

# Tailback Mays named player of the year

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Junior tailback P.J. Mays became the first player in YSU history to be named the Gateway Conference Offensive Player of the Year on Nov. 28.

Mays had a remarkable year for the Pens in their successful 8-3 season. He broke school records in rushing yards with 1,446, and in yards-per-game, averaging 131.5. He also became the first Penguin to rush for four touchdowns in one game against Indiana State since 1992.

He rushed for more than 200 yards three separate times, six times for more than 100 and his 83-yard touchdown scramble against Clarion is the third longest in school history.

In addition to his record-breaking statistics, Mays scored 22 total touchdowns on the year, ranking him third in the nation. For his career he ranks 12th nationally in rushing yards per game.

"P.J. showed this year that he was capable of playing at the highest reaches of this game," said Pens assistant coach Sam Eddy. "He sets the example other guys have to live up to."

Pens linebacker coach George Small, on the

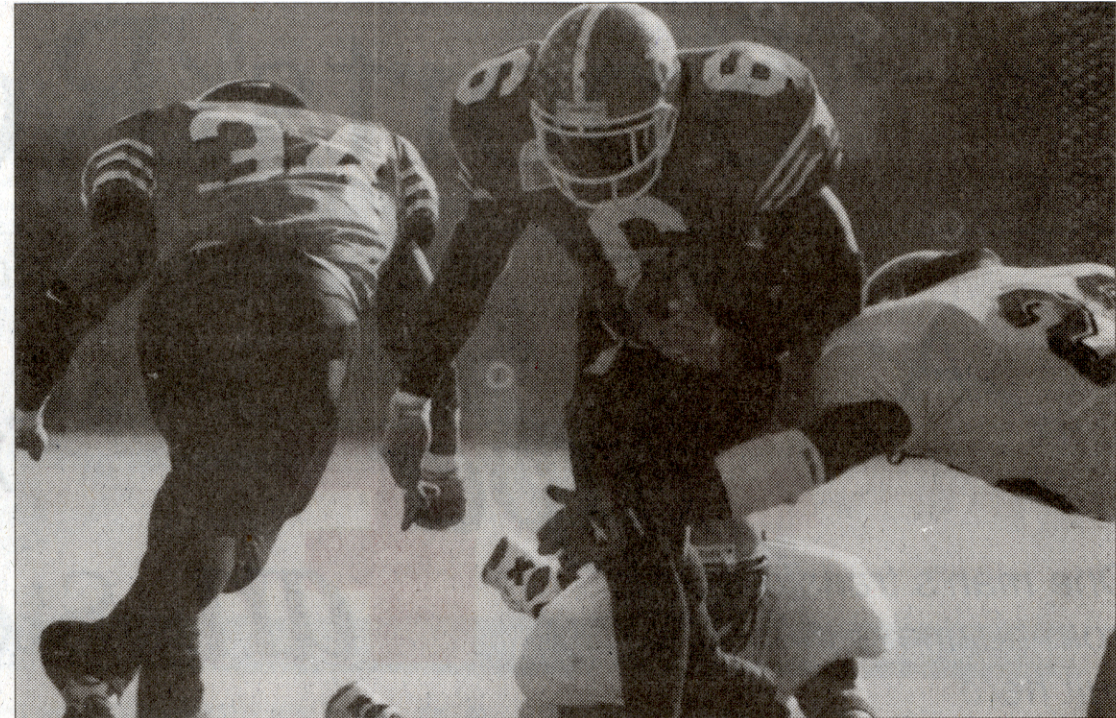
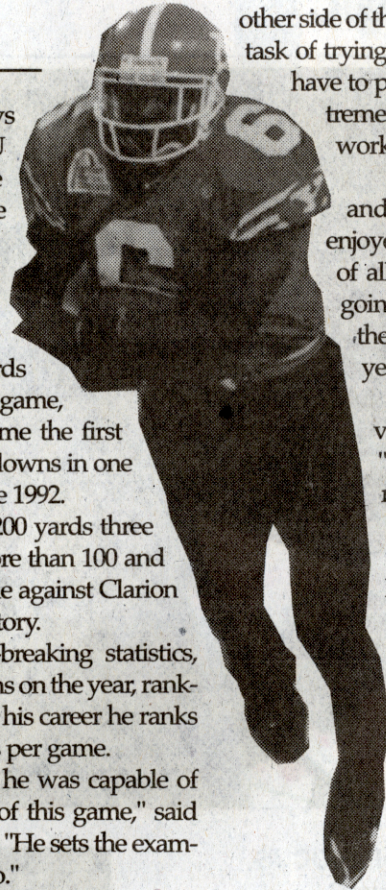
other side of the ball, was happy he didn't have the task of trying to contain Mays. "I'm glad I don't have to play against him," Small said. "He's a tremendous athlete with a tremendous work ethic."

On the field Mays dazzled crowds and bewildered opponents, but he enjoyed the behind the scenes action most of all. "Just playing with the guys and going to practices and meetings with all the seniors was the highlight of my year," said Mays.

"Despite all his success P.J. is a very humble person," said Small. "He's not a real vocal leader, but rather he leads by example."

Exclusion from playoff action was a major disappointment for the Pens this year, but Mays knows what it will take to be back in the hunt for next season. "We have to bring up the younger guys, take them by the hand, and do a great job in leading them on," said Mays.

Penguin's fans look for another competitive season of football next year, and P.J. Mays will be right up front, leading the way.



Photos courtesy of Sports Information

## Break on through

P.J. Mays in action during the Penguins 2001 season. Mays was named Gateway Conference Offensive player of the year on Nov 28.

