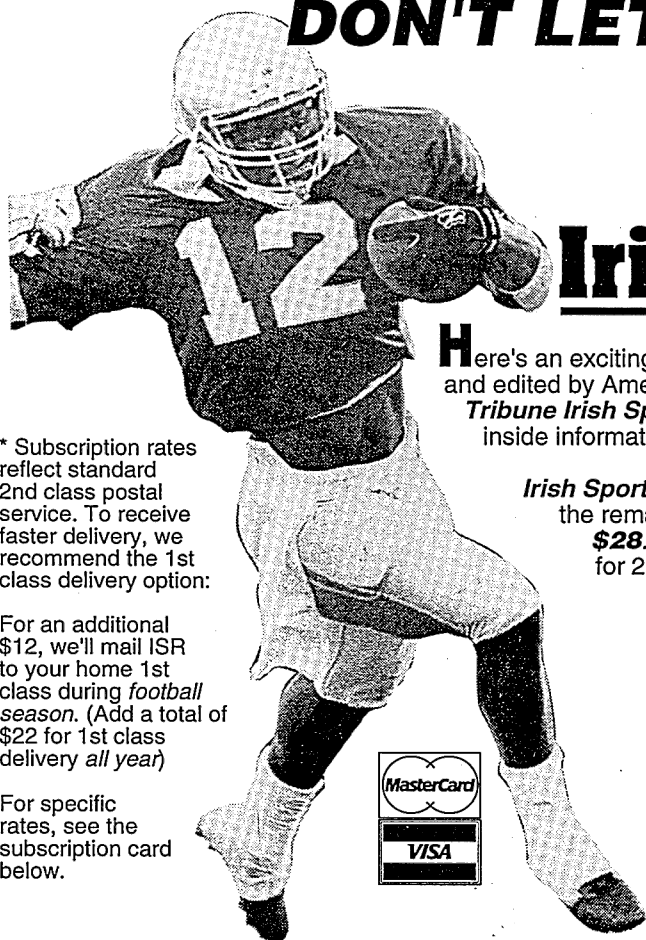


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NOTRE DAME'S STUDENT MAGAZINE



1991
FOOTBALL
REVIEW



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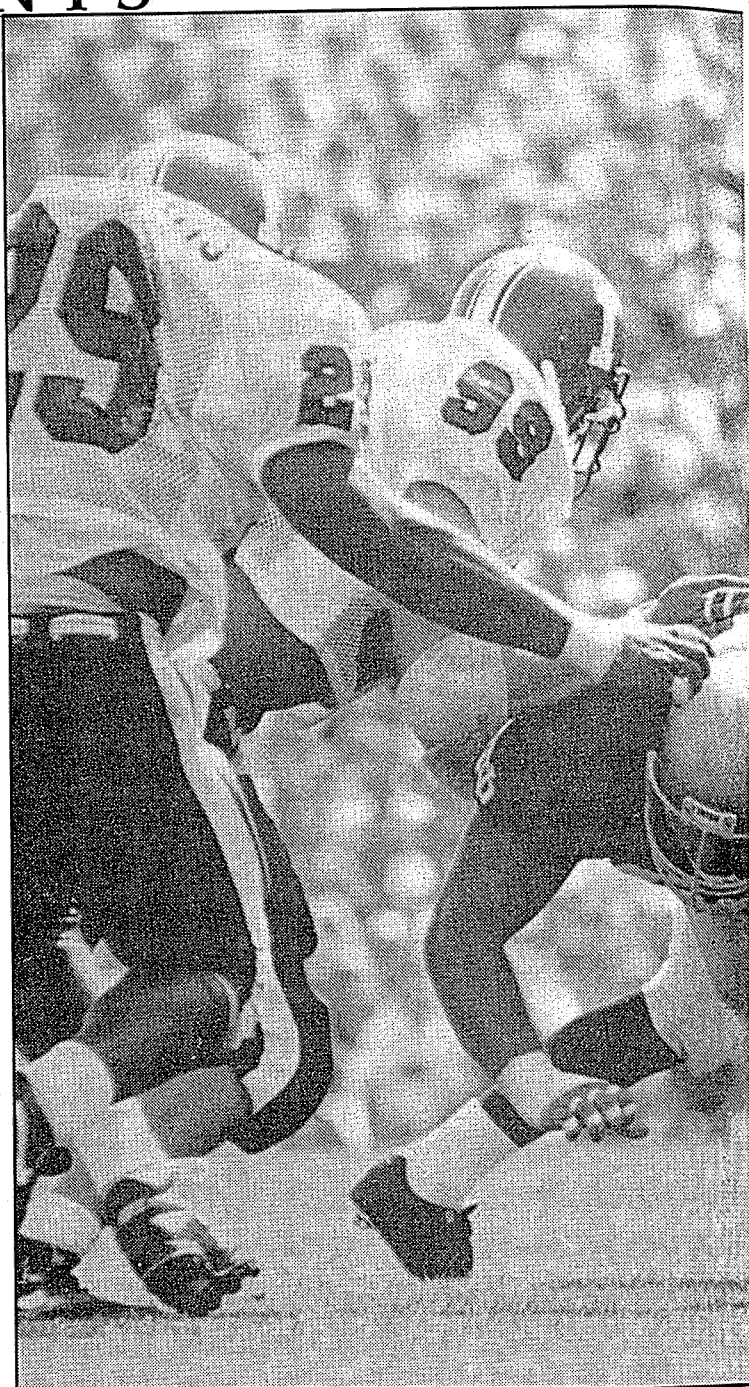
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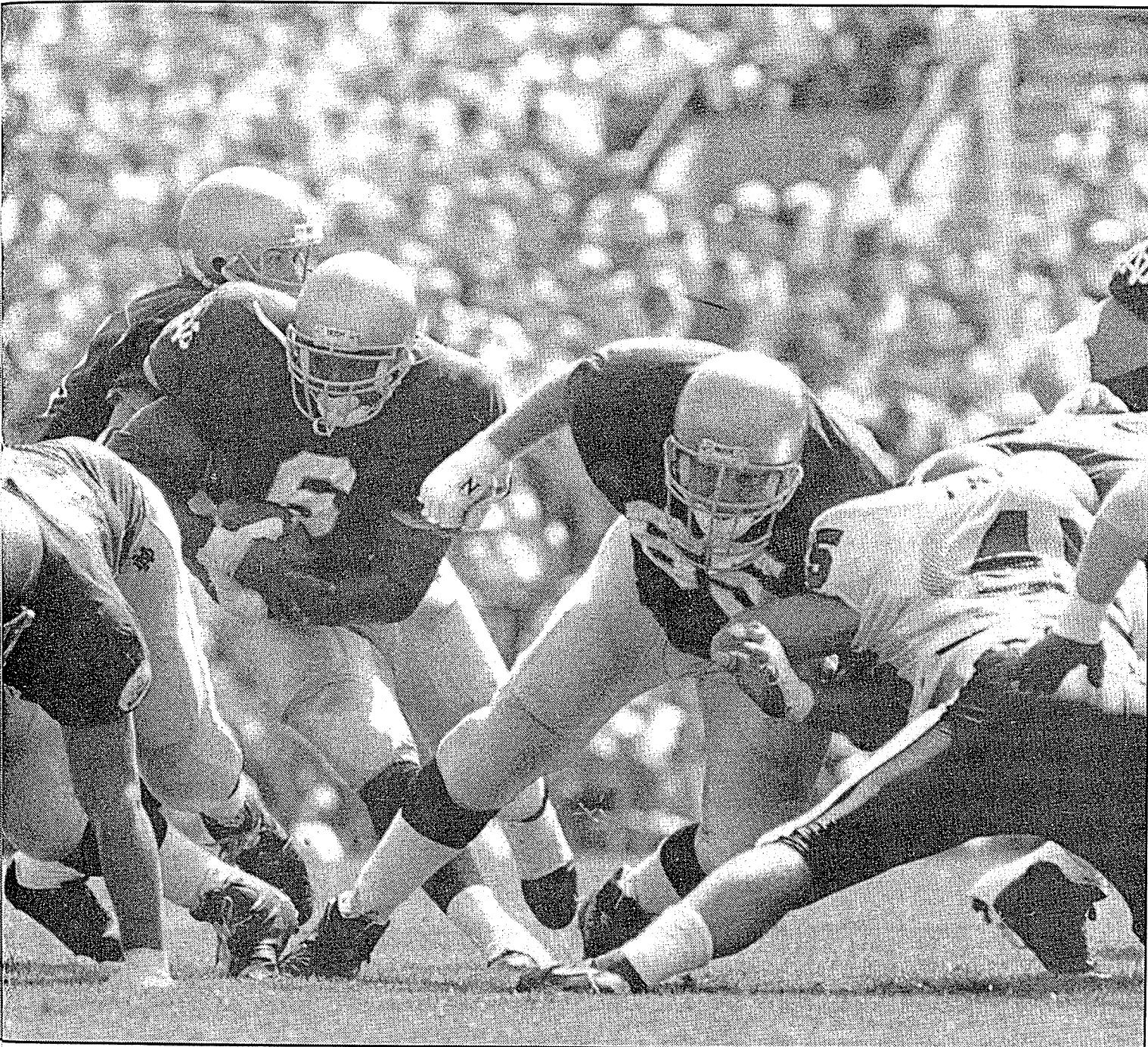
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Sophomore fullback Jerome Bettis began a stellar season against Indiana ending 1991 sharing ND's National Monogram Club team co-MVP honors with Rick Mirer.

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1991 FOOTBALL REVIEW

SCHOLASTIC

NOTRE DAME'S STUDENT MAGAZINE

Vol. 133, No. 15
1991 Football Review

*Disce Quasi Semper Victurus
Vive Quasi Cras Moriturus*

Founded 1867

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EDITOR'S NOTES

After much work and effort, *Scholastic* magazine presents its annual Football Review. This particular issue of Notre Dame's student magazine represents the effort of many writers, editors and other members of the *Scholastic* staff who worked hard to bring you, the reader, an interesting and worthwhile recap of the 1991 Irish football season.

As a senior, 1991 marked my last fall as a Notre Dame student. The 1991 football season was for me, as it probably was for most of my classmates, bittersweet.

In one sense, it was great. After four years, my friends and I knew where all the fun tailgaters were and we had tickets at the 25-30 yard line for all six home football games — you can't ask for better as a Notre Dame football fan.

But on the other hand, every game we realized that we were one game closer to graduation. Suddenly, before we knew it, Jeremy Lincoln of the University of Tennessee was blocking a field goal and our last home game was over. It seemed to come and go so fast!

As freshmen, it seemed the seasons would go on forever. We matriculated in the fall of 1988 when there were seven home games and history was made. Notre Dame went 12-0 and won the national championship. No sporting event or any other public spectacle will ever top the excitement and natural high of the 31-30 Notre Dame victory over the hated Hurricanes of Miami on October 15, 1988.

And no matter how many Super Bowls Jimmy Johnson may win with the NFL's

Dallas Cowboys, he will probably never forget the freshman from Notre Dame who called him that season to express his distaste for Hurricane football.

As for this year, 1991 was one of the most topsy-turvy seasons of Notre Dame football in recent memory. After the heart-breaking loss to the Volunteers, the blow-out at the hands of Penn State and the narrow victory over the Rainbows of the University of Hawaii, it seemed the season was going to be a huge disappointment. But Jerome Bettis and some ingenious defensive strategy by Lou Holtz saved the day and the Irish pulled the season from the fire and finished in grand fashion — upsetting the third-ranked and heavily favored Florida Gators 39-28 to put all cereal jokes to rest.

It is the sincere wish of the whole *Scholastic* staff that this issue will serve as a keepsake of this exciting, if not uneven, season of Irish football. And not just as a diversion for today, as you pull it out of your mailbox, but as a keepsake for years to come when you remember your experiences under the Golden Dome.

Finally, this issue could not have been possible without the aid of John Heisler and the rest of his staff at Notre Dame sports information, contributors from *The Observer* and the *South Bend Tribune*, and the whole *Scholastic* staff.

Read and enjoy. And editorial comments are always welcome — just drop us a note at the *Scholastic* sports department.

Jon Paul Potts
Sports Editor

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SCHOLASTIC

GAME 1

The Irish open their 1991 campaign in style, walloping the in-state rival Indiana Hoosiers 49-27

By Amanda Clinton

September 7, Notre Dame —

Notre Dame and Indiana have kept up an intense rivalry since their first football game played in 1898. But while the two schools' basketball teams compete every year, the football squads were strangers. After 33 years, the gridiron tradition continued and finally, the Irish faced the Hoosiers in an atmosphere they knew best — the gridiron.

On a sweltering 86-degree day, Notre Dame bolted onto the field knowing that on opening day, the team was being scrutinized. It was, after all, the first "Notre Dame Saturday" on NBC of 1991.

The loss of a significant portion of the defense had the media calling the defense shaky. The arrest of junior quarterback Rick Mirer and junior inside linebacker Demetrius DuBose, and subsequent accusation of underage drinking, had exploded the week before the game and was a serious distraction.

The team responded to these small crises by playing hard and concentrated football, earning a satisfying 49-27 victory.

"It was important for me to come out and show that it [his arrest] didn't affect me," said Mirer. "As far as I'm concerned, all that stuff is behind us and it didn't affect the way we played."

The game did not start out with the high-paced intensity Notre Dame fans are so familiar with.

Rodney Culver, senior captain of the Irish, drove his way up the middle for seven yards to start off the game. The second play of the drive ended with Culver being tackled for a gain of two yards. Despite a rush by sophomore fullback Jerome Bettis the Irish were forced to punt.

The Hoosiers turned an impressive 61-yard punt by junior Craig Hentrich into a field goal with a 49-yard drive. Only 7:59 into the game and Notre Dame was down by three. The red Hoosier pompons waved hysterically in the crowd.

Once again the Irish tried to make some headway but were stopped by a high adrenaline-pumping Indiana team.

The Hoosiers took possession at their 46-yard line. Just when the Indiana fans were getting a little too cocky, Indiana quarterback Trent Green threw a pass intended for senior tight end Rod Coleman.

DuBose anticipated the play and made the interception at the



John Naperkowski

Senior captain Rodney Culver takes the field to begin his last season as a Notre Dame football player.

A

Promising Start

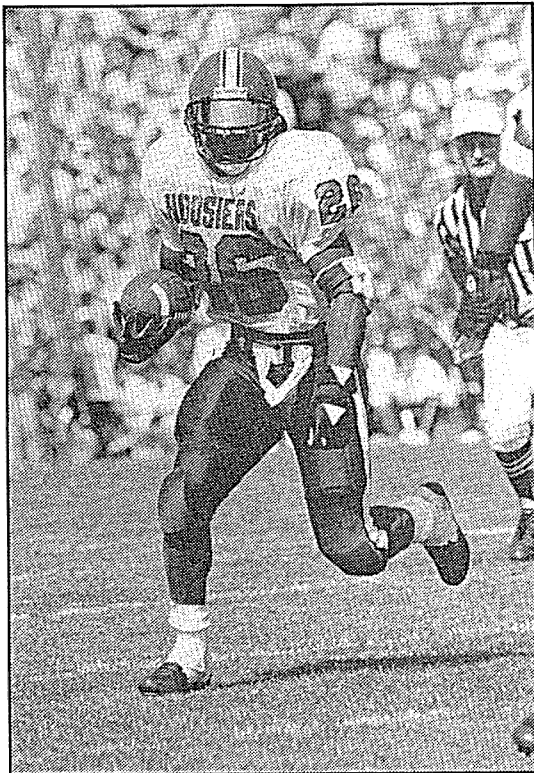
Indiana 49-yard line. He then proceeded to plow his way down the field. He evaded Green at the 20-yard line and received help from Eric Jones with a devastating block to a potential Indiana tackler, before dancing his way into the end zone.

"I just wanted to get out there and play today," said DuBose. "The ball was there and my goal was just to make the play."

The action began to heighten.

The second quarter began with Indiana completing a 79-yard scoring drive. With the combination of Green and senior All American tailback Vaughn Dunbar, Indiana penetrated the Notre Dame defense. The touchdown put the Hoosiers back on top with a score of Hoosiers 10, Irish 7.

However, the Irish came back with an 80-yard drive which included an incredible connection for Mirer and Culver. Mirer ran right and at the last possible moment, pitched it to Culver on the option at the 20. Culver juggled the ball for several yards before



John Napierkowski

Hoosier tailback Vaughn Dunbar rushed for 161 yards on the day.

charging 19 yards down the side for a touchdown, putting Notre Dame back on top, 14-10.

However, the tide turned once again and Indiana jumped into the lead 17-14. The Hoosiers scored again thanks to their two-man team of Green and Dunbar. With constant pounding on the defense, they were able to break through for a touchdown.

However, Rick Mirer ran in a 46-yard touchdown, and the Irish gained 7 more points to make the score 21-17. With the intensity — and perhaps Irish coach Lou Holtz's blood pressure — beginning to boil, the Irish took control of the game.

Indiana's Mark Hagen explained the difficulties the Hoosier defense encountered, "It was a combination of physical and mental mistakes. It was almost like a snowball effect. Once one thing went wrong, everything else seemed to go wrong."

Notre Dame is known for

making games exciting because of the incredible plays executed at the most unlikely times.

This Indiana game was no exception.

Sports enthusiasts raved that this would be quite a game. With the combination of the rivalry between the two teams and a tough Indiana team, many were saying that this was could be more than the Irish had bargained for.

However, once

the game got underway and Notre Dame really took control at the end of the second quarter, it became apparent that the Irish offense, although not perfect, was more than the Hoosiers had expected.

"I knew going in Notre Dame would be strong," said Indiana coach Bill Mallory. "They came up with the key plays at the key times. We made costly mistakes when we should not have and you cannot do that and expect to beat a team like Notre Dame."

An impressive play came at the end of the second quarter when the game was still close — Notre Dame 21, Indiana 17. The Irish had just scored. Mirer ran right on the option and succeeded in racing to a 46-yard touchdown. When it came time for Notre Dame to kick off, the Irish had a trick up their sleeve.

Notre Dame kicker, Craig Hentrich chipped an on-sides kick. As the shocked Hoosiers watched the ball bounce along the field, junior inside linebacker Brian Ratigan recovered at Indiana's 41-yard line.

"The onside kick was costly," lamented Mallory. "We had a young player in there. The ball came his way and they recovered. We alerted them before it happened. It was a smart move by Notre Dame and not everybody was heads-up for us. You've got to be on your toes in that situation."

Another incredible play came at the perfect time in the third quarter when the score was 35-20. The Irish were at their own 42-yard line and Mirer launched a pass to Irv Smith who caught it at the 20-yard line and plowed his way into the end zone (*see related story below*).

"Oh My!"

"Mirer... going deep to Smith... Irv Smith. What a run by Smith! TOUCHDOWN! Oh My! Irv Smith, an outfielder on the Notre Dame baseball team has just hit a home run carrying Indiana tacklers the last 15 yards," exclaimed an excited Dick Enberg, NBC's announcer for Notre Dame football.

The play of the day and an early favorite for Play-of-the-Year was this tremendous run made by junior Irv Smith.

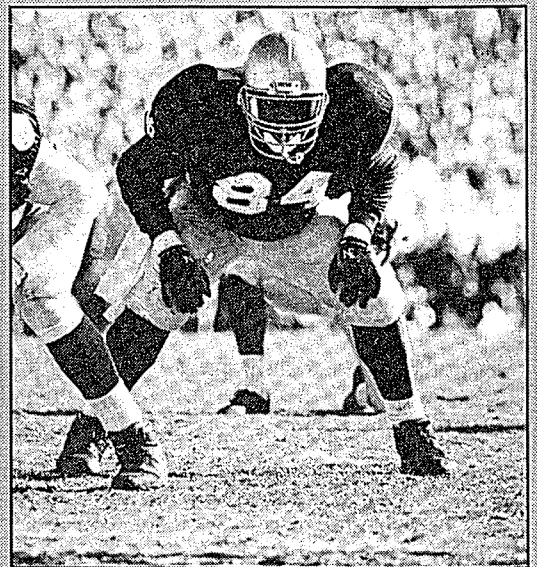
Rick Mirer shot a pass at Smith who caught the bullet in mid-stride at the Indiana 20-yard line. Smith's run up the middle caught the linebackers off guard. He plowed and hopped and did anything humanly possible, out of sheer determination, to get the ball in the end zone. He raced his way down the field 20 yards with two Hoosier players hanging on his back like rodeo riders. There was no stopping the 233-lb. tight end.

"I thought Irv Smith's effort was tremendous," said his coach, Lou Holtz. "And he is such a great person. He really is. He has played in the shadow of Derek Brown, but he is a good football player. You know, he plays baseball in the spring and starts for our baseball team. He comes out and makes every spring practice, unless there is a baseball game."

Smith and his strong will was what ultimately pulled the pigskin over the goal line.

"The only thing on my mind was to catch the ball," said Smith. "I really think it was the will of God that got me into the endzone." □

- By Amanda Clinton



Paul Webb

Big Irv Smith, shown here against Tennessee, carried four Hoosier defenders into the end zone on his third quarter touchdown.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Indiana's linebacker Hagen. "It was a heck of an effort on his part."

The first game of the football season at Notre Dame always proves to be an interesting one. The question often repeated while walking into the stadium is: How good will the Irish be this year? Who will be the key players? Most years, the questions are already answered before the game begins. But this year, with a young team, there seemed to be no standout players. However, with a career high for rushing touchdowns in the game, Rick Mirer came out of his shell and showed the media that he was definitely worth watching.

"I could just see this coming with Rick, his performance today, his poise, his polish," said Mirer's coach Holtz.

"We had an awful lot of guys touch the ball," said Mirer. "Our goal is to get everybody involved, and we did that today."

DuBose proved to be one of the leaders in the defense. He had one of the highest numbers of tackles for the game and also carried the ball 49 yards on his interception.

"We didn't play all that well today, but we'll just get out there next week and work harder in practice," said DuBose. "Personally I didn't play as well as I could. I just tried to do my best to get the job done."

Culver had an impressive day with 63 yards rushing and sopho-

more fullback Jerome Bettis was impressive as well with his first 100 yard game.

"Our offense started slow and I started slow," said captain Culver. "Some of our timing was a bit off. The opposing defense doesn't always show you what you expect in practice. I think Jerome played well and once we got started our offensive line played well, but there still is a lot of room for improvement."

Despite the incredible interception on the part of DuBose, the defense proved to have a number of things to work on. Notre Dame

did not even threaten on the pass rush and gave up a significant amount of yardage, 418 yards total. At times, the Hoosiers' Coleman-Dunbar-Green combination seemed unstoppable.

Indiana player Vaughn Dunbar made a fair assessment, "They're a good defense, but not a great defense. They have good pursuit and they're aggressive. They're young and they have to get their feet wet. They're going to get better."

But for this day, the Irish were 1-0 and retained their national preseason ranking of six in the Associated Press poll. All the

hardships and struggles of the season to come were still just an Irish-basher's pipe dreams.

"It had to be a good spectator's game," said Holtz as he caught his breath at the post-game press conference. "It was a physical game and an emotional game, but boy, was it a ballgame." □



Mirer impressed his coach with his poise, and polish.

