

## SPORTS

OHIO STATE AT PENN STATE • SATURDAY, 3:30 P.M. • TV: ABC

# Bucks poised for hostile crowd in Happy Valley

By Rusty Miller  
Associated Press

COLUMBUS — Two teams, both looking for a signature win, and neither can afford a loss.

That's what is on the line when No. 15 Ohio State travels to No. 11 Penn State in a showdown that may not determine the Big Ten champion but will almost definitely decide who it won't be.

"We know how important all these games are," Buckeyes wide receiver Dane Sanzenbacher said. "It's come to a point in a season where we have to win out and we have to play well in November to be a great team."

Each team has played one ranked opponent this year and lost. The Nittany Lions (8-1, 4-1) fell at home to unbeaten Iowa, 21-10, in their Big Ten opener. Since then, they have won five in a row.

Ohio State (7-2, 4-1) lost to Southern California 18-15 way back on Sept. 12. The Buckeyes followed that by winning 6-of-7 games, the lone setback a stunning 26-18 defeat at Purdue.

The Buckeyes follow up the game against Penn State with one at home against Iowa (9-0, 5-0). So they still control their own destiny in their quest to capture a fifth consecutive Big Ten title.

"Maybe fans out there think Ohio State hasn't beaten anybody, a great opponent," Buckeyes linebacker Austin Spitler said. "And neither has Penn State. But we're going to find out Saturday who the best is between Penn State and Ohio State."

To beat the Nittany Lions, the Buckeyes will have to play perhaps their best game of the season and do it in the most hostile environment.

"There's so much energy and electricity," coach Jim Tressel said about the atmosphere in Beaver Stadium. "It's a fun place to play. There's noise. There's excitement."

Sometimes, the Nittany Lions faithful might carry that to the extreme. That becomes evident when visiting teams almost have to run a gauntlet down a walkway underneath the stadium to get to the field.

"It's something. They're throwing stuff at you, spitting on you, yelling everything you can think of at you," Spitler said, smiling. "But it doesn't bring you down, it really fires you up and gets you going. I think it's a positive in a way for us."

The focal point of most of that venom figures to be Ohio State quarterback Terrelle Pryor. He was heralded as the nation's No. 1 quarterback recruit while playing his high school ball in Jeannette, Pa. — about a 65-mile drive from Happy Valley. Pryor narrowed his final choices down to Michigan, Ohio State, Oregon and Penn State before deciding to be a Buckeye.

Pryor knows he'll be a marked man. He was already talking about it moments after the Buckeyes polished off overmatched New Mexico State 45-0 last Saturday.

"I'll probably get booed as soon as I go out to warm up," he said. "I'm happy here, and we'll be ready to go."



Associated Press

**Ohio State's Terrelle Pryor races into the end zone for a touchdown against New Mexico State during the second quarter last Saturday at Ohio Stadium.**

Tressel said on Tuesday that he didn't feel the need to prepare Pryor for the fans.

"I'm sure he's very aware of that," Tressel said. "I'm sure as we go through the preparation for the week, we'll talk a lot about poise and patience because that's what you have to do. You have to be a poised guy. ... That's what being part of a great environment is all about."

Besides, the visiting team has won the last two games in the heated series.

"The last time they came here (in 2007) it wasn't very fun, because it was a night game and they really put it to us," Penn State linebacker Sean Lee said. "We weren't even able to make their offense punt (in a 37-17 loss). ... But the atmosphere at both stadiums, especially Beaver Stadium, is unbelievable. It's something you dream of as a young kid, and finally as a fifth-year senior, now that I'm healthy, it's going to be great."

A season-ending knee injury to kicker Aaron Pettrey, the Big Ten's leading scorer, puts a damper on some of the excitement for Ohio State.

Pettrey was blocked on a first-half kickoff last week, tearing the medial collateral ligament in his right (kicking) leg. He was scheduled to undergo surgery on Tuesday.

In his place, the Buckeyes will go with 26-year-old former Major League Soccer player Devin Barclay, a former walk-on who beat out scholarship kicker Ben Buchanan for the No. 2 spot behind Pettrey. Barclay missed two of his three field-goal attempts in his college debut last week after Pettrey went out.

