Shoulder injury brings frustration

BY CURTIS PAINTER
For SN Today

CARLOS OSORIO / AP

Curtis Painter started 39 straight games for the Boilermakers before a balky shoulder forced him to the sideline.

The injury has been tough. I think really the toughest part is when you think that I played the last 39 games straight up until the game I got injured in—without a problem. The Michigan win was the first time I watched a game in its entirety in a long time. It makes you realize how much fun the game really is. It's not very fun sitting on the sideline and not being able to get into the game. It's been tough for me.

It's frustrating, because I could probably throw the ball all right and could play if I'd hurt my left shoulder, my non-throwing shoulder. I think I could still play. For the most part you can play with some injuries, but this one is a tough one.

It's really getting a lot better. Probably the biggest improvement was this weekend when we were off, and I got to go in and throw on my own. It went pretty good; it was a good throwing workout. Obviously I'm not 100 percent, but to be able to go out there and make certain throws I hadn't been able to make was encouraging. I just need to keep building and hopefully I'll get an opportunity later. I'm still a little limited, but hopefully by the end of the week I can go out and make all the throws.

Just talking to the trainers here, they told me they don't think they've had a quarterback have to sit out a game since Coach Tiller's been here. They've had good luck. Then to have the first- and second-team QBs go out in back-to-back weeks like Joey Elliott and I have is tough luck. It's kind of crazy that we've both had very similar situations and injuries to our throwing shoulders.

Justin Siller is a young guy, and relatively inexperienced in there at quarterback, so I've felt that it is really my obligation to try to help him out as much as I can when he comes to the sidelines. He came in there against Michigan and had a great game—he played well. His athleticism does a lot for him, and he can make a lot of plays. Just having an extra pair of eyes out there is big. Sometimes when you have an injury, it's easy for the staff to leave you at home during a road trip, but they wanted to bring me along to Michigan State to help Justin along with the game.

Beating Michigan with Justin two weeks ago was great. They've got a great tradition and they've always been a tough team—they battled us tough this year. I had not beaten them. The team showed a lot of character being able to pull that one out.

—As told to Brian McLaughlin

About the author

Curtis Painter
Purdue QB
Painter, Purdue's 6-4, 230-pound four-year starting quarterback, has missed two straight games because of a shoulder injury. This week, Purdue travels to Iowa and Painter continues to try to get healthy enough to get back on the field. Justin Siller has filled in at QB for Purdue.

Sun Devils still thinking bowl game

JOHN FROSCHAUER / AP

Mke Nixon picked up his third interception of the season in ASU's season-saving win over Washington.

BY MIKE NIXON
For SN Today

It's a great feeling to get a win again. We had a tough stretch in our schedule with Cal, USC, Oregon and Oregon State, and we had a chance to get a win on the road against Washington, which is never easy. We kind of kept them in the game in the first half, but we played a really good second half and were able to pull away.

Our offense came out and ran the ball very well, and it set up the pass. In the second half, they were moving it up and down the field. Our defense got a few turnovers and put our offense in a position to score. Plus, we limited mistakes—we only committed one turnover.

I had my third interception of the season. I dropped back—we were in a zone coverage—and I was reading the quarterback's eyes. He brought me right to the wideout. The wideout actually kind of had it in his hands, and I just kind of pulled it out of his hands. It was one of my better interceptions—the other two this season were thrown right to me.

Also, one of our safeties picked up a fumble and ran it back for a touchdown. Any time we score a defensive touchdown in a Pac-10 game and win, they cut down the sprints by about 40 percent on Sunday. That's always a plus.

At home against Washington State on Saturday, we just have to come out and take care of business. They've obviously been struggling recently, but it's kind of like last week's game against Washington. We're only 3-6 right now, and we have a lot on the line. We have to win out for a chance to go to a bowl game. We can't take anyone lightly—we saw what happened in the UNLV game if maybe you look ahead to the next week.

We've played four out of our last five games on the road, and our one home game in that stretch was a blowout against Oregon, so hopefully we can come back and give the fans a couple of home wins to end the season.

—As told to Jim Ryan

About the author

Mike Nixon
Arizona State
LB
Thanks to a minor league baseball career, Nixon is a 25-year-old junior. He is third in the Pac-10 in total tackles per game with 7.56.