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	7	21	14	7	49
Indiana	3	14	3	7	27

1st Quarter	IU: Bonnell 48 field goal at 7:59
	ND: DuBose 49 interception return (Hentrich kick) at 5:44
2nd Quarter	IU: Green 5 run (Bonnell kick) at 13:15
	ND: Culver 19 run (Hentrich kick) at 10:29
	IU: Green 1 run (Bonnell kick) at 5:26
	ND: Mirer 46 run (Hentrich kick) at 3:31
	ND: Brooks 13 run (Hentrich kick) at 3:05
3rd quarter	IU: Bonnell 29 field goal at 3:36
	ND: Mirer 6 run (Hentrich kick) at 5:52
	ND: Smith 58 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 3:05
4th Quarter	IU: Walker 5 pass from Green (Bonnell kick) at 14:16
	ND: Mirer 1 run (Hentrich kick) at 9:18

Team Statistics

	ND	IU
First Downs	24	25
Rushing	14	11
Passing	10	13
Penalty	0	1
Rushing	327	197
Passing	251	221
Total Net Yards	578	418
Average Gain Per Play	7.9	5.8
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	8-62	6-46
Punts-Average	2-100	1-37
Kickoff Returns	80	107
3rd Down Conversions	10-16	7-13

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Bettis 11-111, Culver 12-77, T. Brooks 12-61, Mirer 6-50, Clark 4-16, Poorman 1-10, R. Brooks 4-1, Mihalko 1-4, Johnson 1-3, Failla 2-(-4), Smith 1-(-2) IU- Dunbar 33-161, Law 2-27, Green 6-16
 Passing: ND- Mirer 11-17-1-209-2, Hentrich 1-1 IU- Green 18-34-4-221-1
 Receiving: ND- I. Smith 2-68, T. Smith 2-43, Dawson 2-28, Brown 2-27, Bettis 1-19, Griggs 1-17, T. Brooks 1-7, Davis 1-42 IU- Coleman 7-75, Lewis 3-49, Baety 3-35, Thomas 2-37, Walker 2-8, Dunbar 1-17

GAME 2

Beaten by a little "Magic"

*Heisman Trophy
winner
Desmond "Magic"
Howard scores two
touchdowns as the
Wolverines defeat the
Irish 24-14 in
Wolverine Stadium*



Paul Webb

Howard turns the corner on his second quarter end-around that went for a 29-yard touchdown and 10-0 Michigan lead.

By J. Bradley Keck

September 14, Ann Arbor, MI —

Michigan Stadium is not the place to be behind going into the fourth quarter. Coach Lou Holtz and the Fighting Irish knew this and did everything possible to get as close to the Wolverines as they could before the clock wound down to zero in the third period. The only shot the Irish had to win in a frenzied, foreign stadium against a higher ranked opponent was to grind out their game plan and stay close to the talented Michigan football team.

Throughout the second and third quarters Notre Dame fought back to narrow a 17 - 0 deficit. By the start of the fourth quarter Notre Dame had closed the gap to 17 - 14. What had at first seemed to be a rout was now a tight contest. As the final seconds of the third quarter ticked off the clock Notre

Dame stuffed a Michigan fourth-and-short and gained possession of the pigskin. The Irish, with momentum in their favor, were on the drive again.

But it was not to be, as a little receiver made a truly "Magic" catch and the Wolverines won 24-14.

The Irish took the field hoping to roll over the Wolverines as they did against a much weaker Indiana University team the previous Saturday.

Irish coach Lou Holtz was ready to continue the air-ground attack in the hopes of keeping a strong Michigan defense off-balance. Junior quarterback Rick Mirer was ready to use his experience to exploit holes in that defense and drop some passes into the hands of his array of receivers. All the weapons at Notre Dame's command were ready

to be sent in to loosen up a stingy Michigan defense. Rodney Culver and Jerome Bettis both had solid games against Indiana. Their success in moving the ball on the ground would be another key to secure a victory for Notre Dame.

But Michigan was holding a grudge. The 15 seniors on the Wolverines team had never beaten the Irish. They wanted this game badly.

"I can't ever remember a group of players so dedicated to win a football game," said ABC television analyst Brent Musburger at the outset of the game.

Culver, the Irish captain, got the call on the first play from scrimmage. He ran hard past left guard and picked up three yards. Holtz's trademark to establish the inside rush early was under way. On the very next play Bettis got his shot — unfortunately, the

shot Bettis got to deliver was in tackling Wolverine cornerback Lance Dottin. On second-and-seven, Mirer dropped back under good protection and floated a pass over the head of flanker Lake Dawson. Dottin waited on the 20-yard pass, made the interception and raced up the right sideline. As Bettis brought Dottin down the spirits of the Wolverine fans in Michigan Stadium lifted.

"The turnover on the second play of the game really got the crowd into the game," said Holtz. "We needed to control the crowd but the interception really got them into it."

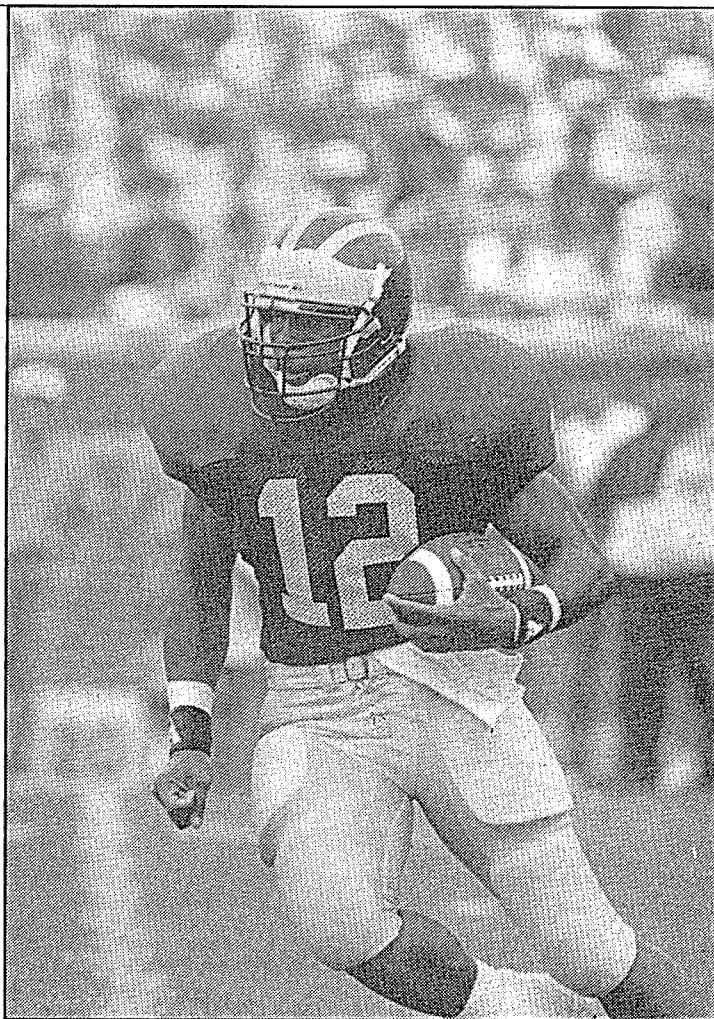
A hyper, pro-Michigan crowd is not what the Irish were hoping to face. The Wolverine players were hungry for a win and had a prime chance to draw first blood. Focusing this energy, the Wolverines moved to score quickly.

In a little under three minutes Michigan drove 37 yards to the Irish 5-yard line. Due to a back-field tackle by Bryant Young and a stick by Greg Lane on consecutive plays, Michigan had to settle for a field goal. J. D. Carlson's 27-yard kick put Michigan into the early lead, 3-0.

Notre Dame could not move the ball once again and by the start of the second quarter, Michigan was in control again. The drive that followed was trademark Wolverine football. Fullback Ricky Powers was all but unstoppable behind Michigan's complex zone blocking. Powers was seeing the cut backs so well that the Irish began to key on

him alone. The young defensive line was trying so hard to stop Powers that Michigan's quarterback, Elvis Grbac, was able to set up some electrifying play-action passes. One was an 8-yard gain on third down to W. Smith, the other a rollout pass to the tight end Dave Diebolt.

The Irish were back on their heels. On the 29-yard line, Michigan coach Gary Moeller knew just what to do. Power took the handoff from Grbac and headed left. The entire defense stampeded toward Powers, somehow ignoring eventual Heisman Trophy winner Desmond "Magic" Howard. On the reverse, Howard burned around the right end



Paul Webb

Ricky Powers was a headache all day for Notre Dame, following his huge offensive line to gain 164 yards.

Irish quarterback Rick Mirer scrambles away from Michigan defenders in the third quarter.

Paul Webb



frying defensive backs Rod Smith and Greg Davis, the only two players not sucked in by the fake. Howard crossed into the end zone and 100,000 fans were there to greet him with their cheers. The score was 10-0 in favor of Michigan.

The Irish had to strike back or the game could easily get out of hand. But the Wolverine mob was sedated for only a moment. Senior tailback Tony Brooks had trouble closing on a handoff and fumbled the ball away to Michigan's Butkus Award-winning linebacker Erick Anderson.

Michigan could do no wrong. They marched back down to the Irish 37-yard line. Grbac hit Rickey Ellison, his money-receiver Howard, and Burnier Leggett to bring up a first-and-ten from the 12. Devon McDonald stopped Michigan's first attempt to score. But on the next play, Moeller made another great call. After passing so many times on this drive and running up the

middle with Powers the Irish were concentrating on these two options. Banking on this, Michigan went with a delay. Showing pass, Irish eyes moved from Powers. After a slight pause Powers did indeed get the ball, breezed through a gaping hole and in for the score.

This drive crunched 6:45 off the clock so Notre Dame went right to the air hoping to score before the half expired. Under intense pressure, Mirer delivered. In one of the finest Irish drives of the season the offense covered 65 yards in a minute-and-a-half. Willie Clark started the drive with a 20-yard gain on the draw and Notre Dame scored the touchdown on a three yard pass to Bettis. Along the way tight end Derek Brown, Lake Dawson and Smith all had big catches.

"I was happy with the drive at the end of the half," said Mirer. "Everyone did a really nice job of getting the touchdown."

Just as important as the points for the Irish was the momentum they gained coming out

for the second half. They kept that momentum going as they stuffed the Wolverine rushing attack early in the third quarter. After Demetrius DuBose stuck Powers on third down it was Irish ball again.

Ready to cut the lead further, Notre Dame came out rushing. But two huge passes to Tony Smith took the Irish to the end zone. Moving behind coverage, Smith made a great catch for 34 yards. Soon, just inside mid-field, Holtz elected to go for a fourth down conversion. Mirer stepped under center and barked out his cadence. Michigan's line jumped and made contact. First down for the Irish on an encroachment penalty. Two plays later Mirer found Smith again, good for 35 yards and six points.

Notre Dame would hang tough for the rest of the quarter. Using the huge Wolverine line, Michigan tried to tire the Irish out. The first six plays of the drive Powers got the call. He slammed his way up the middle for two first downs and 30 yards. Due to a

muffed handoff and a good stop by line-backer Jim Flanigan, Michigan was forced to fourth down. Powers slammed into the line over the left tackle. Hitting the line hard, the Irish defense slammed Powers to the ground, short of the first down marker.

Opportunity knocks, but the offense faltered. It was one, two, three, punt for Notre Dame. Michigan had the weary Irish defense back on the field.

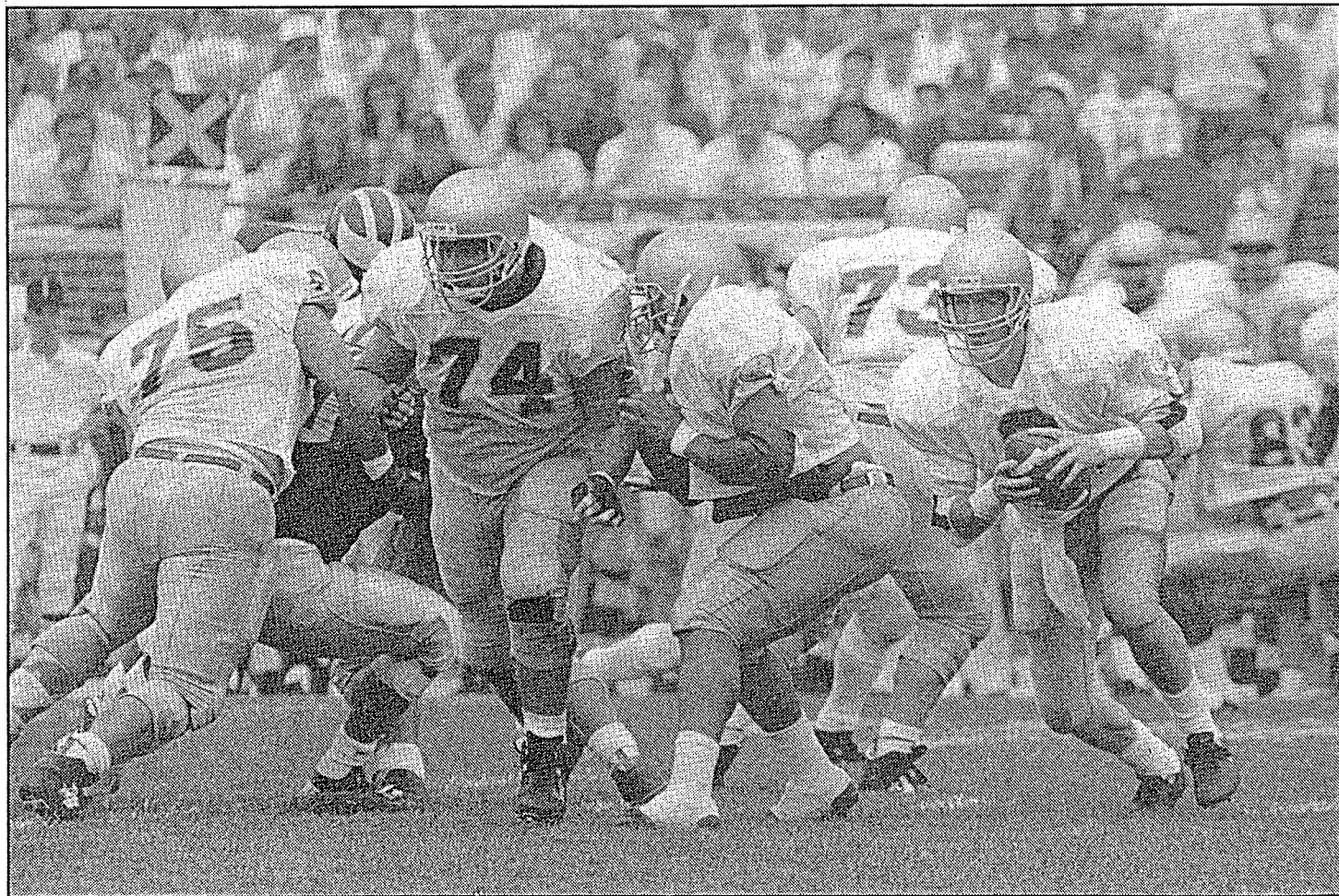
"We played a lot better on defense and a lot worse on offense than it looked," said Holtz. "We managed to come back. I was very proud of our football team."

Michigan moved down the field slowly going to Powers on the ground and Yale Van Dyne in the air. Grbac found Van Dyne open twice for back-to-back first downs. The Wolverines then failed to keep the ball moving on the next set of downs. On fourth-and-short, Moeller rolled the dice again. The payoff could be victory.

Moeller, surprising everyone, had called a

The Notre Dame offense was impressive in driving 65 yards in 1:30 in the second quarter, scoring before the half on a three-yard pass from Mirer to Jerome Bettis.

Paul Webb



deep pass. Howard was open, sprinting to the end zone. The ball was overthrown deep into the corner. Diving away from one defender toward the ball, Howard made the catch inches from the ground. Touchdown Michigan.

"It was a play Elvis [Grbac] and I work on every day," said Howard. "If the ball was going to be close I knew I would catch it."

With that catch, Howard entered the Heisman race and the wind was knocked from Notre Dame's sails. They could not come back. Michigan was not going to fool around. No big scores were needed, no big plays: With 6:30 left their only enemy was the clock and they ran that out perfectly. Powers ran the ball eight more times in this game-ending drive, picking up first downs as he went.

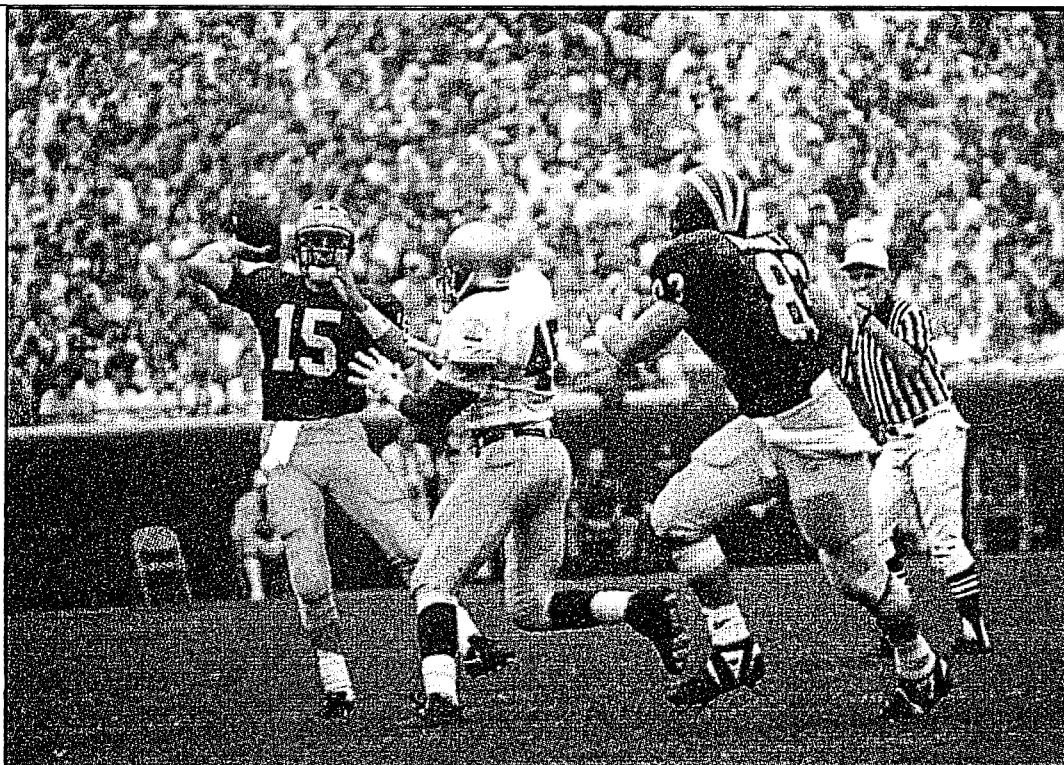
In a dull ending to an exciting game Notre Dame called their final time outs as the clock kept moving. Helpless, the Irish sighed as Grbac knelt down to end the contest.

"Michigan played a perfect football game right down to the end," groaned Holtz. "No

mistakes. They fell forward every time. You can't play any better."

In a clash between two of college football's greatest titans, the day was all Michigan's. Wolverine seniors got the vic-

tory they wanted so badly, Michigan was back as a national contender and a little receiver, Desmond "Magic" Howard, starred on national television and became a true Heisman hopeful. □



Paul Webb

Wolverine quarterback Elvis Grbac was almost perfect on the day, missing on only two passes while throwing for 195 yards.

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	0	7	7	0	14
Michigan	3	14	0	7	24

1st Quarter	MU: Carlson 23 field goal at 10:54
2nd Quarter	MU: Howard 29 run (Carlson kick) at 9:58
	MU: Powers 16 run (Carlson kick) at 1:49
	ND: Mirer 3 pass (pass to Bettis) at :17
3rd Quarter	ND: Mirer 35 pass (pass to Smith) at 6:47
4th Quarter	MU: Grbac 25 pass (pass to Howard) at 9:02

Team Statistics

	ND	UM
First Downs	14	26
Rushing	4	15
Passing	9	11
Penalty	1	0
Rushing	78	233
Passing	234	195
Total Net Yards	312	428
Average Gain Per Play	5.8	5.5
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	1-0
Penalties-Yards	4-35	3-21
Punts-Average	4-39.3	4-40
Kickoff Returns	59	33
3rd Down Conversions	5-11	10-15

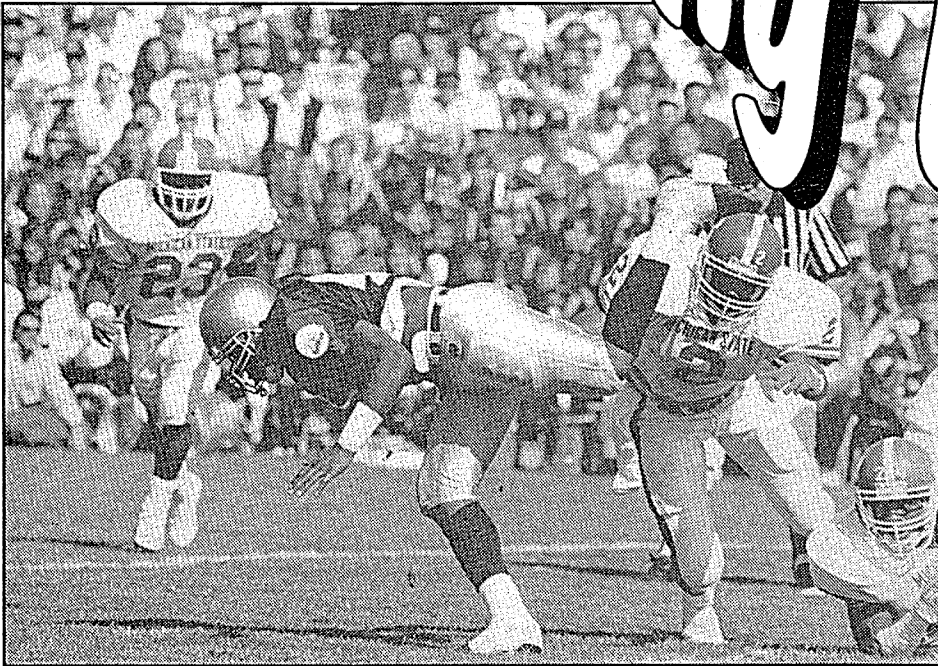
Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Bettis 8-28, Clark 2-22, Mirer 6-13, Culver 6-10, T. Brooks 6-5 MU- Powers 38-164, Legette 11-39, Howard 1-29, Wheatley 3-5, Grbac 2-(-4)
 Passing: ND- Mirer 13-25-1-234-2 MU- Grbac 20-22-1-195-1
 Receiving: ND- Smith 5-121, Brown 4-70, Bettis 2-15, Dawson 1-20, Culver 1-8 MU- Howard 6-74, Van Dyne 6-56, Diebolt 3-25, Wheatley 1-10, Smith 1-8, Power 1-8, Legette 1-8, Ellison 1-6

GAME 3

The Irish come back after their tough loss to the Wolverines to trounce the Michigan State Spartans 49-10 in Notre Dame Stadium

Bouncing Back



Matt Cashore

Tony Brooks falls forward for several of Notre Dame's astounding 448 yards rushing on the day against the helpless Spartan defense.

By J. Bradley Keck

September 21, Notre Dame —

Michigan State came into this season with hope of great things. In 1990, the Spartans ended their season tied for the Big 10 championship with a record of 8-3-1. If Michigan State could have squeezed out only eight more points in their three losses of the season they would have secured an undefeated season. On January 1, 1991, State was victorious in the John Hancock Bowl over Southern California, 17-16. Among their goals for this season was to better their record and avenge their close losses.

Tops on the Spartans' list, in this category, was the University of Notre Dame.

Notre Dame defeated State last year by only one point. The Irish scored two fourth quarter touchdowns to hand the Spartans a 20-19 loss. With time running out in the fourth quarter Irish quarterback Rick Mirer threw a desperation pass that looked to be a sure Michigan State interception. That pass, however, bounced off cornerback Todd Murray's chest and into the hands of Irish receiver Adrian Jarrell, standing on the 2-yard line. Then, with only 34 seconds on the clock, Rodney Culver rambled in for the winning score.

The Spartans hoped that in '91 this heartbreaking loss could be avenged. They came into the 1992 game with two big advantages — running back Tico Duckett and

wide receiver Courtney Hawkins. These players were two of the big pre-season media sensations: many thought that one or the other would play their way to the Heisman Trophy.

