

A football legend is gone, but is there a new one on the way for the Penn State Nittany Lions?

PENN STATE MOVES PAST LAST YEAR'S MISTAKES WITH HIRING OF NEW HEAD COACH

By Michael MacVane
STAFF WRITER

Former Patriots' offensive coordinator Bill O'Brien has become the new head coach of the Penn State Nittany Lions. And there has been a lot of controversy about his getting the job.

How do you replace an icon? One that has won the most games in Division I football (409 games) and is as loved by students, staff, alumni and student athletes alike? The answer: not easily, but Penn State University has taken the first step in this arduous process by hiring O'Brien.

"What we stood for and what we represented for so long, what we have been taught, what we have been trained to know and the values that I raise my own children with, you're basically telling me it's good, only as long as times are good?" said former Nittany Lions linebacker LeVar Arrington.

The fans are concerned with the hire. Their first concern is that O'Brien is not part of the

Penn State family. Secondly, what experience does O'Brien have? He has never been a head coach. He has coached subpar college programs as a running back coach and assistant offensive coordinator. Many argue that his only real success in the pros has come off the arm of Tom Brady, arguably the best quarterback in the NFL, especially after last

The recruiting process for Penn State has been a struggle to say the least. It is hard to recruit anyone when you do not have a head coach. But all of those problems seem to be solved with the hiring of O'Brien.

One of the top quarterback recruits in the country, Skyler Mornhinweg, verbally committed to Penn before the Sandusky

Wilkerson and safety Demetrius Cox.

Another key factor that should be considered is that Penn State is a very prestigious academic school as well. They believe that the commitment to academics should be as important as the commitment to football.

O'Brien, who graduated from Brown, understands the management of football and academics. When introduced as Head Coach, O'Brien spoke of what his concerns for his players would be.

"The ability to get a meaningful degree, graduate from Penn State and make something of your life," said O'Brien. "We're going to try and teach our players what it means to be a Penn State man."

The Penn State search committee had a very tough task of finding a new head coach due to the lack of interest in the job by many candidates.

With the hiring of O'Brien, Penn State has begun to fill the gaps left by Paterno and members of his former staff. The upcoming season will be a true test of Bill O'Brien's coaching ability as he attempts to find success in filling the shoes of a walking legend who left the institution in shame but remains supported by many of the Nittany Lion faithful.

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Bill O'Brien, Penn State head coach

weekend's playoff game, proving Penn State's position that he may not be ready.

Amidst those concerns, the school has its reasons for the hiring. By going outside the family, they can start over after the sex abuse scandal that rocked the university.

"I wasn't here, and I am planning for the future," said O'Brien when asked about the issue.

incident. Since the hiring of O'Brien, Mornhinweg is scheduled to visit Penn State in the next few weeks and will make his decision as to what college he will attend.

Some of the other notable recruits that are deciding yea or nay on making Happy Valley their home for the next four years are cornerback Armani Reeves, linebacker Camren Williams and defensive end Brent

Tebow's magic runs out in Divisional Round of NFL playoffs

By Thomas Deane
STAFF WRITER

Tim Tebow's and the Broncos' season ended Saturday night in Foxboro, completing a season that mystified both fans and NFL players alike.

After an exhilarating win against the Pittsburgh Steelers in the Wild Card round, the Broncos found themselves completely outmatched against the New England Patriots.

In the Wild Card game, Tebow was able to throw a game-winning pass to Demaryius Thomas to take out the Steelers in overtime. Tebow threw for a game high 316 yards and two touchdowns.

Parke Puterbaugh, part time lecturer in music and avid sports fan, attributed Tebow's success to an injury-depleted Steeler defense.

"Having a healthy team would have helped (the Steelers)," said Puterbaugh. "Losing Kiesel and Hampton early was a big blow."

The week prior to the second round of playoff games, all sports news revolved around Tebow. Having begun the season at third on the depth chart and eventually being named starting quarterback, Tebow maintained his strong religious beliefs and gained somewhat of a cult following.

Could Tebow really pull off another miraculous victory against one of the most dominant teams of the decade?