Buchanan, sick last week, is expected to battle him for the job this week.

"We were very comfortable with Aaron from anywhere," Tressel said of Pettrey's range. "These guys aren't quite there."

## Intriguing plots abound for Ohio State-Penn State

By Genaro C. Armas  
Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — JoePa vs. Jim Tressel. Daryll Clark vs. Terrelle Pryor. The best defense in the Big Ten against the league's second-best unit.

It looks like Saturday's game between No. 11 Penn State and No. 15 Ohio State should be another star-powered, high-stakes slugfest.

The winner remains alive in the Big Ten race, in position to pounce should undefeated Iowa falter in the last three weeks of the season.

The loser probably says goodbye to a shot at a BCS bowl — not that Paterno is trying to heap more pressure on his No. 11 Nittany Lions (8-1, 4-1).

"Well the consequences of the winning and the losing of it are obvious to everybody, but you can't go at it that way," Paterno said Tuesday. "I think we just got to say, 'Hey, let's play it. Go out there and have a little fun. Let's not beat ourselves. ... What happens afterward happens.'"

If recent history in this series is any indication, the latest edition of one of the Big Ten's highest-profile rivalries could be another last-minute thriller. Like safety Mark Rubin's fourth-quarter hit on quarterback Pryor last year that caused a fumble in Buckeye territory to set up Penn State's go-ahead touchdown in a 13-6 win.

In 2005, defensive end Tamba Hall's forced fumble with 1:21 to play cemented Penn State's 17-10 win in 2005. Michael Jenkins' 5-yard TD catch with 1:35 left lifted Ohio State to a 21-20 win two years earlier, overcoming Penn State cornerback Alan Zemaitis' 78-yard interception return.

The common theme in each of those games: big defensive plays — just how Nittany Lions

linebacker Sean Lee likes it.

"For sure, a tough physical game that's going to come down to a few mistakes," Penn State's defensive captain said.

As if a game against Ohio State (7-2, 4-1) needed any more intrigue, this year's meeting includes two new wrinkles. Saturday's game will be the 300th in the 50-season history of Beaver Stadium. The Nittany Lions are 241-58 at the stadium since it opened in 1960.

There's also the return of western Pennsylvania native Pryor to his home state for the first time since the sophomore spurned Paterno two years ago in one of the most closely watched recruiting contests in recent memory.

Clark, a native of Youngstown, Ohio, ended up winning the quarterback job in Happy Valley in 2008, and he's been 19-3 ever since in leading Penn State's spread HD offense.

Pryor helped the Buckeyes get to the Fiesta Bowl last year, though he's felt pressure from fans this season for the inconsistent Ohio State offense.

That criticism might be paltry compared to the unfriendly response Pryor should get Saturday at Beaver Stadium.

Paterno has shown only respect for Ohio State's dangerous dual-threat sophomore.

"Tremendous ability. He started a little bit slow, but the last few games, he's been very, very overpowering," Paterno said.

If there's any team that has the talent to stop Pryor, it's Penn State — the Big Ten leader in scoring defense (FBS-leading 9.3 points per game) and total defense (254 yards).

Unfortunately for Paterno, he's got the Ohio State defense to worry about, too. The Buckeyes allow 11.7 points and 260 yards per game, second in the conference behind the Nittany Lions.

Despite all the big-game hoopla — including an early opening for the students at the Paternoville tent city outside the stadium and a pep rally Friday — Paterno said he's approaching this week in practice like any other.

"If there's a little more thrust, enthusiasm, emotion in the way we teach things, or my involvement in it ... I think the kids could tell you better than I could. I try not to though," Paterno said.

Lee, a senior, doesn't need any new motivational tricks to get ready for Saturday.

"We had a lot of pop in practice, everyone was excited," Lee said. "I think we'll have a lot of fun in this game."

Still, this year's meeting doesn't have quite the luster as last year's, when then-unbeaten Penn State handed the Buckeyes their only Big Ten loss of the season.