The Spartans were also an angry team. In the first week of the season, State suffered one of the most humiliating defeats in its history — a 20-3 loss to the Central Michigan Chippewas. The Spartans were also battling history as they had struggled to beat the Irish at Notre Dame Stadium, losing on 24 of 31 occasions.

Michigan State was ready to play, "They practiced with emotion, emotion was not a problem for this," said State coach George Perles.

Emotion would be a problem after the game, though.

By the time the battered Spartans left South Bend, they had suffered the 13th worst defeat in the history of their football program, a 49-10 debacle. The Irish trounced the over-matched Spartans in the most lopsided match up between the two teams since Notre Dame smashed Michigan State 48-0 in 1921.

On the offensive side of the ball, the Irish entered their name in the Spartan record books in four categories. The Irish had 34 first downs, 24 of them rushing; they attempted 76 rushes and they totaled 650 yards. Up until this point in Spartan history

only one team had moved the ball for more than 600 yards against Michigan State.

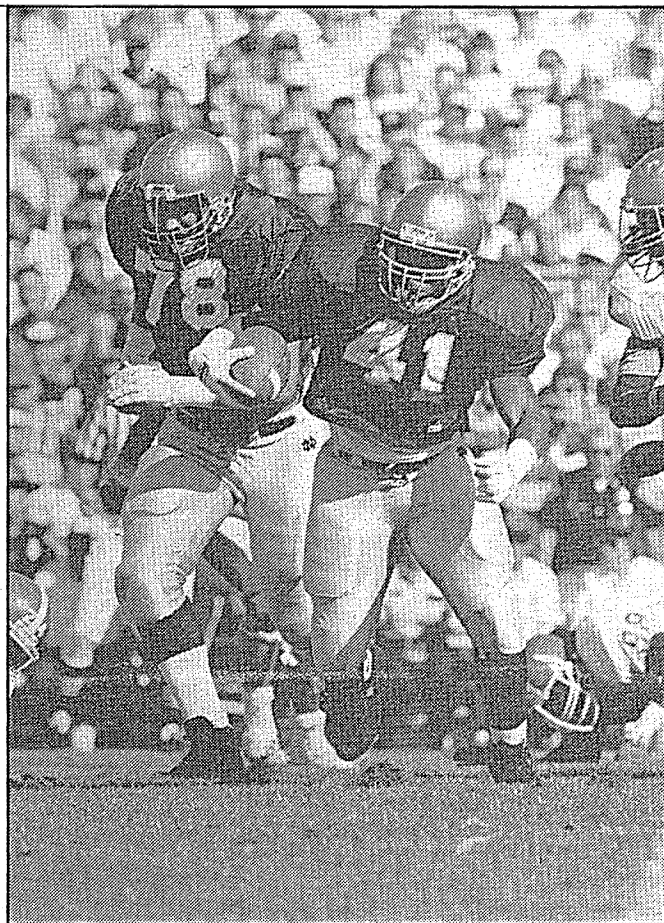
"We played awful well, but it took a great effort on our part," said coach Lou Holtz. "We've made a lot of progress in the last two weeks."

In their first series from scrimmage the Irish came out flat. They began moving the ball well but on a third down, Mirer threw an interception. As he dropped back at mid-field he looked to connect with fullback Jerome Bettis coming out of the backfield, but the pass was low and short. Michigan State linebacker Chuck Bullough was there to pick-off the pass.

Many Irish fans hoped that this early interception was not foreshadowing the same fate that the team had suffered against Michigan the week before. In that contest, another early interception thrown by Mirer changed the momentum and led to the Irish loss. Notre Dame could not afford lapses of execution that would give State a window of opportunity.

The teams traded punts, and once again, the Notre Dame defense had to keep the Spartans from gaining momentum. After a effective drive Michigan State moved within field goal range to the 35-yard line. Then they were stopped. Duckett got the call on three consecutive plays only to be stuffed by Bryant and then twice by linebacker Jim Flanigan. Pushed just out of field goal range, State again had to punt.

With 6:22 on the clock in the first quarter, the Irish offense was determined to end the punting duel. In just over four minutes the Irish land/air assault chewed up 80 yards and landed in the end zone.



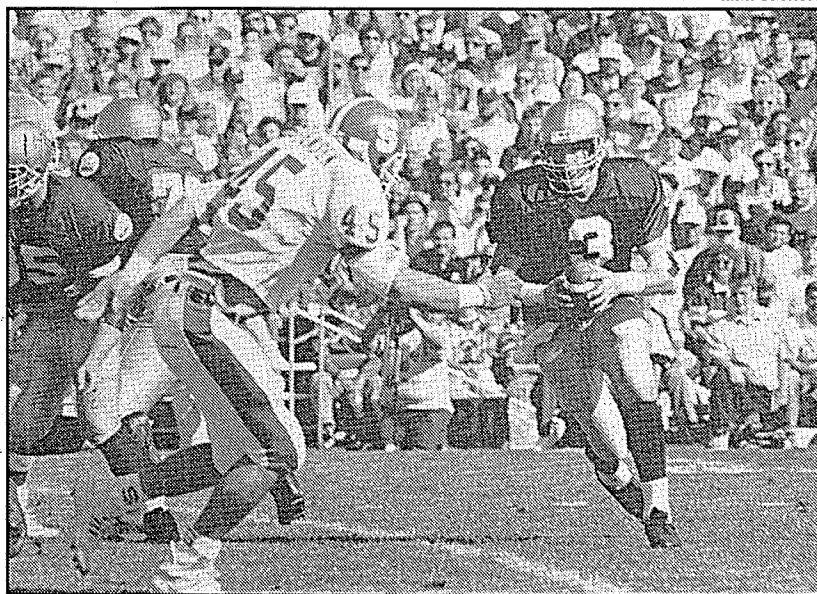
Reggie Brooks turns the corner on his first quarter touchdown — Notre Dame's first score.

Matt Cashore

Notre Dame mixed up the plays well on this drive and controlled the line of scrimmage. Bettis carried the ball five times, moving powerfully in the north-south direc-

Irish quarterback drew high praise from his coach who said Mirer, "...has become a complete quarterback."

Matt Cashore



tion. He ran over tacklers on a 12-yard scamper and powered through the middle on a key fourth-and-one play. Along with the powerful rushing, Notre Dame used the pass well. Mirer hit Lake Dawson for 32 yards off a play-action pass. The score came from Reggie Brooks, who scored on a pitch.

After the Spartan's Josh Butland hit a 35-yard field goal, the Irish offense had the pigskin again. In another patented Holtz drive, Notre Dame went 68 yards in 13 plays for the score. The Irish passed on two crucial plays in order to keep the drive alive. On a third-and-six, Mirer dropped back and found Tony Smith for a 23-yard gain. Then, on third-and-27 on State's 29 yard line, Mirer again hit T. Smith in the end zone for six points. Notre Dame was in control, 21-3.

From this point on, the men of the Blue and Gold seemed to glide towards victory. In State's first possession after the Irish touchdown they were stuffed in just three plays. On Notre Dame's first play, they showed play-action and Mirer found tight end Derek Brown streaking down the left sideline. The pass traveled 30 yards in the air and hit Brown in mid-stride. Brown coasted the final twenty yards into the end zone carrying a state would-be tackler.

"Rick Mirer has become a complete quarterback," said Holtz. "He played well all day and is playing better every week."

But could the Irish play a complete game? Going into the locker room at the end of the half that question was still in doubt. At the very end of the first half, the Spartans put together a drive of their own. On the fifth play,

State quarterback Bret Johnson hit Hawkins over the middle and after a good run the receiver picked up 48 yards for the touchdown.

"During half time I was really concerned — it was 21-10, but they [MSU] were moving the ball well," said Holtz.

These fears were put to rest early in the second half. The Irish came out of the locker room firing on all cylinders. Notre Dame safety Greg Davis intercepted Johnson's first pass of the half and Notre Dame ran the ball right up the middle all the way down the field. From the MSU two-yard line, Mirer fired another touchdown pass to tight end Irv Smith. This brought the score to 28-10.

Michigan State was penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct on the ensuing extra point. This led to a string of events that turned the game into a rout. Because Craig Hentrich would be kicking from the 50-yard line, Holtz called an onside kick.

Hentrich, a right-footed kicker, hit the ball with his left foot. The ball took an Irish bounce and the unsuspecting Spartans watched as Rod Smith pounced on the ball at the 23-yard line. Four plays later, the Irish struck again on a Tony Brooks nine-yard run. With the score now 35-10, the game was all but over.

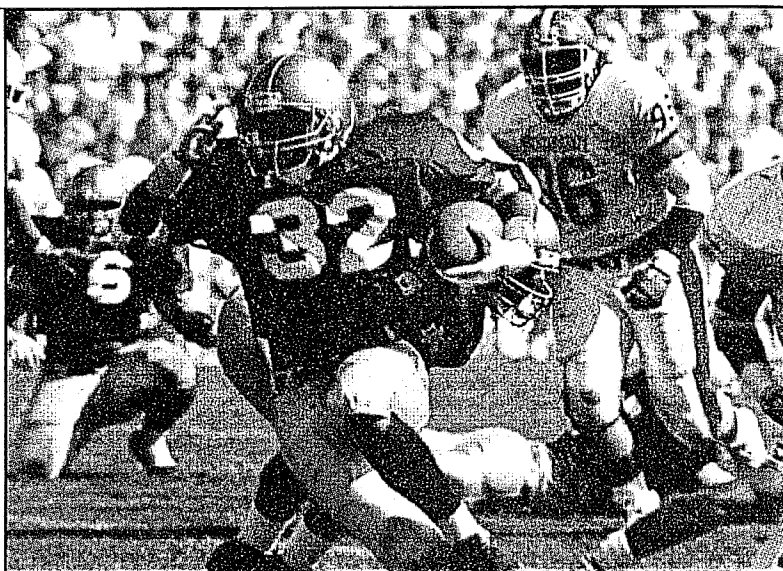
In the remainder of the game, Notre Dame scored two more unanswered touchdowns.

One by Mirer and one by Willie Clark. Throughout the fourth quarter, Notre Dame had a chance to play a lot of reserves and untested freshmen. An amazing 13 different players rushed for the Irish, tallying 448 yards.

Holtz said he expected such an effort after a tough week of practice. Holtz purposely made the drills in the week before this game really taxing.

"If I were murdered on Tuesday night the police would not even be able to investigate — there would have been too many suspects," deadpanned Holtz. "Practice was that rough."

This rough and tough attitude really showed in the game. Michigan State coach Perles could only wish that it had not, but he was thankful that Holtz called off the dogs in



Nick Spangler

Sophomore tailback Willie Clark contributes his touchdown in the blow-out fourth quarter.

the fourth quarter.

"This is my worst defeat in nine years," said Perles. "The scoreboard says it all — 49-10. It could have been a lot more, but Notre Dame sat on it and let us off the hook."

Too bad that it took a week for the Irish to learn how to hook a team from Michigan. If Notre Dame would have shown the same offensive fireworks in the previous week, they might have been able to fry a much bigger fish — the Rose Bowl-bound University of Michigan Wolverines. □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	0	10	0	0	10
Michigan State	7	14	21	7	49

1st Quarter	ND: R. Brooks 2 run (Hentrich kick) at 2:02
2nd Quarter	MSU: Delverne 35 field goal at 14:19
	ND: T. Smith 29 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 8:18
	ND: Brown 55 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 5:59
	MSU: Hawkins 48 pass from Johnson (Delverne kick) at 4:01
3rd Quarter	ND: I. Smith 2 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 9:29
	ND: T. Brooks 9 run (Hentrich kick) at 8:21
	ND: Mirer 12 run (Hentrich kick) at 3:50
4th Quarter	ND: Clark 1 run (Leonard kick) at 3:50

Team Statistics

	ND	MSU
First Downs	34	10
Rushing	26	5
Passing	8	5
Penalty	0	0
Rushing	433	134
Passing	217	139
Total Net Yards	650	273
Average Gain Per Play	6.9	5.5
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	0-0
Penalties-Yards	8-81	6-65
Punts-Average	2-34.0	5-46.8
Kickoff Returns	111	61
3rd Down Conversions	7-13	0-10

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Bettis 16-93, T. Brooks 11-76, Becton 10-57, Clark 9-56, Zellars 5-37, Mirer 6-27, Mihalko 5-23, R. Brooks 4-21, Culver 5-19, McDougal 2-12, Failla 1-11, Lozano 1-3, Davis 1-(-2) MSU- Duckett 19-72, Small 6-37, Johnson 2-19, Miller 1-1
 Passing: ND- Mirer 11-16-1-208-3, McDougal 1-2-0-9-0 MSU- Johnson 5-11-2-104-1, Miller 3-8-0-35-0
 Receiving: ND- T. Smith 4-84, Dawson 2-39, Bettis 2-19, Brown 1-55, Griggs 1-9, McBride 1-9, I. Smith 1-2 MSU- Hawkins 4-96, Hallock 2-36, Mac Farland 1-8, Prins 1-1

GAME 4

SAME OLD STORY



Nick Spangler

With double team tackling like this by Tom Carter and Jeff Burris, it was no wonder the anemic Purdue offense had trouble moving the ball and scoring.

With a 45-20 thrashing of the Boilermakers, Notre Dame posts a blowout win over Purdue for the sixth year in a row

By Amanda Clinton

September 28, Purdue —

Despite a new head football coach, Jim Colletto, and an acclaimed rising star at quarterback, the Purdue Boilermakers once again found the power of Notre Dame football unstoppable.

The degree to which the Boilermakers were outplayed by the Irish is evident by the final statistics from the game. Notre Dame gained over two times as many net yards rushing with 267 as compared to Purdue's measly 106 yards. Out of the 16 attempted passes, the Irish completed 14; while the Boilermakers attempted 27 passes and came up with 18 completions. Notre Dame plowed to an average per play gain of 7.6 yards while Purdue averaged 4.6 yards per play.

The Irish defense tore their way through players in order to attack the quarterback and ended up sacking the quarterback four times. Purdue, in comparison, never had the opportunity to sack Irish quarterback Rick

Mirer and even gave him enough time to score two touchdowns.

What does all this add up to? A thorough 45-20 thrashing in Purdue's Ross-Ade Stadium.

Irish fans got a surprise at the outset after Notre Dame stuffed Purdue and gained possession at their own 20-yard line. Freshmen Paul Failla trotted onto the field in place of Rick Mirer at quarterback. Mirer had been dealing with an injury to his rib cage for the entire week.

"Rick was fine at practice on Monday. Tuesday he came out to practice and tore the cartilage in his rib cage," said Irish coach Lou Holtz. "He couldn't throw a ball 2 yards on Tuesday. He couldn't throw a ball 2 yards on Wednesday. He was qualified to start in the game but we decided to start Paul Failla."

Failla couldn't take the Irish anywhere as Notre Dame did not score in the first quarter. Mirer came back into the game.

Purdue gained possession at the end of the first quarter. The Boilermakers were able to

bring the ball to Notre Dame's 27-yard line before the quarter ended. The first quarter ended without any points on the board.

Purdue continued their possession in the beginning of the second quarter. Hunter threw for a gain of 11 yards, landing the Boilermakers at the Irish 18-yard line. Purdue rushed to the 14-yard line and then Hunter shot an pass to tight end Tony Simmons, bringing Purdue to the Notre Dame three. Running back Earl Coleman was stopped by the Notre Dame defense at the one, but Rogers was able to run wide to the right for the touchdown.

With a score of 7 - 0 the Boilermakers were on top. This was the first time since the third quarter in the 1987 game that Purdue had ever taken the lead against Notre Dame.

"We got off to a slow start and dug ourselves into a hole, falling behind 7 - 0," said Holtz. "But I thought we responded well."

Notre Dame most definitely responded. Fans watched as the Irish amassed 21 points by the conclusion of the first half.

Notre Dame received the kick off from Purdue and started the possession at the Irish 35-yard line. Mirer began the drive by launching a pass to Dawson, taking Notre Dame to the 42-yard line. Tailback Tony Brooks, through two plays, brought the Irish to the Purdue 48-yard line. Sophomore Jerome Bettis received a pass from Mirer, gaining eight yards. On the next play Bettis carried the ball another two yards, pulling the Irish to the 38-yard line. The Irish scored on a 29-yard bootleg by Mirer who kept the ball, dashed up the middle evading several Purdue players, and squeezed into the end zone for a touchdown.

Purdue took control of the ball at the Boilermaker 20-yard line. But Purdue was able to gain 7 yards before turnovers hit them hard and Hunter was sacked and fumbled the ball. Sophomore Bryant Young recovered for the Irish at the Purdue 17. Brooks carried the ball up the middle three yards. Sophomore Willie Clark ran left for five, Bettis ran up the middle for three, and then, with Notre Dame only 6 yards from the end zone, Bettis rumbled in to put the Irish on top 14-7.

Purdue gained control of the ball at their own 20-yard line but were only able to gain seven yards before punting.

Through seven plays the Irish were able to get within scoring range at the Purdue 15 yard line before Tony Brooks carried the ball up the middle for four yards and fumbled when he was brought to the ground.

"Coach didn't want me to get down after I fumbled the ball because he feels more comfortable with people who are experienced out there," said Brooks.

Holtz expressed his satisfaction with Brooks despite



Nick Spangler

Although Hunter threw for 218 yards, his receivers were punished upon each and every catch.

his fumble.

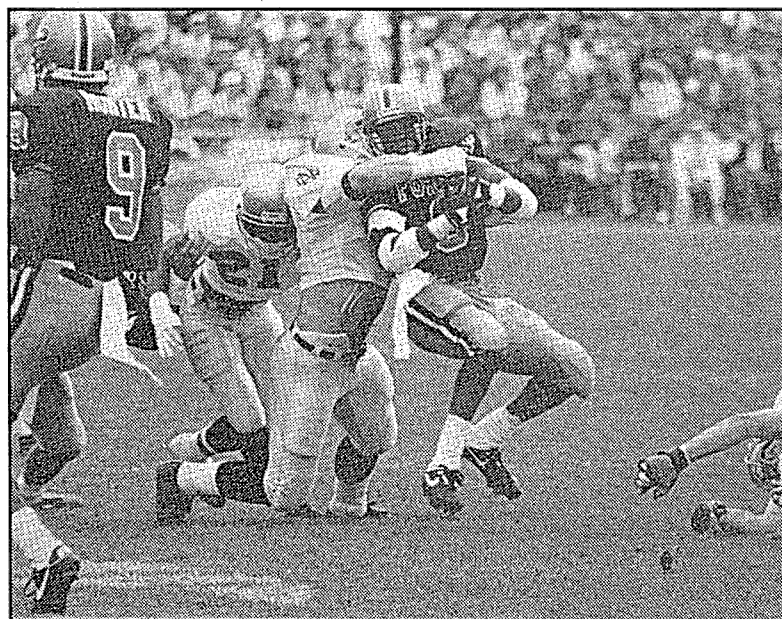
"Tony Brooks is outstanding, other than the time he put the ball on the ground. He ran as a man with conviction today."

Freshmen quarterback Matt Pike came in for Purdue's starting quarterback Hunter. The first play of their possession he attempted to run up the middle but gained no yardage and fumbled in the process. Purdue recovered at their own eight. Proving he wasn't a quick learner, Pike tried going up

received the ball, faked left and then ran right before being stopped by Matt Johnson and Rod Smith. This 31-yard pass play brought the Boilermakers to the Notre Dame 22-yard line. Hunter ran right but found a dead end when he came face-to-face with junior linebacker Demetrius DuBose. After throwing an incomplete pass, Hunter found a connection with Arlee Conners. Despite two Irish players latched onto his ankles, Conners struggled to the goal line and threw himself into the end zone to change the score to 28 - 14.

The third quarter ended with another Notre Dame touchdown. Purdue's Hunter was sacked for a loss of eight and fumbled. Irish junior Junior Bryant recovered at the Purdue 39. Bettis and Brooks then proceeded to take turns running the ball for a total of 30 yards. Mirer pulled back from the line and scanned for a target while several hungry Purdue players broke through the line. Mirer tip-toed around the diving bodies and connected with the tight end Brown for a new score of 35-14.

In the fourth quarter, Notre Dame turned yet another mistake on the part of



Nick Spangler

The usually elusive Hunter carried the ball 11 times for a total of 8 yards. His supporting cast of runners was equally frustrated, especially Matt Pike who here lost yardage on a carry.

Purdue into a touchdown. Sophomore quarterback Kevin McDougal checked in for Mirer. McDougal passed to junior Will Pollard for a gain of 17 yards bringing the Irish to the Purdue 25-yard line. Sophomore Clint Johnson carried the ball five yards before Clark made an impressive run which included spins, fakes, and dodges landing at the four. Mihalko brought the ball in the end zone to increase the gap to 45-14.

"I thought that offensively we played very well," said Holtz. "Defensively we had our moments but we're not as consistent as we have to be. I thought our defensive line played well and we had good pressure on the pass."

Part of the success of the defense can be attributed to Lake Dawson who caught six passes for a total of 81 yards for a career high.

"Today was a good day," said a modest Dawson. "I was just trying to do the things the coaches were asking me to do. The offensive line gave Rick enough time

and he was able to get the ball to me or anyone else that was open. They played a deep zone so I was able to find a lot of holes underneath."

The Irish once again overpowered the Boilermakers. The offense was able to pull together and execute several tremendous

plays.

In 1990, Notre Dame beat up Purdue and then went on the next weekend to lose to Stanford. Such a let down weighed heavily on the minds of all the coaches as they prepared the Irish to go west and face the Cardinal. □



Nick Spangler

Behind some devastating blocking by the men in the trenches, the Irish ground game was able to get on track. Above, Tony Brooks scampers for 57 of his 141 yards.

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	0	21	14	10	45
Purdue	0	7	7	6	20

2nd Quarter PU: Rogers 1 run (O'Leary kick) at 11:51
 ND: Mirer 29 run (Hentrich kick) at 8:48
 ND: Bettis 6 run (Hentrich kick) at 5:31
 ND: Mirer 5 pass (pass to Brown) at :54
 3rd Quarter ND: Bettis 2 run (Hentrich kick) at 9:31
 PU: Hunter 19 pass (pass to Conners) at 4:01
 ND: Mirer 9 pass (pass to Brown) at 1:38
 4th Quarter ND: Hentrich 33 field goal at 10:37
 ND: Mihalko 1 run (Hentrich kick) at 6:12
 PU: Coleman 2 run (kick blocked) at :45

Team Statistics

	ND	UF
First Downs	21	19
Rushing	13	9
Passing	8	10
Penalty	0	0
Rushing	267	106
Passing	166	218
Total Net Yards	433	324
Average Gain Per Play	7.6	4.6
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	5-3
Penalties-Yards	3-15	4-23
Punts-Average	1-48.0	5-47.8
Kickoff Returns	80	72
3rd Down Conversions	3-6	6-13

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- T. Brooks 16-141, Mirer 2-31, Bettis 9-28, Clark 3-20, Mihalko 3-17, McDougal 1-13, Failla 2-11, Johnson 1-5 PU- Rogers 15-52, Coleman 4-8, Conners 7-37, Hunter 11-8, Hill 4-7, Pike 3-(-6)
 Passing: ND- Mirer 12-14-1-139-1, McDougal 1-1-0-17-0, Failla 1-1-0-10-0 PU- Hunter 17-25-1-214-1, Pike 1-2-0-4-0
 Receiving: ND- Dawson 6-81, Bettis 3-34, Brown 2-14, T. Brooks 2-14, Pollard 1-17 PU- Dennis 5-66, Conners 4-53, Calloway 3-42, Rogers 2-15, Brown 1-16, Simmons 1-11, Ross 1-8, Coleman 1-7

A Little Bit of Revenge

Notre Dame defeats the Cardinal 42-26, exacting some retribution for Stanford's huge 1990 upset of the Irish

By Rene Ferran

October 5, Palo Alto, CA —

All week before the Stanford game, Notre Dame head coach Lou Holtz insisted that the Irish harbored no thoughts of revenge as they headed into Stanford Stadium.

