

Joe Paterno News Conference

October 25, 2011

Q. Who do you plan to start at quarterback Saturday?

COACH PATERNO: I haven't got the slightest idea yet. That is why we are practicing.

Q. Do you have an update on Derek Moyer and his broken foot, do you think you'll have him this week?

COACH PATERNO: One more week. Derek is close, but he hasn't done anything yet. The doctors think he ought to just take one more week and then we have the off week. He can rest up, test it a little bit and hopefully he'll be available the week after that. But we're not even sure of that.

Q. Can you evaluate the play of Matt McGloin against Northwestern, what specifically did you see on the film?

COACH PATERNO: I thought Matt did a good job.

Q. Anything specific stand out to you about his play?

COACH PATERNO: He did a good job.

Q. Regarding Silas Redd, did you expect him to average this number of carries at the beginning of the season? Did you expect him to have this many carries as he's getting over the past month?

COACH PATERNO: I never go into a season, at least I don't think I do, with a guy setting individual goals. We try to set team goals. And then in the process of trying to win some games, you play people who are doing different things that will help you win the game.

Sometimes you don't play people as much as you would like. We've got one or two wideouts that I think we ought to be playing a little bit more. But they're throwing the ball X number of times. So, again, let me restart that.

I do not go into a season and say, "this guy has to gain this many yards, this guy's gotta do this or that." Everything we do is team-oriented.

Q. Wanted to ask you about Stephfon Green. How has he handled his second chance opportunity lately, and was it hard for you, a hard decision for you to give him this latest chance?

COACH PATERNO: I think you'll probably have to ask him that. I think he deserves it, and I told him if he did the things he's supposed to do, he would be fine.

But I think he's gone at it in a very determined way. He's wanting to help the team, and he has at different spots, particularly when (Brandon) Beachum was hurt. But, I think whether he's comfortable that he's been treated fairly or not, I think that's something you'd have to ask him.

We think we've treated him fairly. You never know.

Q. Noticed the two questions that you've been offered about the quarterback situation, the responses have been brief. Are you tired of talking about the quarterback situation?

COACH PATERNO: Well, if you guys want to talk about it, you can talk all you want. I'm not talking about it. I'm not tired of talking about it.

I just feel good that we are in a position, we had a couple of quarterbacks, I think, in different situations can help us win a game.

We only lost one game (Alabama), and the game we lost had nothing to do with the quarterback play. And the more you look around, the more you see two quarterbacks playing. Michigan is down to two, even though they had that kid who was the quarterback in the country last year, played against two quarterbacks last week. Probably play against two this week. At least they played two last weekend.

Q. Illinois' pass rush has been pretty good all season. What impresses you most about their defensive line, is that as good a front four as you've seen all year?

COACH PATERNO: Generally speaking, Illinois is the best football team we've played outside of Alabama, personnel and scheme-wise, everything else. They'll be the toughest for us up to now except for Alabama. I don't think people quite understood how good Alabama was when we played them.

And we didn't -- we didn't get killed, but we certainly didn't get a lickin' from them, from Alabama. This team is solid, a couple of really good linebackers that can run. Their two safeties are big-time safeties. Offensively they've got a big offensive line...315, 320 (pounds).

It's a solid football team. I think the Purdue game was a tough game for them to recover from the Ohio State game. The Ohio State game, they kind of let it get away from them and I don't think quite recovered from it because they were down 21-0 (to Purdue), as most of you know, in the first half.

But, after that, they understood where they were and came out and out-played Purdue. So if you ask me about one particular part, I think they're a good team. I think they're down four are fine players. I think their offensive line's a good football group.

They've got two or three running backs, that it's tough to tell one from the other. Great wideout. So you look at it. You don't just stare at any one part of their game. You've got to be ready for good solid all-around squad.

We've got to play a better football game than we've played all year.

