

## **Penn State Students Temper Expectations for Next Season**

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UNIVERSITY PARK, PA.- As Penn State looks ahead to a new football season marked by a coaching change and significant roster turnover, excitement on campus has been mixed with hesitation.

The program's recent adjustments have left some fans unsure of what to expect. With new leadership shaping the sidelines and key players departing or transferring, Penn State students say they are entering the season with more caution than confidence.

Lucas Devinney, a sophomore, described his outlook as "realistic." He said that while change can sometimes energize a program, it also brings uncertainty. "It just feels like we're starting over in some ways," Devinney said. "You don't really know what we're going to be good at yet. That makes it hard to get too hyped."

For Devinney, much of the doubt centers on cohesion. He noted that roster turnover in the transfer portal era makes it difficult to build chemistry. "It's like a new team every year now," he said. "That can work out, but it usually doesn't."

Michael Wright, a senior, echoed similar concerns but framed them through the lens of expectations. As someone preparing for his final semester on campus, Wright said he hoped to feel more confident heading into the season. Instead, he feels uncertain about whether the team can compete at the highest level.

"I'm not saying they'll be bad," Wright said. "But I don't see us doing anything serious. It feels like we're in a transition year, and that's sad since it's my last semester."

Junior Nico Ricardi pointed to recent inconsistencies as a reason for his skepticism. He said that while Penn State often flashes potential, it has struggled to win the biggest games. The coaching change, in his view, adds another layer of unpredictability.

"Every year we say, 'This is the year,'" Ricardi said. "And then we fall short in one or two big games. With a new staff and new players, there's no reason this will be any different."

For some students, that uncertainty is affecting their level of investment. Tracy Kha, a sophomore, said she is reconsidering whether she will purchase season tickets next year. While she has attended games through her time at Penn State, she said the cost and time commitment feels like a waste if the team isn't going to win.

“I love the atmosphere, and Saturdays are always fun,” Kha said. “I’m not even sure I’d buy tickets next year though. It depends on how the first few games look. I just don’t want to spend all that money if it’s going to be L after L.”

Change can ultimately be positive, but fans have already begun to adjust their expectations. People need to be realistic when it comes to their expectations for next season. There is talent, but the talent will take time to develop. Many Penn State fans want a national championship, but that seems to be a pipe dream for now. This team needs to find its identity first.

As the offseason continues and preseason hype begins to build, Penn State students appear to be approaching the upcoming season with cautious curiosity rather than unwavering belief. For now, optimism exists, but it is tempered by doubt and the burning memory of seasons that did not meet expectations.