"Revenge doesn't factor in at all on my part, and I don't think it does for the players as well," Holtz said. "That was last year and that's over no matter what you do. It's history.

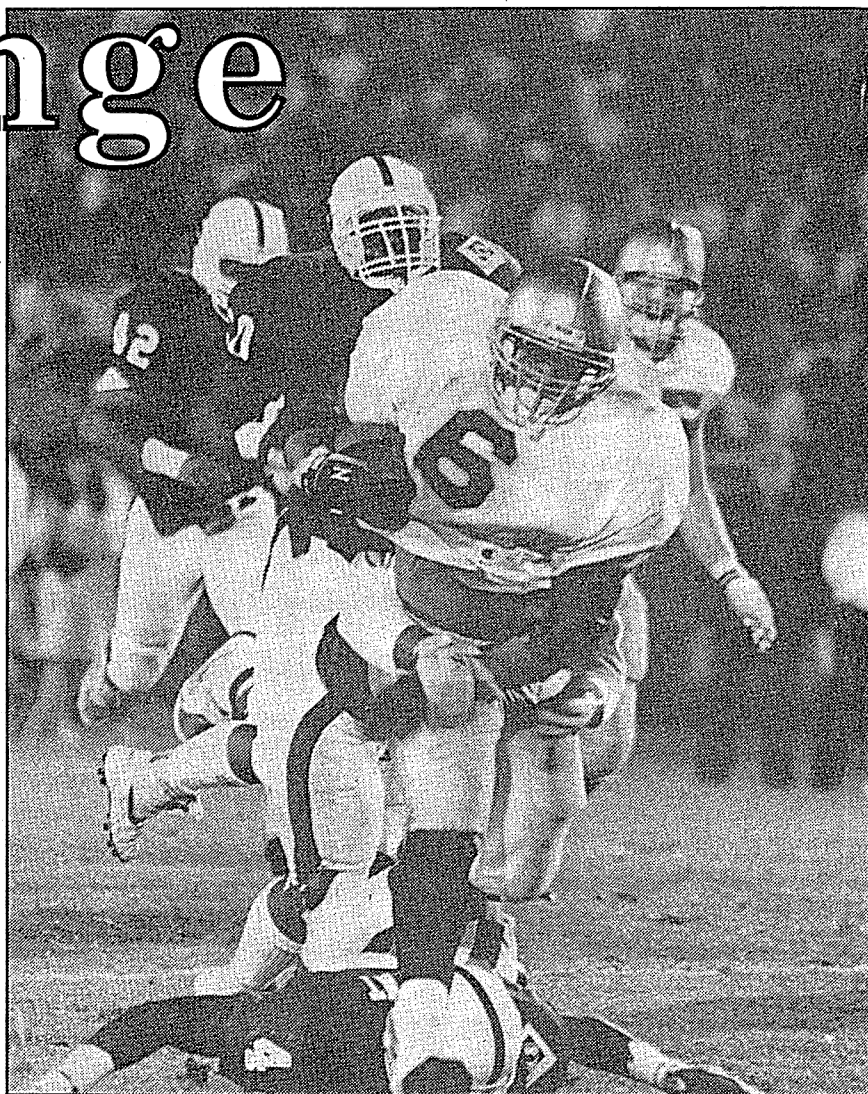
"My main concern — and I think it's the players' as well — is how we're going to win the football game."

Holtz and his players certainly came up with a game plan, piling up 363 rushing yards against a depleted Cardinal defensive line, as Notre Dame defeated Stanford 42-26.

And even if in Holtz's mind it wasn't revenge, it was a sweet victory nevertheless.

"I knew this would be a tough football game, and it certainly was," he said. "(Stanford) hung in there and refused to quit. We're just happy to get out of here with a win."

The game started out exactly as last year's had, with Notre Dame establishing dominance in the trenches early. Stanford, meanwhile, would gain plenty of yards through the air, but those



Andrew McCloskey/The Observer

Jerome Bettis had a career day, rushing for 179 yards and an amazing four touchdowns.

yards translated to zero points. The Irish offensive line overwhelmed a Cardinal front line that had been decimated by injuries. Two key starters on the defensive line were making their return for Stanford just in time to be steamrolled by the firm of Hall, Jurkovic, McGuire, Taylor & Knapp.

"What else can I say about our offensive line except they played a great game today?" said sophomore fullback Jerome Bettis, who rushed for a career-high 179 yards and scored four touchdowns. "Everything I accomplished today is a credit to them."

"Notre Dame really can take it to you with its great line," praised

Stanford coach Dennis Green. "They did a terrific job of rushing tonight. Their running backs run hard, and with extreme power."

Meanwhile, a change in defensive strategy was paying big dividends for the Irish. Senior Greg Davis moved from his normal strong safety position to drop end, and sophomore Willie Clark was switched back to the secondary. With five defensive backs in the game, Notre Dame was better able to handle the Stanford passing attack.

"I thought the first 25 minutes of the game, we played as well on defense as we have in a long time," Holtz said.

"We moved the ball, but we couldn't score," Green lamented. "We couldn't stop them either."

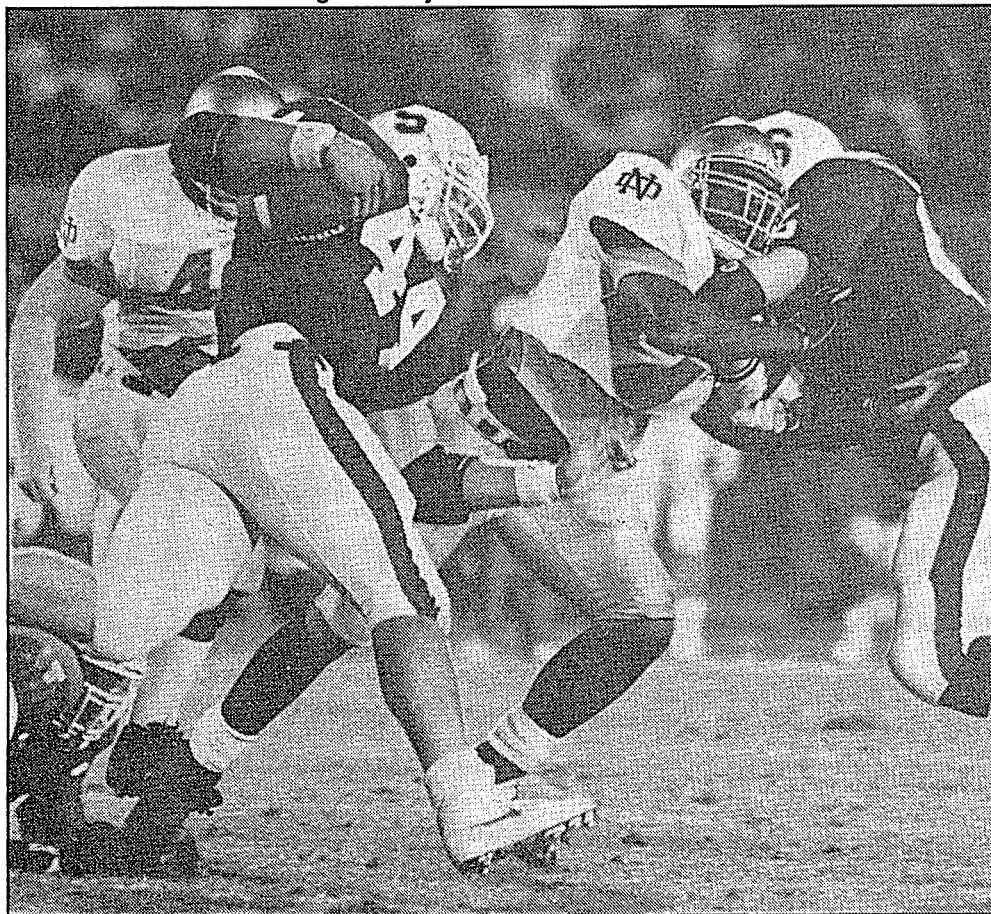
Notre Dame exploded to a 28-0 lead by midway through the second quarter, scoring on four of its first five possessions. Bettis and senior Tony Brooks already had over 100 yards rushing. And then, one play changed everything.

"Tony's fumble changed the momentum in a hurry," Holtz said. "[Stanford] fell into a rhythm and we couldn't get them out of it."

Just as Ricky Watters' two fumbles cost the Irish dearly in last season's 36-31 upset loss, Brooks' fumble deep in Irish territory altered the complexion of the game in Stanford's favor. The Cardinal took advantage of the excellent field position, putting points on the board just before halftime.

And just like last year, it was fullback Tommy Vardell who capped the Stanford scoring drive, breaking two tackles at the line

"Touchdown Tommy" Vardell burned the Irish for the second season in a row, rushing for 140 yards and three touchdowns.



Andrew McCloskey/The Observer

of scrimmage before scampering 27 yards for the touchdown. Yes, the same "Touchdown Tommy" who scored four touchdowns in last season's contest — the last with 36 seconds remaining to put Stanford up for good — was working on delivering another miracle for the Cardinal.

He was to score two more times in this year's game—gaining 140 yards overall — ensuring himself an infamous place in Notre Dame's long history.

"Vardell is an outstanding back," Holtz said. "I think he is as good a back as we've played against this year."

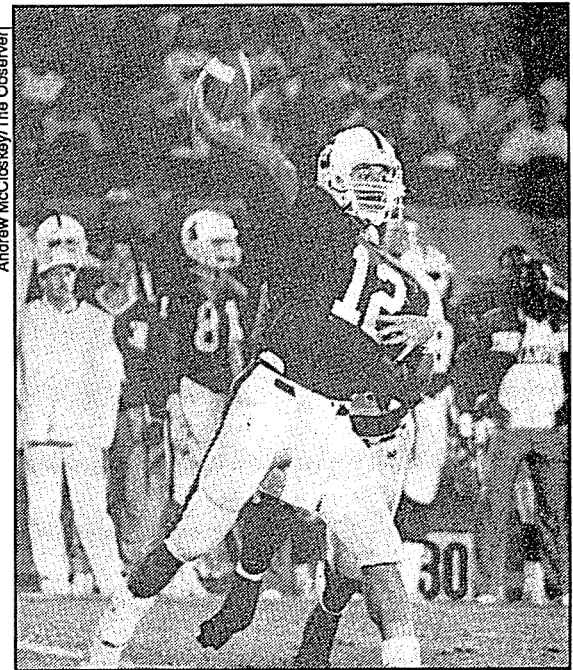
But what really hurt the Irish defense was Davis' knee injury in the third quarter that put him out of the game and the rest of the season with torn ligaments, Notre Dame had to go back to a traditional defensive set, and Stanford welcomed the change with an 80-yard drive to draw within 14 points.

"When we lost Greg, we lost an awful lot," said Holtz. "We couldn't do a lot of the things we had been doing and wanted to keep doing."

Suddenly, the crowd at Stanford Stadium came alive, hoping what they had only witnessed on television last season might be reenacted live and in person. The Irish had other ideas.

"We finished off the second half pretty strong," Bettis said. "And we knew that it was going to be tough the rest of the way. But we remembered last year, so we weren't going to slack off any either. We didn't want to give them any ground. We wanted to keep pounding on them."

As the crowd fired up, so did the Notre



Andrew McCloskey/The Observer

Stanford quarterback Jason Palumbis — who hurt the Irish so bad in 1990 — passed for 153 yards and rushed for one touchdown.

Dame running attack. The big holes that had been there in the first five Irish possessions reappeared, and when Bettis took a Rick Mirer screen pass and rumbled 13 yards into the end zone, the only sound in the stands was from the mass of Notre Dame alumni in the north end of the stadium.

Unlike last season, when Irish mistakes on special teams would allow Stanford to come back from a 24-7 deficit, a Cardinal miscue would give Notre Dame the chance to put the game away. On the ensuing kickoff, Stanford's Ozzie Grenardo tried to field the ball at the two, only to fall out of bounds. Three plays later, senior Rod Smith picked off a pass by Jason Palumbis at the Cardinal 19.

That's when Holtz reached into his bag of tricks and sealed the victory. Mirer pitched the ball to Brooks on what appeared to be a sweep right. But Brooks instead pulled up, turned left, and lobbed the ball to a wide-open Mirer, who dove to the one-yard line. Bettis' fourth touchdown on the next play gave the Irish a 42-14 lead with 14:50 left in the game.

Afterwards, in true Holtz fashion, the Irish head coach downplayed the significance of the play.

"We simply felt that if we got ahead, they would go to man coverage, and this play is open against that type of coverage," he said. "That was just a play that we felt would be open at that time."

And although Stanford scored two late touchdowns on Vardell runs to make the final score close, there was to be no repeat of last year's heroics. Notre Dame got the ball back with 7:40 remaining, and the Cardinal never regained possession.

With the victory, the Irish also regained the Legends Trophy, a combination of Irish crystal and California redwood awarded annually by the Notre Dame Club of San Francisco, handed over by Cardinal players Dave Garnett and Vardell to a loud ovation in the Irish locker room.

"It's a beautiful trophy," said Holtz. "They took good care of it last

Andrew McClellan/The Observer



Rick Mirer threw for two touchdowns and even caught a pass thrown by Tony Brooks.

year, and we'll take just as good care of it this year."

So, with trophy in hand, and a date with undefeated Pittsburgh next on the schedule, Notre Dame walked out of Stanford Stadium with its desired victory.

And with a touch of revenge served on the side. □

Rene Ferran is an associate sports editor for The Observer.

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	14	14	7	7	42
Stanford	0	7	7	12	26

1st Quarter	ND: Dawson 27 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 9:37
	ND: Bettis 3 run (Hentrich kick) at 5:04
2nd quarter	ND: Bettis 1 run (Hentrich kick) at 13:49
	ND: Mirer 1 run (Hentrich kick) at 6:47
	SU: Vardell 27 run (Mills kick) at 2:49
3rd quarter	SU: Palumbis 2 run (Mills kick) at 7:32
	ND: Bettis 13 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 0:56
4th quarter	ND: Bettis 1 run (Hentrich kick) at 14:50
	SU: Vardell 1 run (run failed) at 12:06
	SU: Vardell 2 run (pass failed) at 7:40

Team Statistics

	ND	SU
First Downs	26	26
Rushing	21	10
Passing	5	15
Penalty	0	1
Rushing	363	191
Passing	166	218
Total Net Yards	487	468
Average Gain Per Play	6.6	6.1
Fumbles-Lost	3-1	1-1
Penalties-Yards	2-11	3-32
Punts-Average	5-40.4	4-35.0
Kickoff Returns	55	88
3rd Down Conversions	5-13	4-13

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Bettis 24-179, T. Brooks 17-122, Culver 5-44, Mihalko 2-8, Mirer 6-6, R. Brooks 1-3, Becton 2-1 SU- Vardell 23-140, Milburn 12-39, Palumbis 4-8, Stenstrom 1-4

Passing: ND-Mirer 9-16-0-108-2, T. Brooks 1-1-0-16-0 SU: Palumbis 18-27-1-157-0, Stenstrom 8-10-0-124-0

Receiving: ND- T. Smith 3-48, Dawson 3-48, Mirer 1-16, Bettis 1-13, Culver 1-6, Brown 1-2 SU: Walsh 8-118, Milburn 8-70, Vardell 5-24, Shaw 2-23, Nickel 1-21, Calomese 1-13, Baur 1-8

GAME 6

The Pittsburgh Panthers fail all expectations as they are dismantled by the Irish 42-7 on the grass of Notre Dame Stadium

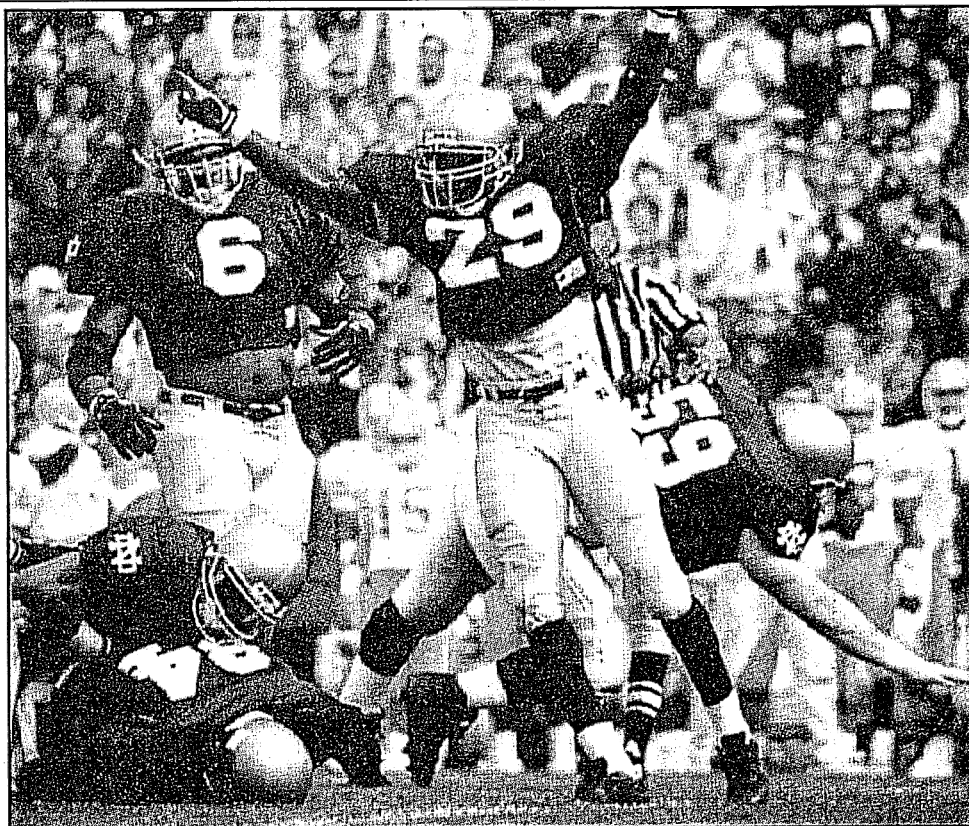
By Jim Kuser

October 12, Notre Dame —

The Pittsburgh Panthers came roaring out of the tunnel of Notre Dame Stadium, but the Notre Dame Fighting Irish proved them toothless. Final score: Notre Dame 42 and Pitt 7.

Why were the twelfth-ranked Panthers wiped out so easily by the Irish? Linebacker Demetrius DuBose answered.

"Tackling is an attitude. Today we had



Notre Dame linebacker John Covington celebrates a big hit on a Pittsburgh ball carrier. Matt Cashore

A "Pitt-iful" Performance

serious attitude."

Pitt, boasting a bountiful running attack, recorded a meager 59 yards on 24 rushes. DuBose, linebacker Pete Bercich, and linemen Eric Jones, Germaine Holden, and Junior Bryant all recorded tackles for losses in the game. A shutout performance by the Irish defense was spoiled when Pitt quarterback Alex Van Pelt hit his tight end Eric Seaman for a 51-yard touchdown.

The Irish special teams blocked a punt and forced a fumbled punt in this game. Both became Notre Dame touchdowns, but the better one of the two was the blocked punt. Junior special teams star Reggie Brooks

blocked a punt and recovered it 26 yards down the field in the Pitt end zone for a touchdown.

"I couldn't believe it," said Brooks. "The ball went right through my hands and then hit me right in the face."

Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz revealed that this block was a planned play.

"We work on it day after day," he said. "On the first kick we disguised our blocking scheme, and on the next one we went for it. Reggie came clean and did a great job of getting the ball."

Despite the 42 points put on the board by the Irish, the Notre Dame offense had to take

a bow to the Notre Dame defense and special teams as the stars of this game. Quarterback Rick Mirer gave the worst passing game of his career as he completed only four of 15 passes for 40 yards and two interceptions.

"It was good to win the game," said Holtz. "The score was very deceptive. We had trouble on offense. We had no rhythm and could not get the passing game going."

But they could get the running game going, as seen by the 340 yards that the Irish gained on the ground, including 125 yards cashed in on carries by sophomore fullback Jerome Bettis.

Do not tell Pitt Coach Paul Hackett that

Twin Tacklers

An interesting side story to the Notre Dame-Pitt matchup was the Devon-Ricardo McDonald matchup. Devon, a senior linebacker for Notre Dame, and Ricardo, a junior linebacker for Pitt, were twin brothers squaring off on a football

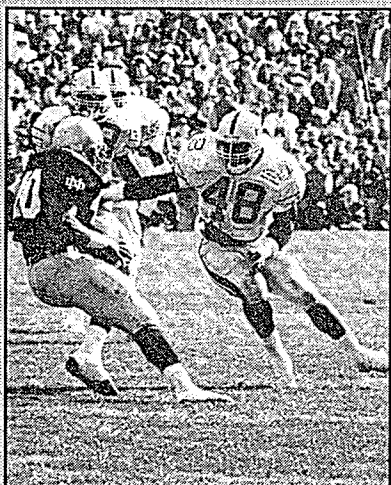
field.

Devon had proved himself to be one of the physical and psychological leaders of the Irish defense with his play in his first few games. Going into the game against Pitt, Devon had recorded seven solo tackles, 19 assisted tackles, and three tackles for losses.

Ricardo had also proved himself one of the leaders of his team's defense with his impressive play in his first few years. Going into the game against Notre Dame, Ricardo was one of only five players in the last twenty years to have started each and every game since his freshmen season for Pitt. Those other players, who went on to become NFL superstars, were Bill Fralic, Hugh Green, Tony Dorsett, and Marc Spindler.

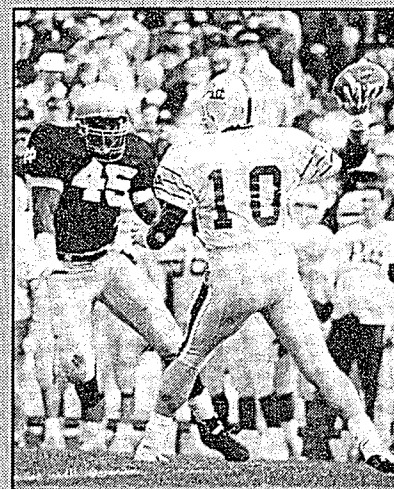
In this game, the twin brothers combined for ten tackles - Devon having two and Ricardo having eight. Despite the statistics and the score, Mom McDonald summed up the sentiments of this game best.

"I am happy that my boys have the gifts to play football. Both schools are fine. Both teams are fine," said the mother of these two



Matt Cashore

Ricardo McDonald of Pittsburgh chases down Notre Dame's Tony Brooks.



Matt Cashore

Devon McDonald pressures Pitt quarterback Alex Van Pelt.

linebackers. "I only hope that the players, especially my sons, stay happy and healthy. It is too bad that the teams could not tie."

From a bipartisan parent's perspective, it is too bad that the two teams could not have tied. But from a partisan Irish fan's perspective, it was rewarding that Devon's Irish defeated Ricardo's previously undefeated Pitt Panthers. □

the Notre Dame offense had an off day.

"Notre Dame is one hell of an offensive football team," said a coach in awe of the opponent who had so thoroughly whipped his squad. "You stop their zone blocking and they go to the tackle trap. Then they destroy you with the option when you least expect it."