Q. You've talked about getting a little bit better every week. Through eight games, do you feel like you're prepared or better prepared for this really tough four-game closing stretch than you might have been had those games been earlier?

COACH PATERNO: I'm looking at Illinois. I have not looked beyond Illinois. Going to sleep at night I'll turn on the television, get ESPN or some replay. If we're not playing on a Saturday (afternoon) like the last Saturday; I got to see Purdue and Illinois a lot because we were playing at night and they were playing in earlier in the afternoon.

I got to see a lot of that game. But, ordinarily I don't see much, except for the team we're going to play that particular week. And that's about where I am right now.

I think we've got our hands full this week. We've got to be a better football team this week than we've been all year. And after that, we'll take a look and see where we are and see how good the people are that we're going to play coming down the line.

But, it's one of those things, from week-to-week you're not quite sure what you're going to get, either from your own team or from the other guy.

Q. The game against Illinois last year, they came in here and put a pretty good lickin' on you. I wondered what you remembered about that game and how that changed your team around after the off week?

COACH PATERNO: We got a good lickin', is what I remember. I thought they kicked our ears in. Hopefully you learn from every game, even when you lose. I think we got -- we got to the realization, particularly since we were so young last year, we were young coming into this year, but we were really young last year, that all of a sudden some of our guys understood exactly what, how tough this league is. And when Illinois did what they did to us -- and Illinois wasn't the only team that kicked our ears in last year.

We learned that. Hopefully we learned from it. I hope we did. We haven't had a chance to do much in practice. Mondays we go without pads. We only work an hour. Most of it is on kicking.

So I can't tell you exactly what our mental attitude is yet.

Q. Does the open date (after Illinois) affect your preparation in terms of the fact that you're open next week and if you have a strong performance this week that you can really take some momentum into November?

COACH PATERNO: I don't know. I think it depends on how we -- depends on whether we can play the kind of game that maybe you're suggesting, I don't know. I haven't thought about that. The only thing I've

tried to think out for next week is how we can practice and also give the kids a chance to get a couple of days off so they can maybe get caught up in their studies.

We have a couple of kids that really have some tough courses and papers due and things like that. I think a little time off from football will give them an opportunity to get caught up.

So I'm trying, and I told the captains that, I said when it comes time for me to sit down and figure out how we want to handle next week, I'll sit down with you guys and a couple of seniors, try to figure out what's best for the team. But I have not looked at it the way I think you're approaching it, how we play this week will affect how we're going to do.

I doubt it. I won't tell you yes or no, but I doubt it.

Q. There are not a lot of guys Devon Smith's size who can compete at this level. What makes him the player he is?

COACH PATERNO: Well, he can run, run, run. Speed's a big thing. Particularly in certain things you want to do. He's had his struggles. He's not a natural. He's had to work hard with his hands, timing, body control, so that he can put himself in position to make the catch. To his credit he's done that. And I think he's in a position to do pretty good.

He's got to have more than one game for me to go around saying he's this or that. But, he can run. And he's tough. He's a tough kid. He's not one of those -- he's had a pretty good run into the year. And he'll try to block you. I know how tough he can block (laughter).

Q. Talk about that Nate Scheelhaase and what about his game concerns you, the Illinois quarterback.

COACH PATERNO: He's one of the better quarterbacks. If you told me -- I think that the Big Ten this year has got a lot of good quarterbacks. The kid at Wisconsin, obviously. A little bit I've seen of him he's good. The kid at Michigan I know is good. He's a class guy. Look at the Northwestern guys. You look at the -- this kid will be right, right up there as one of the -- I think one of the top three quarterbacks in the conference. He can run. He does the things that hurt us. He scrambles well.

He's got a couple of great receivers. And he's got the running back, and as I said, the big strong offensive line has done a good job protecting him. I think he's going to be a real problem for us.

Q. Malcolm Willis had to come off with an injury in the Northwestern game. Do you expect to have him available this week and will Stephon Morris be back this week?