This season, Iowa (9-0, 5-0) controls its own destiny and can clinch a Rose Bowl berth if its wins out.

But the Hawkeyes have faced questions about their viability as BCS title contenders, in part because of their tendency to have to rally from behind for victories. The strength of the Big Ten has also been questioned by some national pundits because of Ohio State's recent losses in high-profile games, as well as Penn State's loss to Southern California in last season's Rose Bowl.

Asked Tuesday if he was bothered by the conference's national reputation, Paterno offered his oft-repeated suggestion of expanding the conference to extend the league schedule — possibly with a conference title game.

"I think it's hurt us some, but it's obvious why," Paterno said. "We back out of the national scene" in mid-November, when Big Ten teams end their regular season.

## From the sports Wire

### Three softball players found dead in pond

Associated Press

DICKINSON, N.D. — Police say three missing North Dakota college softball players have been found dead in their vehicle, which was pulled from a pond northwest of Dickinson.

Police Lt. Rod Banyai said Tuesday night that police are "still investigating" the cause of the deaths. Authorities have been searching since Sunday night for 22-year-old Kyrstin Gemar of San Diego; 20-year-old Afton Williamson, of Lake Elsinore, Calif.; and 21-year-old Ashley Neufeld of Brandon, Manitoba.

The Dickinson State University students were said to be in a white 1997 Jeep Cherokee with California plates when they were last heard from in calls made to two friends on cell phones before the lines went dead.

### Mom of Yanks' Chamberlain faces prison

LINCOLN, Neb. — The mother of New York Yankees pitcher Joba Cham-

berlain faces up to 20 years in prison when she's sentenced next month on a felony drug charge.

Jackie Standley pleaded no contest Monday to an amended charge of delivery of a controlled substance, according to court records. The 44-year-old Standley was arrested in May after selling a gram of methamphetamine to an undercover officer at her Lincoln residence.

Standley originally was charged with a Class II felony, which carries a maximum sentence of 50 years, but the prosecutor reduced the charge to a Class III felony. She'll be sentenced Dec. 16.

### Police use water cannon to end soccer riot

FRANKFURT — Police used a water cannon to overcome rioting soccer fans after a second-division game and detained 23 people. Twenty-seven officers were slightly hurt.

The police reacted when about 500 violent supporters of Hansa Rostock tried to breach a police barrier and threw bottles and firecrackers after their club had lost to visiting St. Pauli 2-0. About 1,500 police were on hand for the game between the clubs whose supporters have a history of animosity.

There were clashes during and after Monday night's game between rival groups of supporters. Police had no information on possible injuries.

### FSU's Andrews to retire at season's end

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Longtime Florida State defensive coordinator Mickey Andrews is retiring after four decades of coaching and 26 years as one of Bobby Bowden's assistants.

The architect of defenses that helped the Seminoles win two national titles in the 1990s, Andrews announced his plans to retire Tuesday.

A football star at Alabama under coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, Andrews developed 18 first round NFL Draft picks during 26 seasons at Florida State beginning with cornerback Deion Sanders in 1988.

### Woodson: Michigan hard to watch

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Charles Woodson says "it's hard to watch" Michigan play football.

Woodson won the Heisman Trophy and led the Wolverines to a share of the national championship with Nebraska in 1997.

Michigan (5-4) has lost four straight Big Ten games and could turn a 4-0 start into a 5-7 flop a year after college football's winningest program lost a school-record nine games last year in Rich Rodriguez's debut season.

Woodson says he and former teammate Marcus Ray exchange messages about the once-proud program. "I won't share the texts with you," he said.

### COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## BG beats Buffalo on last-minute TD

Associated Press

AMHERST, N.Y. — Tyler Sheehan threw an 18-yard touchdown pass to Freddie Barnes with 39 seconds left to give Bowling Green a 30-29 victory over Buffalo on Tuesday night.

The Falcons (4-5, 3-2 Mid-American Conference) rallied from a 13-point deficit as Sheehan threw two touchdown passes in the fourth quarter. He was 22-for-40 for 313 yards and an interception.