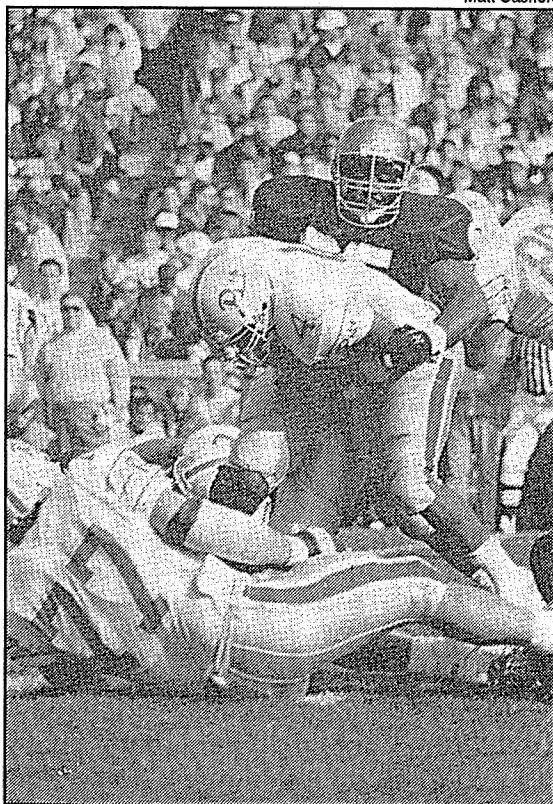
"Last year, we disguised our defense and tried to play games with Mirer because he was inexperienced. But he is so good this year. When we least expected it, he ran that option — on third down and even on fourth down!" marveled Hackett.

To see the statistics is to see the story of this game. Notre Dame had 23 first downs to Pitt's 14. Notre Dame had 340 rushing yards on 60 rushes to Pitt's 59 rushing yards on 24 rushes. These statistics soared quarter by quarter as the Irish scored two touchdowns in the second quarter, two in the third, and two in the fourth after a 0-0 deadlock in the first.

Bettis' one yard run at 12:55 of the second quarter started the scoring for

The Irish defensive linemen, such as Junior Bryant shown here, limited Pitt ball carriers to a meager 59 yards rushing.

Matt Cashore



the Irish. It capped an efficient and effective seven-play drive that took 2:08 off of the clock. A recovery by Irv Smith of a Pitt fumbled punt on their own 31 yard line set the stage for this drive.

Exactly one minute later, after a stingy defensive stance, Brooks scored his touchdown off of the blocked punt. The score stood at 14-0 in favor of the Irish at the end of the second quarter. The third quarter started with a Reggie Brooks 42-yard kickoff return to midfield. Another efficient and effective scoring drive ensued. This time the Irish took 9:39 off of the clock as they traveled 50 yards for the score on 11 plays from scrimmage. Smith caught a 2-yard touchdown pass from Mirer to hit paydirt. Between Reggie Brooks and Irv Smith, there was one touchdown apiece and one fumble recovery apiece.

"Those two played exceptionally smart football today," praised Holtz.

The Irish posted another touchdown as a result of a pounding, play-by-play

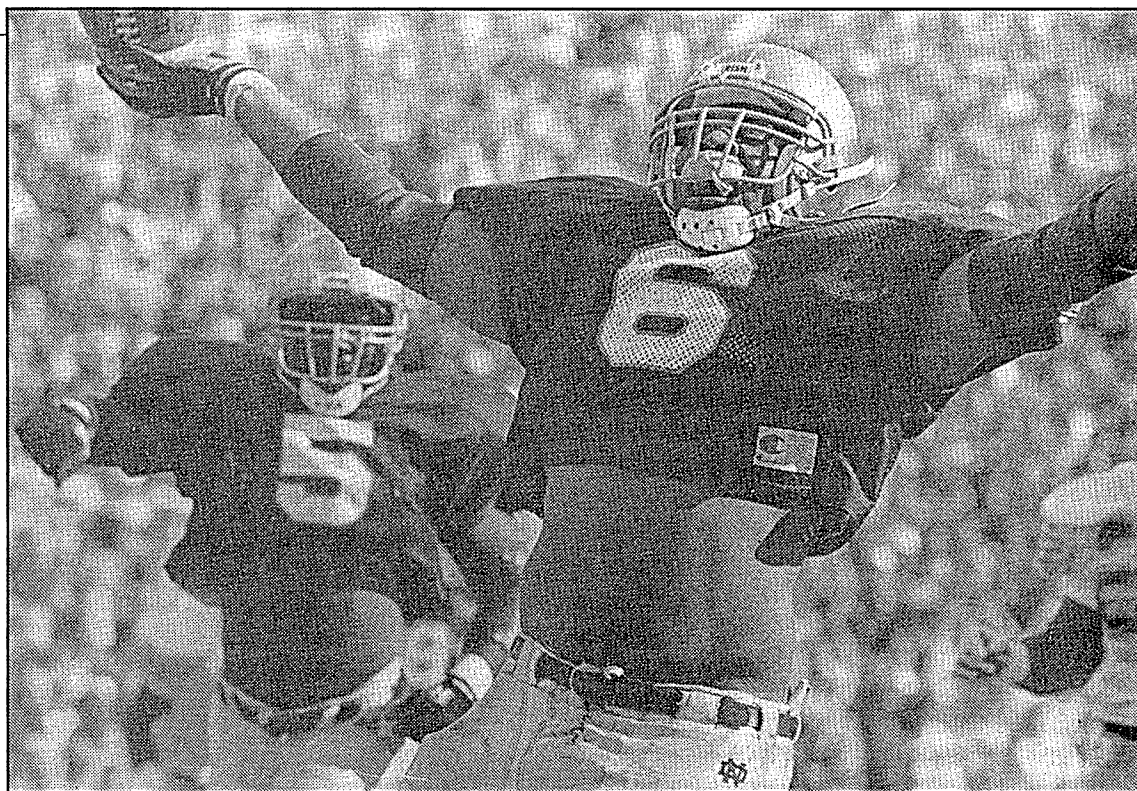
rushing plan. Mirer hit paydirt on an 8-yard push behind the brilliant blocking of the boys down deep in the trenches that blew Pitt players off of the ball time and time again.

Perhaps the best offensive series of this game was Bettis' 66 yards on six rushes highlighted by his 40-yard touchdown run. The final Irish touchdown was formulated by the Notre Dame second-stringers. Notre Dame scored on quarterback Kevin McDougal's five-yard touchdown scamper.

"They moved the ball well against the Pitt starters," said Holtz. "It was encouraging to see their poise out there on the field."

So, once again, the Irish had defeated Pitt in Notre Dame Stadium. In 1989, Pitt had come into South Bend with a 5-0-1 record and were looking to make a statement, but the Irish had delivered a 45-7 thrashing that sent the Panthers into a tailspin. That year, they only won two more games.

This year, the same thing happened. The



Fullback Jerome Bettis beat-up the overmatched Pittsburgh defense, gaining 125 yards on the day with two touchdowns. Galvin Kenny

Panthers were undefeated and ready to finally beat the Irish, but were instead beaten up. From this loss, Pitt went on to lose four more games in a row in a 1991 season that rapidly became a lost cause. Quite a disappointing season for a team entering their first

year of Big East conference football.

As for the Irish, they were headed to Colorado Springs to play the Cadets of Air Force riding high — 5-1 and ranked fifth in the country. The season seemed to be shaping up. □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	0	14	14	14	42
Pittsburgh	0	0	0	7	7

2nd Quarter ND: Bettis 1 run (Hentrich kick) at 12:55
ND: R. Brooks 26 punt return (Hentrich kick) at 11:52
3rd Quarter ND: I. Smith 2 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 9:39
ND: Mirer 8 run (Hentrich kick) at :54
4th Quarter PITT: Seamon 51 pass from Van Pelt at 12:44
ND: Bettis 40 run (Hentrich kick) at 7:55
ND: McDougal 5 run (Marsh kick) at 2:04

Team Statistics

	ND	PITT
First Downs	23	14
Rushing	19	4
Passing	2	9
Penalty	2	1
Rushing	327	59
Passing	49	213
Total Net Yards	376	272
Average Gain Per Play	4.9	4.4
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	3-1
Penalties-Yards	5-24	4-35
Punts-Average	5-38.0	8-35.5
Kickoff Returns	79	97
3rd Down Conversions	6-15	5-14

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Bettis 17-125, T. Brooks 16-65, R. Culver 13-49, Mirer 8-48, R. Brooks 2-19, Zellars 1-14, McDougal 1-5, Mihalko 1-4, Failla 1-(-2) PITT- J. William 14-44, Martin 6-10, K. Williams 3-6, Van Pelt 1-(-1)
Passing: ND- Mirer 4-15-2-40-1, McDougal 1-1-0-9-0, Failla 0-1-0-0-0 PITT- Van Pelt 22-37-1-207-1, Ferguson 1-1-0-6-0
Receiving: ND- Brown 2-31, McBride 1-9, Culver 1-7, I. Smith 1-2-1 PITT- Moore 9-61, Seamon 6-85, J. Williams 2-21, Martin 2-14, Bouyer 1-18, Deveau 1-8, Davis 1-4, Green 1-2

GAME 7

"We won a football game ...

By Dave McMahon

October 19, Colorado Springs, CO —

Notre Dame entered its matchup against the Cadets of the United States Air Force Academy with a decided physical advantage, as the Irish offensive line outweighed the Falcon defensive line by over 45 pounds.

Physical attributes had little bearing on the game's outcome, however, as Notre Dame escaped with a 28-15 win and returned to South Bend with two injured defensive tackles.

"We won a football game tonight but lost a team," said Notre Dame head coach Lou Holtz.

With quarterback Rob Perez guiding Air Force's wishbone offense through an attacking Irish pass defense, the Falcons rushed for 108 yards in the first quarter. Air Force offensive linemen accompanied the wishbone with low "chop" blocking, a feature that left the Irish pondering the future of their defensive line.

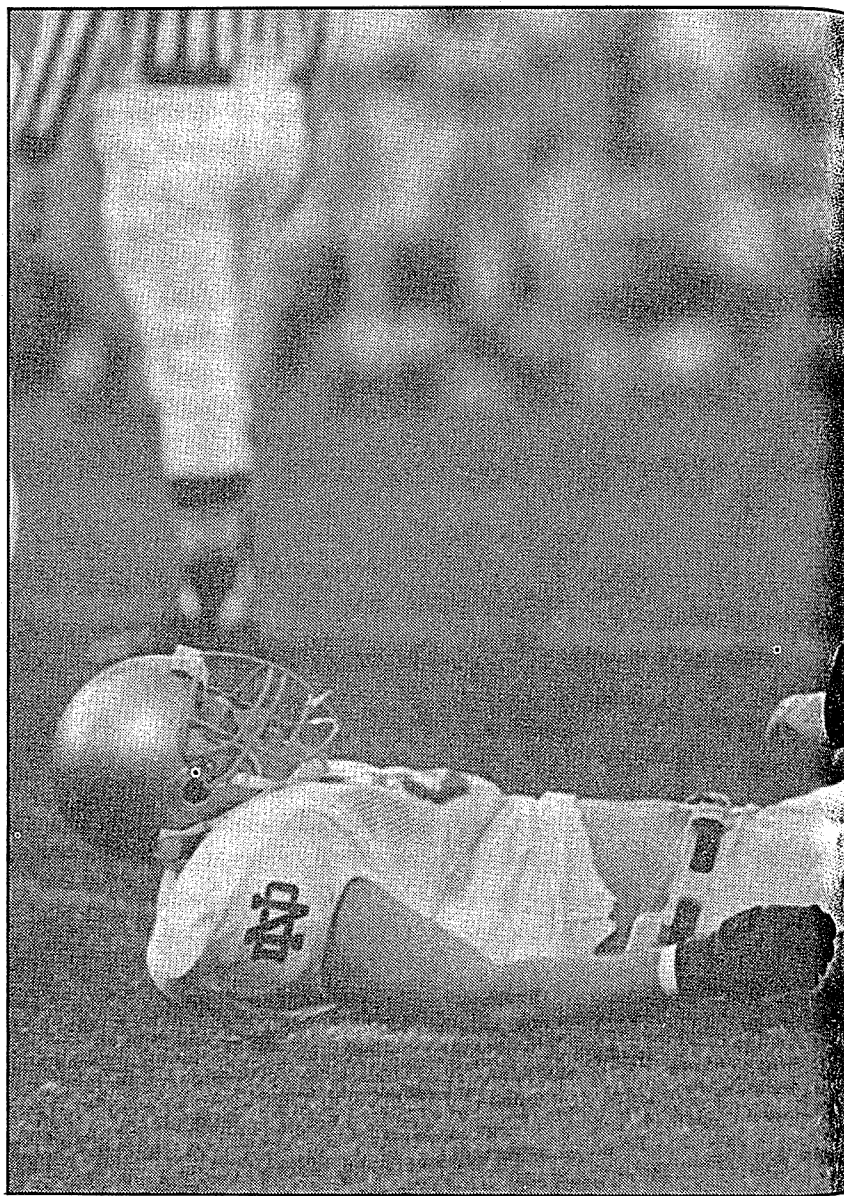
The first casualty occurred just over four minutes into the game when junior right tackle Eric Jones went down with a broken ankle and torn ligaments after a chop block by Air Force tight end David Mott. Jones, a stalwart on the Irish defensive line, would miss the rest of the season and possibly some of spring practice.

The scenario only worsened for Notre Dame's defensive line, which was the most inexperienced Irish unit coming into the season. With Air Force driving in the fourth quarter to the Irish 34-yard line, sophomore nose tackle Bryant Young suffered the second broken ankle of the night after a block similar to the one used against Jones.

"It hurts our morale because we never want to see our buddies go down, especially in a game like this," said senior Troy Ridgley, who replaced Young at nose tackle for the remainder of the game. "I could see maybe in the national championship or something, but in a game like this where all kinds of things went wrong and to top it off with these two injuries is just unbelievable."

Freshmen Germaine Holden and John Taliaferro, both inside linebackers in high school, combined for eight tackles in relief of Jones and Young.

After a 42-yard field goal by Air Force's Joe Wood on its first

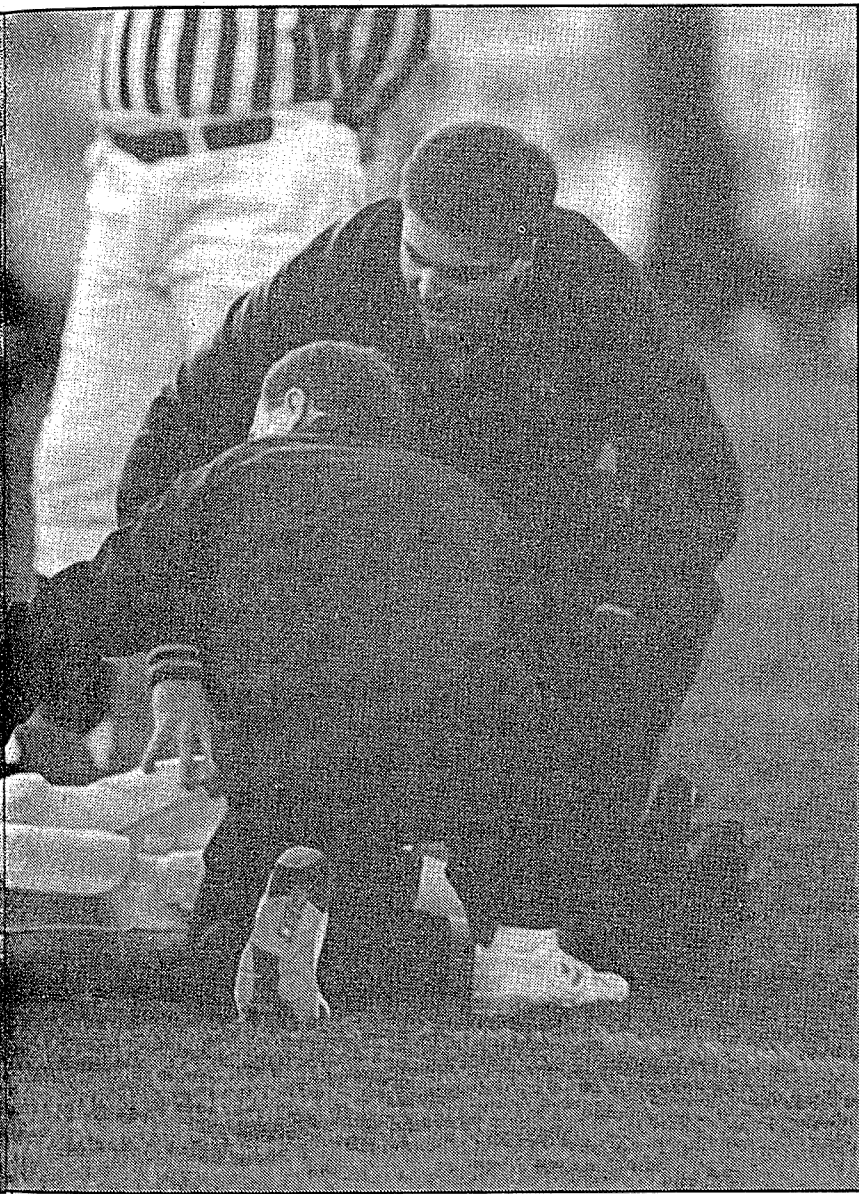


Trainers tend to right tackle Eric Jones' broken ankle in the first quarter, one of two such injuries to Irish defensive linemen. In the fourth quarter, nose tackle Bryant Young went down.

possession put the Falcons ahead 3-0, Notre Dame began the first of two 70-plus yard drives. Irish quarterback Rick Mirer finished the first drive, a 76-yard march, with a 7-yard touchdown pass to fullback Jerome Bettis for the first Irish score. Craig Hentrich kicked the extra point to give Notre Dame a lead it would never relinquish.

Air Force responded with 11 consecutive rushes for 73 yards before Wood connected on a 24-yard field goal to cut the lead to 7-6. After Air Force recovered a punt fumbled by Irish return man Jeff Burris, Wood had a chance to give the Falcons the lead, but missed

Injuries on the defensive line ruin a 28-15 victory over the Falcons of the Air Force Academy



route," said Mirer, who threw for 151 yards and two touchdowns on 6-of-12 passing. "I got the ball to him where he needed it and he caught it in stride. We've been looking for a deep ball for a while and finally got one."

After Ridgley forced and recovered a fumble by Perez at the Air Force 32, Bettis crashed in from three yards for the touchdown. Hentrich booted the extra point for a 21-6 Irish with 1:13 remaining in the half.

With no time on the clock following a penalty against Notre Dame, Wood easily connected on a 58-yard field goal to cut the gap to 21-9 at halftime.

"We tightened up on defense inside the 20-yard line," said linebacker Jim Flanagan, who had eight tackles for the Irish. "We came through when we had to by the goal line. It could've easily been a 21-21 ballgame at halftime."

In the second half, Notre Dame picked up offensively where it left off. After Dean Lytle recovered an onside kick (a weapon Holtz used surprisingly often in the 1991 season) at the Air Force 45, the Irish drove 55 yards in eight plays. Bettis recorded his third touchdown of the game on a 19 yard run behind right tackle Lindsay Knapp.

Despite a decided time of possession advantage of 35:03 to 23:41 by the Falcons over the Irish, Notre Dame's ball control offense matched Air Force's style in the third quarter.

Air Force entered the game as the second best rushing team in the nation (344 yards per game) and lived up to its billing with 382 yards on the ground. In a balanced wishbone attack, fullback Jason Jones piled up 171 yards on 37 attempts, both career highs. Perez added 125 yards rushing on 26 carries for his fifth 110-yard rushing game of the season.

"We weren't surprised at the fullback running because he's the key to their entire offense," said Notre Dame linebacker Demetrius DuBose, who led the Irish with nine unassisted tackles. "The defense overall did a good job as far as holding them down when we needed to."

After recovering a Rodney Culver fumble in the third quarter, Air Force drove 91 yards on 21 rushing plays for its lone touchdown. The two-point conversion failed.

"They do so many things so well and are so disciplined,"

said Mirer. "We've got to give them credit. You can see how they won six ballgames."

Although the loss of Jones and Young would come to haunt the Irish later in the season and hinder the inexperienced Notre Dame defense, the

Irish didn't view Air Force's chop blocking tactics as cheap shots.

"The only way you can combat that kind of blocking successfully all night is to step backwards instead of stepping forward when the ball's snapped," said Holden, the freshman who replaced Young. "Then you loose everything off the snap so you really can't afford to do that. You have to go out on the edge. Unfortunately my boys got hurt tonight."

Irish offensive guard Mirko Jurkovic saw the chop blocks as best

... but lost a team."

wide left on a 39-yard field goal attempt.

Then the Irish offense cranked into gear.

On first-and-ten from their own 22-yard line, the Irish were penalized five yards for illegal motion. On the second try, Mirer connected with split end Tony Smith across the middle for an 83-yard touchdown pass. The pass was the longest of Mirer's career and ranks as the fifth longest all-time for the Irish.

"They were in a three-deep coverage and Tony just ran a good



Joe Raymond/South Bend Tribune

Senior tailback Tony Brooks turns the corner for several of his 82 yards.

for the wishbone.

"They're always down at your legs and grabbing. And it works. I give them a lot of credit. They played hard."

Flanigan also recognized the low attacks by the Air Force line.

"We had to

try to stay low and keep people from coming at our feet. But they make it tough on you."

"They did what they had to do to put themselves in a winning position," said DuBose.

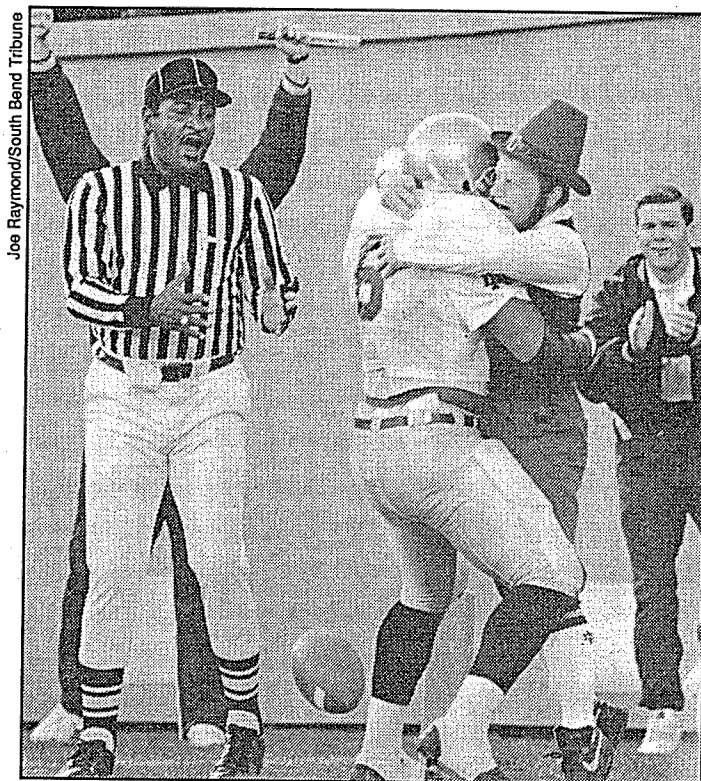
Notre Dame linebacker Pete Bercich did his part to put the Irish in a winning position and received the Toyota Leadership Award for his contributions. The Award, in its seventh season, is presented weekly by Toyota to a player from each of the participating teams during ESPN's Prime Time college football game of the week. Bercich, from Mokena, Ill., is a sophomore in the college of Business Administration with a 3.23 grade point average.

The leadership the Irish really needed, however, may have been lost when Young and Jones went down. They had been emerging as forces on the defensive line and were becoming double threats on either side of the line. How the freshmen such as Holden and Taliaferro would hold up while playing the Trojans of the Uni-

versity of Southern California in college football's greatest rivalry remained to be seen. □

Dave McMahon is an associate sports editor for the Observer.

The Notre Dame leprechaun congratulates fullback Jerome Bettis after one of his three touchdowns.



