-1 (1-1 Big Ten)
UM: 5-2 (1-2)

Bowl Records

PSU: 26-13-2
UM: 19-20

Series History

Last Meeting: 2008, PSU 46-17
Record: UM leads 10-4

In the NFL

PSU: Buffalo Bills LB Paul Posluszny
UM: Pittsburgh Steelers LB LaMarr Woodley

PSU INJURIES

Out:
LB Michael Mauti (knee)
DB Jacob Fagnano (ankle)
DE Pete Massaro (knee)
FB Josh Matzkin (foot)
DT Brandon Ware (foot)
Possible:
RB Stephon Green (ankle)
OT Nerraw McCormack (ankle)
RB Brent Carter (knee)

STATISTICS

Penn State

Passing: Daryll Clark 1,654 yards, 13 TDs, 7 INTs
Rushing: Evan Royster 641 yards, 4 TDs
Receiving: Derek Moye 27 catches, 472 yards, 4 TDs
Chaz Powell 21 catches, 316 yards, 3 TDs
Tackles: Josh Hull, 69
Sacks: Jared Odrick, 5
INTs: A.J. Wallace and Josh Hull, 2

Michigan

Passing: Tate Forcier 1,027 yards, 9 TDs, 4 INTs
Rushing: Carlos Brown 336 yards, 3 TDs
Receiving: M. Odoms 19 catches, 238 yards, 1 TD
Tackles: Obi Ezeh, 55
Sacks: Brandon Graham, 5
INTs: Donovan Warren, 3

KEY MATCHUP

The Penn State offensive line appears to finally be clicking, and with that, tailback Evan Royster has started to roll through defenses. Royster shredded Minnesota for 137 yards last week and now meets a test in 240-pound Michigan middle linebacker Obi Ezeh.

The Nittany Lions struggled offensively the last time in Ann Arbor, and it will be important to get the running game going. A big first half for Royster would open the door for big plays in the passing game from Daryll Clark to receivers Derek Moye and Chaz Powell.

THIRTEEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE PENN STATE LAST WON AT MICHIGAN. NOW THEY RETURN TO...

THE BIG HOUSE OF HORRORS



Nathan A. Smith/Collegian

Big troubles at the Big House

By Wayne Staats
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Daryll Clark has seen Penn State suffer two heartbreaking losses at Michigan Stadium.

Only this time, he gets his chance.

"Those are the things you think of, you realize that you're going to have a shot to play up there again," Clark said earlier this week. "At the Big House, you can't beat yourself."

The senior quarterback starts under center on the road against the Wolverines for the first time when No. 13 Penn State plays Michigan at 3:30 p.m. Saturday in Michigan Stadium.

The Nittany Lions have lost their last five games in the Big House, remaining winless there since 1996. That includes two straight losses by a combined seven points when they were ranked in the top-10 but lost to unranked Michigan teams. In fact, in those five consecutive losses at Michigan Stadium, Penn State fielded a top-15 team four times.

In 2005, No. 8 Penn State grabbed the lead in the fourth quarter twice, 18-10 and later 25-21, when Michael Robinson gave the Lions the lead when he ran in for a three-yard touchdown with 0:53 left before the Wolverines pulled out some of their own magic.

Although Clark didn't make the trip with the team that time, he had a good feeling after the late Robinson score.

"I really thought that that was going to be the game," Clark said. Alas, it wasn't meant to be.

Penn State head coach Joe Paterno elected to kick off to Steve Breaston, who promptly returned it 41 yards. Paterno said this week he blames himself on kicking the ball to the dangerous playmaker.

Sean Lee was on that kickoff team, adding some of those who were on the field on the play felt they had lost the game.

Michigan drove down the rest of the field and on the last play, Chad Henne found Mario Manningham open in the end zone for the game-winning touchdown, 27-25. "It was a hard fought game both ways," Lee said. "It was just frustrating because they ended up driving down the field and making a play at the end, which was uncharacteristic of that defense."

Two seasons later, No. 10 Penn State struggled offensively and never held a lead as it lost to Michigan, 14-9.

The Lions fumbled the ball away twice in the game, including one from quarterback Anthony Morelli deep in his own territory in the first quarter.

"I feel like we kind of beat ourselves," Clark, the backup at the time, said.

"It wasn't a very good day. But Michigan capitalized on most of those mistakes."

Penn State has also lost with some close officiating calls, when in 2002 it fell in overtime, 27-24. With the game tied at 21 late in regulation, the Lions drove to Michigan's 49-yard-line but had to punt after a Tony Johnson catch was controversially ruled out of bounds.

Be it in overtime, a back-and-forth fourth quarter or turnovers, Penn State has lost in seemingly every possible way to Michigan in recent seasons.

But, for a time, it was actually the Lions who were frustrating the Wolverines.

Penn State won its first two games at the Big House after joining the Big Ten. The second victory came in 1996, when Wally Richardson was the signal caller in

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a 29-17 win as his defense forced five turnovers.

"We had some help," Richardson said. "It was a tight contest throughout for the most part, going back and forth. But we blocked a punt of theirs and ended up taking it in for a score, and that was really the turning point of the game."

On the play, David Macklin came up with the block and Ahmad Collins ran in it for the touchdown as Penn State grabbed the lead for good.

That helped the Lions win their third straight game against the Wolverines, the first Big Ten team to do so since Michigan State from 1965-67.

Since that game, however, Penn State has lost 9-of-10 against Michigan, with last season's 46-17 blowout the lone victory.

Richardson acknowledged that while some people may think the coaching staff has been conservative on offense, the former quarterback thinks it comes down to the simple fact that the team which plays best a certain day wins — talent has not been the issue.

Lee attributed the struggles to his team not making the big play late in a close game.

If Lee and his teammates are to break the streak, they'll have to do it against a Michigan team that has won five straight at home to open up this season.

By doing so, the Lions have the chance to break two different five-game stretches this weekend.

Only this time, Penn State has the senior quarterback in Clark matching up against freshman Tate Forcier. Plus, Paterno is 1-0 against Wolverines head coach Rich Rodriguez thanks to last season's rout.

Of course, the Lions have been close before. They now just need to find a way to finish the job.

"You would think that Penn State would go out there and feel really good about their opportunity to seize the victory from them," Richardson said.

"I would think they would be confident in their abilities because they've been thorough this before."

To e-mail reporter: wms5012@psu.edu



Carlos Osorio/Associated Press

Tate Forcier

THE LAST FIVE MEETINGS IN MICHIGAN STADIUM

14-9

2007

27-25

2005

27-24

2002

33-11

2000

27-0

1998

Daily Collegian Predictions

Matt Brown

Score: PSU 24, UM 17
What's good: PSU pass rush gets to Forcier.

What's bad: O-line takes a step back.

What to look for: Clark to Powell on deep ball.



Matt Fortuna

Score: UM 21, PSU 13
What's good: Another big game for A.J. Wallace

What's bad: PSU loses turnover battle.

What to look for: More Tate Forcier magic.



Nate Mink

Score: PSU 21, UM 17
What's Good: Lions stay in Big Ten race.

What's Bad: Defense finally allows first-half TD.

Look for: Lloyd Carr for AD petitions.



Wayne Staats

Score: PSU 20, UM 13
What's good: Michigan's home streak ends

What's bad: Another slow start for the offense.

What to look for: A late PSU defensive stand.

