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Battalion/Page  
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Eagles' Flutie says team ready for Aggie opener

by Frank L. Christlieb  
Sports Editor

Doug Flutie watched from the sideline as the Penn State Nittany Lions rolled up a 31-0 lead over his Boston College teammates during the fourth game of the 1981 season.

Fellow quarterback John Loughery, a first-string quarterback who had completed one of 15 passes for five yards during the first three quarters, couldn't move the Eagles downfield. After watching that scene throughout most of the game, Coach Jack Bicknell made his best move of the year.

He sent Flutie, a freshman, into the game to replace Loughery. Most people expected Flutie, the fourth-string quarterback entering the season, to fumble his first snap, to stumble while handing off to one of his backs or to throw an interception deep in Eagle territory.

But Flutie stayed calm, passed for 135 yards and threw a touchdown pass—all in one quarter. Although the Eagles lost 38-7, Flutie had won the starting quarterback job by virtue of his performance in those 12 minutes of play.

While Loughery had been the starter entering the season, juniors Dennis Scala and Doug Guyer had been the second- and third-stringers until getting injured during the first part of the season. Flutie made the Penn State trip as the third-string quarterback, but had no idea he'd get a chance to take his first snap in college football.

"Guyer hadn't done that well during the first of the season," Flutie said, "so after Loughery had a poor game, they put me in. I guess being in the situation I was in, there was no pressure on me. I thought that if I did well, great, and if I didn't, people wouldn't really care because it wasn't expected."



Eagle QB Doug Flutie

With Boston College losing to Navy 23-10 in his first start, Flutie completed 14 of 25 passes for 118 yards with one interception. Not bad, but in this case, the best was yet to come.

In fact, the best came during the Eagles' next game, when the Jackie Sherrill and Pittsburgh narrowly won 29-24. Flutie surprised the Panthers by completing 23 of 42 passes for 347 yards and two touchdowns. In that game, Boston College outgained Pitt offensively 415-405.

"I was pleased with my performance, but there were some things we could have done better to win the game," Flutie said. "The team played well that day, and I happened to be throwing the ball and we racked up some points."

The Eagles, who trailed 20-10 at halftime, missed chances to win the game when they fumbled with a first-and-goal situation at the 8-yard line. Boston College also couldn't capitalize on a first-and-goal at the 9-yard line, and missed a field goal in the process.

The Eagles won four of their final five games, while Flutie passed for 234, 251, 244, 201

and 122 yards, along with 12 touchdowns. The Boston College coaches and players to look toward the 5-foot-11, 170-pounder for leadership.

But leadership is a freshie's job, isn't it? "I should have been, and not. Coming into this was still worried about the starting position. I've got it and I can't be a leader."

But becoming the Boston College starter so early in his career wasn't simple, Flutie said. "It was very difficult to learn our offense coming in as a freshman," he said. "The types of things really were hard."

"We try to use things to our advantage to confuse the defense," Flutie said. "Last year during the first part of games I played, I was confused that the defense was giving me a hard time."

Flutie, who finished his college career with 1,652 yards and 10 touchdowns, was ranked ninth best passer in the country in 1981.

"I feel like I'm really growing up to mature and I'm taking more responsibility," Flutie said. "There wasn't a lot of pressure last year because I was a man, but now there is."

In Saturday's season opener, Flutie and his teammates face the Sherrill and the Aggies in Kyle Field at 6 p.m. Flutie didn't appear in last year's 13-12 Boston College game. See FLUTIE page 1.

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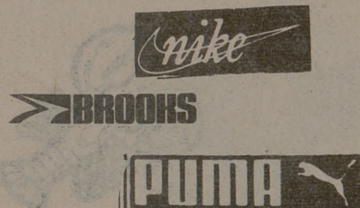
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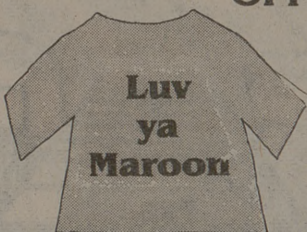
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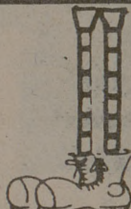
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