Joe Raymond/South Bend Tribune

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	7	14	7	0	28
Air Force	3	6	0	6	15

1st Quarter	USAFA: Wood 42 field goal at 9:13
	ND: Bettis 7 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 3:55
2nd Quarter	USAFA: Wood 24 field goal at 13:51
	ND: T. Smith 83 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 3:23
	ND: Bettis 3 run (Hentrich kick) at 1:13
	USAFA: Wood 58 field goal at :00
3rd Quarter	ND: Bettis 19 run (Hentrich kick) at 11:23
4th Quarter	USAFA: Jones 1 run (run failed) at 8:01

Team Statistics

	ND	USAFA
First Downs	21	29
Rushing	15	27
Passing	6	1
Penalty	0	1
Rushing	269	354
Passing	151	26
Total Net Yards	420	380
Average Gain Per Play	7.1	4.4
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	3-1
Penalties-Yards	7-48	4-32
Punts-Average	3-44.7	3-44.7
Kickoff Returns	52	22
3rd Down Conversions	6-11	8-16

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Culver 17-82, T. Brooks 12-82, Bettis 10-52, Mirer 3-26, Failla 1-12, Hentrich 1-7, Beckton 1-5, R. Brooks 1-2 USAFA- Jones 37-171, Perez 26-125, Young 6-28, Onuoha 3-19, Hufford 1-7, Banks 2-4
Passing: ND- Mirer 6-12-0-151-2 USAFA: Perez 3-12-0-26-0
Receiving: ND- T. Smith 4-134, T. Brooks 1-10, Bettis 1-7 USAFA: Onuoha 1-11, Hopkins 1-9, Banks 1-6

GAME 8

Notre Dame's Irv Smith grabs onto a desperation onside kick in the last minute to seal a 24-20 victory over the Trojans of USC

By Jon Paul Potts

October 26, Notre Dame —

It was just another routine onside kick that any team losing in the last second attempts.

The kicking team all rush one side, the kicker duffs it, hoping to get that one lucky bounce, and the players converge on the ball. Usually, the receiving team gets it easily and the game ends in a flurry of time outs.

of Holtz on the Notre Dame sideline. Irish fans gasped: had this hard-fought game come to this, with the Trojans recovering an onside kick with a chance to score the upset-touchdown?

"On the onside kick, I was privy to be rather close to it," said Holtz. "I thought we played it very well, we just didn't catch the ball. Right in front of our bench, Irv Smith and the young man from Southern Cal had

the ball. Irv had it just as much as anybody else.

"After they piled them out, the referee signalled it was our ball, but Irv still wouldn't let it go," continued Holtz. "But we patted Irv on the back and said it was our ball, and he finally let it go."

On the bottom of the pile, Smith was battling USC's Marvin Pollard and the big tight end finally managed to pull it to his

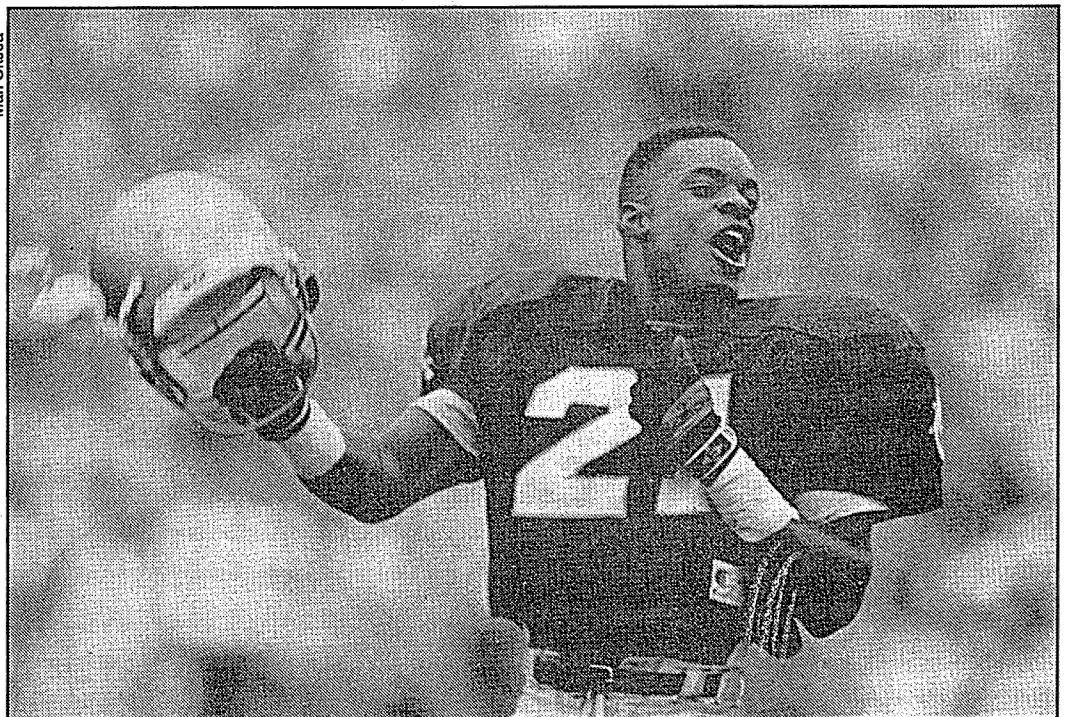
Follow the Bouncing Ball ...

Rod Smith celebrates the referee's signal of Irish ball after Irv Smith had recovered the USC onside kick underneath a pile of players.

So it was that with 1:50 to go in the game and the Irish leading 24-20, University of Southern California coach Larry Smith sent his kicker out and Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz countered with his "hands" team — quarterback Rick Mirer, fullback Jerome Bettis, tight end Irv Smith — all the skill players who, due to the nature of their positions, are relied upon for their sure and reliable ability to grasp onto a bouncing football.

But this was not a routine onside kick. USC kicker Cole Ford hit a beauty and as it took a high bounce, Irish flanker Lake Dawson missed it and the free-for-all that ensued resulted in a huge pile right in front

Mari Okuda



chest.

"I think he [Pollard] might have had a little better handle on the ball than I did at first, but

When Holtz told Smith to let go, the player did as his coach said, but Pollard emerged from the pile jumping in the air cradling the

The Defense's "Diaper Dandies"

While they could usually watch the upperclassmen knock heads and get yelled at at practice, they could stand off to the side and watch, sometimes even somewhat bemused by the whole thing.

But suddenly, it was one of the biggest game on the Notre Dame schedule, and they were being thrown into the fray.

"It was quite a shock when I was thrown in there," said Justin Goheen, a freshman linebacker from Wexford, PA. "I usually like to goof around at practice, have a little fun. This week was all business. I had to take my play to another level in a hurry."

Due to injuries to the defensive line, and the absence of linebacker Pete Bercich for personal reasons, Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz had to send three freshmen out to play against the Trojans on the defensive front which had been shaky with all the *regular* starters in there. Goheen at linebacker, and Germaine

Holden and John Taliaferro on the line, all faced their first substantial action.

"I had no worries about Justin Goheen and the others at all," said the defensive leader, junior linebacker Demetrius DuBose. "He [Goheen] stepped up and played an outstanding game... you know a true freshman starting in the biggest game of the year. That's outstanding."

Goheen collected 12 tackles, second only to DuBose on the day, and forced a fumble. Holden had a tackle and an interception on a pass that was tipped by a USC receiver, and Taliaferro had a tackle.

"I was more nervous this week than I've ever been," said Goheen. "My main concern was not letting my teammates down."

That he didn't do, and Goheen and the

other two members of the Defensive Diaper Dandies proved themselves to their coach and their teammates. □

— By Jon Paul Potts



Justin Goheen, (#54) wraps up a USC ball carrier, one of his 12 tackles.

Mark Orkida

ball," said a frustrated Larry Smith who drew a penalty when he ran all the way across the field to yell at the official's final decision. "In a big pile like that, a lot of things can happen. I don't know exactly what happened."

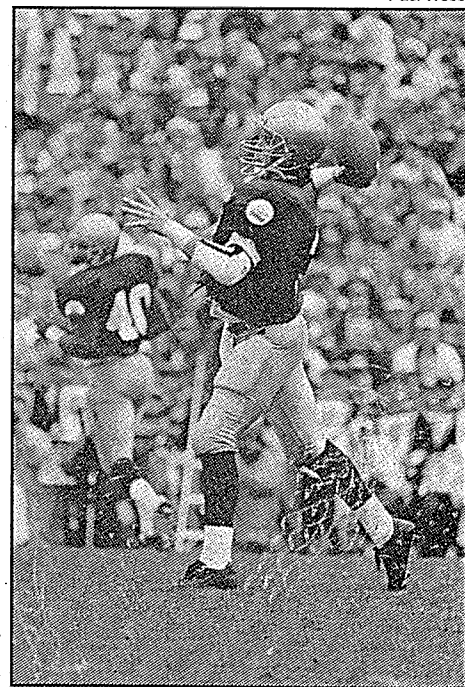
But the officiating crew finally signalled Irish ball and, thanks to the soft hands of a tight end/outfielder, Notre Dame had pulled out a 24-20 victory that resulted in more than a few sighs of relief from the Irish coaching staff.

Until the last quarter, including the suspenseful onside kick, this game had lacked dramatics. About the biggest thrill of the first three stanzas had come from — who else? — Jerome "They Call him Mr. Touch-down" Bettis.

The sophomore fullback had galloped for a 53-yard score in the first quarter. On the Irish's third possession of the opening 15 minutes, Notre Dame started a drive from their own 26. After senior captain Rodney Culver was dropped for a 3-yard loss, Mirer hit Bettis over the middle on a play-action fake for a gain of 22 yards. Then, two plays later, Bettis took a handoff from Mirer, cut back left and bounced off a group of Trojan tacklers to sprint the 53 yards to the end zone.

"I heard a little voice when I made my cut," the bruising fullback said. "I wanted to go outside, but I kept hearing the coaches in

Paul Webb



I had about all of it when it was over," said the unlikely hero Irv Smith. "He [Pollard] kept saying, 'Let it go, I got it,' but I kept telling him I had it. We weren't going to let it go until all the people in the stadium had gone home."

football. The stadium had no clue what was going on.

"All I saw was my guy come up with the

Irish quarterback Rick Mirer threw for one touchdown and 166 yards on the day.

practice telling me to run north and south. A lot of people think that a big guy doesn't have a lot of speed: I don't have *too much* speed, but it's *deceptive* speed."

On this day, Bettis did a lot of running in those two directions. Despite one fumble in the third quarter that was recovered by the Trojans, Bettis had another stellar afternoon on what was to be a truly outstanding sophomore campaign. He rushed for 178 yards on 24 attempts and two touchdowns — the fifth straight contest in which he scored two or more times, dating back to the Sept. 28 destruction of the Purdue Boilermakers. This effort prompted the highest praise from the opposition's coach.

"He's a great fullback, the best I've ever seen," gushed Smith. "He is the core of the Notre Dame offense. He was the difference, without him Notre Dame would have lost the game."

The game was a 14-0 Irish shutout at the half and stood a boring 21-7 with 8:18 to go in the game when inconsistent USC decided to stage their comeback. After Bettis' fumble, the Trojans took over on the Notre Dame 20-yard line. It only took two plays for USC to cash in on the Irish miscue. On first down, tailback Mazio Royster took the ball on a delay and danced for six yards before he was brought down by defensive back Jeff Burris. Then, on second-and-four from the Irish 14, Royster burst up the middle, juked linebacker Demetrius DuBose, and hit paydirt to pull the Trojans, with the PAT, to within seven at 21-14.

"We were up 21-7 at one point but we could never take control of the game," said Holtz. "We had problems with their counter in the second half and we just could not disrupt their rhythm. That's a credit to Southern Cal."

The Irish converted on a 34-yard field goal by Craig Hentrich to put a little room between themselves and the hard-pressing Trojans, but USC took the kickoff determined to score again. Royster ran for a 14-

yard gain. Sophomore quarterback Reggie Perry hit his wide-open tight end Yonnie Jackson for nine yards. Perry hit split end Johnnie Morton on an inside screen for 15 more and suddenly, it was first-and-ten Trojans from the Irish 4-yard line. With 1:50 to go, USC fullback Raoul Spears took the handoff and blasted off left tackle for the

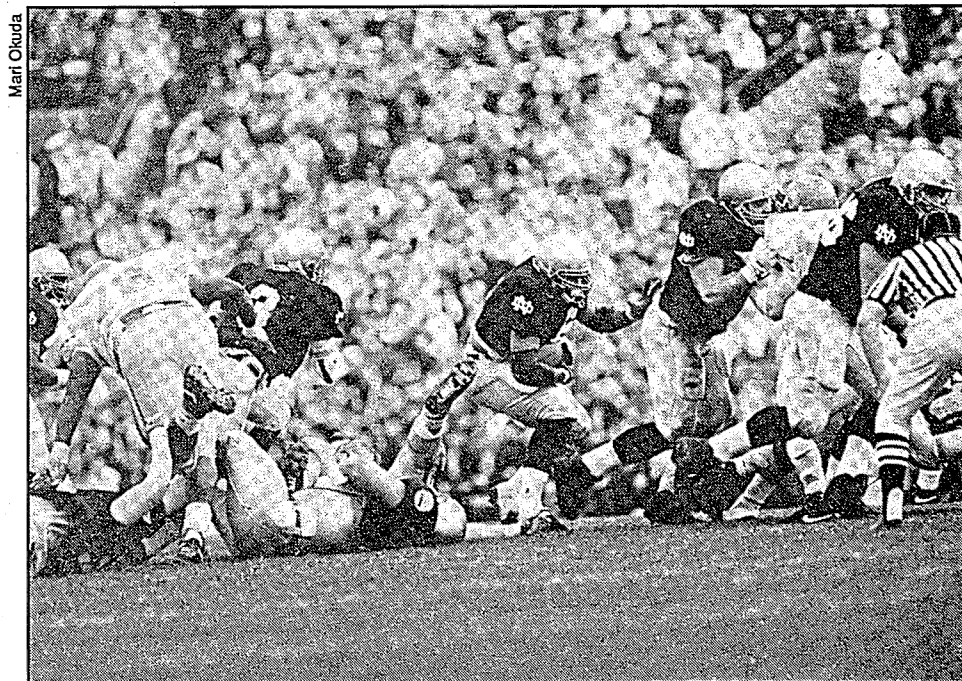
score. The two-point conversion failed, but it was a slim four point lead that Notre Dame held onto as Larry Smith sent out his inside kick formation. Luckily, Irv Smith grabbed the ball and the victory was sealed.

"We wanted to win this one, very much," said Perry who had matured a lot in one game, hitting on 20 of his 35 passes for 222



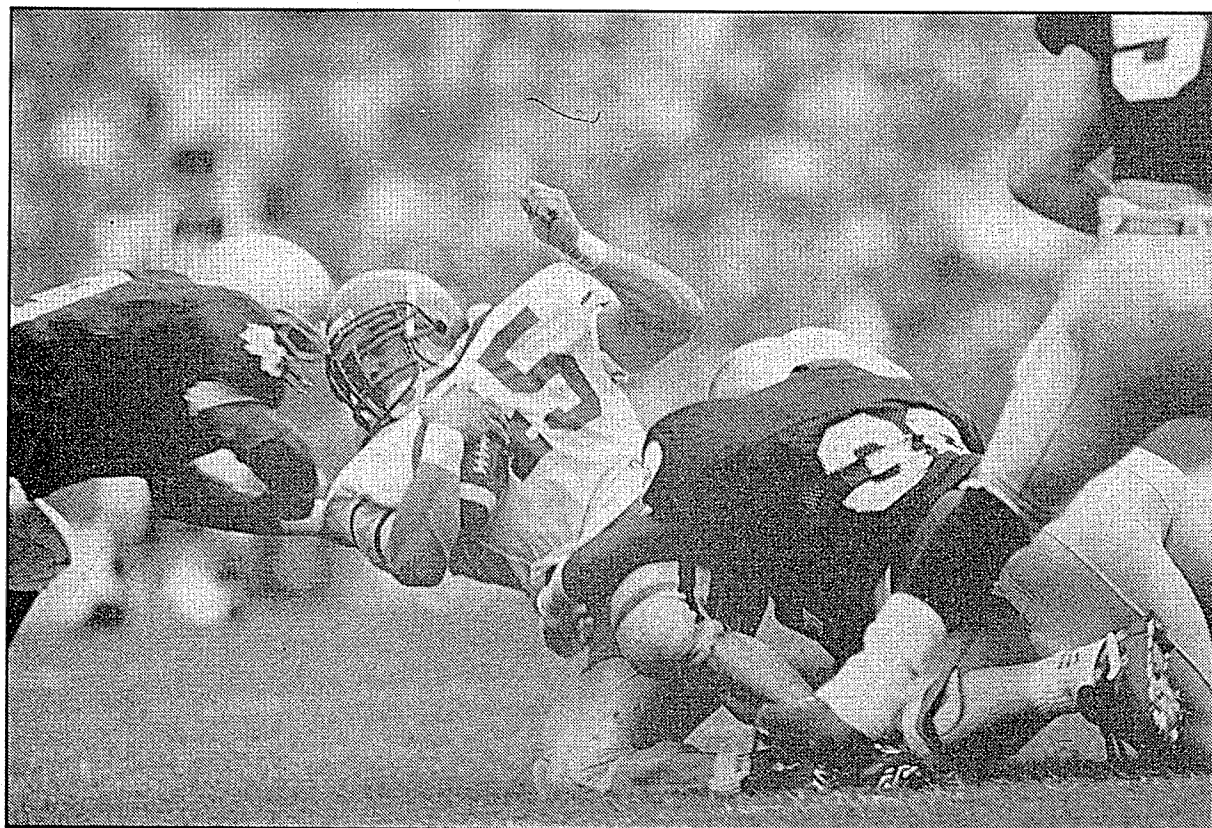
Paul Webb

Demetrius DuBose prepares to wrap up Southern Cal quarterback Reggie Perry.



Marl Okuda

Notre Dame fullback Jerome Bettis hits the hole for several of his 178 yards.



The Irish defense wraps up a USC ball carrier.

Mari Okuda

Irish dominance in this historical college football series.

"This one is out the window and we just go on from here," said Larry Smith. "I am not worried about 'The Series' at all."

"There are too many class people on that side of the ball for that program to fail," said Holtz when asked about his perfect 6-0 record as Notre Dame coach against USC. "By the time we get to the year 2000, maybe things will be going the other way. This series will even out — it always has."

And so the Irish continued on. Next Saturday, the Mid-

yards. "We wanted to win not just for ourselves, but for the seniors who have never beaten Notre Dame. Sure, it hurts us [the younger players], but I feel even worse for them."

The last Trojan team to beat the Irish was

the 1982 squad which defeated a Gerry Faust-coached squad 17-13.

The victory extended the Notre Dame winning streak to nine straight against its great rival USC. But both coaches downplayed the significance of the recent

shipmen from the United States Naval Academy would come to town to warm Notre Dame up on a cold day.

"It was a hard-fought football game, but we're happy to win — it gives us a winning season," as Lou Holtz said. □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	0	0	7	13	20
Southern Cal	7	7	0	10	24

1st Quarter ND: Bettis 53 run (Hentrich kick) at 1:22
 2nd Quarter ND: T. Brooks 14 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 3:18
 3rd Quarter USC: Strothers 29 run (Ford kick) at 6:29
 4th Quarter ND: Bettis 1 run (Hentrich kick) at 13:08
 USC: Royster 14 run (Ford kick) at 7:38
 ND: Hentrich 34 field goal at 4:50
 USC: Spears 4 run (pass failed) at 1:50

Team Statistics

	ND	USC
First Downs	20	25
Rushing	14	13
Passing	5	12
Penalty	1	0
Rushing	299	240
Passing	199	222
Total Net Yards	465	462
Average Gain Per Play	6.8	5.6
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	2-1
Penalties-Yards	8-48	6-66
Punts-Average	3-52.0	6-38.3
Kickoff Returns	30	28
3rd Down Conversions	4-11	9-18

Individual Statistics

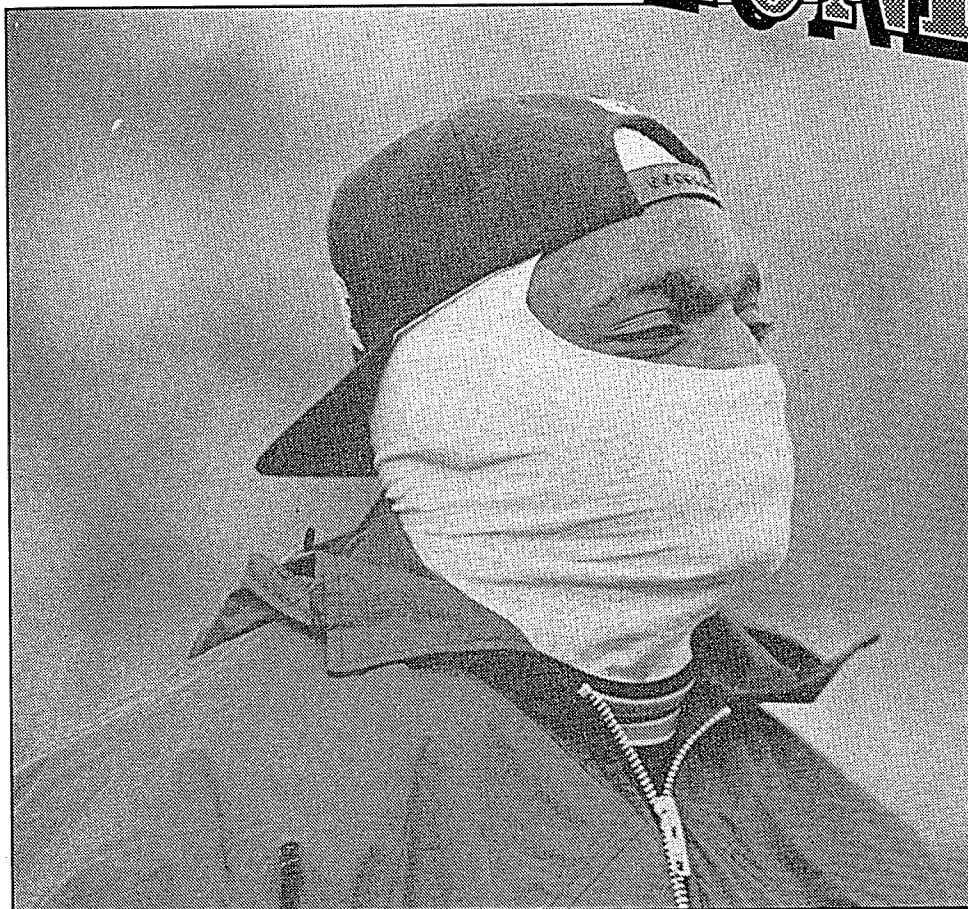
Rushing: ND- Bettis 24-178, T. Brooks 10-83, Culver 7-35, Mirer 8-3 USC- Strother 18-83, Royster 11-65, Perry 11-51, Spears 5-27
 Passing: ND- Mirer 10-19-1-166-1 USC- Perry 20-35-2-222-0
 Receiving: ND- Dawson 3-76, Bettis 2-35, T. Smith 2-30, T. Brooks 2-23, Culver 1-2 USC- Conway 6-69, Jackson 4-39, Morton 3-35, Spears 2-12, Strother 2-10, Wallace 1-47, Scott 1-7, Royster 1-3

GAME 9

*On a blustery
November day of
-4 degrees wind
chill, Notre
Dame stopped
Navy ...*



STONE COLD



Galvin Kenny

Notre Dame defensive end Bryant Young tries to keep warm as the Irish romp all over Navy, 38-0.

By Amanda Clinton

November 2, Notre Dame —

Despite miserable weather, snow, wind and below normal temperatures, Homecoming Weekend continued.

The parade with floats from every dorm still filed down Notre Dame Avenue and the pep rally originally scheduled to be in the stadium was switched, with the appreciation of all, to the Joyce Athletic Center. Nevertheless, the spirit of Notre Dame was in the

air as the Irish went head-to-head with the Navy Midshipmen.

And the Irish, favored by 41 points, showed that the predictions were right on mark with a decisive win of 38-0.

It seemed everyone knew it would be a blowout. Some people never even made it to the game because of the bitter weather. It was, after all, just Navy. It seemed the greatest challenge the fans had was not cheering on the team, but rather, staying warm.

