

# Powerful Panthers

Pittsburgh, Penn State still major forces among East teams

United Press International  
NEW YORK — When a team inherits a new football coach, it usually takes time to adjust to his philosophy. In Pittsburgh's case, however, the adjustment should be eased by the fact the Panthers have a bigger goal — a national championship.

With Coach Jackie Sherrill's defection to Texas A&M, Pittsburgh named defensive coordinator Serafino "Foge" Fazio as head coach.

And it looks as if Fazio not only has the best team in the East, but a team capable of a perfect season, despite one of its toughest schedules in years.

"We have great respect for Coach Fazio," says Pitt senior quarterback Dan Marino, who directed the Panthers to three straight 11-1 seasons and claims his team now is capable of winning the title.

"He's been here for five years and in that time, he's made our defense the best in the country. Sherrill was a great coach for us when he left, the rest of the coaching staff stayed. Sure a new head coach has a different philosophy, but when it comes to certain point, it's the players that have to go out and win, and I think we can."

If Pitt is to make a run at the national championship, it will be in the arm of Marino. Last season he completed 226 of 380 passes for 2,876 yards and 37 TDs. And for good measure, he was named MVP of the Sugar Bowl after guiding the Panthers to a last-minute 24-20 victory over Georgia.

Also returning from last year's No. 2 team are 17 other starters. Among that group are wide receivers Julius Dawkins and Dwight Collins and tight end John Brown, who combined to catch 29 TD passes in 1981.

Up front, the line is anchored by tackles Jimbo Covert (6-foot-5, 275) and Bill Fralic (6-5, 270). Bryan Thomas, a 1,000-yard rusher last season, leads the running corps with Marc Bailey and Marlon McIntyre sharing the fullback spot.

Defensively, the Panthers must replace linebacker Sal Sunseri and safety Pappy Thomas. Otherwise, the Panthers will start the same players as last year when they gave up just 62.4 yards per game rushing to lead the nation.

Unlike previous seasons, the Panthers won't have many breathers during the season. They open at home against North Carolina (Sept. 9) followed by games at Florida State and Illinois. The Panthers also are hosts to Notre Dame (Nov. 6) and close the season at Penn State (Nov. 26).

Joe Paterno, with a winning percentage of 81.9 (151-33-1) during his 16-year coaching reign at Penn State, will be hard-pressed to duplicate last year's 10-2 campaign, which included a 48-14 victory over Pitt and a 26-10 thrashing of Southern Cal in the Fiesta Bowl.

Todd Blackledge returns at quarterback and tailback Curt Warner, if he stays healthy, will star on offense. Question marks on the offensive line and at linebacker, coupled with a schedule that includes Nebraska, Alabama, Notre Dame and Pitt, may leave the Nittany Lions just short of the Panthers for East honors.

West Virginia, 9-3 last year following a 26-6 triumph over Florida in the Peach Bowl, enters its third season under Coach Don Nehlen. Penn State trans-

fer Jeff Hostetler should replace Oliver Luck at quarterback and his primary target will be tight end Mark Raugh.

On defense, the Mountaineers return nine starters, including linebackers Dennis Fowlkes and Darryl Talley. With

there are no sure replacements. A record better than .500 will be a success.

Navy, also with a new coach in Gary Tranquill, has installed a multiple-T offense to help quarterback Marco Pagnanelli. Seven starters return on defense but just four on offense. The Midshipmen open against Virginia and former coach George Welsh before meeting Arkansas and Notre Dame. A fourth bowl bid in the last five seasons seems unlikely.

Having suffered his first losing season (5-6) in nine years at Rutgers, Coach Frank Burns has 16 starters back. The defense will have to carry the Scarlet Knights until Burns gets the offense together.

At Temple, five quarterbacks are vying to replace Tink Murphy — and the winner will have a capable offensive line, but the defense is weak and that could mean disappointment for the Owls.

At Syracuse, new coach Dick MacPherson has problems. Joe Morris, the Orangemen's alltime leading rusher, quarterback Dave Warner and kicker Gary Anderson are gone — and

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its opening game at Oklahoma and, with Pitt and Penn State on the schedule, finishing with eight victories may be a tall order.

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# Astros recall J.R. from Tuscon club

United Press International  
HOUSTON — Pitcher J.R. Richard, called up from the minor leagues for September, will have to improve his stuff to pitch again in the major leagues, Houston Astros General Manager Al Rosen has indicated.

The Astros Monday told Richard, who suffered a massive stroke in 1980, to report to Houston next week after he goes to the mound Wednesday night for the final season game with Houston's Tucson minor league team.

"I would love to see him pitch, but I just don't know," Rosen said from New York, where the Astros played the Mets Monday night. "He was wild his last time out and he is still working on his rhythm. We will have to see how he progresses."

Richard was placed on the major-league roster last September, but he did not pitch last season because of the pennant race. The Astros' failure to get him into a game caused the 6-8, 250-pound Richard to lose intensity in his rehabilitation effort and to report to spring training this year out of shape.

Richard, placed on the Astros' lowest minor league team, worked his way up and now has a good chance to pitch for the first time since he collapsed July 30, 1980, with a massive stroke.

Rosen said Richard would probably pitch batting practice. "The more he throws from the mound to live hitters, the better he will be," Rosen said. "But all of this is up to the pitching coach. He (Richard) still has the same kind of determination he always had and we felt he deserved the opportunity to come up."

Richard pitched well in Class A minor-league ball, but has not performed as well with Class-AAA Tucson.

In addition to Richard, the Astros also called up pitchers Mark Casan, Dan Boone and Zac Paris, infielder Bill Doran and outfielders Scott Loucks and Larry Ray.

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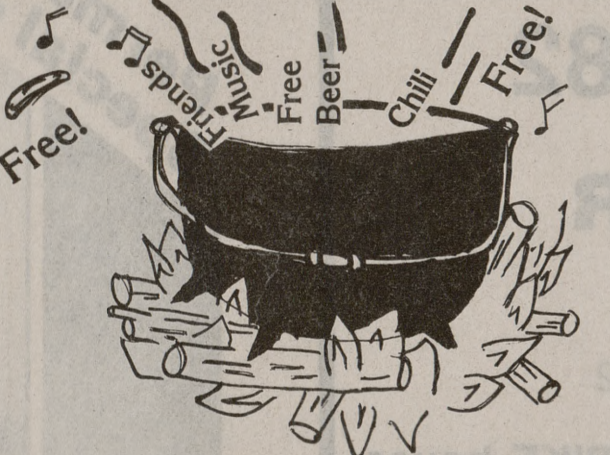
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Sept. 1, 1982

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