Willie Geter scored on a pair of 1-yard touchdown runs

in the first half for Bowling Green.

Jeffvon Gill ran for 172 yards and a touchdown for Buffalo (3-6, 1-4 MAC).

Zach Maynard threw for 149 yards, completing 13-of-27 including an 18-yard touchdown pass to Jesse Rack.

## Flashes

From page B1

"We can get as many Kent State people there as Akron people," he said. "I hope that will happen."

If Kent State can beat Akron on Saturday, they will head into their bye week preparing for a battle for first place at Temple on Nov. 21.

**STUDENT TICKETS AVAILABLE** — The University of Akron has generously released an additional 250 tickets for Kent State students to purchase at a discount.

General admission tickets at 30,000-seat InfoCision Stadium typically cost \$20. KSU students can now pick up a seat to Saturday's game for just \$10 at the M.A.C. Center ticket office.

KSU is hoping its students take advantage of the opportunity by showing up and having an influence on the game.

In fact, Kent State students can take a lesson from their Akron counterparts in how to invade a visiting stadium or arena. No students in the MAC are better at making their presence known in enemy territory than the Zips.

Remember when Akron's students used a Trojan-horse-style attack at the M.A.C. Center for a men's basketball game a few years ago?

They blended into the crowd by showing up in KSU T-shirts and cheering for the Flashes during the game's first few minutes. At the first time out, they tore off their KSU attire in unison to reveal their true colors. It was devious and inspired and it added to a

great atmosphere that day.

### TRADITION TAKES A BACK SEAT

— Kent State-Akron week has a different feel this year, at least in Kent.

As KSU turned its attention to the Zips on Sunday, Martin told his players, "I don't want to hear anything about Wagon Wheels and rivalries," said Martin. "All of that will take care of itself."

Traditionally, all of the talk at Kent State and Akron during rivalry week has centered on the Wagon Wheel. The two teams started playing for the trophy back in 1946. Since then, every team that possesses the wheel has focused on keeping it. The other team has dreamed of getting it back.

Akron reclaimed the Wagon Wheel in 2007 with a 27-20 win at the Rubber Bowl. They earned the right to keep it last year with a 30-27 come-from-behind win at Dix Stadium.

The wheel's two-year residence in Akron may privately grate on KSU's players, but in public, they are following their coach's lead and talking about bigger goals — like winning a division championship and keeping their bowl hopes alive.

The Flashes' current three-game winning streak has been built on single-minded approach. They have remained focused on just the game ahead by calling every Saturday "a one-game MAC championship."

"Regardless of the rivalry, we are going to approach this game the way we do any other MAC game," said senior receiver Jameson Konz. "We need the 'W' and that's all that matters."

**AND IN AKRON** — The focus is still all about the rivalry and the Wagon Wheel

in Akron, and it should be.

The Zips' once-promising season has been sabotaged by injuries, including the loss of two starting quarterbacks. Just as Martin and his players have in past years, J.D. Brookhart has adjusted his focus to attainable goals.

They can't win a championship, but they can keep the Wagon Wheel, and along the way they can spoil the title hopes of their arch-rivals.

GoZips.com has a link to a video "message from Tom Wistrill and the Zips about the Wagon Wheel Game," where the first-year athletic director learns about the rivalry and the importance of keeping the Wagon Wheel for Akron players and coaches, both past and present.

"I don't think I understood the significance, and then after we lost it, I figured out how much it meant," Brookhart says in the video. "It's a source of pride in this community and the school."

It's an impressive production laced with highlights from last year's game at Dix Stadium, and it ends with Akron's own plea for fan support.

"Now you know how much this rivalry means to us," Wistrill says at the end of the video. "We hope it means the same to you. We need you to come out and support the Zips. Bring your friends, bring your family. ... Come cheer us on to victory. Watch us carry the Wagon Wheel around the stadium again."

**EARLY ODDS** — Kent State (5-4, 4-1 MAC) opened as a three-point favorite to beat Akron (1-7, 0-4) on most Las Vegas betting sheets.

**David Carducci can be contacted at dcarducci@recordpub.com**