"New England will be hard to beat, and Tebow won't be having any miracles up there," said Puterbaugh.

Indeed, there were no miracles for Tebow.

Within the first ten minutes of the Divisional Round game against New England, this was shockingly evident. The Patriots performed a flawless first half, leading 28-0 at halftime.

The Patriots pressured Tebow and the Broncos all game long. The Patriot defense limited Tebow to only 136 passing yards, and it was not only Tebow the Patriots went after. The Broncos' running game was stopped 12 times for negative plays.

Quaker sophomore running back Ricky Douglas believed the key to success for the Broncos rested with the defense.

"Tim Tebow could lead the Broncos to the Super Bowl if

they slowed down the Patriot offense," said Douglas.

There was no slowing down the Patriot offense led by quarterback Tom Brady.

Brady set a new franchise playoff record by throwing six touchdowns, five in the first half. He finished the game 26 of 34 for 363 yards.

"I've seen him like this, but hopefully, that's not the best he'll be," said Patriots wide receiver Deion Branch in an interview with the Washington Post.

In the conference championship, the Patriots will play the Baltimore Ravens. The Ravens were able to squeak out a win against the Houston Texans.

The Tim Tebow mania is finally over. Sophomore Elizabeth Carella was annoyed with the media attention garnered by Tebow.

"All week long all we heard was how good Tebow was and how he was going to beat the Patriots," said Carella. "I'm just glad it's over and we all know who the top quarterback really is."

With Tebow done for the season, sports media now has to turn elsewhere for stories. Luckily, there are still more action-packed playoff games to be played.

In order to get to the conference championship games, there were three other very intriguing divisional round match-ups.

On Sunday, the Baltimore Ravens were able to beat the Houston Texans, 20-13. Baltimore garnered the win in classic Raven style: sound defense and protecting the ball.

In fact, the Ravens did not commit one penalty, nor did they turn the ball over once.

The Ravens also forced rookie quarterback T.J. Yates into throwing three costly interceptions. Yates took most of the blame for the loss Sunday.

"If I'd done a better job of protecting the football, I really think we'd have come out with the win today," said Yates.

In the NFC, the New York Giants took on the Green Bay Packers at famed Lambeau Field. The last time the two teams met, the Giants won in overtime, propelling them to the Super Bowl and eventually beating the undefeated New England Patriots.

There would be no redemption for the Packers.

The Giants jumped out to an early lead and they never took their foot off the pedal. The final score favored the Giants, 37-20.

Giants quarterback Eli Manning was able to pick the Packer defense apart, throwing for 330 yards and 3 touchdowns.

One of Manning's touchdowns came in the final seconds of the first half on a Hail-Mary to wide receiver Hakeem Nicks. The play gave the Giants a 10-point lead, and more importantly, all of the momentum heading into the locker room.

New York defensive end Osi Umenyiora knew that the play gave the team the confidence to win the game.

"With a 10-point lead, we're going to get after you. And that's what we did," said Umenyiora in a post-game interview.

The Giants' defense stifled the Packers' offense. They were able to limit Pro Bowl quarterback Aaron Rodgers to only 241 yards passing and one interception.

Turnovers ended up costing the Packers. They committed four in total, each more costly than the last.

For their efforts, the Giants will face the San Francisco 49ers in the conference championship.

The 49ers were able to outlast the New Orleans Saints in a thriller that saw three touchdowns in the last two minutes and 11 seconds.

A touchdown pass from Alex Smith to Vernon Davis with nine seconds left gave the 49ers a 36-32 win.

Smith resembled a former 49er quarterback that was long known for his last-second, game-winning drives. Even the legend himself, Joe Montana, would have been pleased with Smith's efforts.

Smith threw for 299 yards, three touchdowns and most importantly, zero turnovers.

Vernon Davis, who reeled in a huge completion on the final drive as well as the game-winning touchdown catch, was ecstatic after the game.

"This is huge for us," Davis said, "It's history, legendary, anything you can describe."

The 49ers hope to keep the hot hand in the Conference Championship game on Jan 29.