However, to the players, there were different priorities in mind.

"People ask, 'Was it hard to play Navy because they are not having a good season?'" said Irish defensive tackle Troy Ridgely. "The answer is 'No,' because Navy is one of our obstacles to overcome to reach our goals. And that is how we approached it."

Perhaps one of the biggest surprises the team dished out was the lack of the running game and the domination of the passing game. Rick Mirer was able to gain more experience with the pass and showed the fans that he can have a consistent passing game.

"Notre Dame certainly has their share of big play makers. I admired their quarterback a lot before the game and I admire him more now that I saw what he did," said Navy's coach George Chaump. "He didn't care about the wind, he didn't care about the elements, he just went out there and did it when he had to do it. He made some great completions at timely points in the game. And I think that was the difference."

"I think without Rick Mirer we could have been able to hang with them," concluded Chaump.

In addition to displaying consistency with his throws, Mirer broke Notre Dame's single-season touchdown passing record with 17. He leaped ahead of Joe Theismann's 1970 season, John Huarte in 1964 and Bob Williams in 1949. Not only did Mirer break the Notre Dame single-season touchdown passing record, but he also set a personal high with 17 completions and 303 yards.

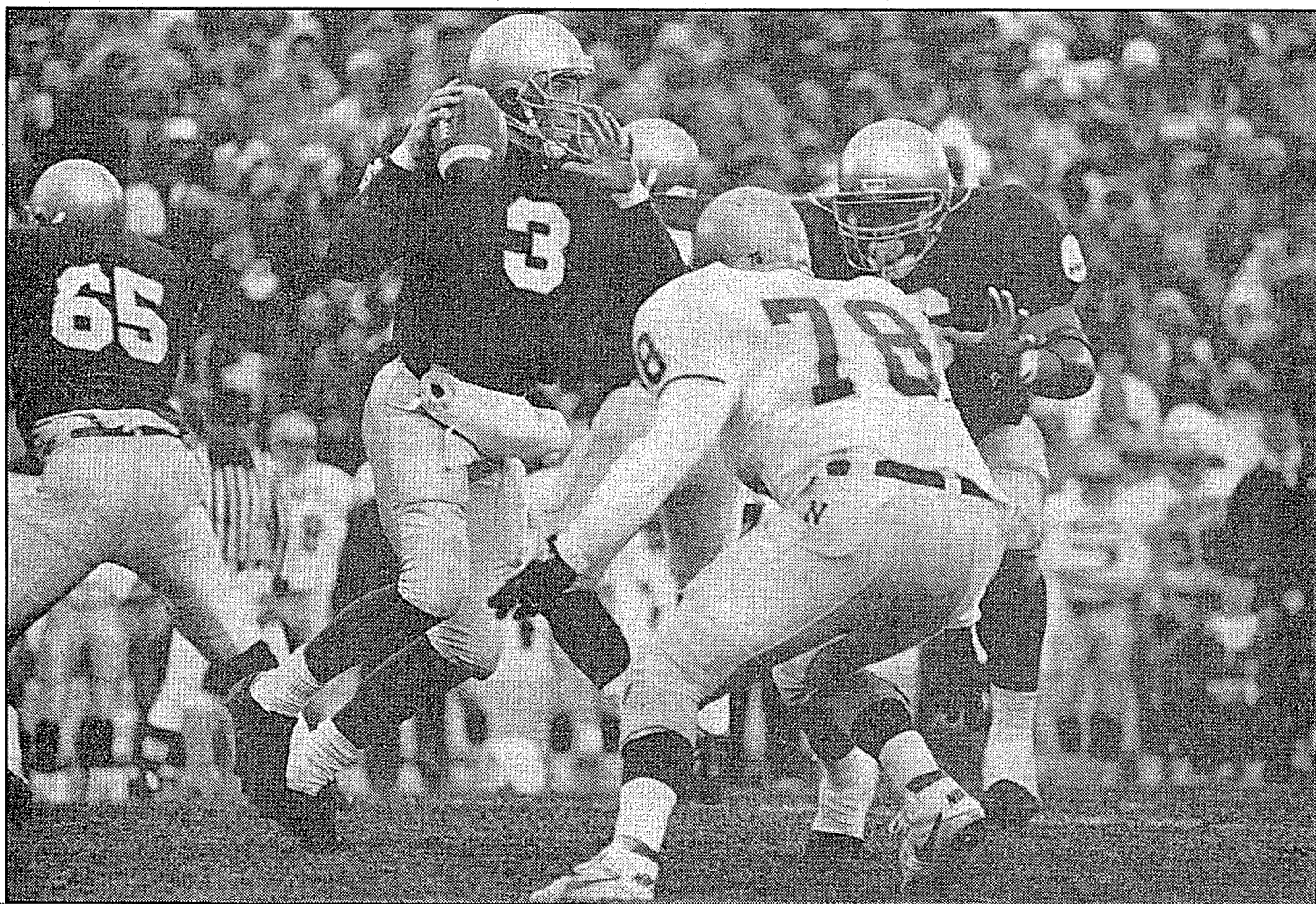
Other standout record breakers in the game were Jerome Bettis, Tony Brooks, and Tony Smith. Bettis, for the sixth consecutive game, scored two touchdowns. Brooks, with 2064 career yards, moved up to seventh place on the Notre Dame all-time rushing list. Finally, Tony Smith, with 100 yards receiving, set a career high.

During the line, the opportunity opened up for the Irish to test the passing game.

"We were able to put a lot of pressure on their front line today, and I think that was a key to stopping their run," said Navy linebacker Chris Beck. "We did an outstanding job stopping their backs and you can see that by them gaining only 60 yards in the first

factors in Navy's loss was their inability to come through when they got close to the endzone.

"I felt we did a good job out there offensively today. We weren't able to get outside as much as we did last year, because they did a good job adjusting their game," said Navy quarterback Jason Van Matre. "They put



Paul Webb

Notre Dame quarterback had the best day of his career to this point, tossing for 303 yards with no interceptions and three touchdowns.

Another record was set by Reggie Brooks. At the end of the fourth quarter, sophomore Kevin McDougal checked in at quarterback. He pitched it to Brooks who took the ball right and charged up the right sidelines before stepping out at the 3 yard line. His 65-yard run was the longest by a Notre Dame player in 1991.

This game also marked the eleventh consecutive game Notre Dame had not given up a touchdown in the first period dating back to the Penn State game in 1990.

Navy took credit for the Notre Dame tendency to throw more than run. By pres-

half. I think this shows that this Navy team can be a good one and that this one is really going to turn things around."

Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz credited the passing success to a combination of factors rather than just the skill of Mirer.

"I thought that Rick Mirer did a nice job, but we protected the passer well," said Holtz. "Our receivers caught the ball well for the most part. I thought our football team responded well."

Despite Navy's loss, the team kept a positive outlook regarding their devastating beating they received. One of the deciding

their linebackers out wide and that pretty much stopped our option. We had some success when we went inside and we started to move, but it comes down to the fact that you have to score when you get inside the 20, and we weren't able to do that."

Although Navy was dismantled, the team and coach were proud of the pressure they put on the run. Navy felt that they forced the Irish to limit the game to throwing the ball in order to come up with the win.

"Our defensive line really reacted on the ball well," said Beck. "We tied up their line which freed up the linebackers and enabled

us to make the plays to stop the run."

The brutal weather made it difficult for both teams. However, Notre Dame never let on that it was a problem. Despite high winds the Irish implemented the passing game and proved to be unstoppable to the Midshipmen.

"Days like this you just have to concentrate more," said Tony Smith. "The adjustments come after the ball is in the air. You just have to see where the ball is headed, but you run your routes the same. The quarterback is the one who has to make the adjustments, but Rick didn't seem to mind the conditions at all."

It would have been bad enough to jog into any football stadium with snow falling and a wind whipping to create a windchill of -4. But to set foot in Notre Dame Stadium, with the crowd cheering for the other team and knowing the opponent is favored by 41 points had to be demoralizing. Navy faced this as they ran onto the field.

However, the Midshipmen felt that the awful weather would work to their advantage, although the Irish proved that it would take a lot more than a few snowflakes or gusting winds to crumble under the clenches of the Midshipmen.

"Quite honestly, I was hoping for worse weather than it was, I was hoping that the wind would go up to about 60 mph," said



Galvin Kenny

Fans, who Holtz saw as candidates for the Iditarod dog sled race, brave the plummeting temperatures in the second half.

Chaump, who must have grown up in the Arctic Circle. "I was hoping that there would be a lot of snow and rain. I smiled all day when I saw the weather but it wasn't enough to stop Notre Dame and Mirer ... it wasn't enough."

Although the Notre Dame players seemed surprised at the emphasis on throwing the ball, so uncharacteristic of Notre Dame, the

team adjusted well to the situation, even in the bad weather.

"I didn't have any indication during the week how much we were going to run and how much we were going to pass," said Tony Smith. "The coaches are the ones calling the plays."

The Navy game, although a blowout, proved to be more than any of the fans had bargained for. With the cold temperatures, many trickled out as early as the first quarter. However, there were those few devoted Notre Dame fans who showed their undying support by bearing the cold and sticking it out to the end.

"We knew the crowd wouldn't really get into the ball game — they would be more concerned about keeping warm," said a bemused Holtz. "But I'll tell you what, the people who stayed until the end — now I don't know who those people are — but there are a lot of people with dog sleds who would like them to run in the Iditarod for them. That impressed me as much as anything."

The Irish showed that in the face of adversity, powerful winds, extreme temperatures and snow falling, the passing game can be just as successful as the running game.

But a little snow and rain would prove to be an easier challenge than the other obstacles to come on the Irish schedule. □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	7	10	7	14	38
Navy	0	0	0	0	0

1st Quarter ND: Brown 2 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 4:37
 2nd Quarter ND: Hentrich 35 field goal at 10:27
 ND: Bettis 9 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 0:12
 3rd Quarter ND: T. Smith 13 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 6:56
 4th Quarter ND: Bettis 1 run (Hentrich kick) at 12:04
 ND: R. Brooks 3 run (Hentrich kick) at 4:31

Team Statistics

	ND	USNA
First Downs	21	20
Rushing	8	16
Passing	12	2
Penalty	1	2
Rushing	180	234
Passing	303	62
Total Net Yards	483	296
Average Gain Per Play	8.1	4.2
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-0
Penalties-Yards	5-49	3-24
Punts-Average	1-41.0	3-35.3
Kickoff Returns	21	106
3rd Down Conversions	9-12	5-14

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND-R. Brooks 3-69, T. Brooks 10-49, Culver 9-32, Bettis 9-30, Failla 2-2, Mirer 4-(-2) USNA- Stramanak 22-89, Van Matre 19-63, Spencer 4-37, James 3-22, Ingraham 3-18, Smith 4-9, Ellis 10-(-4)
 Passing: ND- Mirer 17-23-1-303-3 USNA- Van Matre 4-5-0-17-0, Ellis 3-7-1-31-0, Spencer 1-3-0-14-0
 Receiving: ND- T. Smith 6-100, D. Brown 3-39, Dawson 2-85, T. Brooks 2-39, Griggs 2-25, Bettis 1-9, Culver 1-6 USNA- Hickman 2-17, James 2-13, Gillless 1-18, Ingraham 1-9, Stramanak 1-9, Smith 1-(-4)

Scholastic

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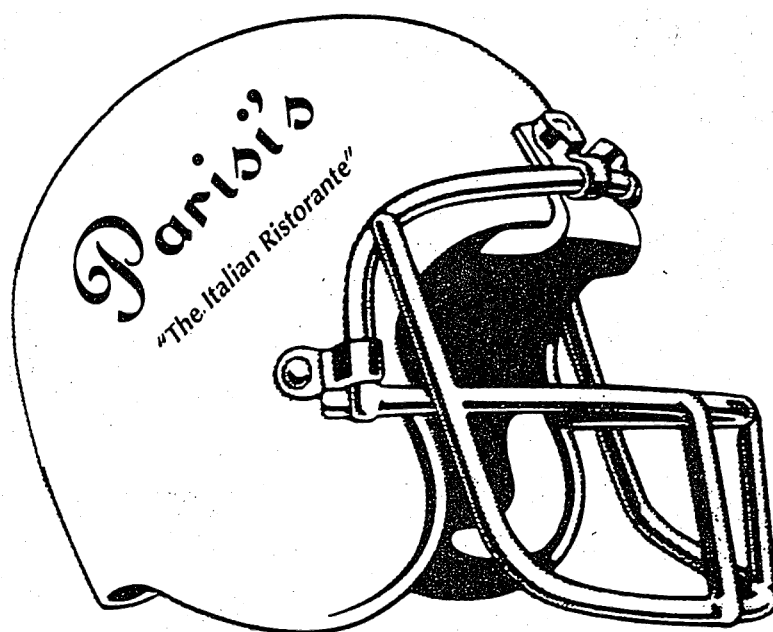
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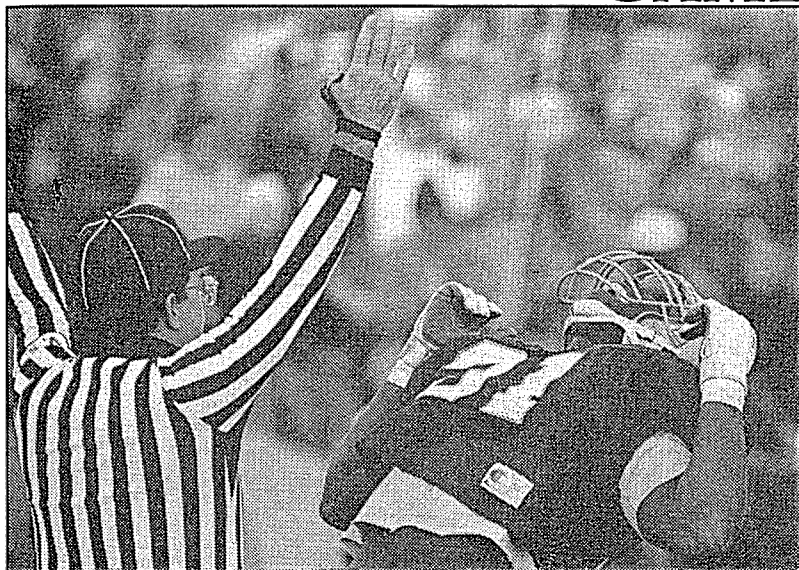
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GAME 10



Demetrilus DuBose is anguished after Tennessee scores a go-ahead touchdown. Minutes later, Tennessee blocks a last-second Irish field goal attempt to preserve a 35-34 win.

Paul Webb

Thanks to the rear end of Jeremy Lincoln, Tennessee blocked a last-second Irish field goal attempt to preserve a 35-34 win

Rear-Ended by the Vols

By J. Bradley Keck

November 9, Notre Dame —

Notre Dame has never lost at home when leading 21-0 after the first quarter. Never, that was, until the Volunteers from Tennessee pulled off one of the greatest comebacks by an opposing team in the history of Notre Dame football. By way of a blocked field goal, a key injury, and an Irish panic, the Volunteers were able to squeak out a 35-34 victory and give college football fans one of the most exciting games of the season.

The Irish came into the contest looking for an important win. A victory would raise their record to 9-1 and put them in the hunt for the National Championship. Tennessee came into South Bend hoping to grab the attention of the bowl representatives that came to watch the contest. Nine different bowls sent representatives and after two tough losses in the Southeast Conference, this was the Vols' final chance to dance in the spotlight and

receive an invitation to a prestigious bowl.

The delegates from the Sugar, Fiesta, and Orange bowls were jockeying for position to rope-in the impressive Irish squad. After the first fifteen minutes and 21 Notre Dame points, the Vols were becoming old news and dreams of a top-ranked University of Miami Hurricane squad facing fourth-ranked Notre Dame had to be filling the post-season matchmakers' heads. But sometimes even the best laid plans ...

In their first possession the Irish sputtered. After three quick plays Craig Hentrich was forced to punt. His punt was weak and it came up short for Tennessee deep returner Dale Carter. The Vols deep man had to sprint under the short ball, and under heavy pressure, he dropped the ball. Notre Dame junior Lance Johnson recovered the football. The Irish had an unexpected early second possession in good field position.

On this drive, senior tailback Tony

Brooks set the tone for the Irish attack for the rest of the first half. On first down, he exploded 26 yards up the middle. After pounding through the line Brooks was stuck six yards down the field by a Vol linebacker, but he punished that would-be-tackler, shot up the gridiron ten yards and was wrapped up by Floyd Miley: but Miley was in for a ride as Brooks dragged the 210-lb. defensive back ten more yards down the field.

Jerome "The End Zone Is My Home" Bettis and Rodney Culver chipped in 11 more yards for another first down before Brooks was ready to roll again. On second-and-goal from the 12-yard line, Brooks got the call, crushed another linebacker at the five and pulled another Tennessee defender into the end zone.

But the Vols didn't quit. On the ensuing kick off Dale Carter bumped and jumped up the field for a thrilling 62-yard return. Carter juiced one player at the ten, reversed his field and ran away from the Irish charge. Notre Dame's Jeff Burris, in a last-ditch attempt, was able to drag Carter down as he flew down the sideline.

Before the stadium stopped rocking from nervous Notre Dame heartbeats and Volunteer cheers, it was filled again with Irish exhilaration and Tennessee groans. On the Vols second play after the return, Andy Kelly, Tennessee's quarterback, saw his ace receiver Carl Pickens open on a quick-out for an apparent 10-yard gain. As Kelly released the ball, Pickens slipped and Irish cornerback Tom Carter was the only person in the vicinity of the play. Carter made the interception, turned on the jets and coasted 79 yards for the second Notre Dame touchdown in little over 30 seconds.

In four furious minutes, the Irish had created two turnovers and turned

them into 14 quick points. In just over two minutes both teams raced up and down the field amassing 187 total yards. These few wild plays, however, could not hold a candle to the craziness that was to ensue.

Notre Dame got one more crack at the ball in the first quarter. In ten rushing plays and one 20-yard pass to senior tight end Derek Brown, the Irish marched 94 yards down the field and in for yet another score. In a drive in which there was only one third down situation, the trio of Brooks, Culver and Bettis ran over and through the Volunteers, averaging almost seven yards/carry.

Tennessee was not ready to roll over and die. Time was in its favor and as soon as the visitors had the pigskin back in their hands

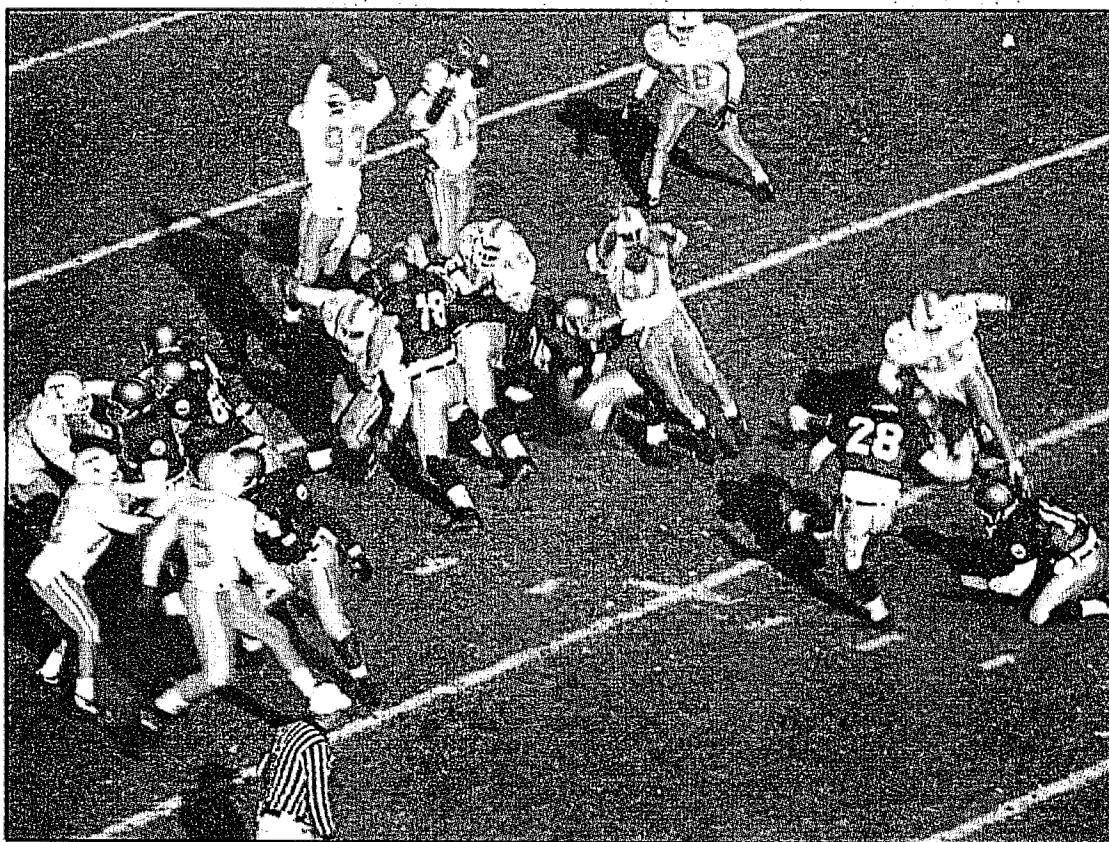
they took their offensive show on the road. Kelly overcame his early passing miscue to usher his team down for a score. With excellent protection, Kelly passed for 46 yards on the drive, completing four out of five attempts. After a drive-saving run by Aaron Hayden, Kelly hit a streaking Cory Fleming

prising rout.

In a quick and powerful drive, Notre Dame added another seven points to the first half tally. On another drive that highly favored the rush, the Irish covered 59 yards in eight plays. Two Volunteer penalties kept the drive alive. Finally, from two yards out

Bettis trucked into the end zone.

After a futile Volunteer possession, it was Notre Dame ball at mid-field with 1:04 left in the half — 31-7 Irish lead. On first down, Culver ran off tackle behind a huge block by Bettis for 33 yards. On the next play, Bettis cranked out four more yards and the Irish looked ready to send the Vols to an early grave. After a 2-yard loss and an incomplete pass, Holtz decided to



Paul Webb

This blocked field goal attempt at the end of the first half was returned 85 yards for a Tennessee touchdown that turned the tide not only of this game but of this season.

for the score. By striking so quickly Tennessee was in good position to greatly cut Notre Dame's lead by the half.

"It was a shocker, but I've been in shockers before," said Tennessee's coach Johnny Majors. "You can't just pick up your tent and run — we knew what we had to do."

The Irish withstood this pressure and ran right down to the Tennessee six on their next possession and kicked a 23-yard field goal. Then, just six plays later, it was Notre Dame ball once again. After making a solid catch, Fleming fumbled when sophomore free safety Willie Clark's helmet pounded into the ball as he made the tackle. As the football floated from Clark's helmet and into Greg Davis' hands, the game looked to be a sur-

close the half with a chip field goal.

The events that followed changed not only the course of the game, but of the Irish season. The short kick by Hentrich was blocked. In the melee that followed, Tennessee came up not only with the ball but renewed hope. From a swarm of players around the football, the Vols defensive back Miley stumbled out with the ball. In a quick move he pivoted away from the pile with only open turf ahead. Untouched and altogether unnoticed, Miley began his 85-yard jaunt to the end zone for a shocking half-ending touchdown.

Coach Majors had only this to say of the magnitude of this one play, "One of the great plays that any football team has ever had. It

gave us a great lift."

For Notre Dame this play was much more deadly than just the missed field goal and the seven points. Hentrich had injured his leg and the Irish had suffered a scare. Going into the locker room at the half, the Irish were reminded of the reality of football — with a key injury and the loss of momentum, a 31-7 lead can be erased as quickly as it was created.

