

July 24, 2008



An Interview With:

COACH JOE PATERNO

Q. What do you want to see at this stage from either Pat Devlin or Daryll Clark that will make your decision a little bit easier if there is a decision to be made?

COACH PATERNO: Well, I'm not interested in an easy decision; I just hope we can make a good decision. I'm going to take my time. I'm not letting one practice or one thing that happens, I'm going to just think it out. We've got X number of days, we can practice preseason practice, and we're going to give both Pat and Daryll plus a kid by the name of (Paul) Cianciolo who nobody's talking about who's a senior who I like very much. We'll give them shot at it and we'll see where we go and when the time comes and looks to me like somebody is ready to go head-to-head, we'll sit down, talk it out and go from there.

Q. Coach, general thoughts on being inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame?

COACH PATERNO: I tell a lot of people if you hang around long enough they have to do something with you. It's a great honor. I think all of us who are in any kind of activity, whether -- I don't know what kind of Hall of Fame journalists have or where you would like to be somehow be recognized by your peers. I think when you get into something like that and you sit back and maybe -- I think maybe when the Hall of Fame in the old days wouldn't put a coach in until he had retired might have been a little bit better for the coach because right now we were out there last week for the enshrinement.

My mind wasn't -- I'm thinking about my football team. We start practice next Monday, a

week from this coming Monday, and odds and ends and some details you want to work out, got some personnel switches we want to make and you've got to talk to kids about the possibility of maybe playing a different position. There's a lot of things in your mind, so I really don't know whether I've had an opportunity to sit back and say hey, this is pretty good.

But deep down I'm sure that I would have been disappointed if I hadn't been; I'll put it that way. I've been fortunate that I've had a university that was a good support to me when I started to coach. I had a lot of really outstanding football coaches who taught me how to coach, and I've been lucky to have a lot of people around me. So I look at it as something that's maybe a little bit more for the institution, for the guys at Penn State football.

One of these days I'll sit back and think it out a little bit. Right now it's just a lot of excitement for a lot of people, but I haven't had time to enjoy it.

Q. Having recruited Terrelle Pryor, what kind of impact do you have think he'll have for Ohio State, especially if they employ a two-quarterback system?

COACH PATERNO: I don't think that's my decision to make. In fact, I think that's a dumb question to be honest with you, even though you are a Penn State graduate. I think that's up to Jimmy. He has got to figure out how that fits in with what his people are. I have absolutely no idea.

Q. I wasn't asking you if he should be the quarterback, I'm saying what kind of impact could he have?

COACH PATERNO: I don't know. That depends on what Tressel wants to do, Tressel wants to do with what he's got. The quarterback he had last year took him to a shot at the National Championship. I don't know when he's ready to get into something else. He's certainly capable of running the Ohio State program. He's done a superb job out there. He's an outstanding coach,



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and I think he'll do what he has to do with both Pryor and the other kid.

Q. Joe, Coach Tiller was earlier, talked highly about his interaction with you. Can you just talk a little bit about your relationship with him and what kind of impact he's had at the Big Ten?

COACH PATERNO: Two thoughts about Joe Tiller. Number one is I thought he brought in a whole new concept to the Big Ten as to what we could do. When I -- way back when I got in it, and I'm probably the old man in the coaching group right now, you know, we have the indoor facilities, we couldn't throw the football because they couldn't practice year-round throwing the football and everything else. And Joe came in and he started to open up offenses and created a lot of problems, and we in coaching are all people that are mimics and I think Joe did that and he did it with a lot of class. I'm very, very fond of Joe Tiller. I think he's just been somebody you like to see in college and I'm sorry he's going.

But he knows, he keeps telling me he wants to fish. I said, fish, for crying out loud. You catch three of them, you look at one and they all look alike, what the hell. But he's a great guy, a great guy and great football team. He's been able to do some things for the Big Ten that have been tremendous for college football because of his ability.

Q. Joe, with your own status people talk about retirement. Do you ever just feel bad at times feel like people are trying to force you out when you have a lot to contribute still?

COACH PATERNO: Well, I haven't thought of it that way. I obviously get tired of answering the same question, when are you going to retire when I don't know and I don't know what to say so many times. I'd like to retire when I feel as if I cannot make a contribution to Penn State. I'm very obligated to the university. I've been at it for 58 years, five kids graduated from there, my wife graduated from there, everybody is around me, and I want to get out of it when I think it's appropriate. And I want to make sure that when I do it, I do it the way Rip Engle did it. When Rip Engle retired and gave me a shot, he left an awful lot of meat on the bones. I inherited a really good football team, and Rip knew that and Rip didn't get out of it because it was worthless. I hope I can do the same thing whenever I decide to get out of it,

but yeah, I'm getting tired of answering that question.