COACH PATERNO: Well, the first one (Willis) is fine. I'm not sure what I'm going to do with the other kid. We'll see. I just don't know what I'm going to do with him.

Q. Coming back from injuries you suffered in the preseason, how challenging has it been, especially getting Penn State to the point where it is now, 7-1?

COACH PATERNO: I'm not where I want to be, the blazing speed I used to have (laughter). It's been tough -- it's a pain in the neck, let me put it that way.

I feel sorry for Tommy Venturino; he's got that cart, got to drive me around practice once in a while. I try to do as much walking as I can in practice, but there comes -- after a while it gets very, very sore and I have a tough time walking the last half hour of practice or so.

And I'm a little nervous (about being on the field). I'd be less than honest. I'm trying to find where everyone is. I don't want to get run into again. It's a pain in the neck.

That's why one of the reasons I've been reluctant to be on the sideline, particularly when we're away. I was going to be on the sideline against Northwestern the whole ballgame until I got a look, when I went out early and looked at the sideline. It was a little different kind of arrangement than you would be used to at home as far as how I would handle certain things that would happen on the field. But it's been a pain in the neck.

But what are you going to do, you know? I don't think it's affected the chance for the football team to get better because of the staff.

I've turned over things to the staff at times where I used to get in there and mix it up with the kids a little bit, which I hope I'll get back to. But I'll yell at one of the coaches "tell that guy to do this," when the old days I

might grab the kid myself and get right in the middle, in the middle of the field and grab him and say: "How many times do I tell you to do it this way?" It's a little -- it's a little different environment than I like. But I don't think it's been -- I think that staff has adjusted well. I think the kids have, too.

Q. Yesterday the NCAA president talked about how he would be in favor of giving scholarship athletes \$2,000 extra. Would you be in favor of that and how much do you think that would change the kids' lives?

COACH PATERNO: I have mixed feelings about it. I'd like to sit down with a bunch of kids. I think the one thing we don't do enough of, I'm talking about some kids that legitimate students. You know, how many kids that have come to a university on a scholarship to get the kind of scholarship that our kids get.

Now we're going to add a couple thousand dollars more to it, I think it puts them -- I'm nervous that we put them in a category. I think they ought to realize that they're here to get an education and they're being, they're really benefitting from that and we're trying to make it possible for them to get the kind of education they should get. Are we trying to make it a plush lifestyle for them? No.

You guys don't like to hear me tell stories, but I was at Brown for four years. There was not one night I was on that campus I didn't wash dishes or wait on tables. And I played football and I played basketball one year until I guarded (Bob) Cousy and he got 35 points in 6 minutes. (laughter). That was the end of my college career.

I did some things that bother me a little bit that were categorism. You're a football player, so you're entitled to \$2,000. And having said that, there are probably some kids that believe that's really the only way they can do this job academically they want to do because maybe they have to do some things at home or, I don't know. I think there's some individuals for just that blanket; I hope we have a discussion of it. But right now I know as much about it as you do. Nobody's calling me up and asking me how I feel about it. Administrators have talked about it.

I knew there was some sentiment for it. But nobody's talked to me about it.

Q. Can you assess how Paul Jones has handled being off this fall and how he's practiced?

COACH PATERNO: I think Paul's done very well. Now, I haven't got any grades yet. With Paul, he had not come here with the idea of -- he had very bad study habits. He's not a dumb kid. And I think once he gets in the groove academically, I think he'll have a good future.

Q. And what about (Joe) Suhey, he didn't play much last week?

COACH PATERNO: Suhey is hurt a little. When he gets hit, he goes numb. We're trying to get him through as much as we can so when he plays he can be more reckless, he won't have to worry about protecting what he has, but he could play.

But if you went out and watched practice, we have the red cross, you can't do anything; green cross, you can in and get hit. He's in the green cross, does everything but he doesn't take a blow. But he can play (this week).