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Maryland notes

Penn State-Florida State likely for Blockbuster Official for new bowl 'very optimistic'

November 11, 1990 | By Mike Preston | Mike Preston, Sun Staff Correspondent

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. -- Two officials of the Blockbuster Bowl and one from the Mazda Gator Bowl watched yesterday's Maryland-Penn State game, but it appears that No. 21 Penn State is headed to the Blockbuster to face No. 12 Florida State.

CNN reported yesterday that the Nittany Lions are going to the new bowl, being played at Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami. The Miami Herald quoted Blockbuster chairman Bob Kuechenberg, who attended Florida State's 70-21 victory over Cincinnati yesterday, as saying he was "very optimistic" about landing Florida State and Penn State.

"You've got two living legends in [Florida State coach Bobby] Bowden and [Penn State coach Joe] Paterno, and it's just incredible if that can happen in our inaugural game," Kuechenberg said.

"I think the prospect of playing a great institution like Penn State is appealing to us," Florida State athletic director Bob Goin told the Herald.

Bruce Keller, a Blockbuster representative who was at Beaver Stadium, said: "If we can get Florida State, then we should definitely be able to get Penn State in our game. . . . It all depends on Florida State, if they do not commit to one of the five major bowls."

Meanwhile, Paterno told The Associated Press he would consider the Sunkist Fiesta Bowl in Arizona, despite controversy over voters' rejection of a Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

"I'd let my kids decide," Paterno said. "If my black players wanted to go, we'd go. If they didn't, we wouldn't go."

* Maryland H-back Frank Wycheck missed the second half of yesterday's game, a loss that proved important to the Terps in the 24-10 loss to the Nittany Lions.

Wycheck played most of the first half but was removed in the second because of a bruised back. Wycheck had four receptions for 35 yards yesterday. He leads the Terps in receptions this season with 58 for 509 yards.

"I'm not trying to use that as an excuse, but he is a big part of our offense," said Maryland coach Joe Krivak.

Four other Maryland players went down with injuries, including reserve cornerback Doug Lawrence (hip pointer), starting offensive tackle O'Neil Glenn (sprained right ankle), reserve linebacker Mike Jarmolowich and reserve strong safety John Vessels (heart palpitations). All will be examined further today.

* Paterno surprised a lot of fans yesterday when he did not replace starting quarterback Tony Sacca with reserve Tom Bill to open the second half.

Sacca completed only one of five passes for 11 yards in the first half. Bill had relieved Sacca the past two games and helped pull out victories over Alabama and West Virginia.

Sacca finished yesterday's game with eight completions on 16 attempts for 162 yards. Bill entered the game but only in a mop-up capacity.

"No, I didn't consider using Bill because I don't think anything Tony did was his fault," said Paterno. "We probably should have thrown deep a little bit sooner in the first half."

* Maryland players already were beginning to talk about the game with No. 11 Virginia next week. A victory would give the Terps (5-5) their first winning season since 1985.

"That only gives us one more shot at a winning season," said Maryland cornerback Scott Rosen. "It's a challenge, but Georgia Tech proved that Virginia can be beaten."

Said Maryland inside linebacker Scott Whittier: "What we have to do is roll up our sleeves and go after it one more time."

* Penn State will play No. 1 Notre Dame next week, a game the Nittany Lions have been gearing for since the second half of the season.

"Notre Dame is a great football team," said Paterno. "We obviously will have to play better than we've ever played. It will be a real challenge to go out there and be in a competitive game with them."

"This team is still getting better each week. I hope we would get better this week and play our best football game, but I don't know whether we're physically capable of matching the kind of team that Notre Dame is."

* Maryland quarterback Scott Zolak yesterday set the school record for completions in a season with 205. The old record was 196 set by Dan Henning in 1986.

Zolak also moved into third place for passing yards in a season with 2,332. Henning holds the record with 2,725, set in 1986.