I don't think -- I just don't want it to take away from the team I have each year. I've got a really prime group of young people. We've had kids that can be some problems but we'll get that addressed but it's been a fun group to coach. I'm looking forward to it. I've got a great coaching staff that stayed with me, almost all of them have for a long time. I lost one coach last year, a young coach, had a chance to become a coordinator someplace else. But I just -- I'm having a lot of fun and I don't want to get out of it but yet I don't want to be too stupid that I go so far that I'm not going to be able to do it the way I like.

Q. Coach Paterno, I'm just wondering if you feel around this time of the year you can kind of gauge how excited you are for this season to begin and the passion and the dedication, is it all still there? Does it still feel the same for you when you get to this time of the year?

COACH PATERNO: Well, you know, you can play games with yourself. You don't know. It would be hard for me to tell you exactly how I felt 10, 15, 20 years ago. All I can tell you is how I feel today without trying to relate it to how I felt 10 or 15 years ago. I feel really good health-wise. I feel good, I'm excited about it.

I think we've got some people that can play a good game of football. I think if we can get the right guy at the right place at the right time doing the right thing, I think we can have a good football team. I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to that challenge.

Now, am I looking forward to it or more excited than I was ten years ago? I can't tell you that. I'm looking forward to it. I'm ready to have more fun.

Q. Coach, you said you kind of get tired of people badgering you, asking you about your contract, about retirement. When you see your friend Joe Tiller getting out of it, do you ever go to him for counsel, maybe not counsel but try to talk to him about the situation, and do you ever go fishing with him?

COACH PATERNO: I'll tell you, if Joe were here, do you think I want to go with some guy that sits on his rear end and fishes for advice? You're crazy, and that's exactly what I would tell

him. Joe has got to do it his way; I've got to do it my way.

A lot of things, I think when you're in coaching you can't lose your own identity. Everybody is pecking away at you, pecking away. Why did you do this, why did you do that. Unless you've got enough strength and you're who you are and where you are and what you want to do, I think you're probably going to get lost. And I've teased Joe, I keep telling him he's crazy, he ought to stay in it and the whole bit, and I love his wife, twice as smart as he is; so is mine. Joe has got to do what he's got to do and hopefully I'll do what I've got to do when it's time.

Q. Coach, is there a certain type of scenario that would unfold this year that would make you feel like hey, this is the time to go?

COACH PATERNO: I'm not talking about that, I don't know.

Q. Something maybe that would happen?

COACH PATERNO: I don't know. I don't know. Let me spell it. I, D-O-N-T, and final -- I don't know. How many times can I say it? I'm having fun, I'm enjoying it. You know, that's the way it's going to go. We can lose 10 games by 15 points and I might say hey, we're that close, we're one play away, a couple years ago, maybe make a decision.

No, I don't think you ever want to put those kind of parameters on what's going on, not in the business that we're in, not in the business where you're a coach and you have to face that kind of competition in the Big Ten, so no. That's not going to do it. I'll know if I don't feel I'm doing a good job, I'll know.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about a possible early signing period for recruits, and I know Penn State lost Mike Shaw at the last second. Are you in favor of that, against it?

COACH PATERNO: The early signing date? I'm not crazy about it. Only in the sense that I think then you're going to have to get yourself and the way you're doing a lot of official business during the season. I grew up with a coach Rip Engle, and we used to get into recruiting, everybody wanted to talk about recruiting this guy, that guy and the other guy. Rip Engle was my boss for 16 years and coached me in college. When I was in college, he would always say hey, look, let's take care of the guys we have. Then

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we'll worry about the recruits. We have an obligation to the guys that come and practice today and tomorrow and doing the best job we can for them, and I don't want to hear a lot of nonsense about some hot shot kid who's 16, 17 years old.

So that's always kind of stuck in my head a little bit, and even though we started early signing or early commitments way back, I'm not so sure I want to get into that where I've got to worry about how we're going to plan a game day or I've got other concerns besides just being able to focus in on the game we're going to play that day. I don't want to be worrying about the recruiting part of it.

Now, having said that, there's a lot of good reasons for early signing. I've just got some reservations about it, and I think obviously it would be something that I would feel very, very comfortable with if the majority of the younger coaches felt that that's the right angle to take for the program. So we'd adjust, but I'm not comfortable with it and if they asked my opinion I'd tell them I'd rather not have early signing. Thanks a lot, guys.

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