Hentrich came out limping for the second half kick off — an apt symbol for his Notre Dame team that also came out lame for the final 30 minutes. After quickly exchanging punts Tennessee came out for their second possession of the half on a mission to score and score a lot.

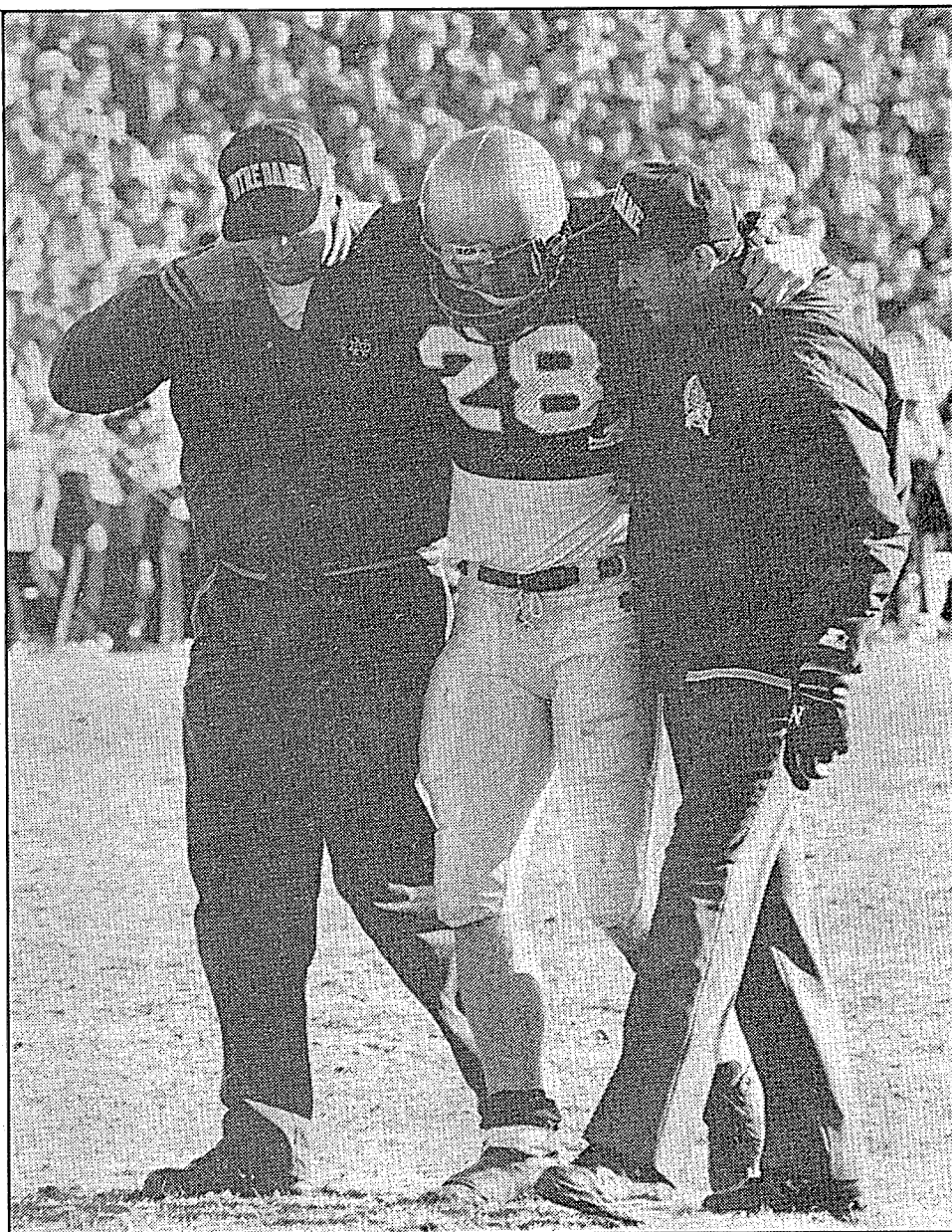
Tennessee charged down the field swiftly behind the strength of Kelly's arm. The Irish defense held the charging Vols to a fourth down but on a gutsy call, Majors went for all or nothing. On fourth-and-four from the Irish 30, Kelly looked down the field for not only an open receiver but a way to take back some control of the game. He found J.J. McClesky, moving across the field for a 14 yard gain. The Vols could cut the lead to 10 and did so three plays later when Kelly found his tight end Von Reeves standing alone in the end zone.

Tested, their Irish came back once again aiming to squash any Volunteer hopes. Junior quarterback Rick Mirer gathered the troops and led the Irish to yet another score. On three great passes, Mirer found Bettis, Lake Dawson, and Will Pollard down the field for a total of 52 yards. Another Hentrich field goal increased the Irish lead to 34-21.

As the quarter wound down, it seemed that the Irish had the game firmly in hand. It was Irish ball to start the fourth quarter and the home team had a 13 point lead. But in a whirlwind 15 minutes, the unthinkable occurred — the Irish panicked as Tennessee came alive on both sides of the ball.

Notre Dame was shut down quickly and forced to punt three times during the quarter by a fired up Volunteer defense. Hentrich finally had to give up his kicking duties as his knee stiffened up. Senior punter Jim Sexton had to kick from deep within his own territory twice. One punt went for 27 yards and the other for only 30.

Tennessee fielded the 27-yard punt with only 9:40 left in the game at the Notre Dame



Nick Spangler

Although Tennessee's first blocked field goal resulted in a touchdown, what proved more costly for Notre Dame was that it also resulted in a severe sprain of kicker Craig Hentrich's knee.

45-yard line. From this point on, Notre Dame lost control. On the Volunteer's ensuing drive, the Irish committed a personal foul and pass interference. This was all the excuse that Tennessee's tough running back Hayden needed as he danced into the end zone, cutting Notre Dame's lead to six.

Forcing the Irish to punt again, Tennessee took over the ball in great field position. After moving to the Irish 25, Coach Majors called his final time-out with 6:47 remaining. He decided on fourth-and-nine to go for the win. As Kelly faded back into the pocket

he threw for Pickens at the goal line. Irish faithful let out a sigh of relief as Notre Dame's Burris batted the ball away.

The Irish took over deep in their own territory. Because of a sack, and a short run by Brooks, the Irish had to go to the air again. On third-and-twelve Mirer looked downfield and threw a strike — right to Tennessee's Dale Carter standing on the 45-yard line.

"We couldn't get any momentum," said Holtz. "We tried to throw it and couldn't convert. They gambled and we failed to

convert."

A team of nine lives, Tennessee got just one more. That was all they needed. Three plays after the turnover, Hayden was coasting into the end zone again on a well-timed screen pass from Kelly.

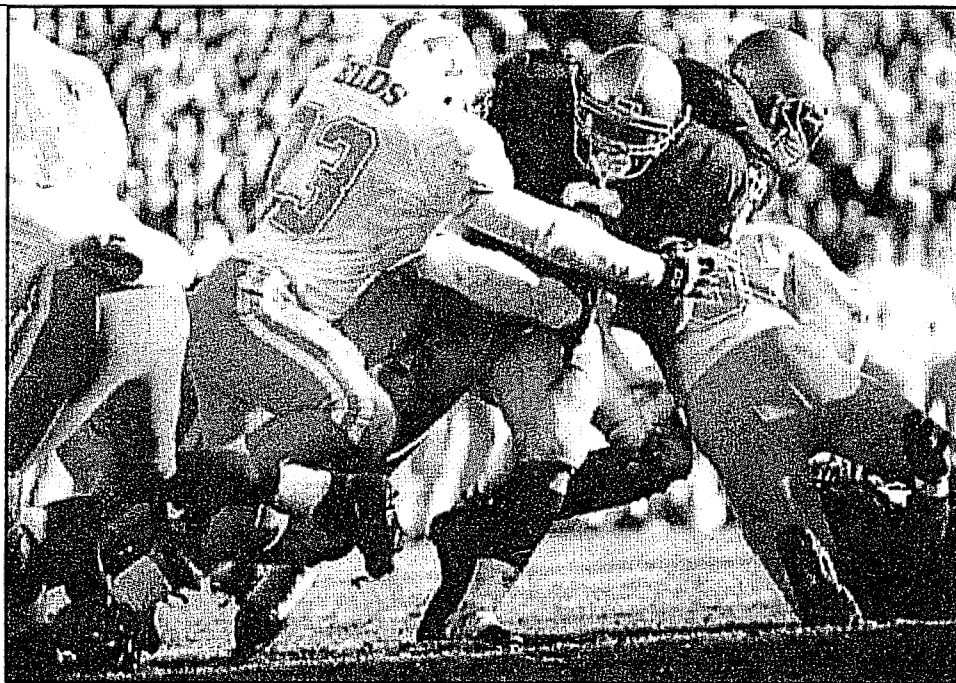
"It was the first screen we called all day," said a joyous Majors after the game. "We didn't know to call it but we did and it worked. We caught the Irish blitzing and as soon as the ball was snapped the offensive coordinators were yelling, 'It's a touch-down!'"

The Irish had panicked while up 34-21 and now had to score again in order to win. The strange had become the unbelievable, and an unthinkable scenario was now the reality.

"It was just a crazy game," said Holtz.

But all was not lost. Composure regained, the Irish had another chance to win. Starting from their own 25-yard line with almost four minutes to play, the Irish marched down the field. But time was fleeting. On fourth-and-three from the Vol 9-yard line, Holtz called his final time out to set up for a game-saving 27-yard field goal.

It was bound to happen someday — Notre Dame was eventually going to miss a chance for a miracle. A chance to enter another chapter into the storybooks in this, the 300th game played in "The House that Rock Built." With Hentrich out, walk-on Rob



After a big first half in which Irish running backs ran wild for 233 yards, the Volunteers buckled down and stymied the Notre Dame attack.

Leonard came on to kick the potential winning field goal. Making this the field goal would be a perfect ending to this wild game. Drama is what has made for great Notre Dame football history — drama, however, could not put the ball through the uprights today.

The snap to the holder Sexton was low and Tennessee pressed hard. As the low kick

cleared the line, it grazed Tennessee player Jeremy Lincoln's ample rear end and wobbled wide right of the goal post.

University of Tennessee Volunteers 35, Notre Dame Fighting Irish 34.

Coach Holtz spoke for thousands of Irish fans after the game when he said, "This is the most disappointed I've ever been in my life." □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	21	10	3	0	34
Tennessee	0	14	7	14	35

1st Quarter	ND: T. Brooks 12 run (Hentrich kick) at 11:35 ND: Carter 79 interception run (Hentrich kick) at 11:01 ND: Mirer 10 run (Hentrich kick) at 2:53
2nd Quarter	UT: Kelly 21 pass (pass to Fleming) at 14:10 ND: Hentrich 24 field goal at 9:13 ND: Bettis 2 run (Hentrich kick) at 3:26 UT: Miley 85 blocked kick run (Becksvort kick) at :14
3rd Quarter	UT: Kelly 4 pass (pass to Reeves) at 6:58 ND: Hentrich 20 field goal at 2:08 UT: Hayden 4 run (Becksvort kick) at 9:03
4th Quarter	UT: Kelly 26 pass (pass to Hayden) at 4:03

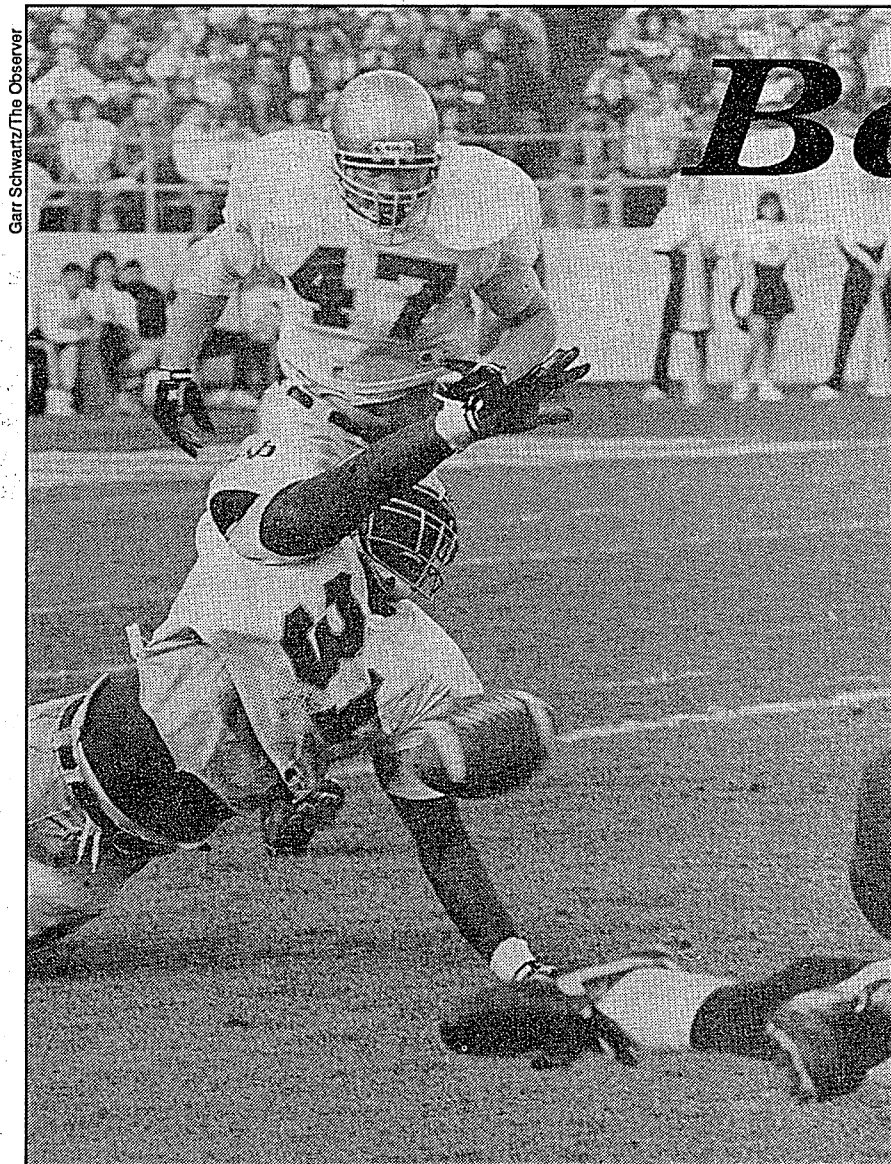
Team Statistics

	ND	UT
First Downs	25	20
Rushing	16	7
Passing	7	12
Penalty	2	1
Rushing	315	144
Passing	142	259
Total Net Yards	457	403
Average Gain Per Play	5.9	6.0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	3-3
Penalties-Yards	6-51	6-40
Punts-Average	5-30.6	3-39.3
Kickoff Returns	178	178
3rd Down Conversions	4-13	3-11

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- T. Brooks 20-126, Culver 11-78, Bettis 16-64, Mirer 9-47 UT- Hayden 17-82, Faulkner 2-32, Kelly 4-14, Stewart 5-14
 Passing: ND- Mirer 11-21-1-121-0 UT- Kelly 24-38-1-259-3
 Receiving: ND- Brown 3-38, Dawson 2-29, T. Brooks 2-22, Smith 2-16, Bettis 1-25, Pollard 1-12 UT- Adams 6-36, Reeves 4-29, Fleming 3-56, Pickens 3-47, Faulkner 3-28, Hayden 2-30, McCleskey 2-26, Stewart 1-7

"We Will Be Back"



Garr Schwartz/The Observer

The Irish visit Penn State a week after the demoralizing defeat at the hands of the Tennessee Volunteers — and are blown out by the Nittany Lions 35-13

Irish linebacker Demetrius DuBose reaches in vain for the football, an apt symbol for Notre Dame's frustrations on the day.

By Jim Kuser

November 16, University Park, PA —

"I told my wife yesterday that this thing could ugly. And it did. It got very, very ugly."

— Notre Dame Coach Lou Holtz

One week after dropping a heartbreaking 35-34 decision at home to the upstart Tennessee Volunteers, the Notre Dame

Fighting Irish traveled to Happy Valley, Pennsylvania, to take on the tenacious Penn State Nittany Lions. This game has always been one of great importance and of great interest to those that follow college football because perennially, and particularly throughout the 1980s, the team that wins soars to the top of the polls and the team that loses stumbles to the bottom of the polls.

Before Notre Dame lost to Tennessee, this game was received the billings that accompany any game that has national champion-

ship implications. But, because Notre Dame lost to Tennessee and fell seven spots in the polls, the national championship implications of this game were washed away. Instead, this game was to be played for pride. New Year's Day bowl invitations whistled in the wind, but they seemed secondary. What was primary was the show that was to start at 3:30 EST between two of college football perennial powerhouses: the 12th-ranked Fighting Irish of the University of Notre Dame and the 8th-ranked Nittany Lions of Pennsylvania State University.

"Any time that Notre Dame and Penn State go head-to-head there are going to be hard hits," said Notre Dame linebacker Demetrius DuBose. "These are two tough teams playing to outdo one another."

Going into the game, Notre Dame was still seething about a last second loss to Penn State at a year ago and the loss to Tennessee at home a week ago in what was the last home game for the seniors on the 1991 Notre Dame team. A win at Penn State would help soothe these wounds.

Notre Dame sought not to rectify a situation: Notre Dame sought to avenge a situation. Rarely in the long, heralded history of Notre Dame football have the Fighting Irish seen themselves in a losing light. Today was the day to step out from this unaccustomed

light. However, Penn State had alternative plans in what was the last home game for the seniors on the 1991 Penn State team. The Nittany Lions were not about to allow the Irish to be spoil their party.

With the overall series record of this rivalry tied at 7-7-1, this was the last time that these two teams would tangle at Beaver Stadium for a long time as Penn State prepares to exit the ranks of the Independents and join the Big Ten.

And so, here were two traditional powerhouses playing for pride. Here were Notre Dame and Penn State. The Fighting Irish and the Nittany Lions; the Blue and the Gold versus the Blue and the White; Lou Holtz and Joe Paterno, two of college football's most prominent coaches.

There was a record-setting crowd of 96,672 at Penn State's Beaver Stadium — a crowd pumped and loud as they anxiously awaited what was to be a battle. But on this day, the battle became a blowout as a rumbling Penn State offense combined to crush Notre Dame 35-13.

"What happened to Notre Dame?" asked the Fighting Irish faithful.

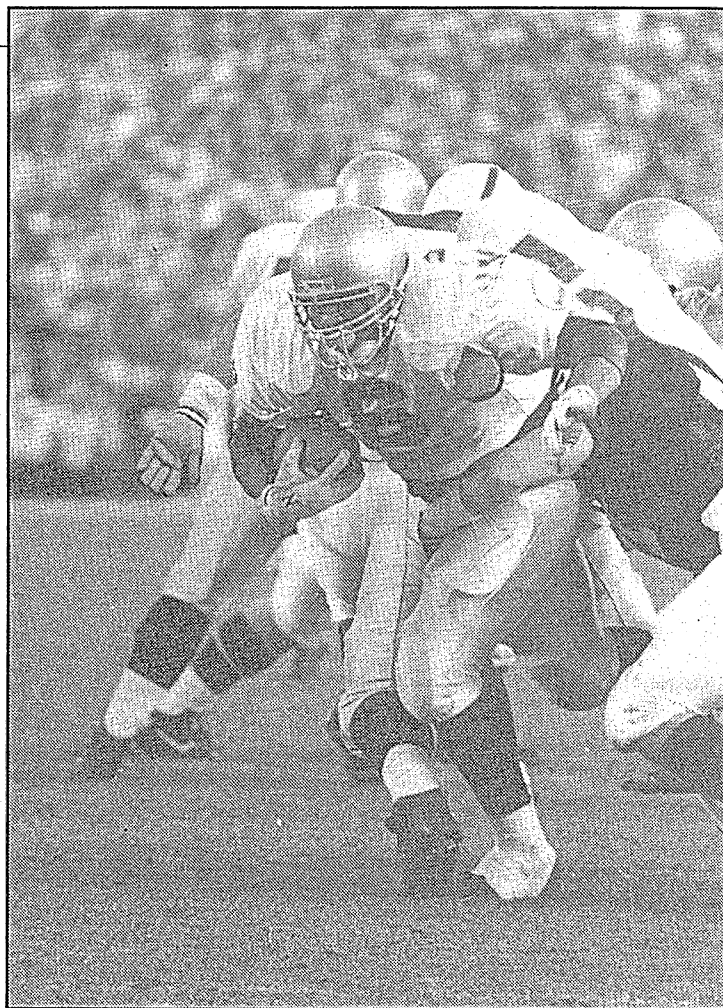
"We fought for a win, but Penn State was too strong today," answered Holtz after the game. "They are a very, very good football team. Their defense was at its best. Their quarterback Tony Sacca was at his best."

Sacca's statistics on the day were a sharp

14-20 passing for 151 yards. He had no interceptions, two touchdowns, and a long of 45 yards. Definitely his most impressive skill was his mobility; although the Penn State offensive line provided protection, Sacca again and again avoided all pursuit.

"I was glad to see Tony get it together in this game," said Sacca's coach Paterno. "He has shown himself to be a good quarterback, but today showed himself to be a great quarterback."

There were many "prime time performers" in this game for the Nittany Lions. Running back Richie Anderson carried the ball 26 times for 136 yards, two touchdowns, and a long of 57 yards. Wide receiver O.J.



Fullback Jerome Bettis was one of the only bright spots for the Irish, scoring a second quarter touchdown.

McDuffie grabbed the ball four times for 86 yards and two touchdowns. The trio of Sacca, Anderson and McDuffie was so effective that Penn State never even attempted a field goal in this game. They marched around the field with the ease of the marching band at halftime.

Study these offensive statistics to see why Penn State was so dominant. In a very un-Notre Dame-like performance, the Irish totaled only 109 yards rushing on 31 attempts to Penn State's 263 yards rushing. The average gain in the game for the Fighting Irish was 4.2 yards, and the average gain in the game for the Nittany Lions was 5.8 yards. The statistics in the time of possession are just as lopsided. Notre Dame took 21:13 off of the clock while Penn State held the ball for 36:48.

But the most telling statistic was turnovers. Notre Dame fumbled away five times to Penn State's once.

"Their offensive line blew us off of the ball as the game got going," said Holtz.

"Corner Kicks?"

After Craig Hentrich was sent to the sidelines on account of a sprained knee against Tennessee, there was some question as to who would be responsible for kicking the ball off for Notre Dame against Penn State. The answer to this question came as a surprise.

Three-time monogram winner for the Notre Dame soccer team Kevin Pendergast (a 5-8, 145 pound junior out of Simsbury, CT) joined the football team earlier in the week as a kicker. Never before had Pendergast played competitive football, and here he was at the highest amateur level kicking the ball off on na-

tional television. Pendergast tried out for the team on Wednesday, made the team on Thursday, practiced on Friday, and kicked the ball off on Saturday.

Pendergast's first kick was high and had good hang time as it reached the Penn State 12-yard line. His second kick was also high and had good hang time as it reached the Penn State 20-yard line. His third kick was similar to his second.

Thinking about taking a fifth year of college, Pendergast has considered trying out as a kicker in the future (see the "Final Word" on page 56 by Pendergast).

— By Jim Kuser

"Their strength and their speed showed itself."

As always, Notre Dame tried to rally. This time, the rally started on the Penn State 3-yard line where, on a fourth down and goal-to-go with thirty-two seconds remaining in the first half, quarterback Rick Mirer rolled out to his left and fired a ball barely above the raised arms of an open receiver Rodney Culver. The halftime score could have been 21-14, but the miscue left the score at a more daunting 21-7. Morale was low, and after half-time, Notre Dame did not come close to being competitive.

"We are not the type of team that plays come-from-behind football," said Holtz. "We would have had a good

thing going if we went in at the half down by seven. Instead, we went in down by fourteen, and we fumbled the opening kickoff of the second half. It was disappointing and discouraging."

But Holtz bounced back at the conclusion

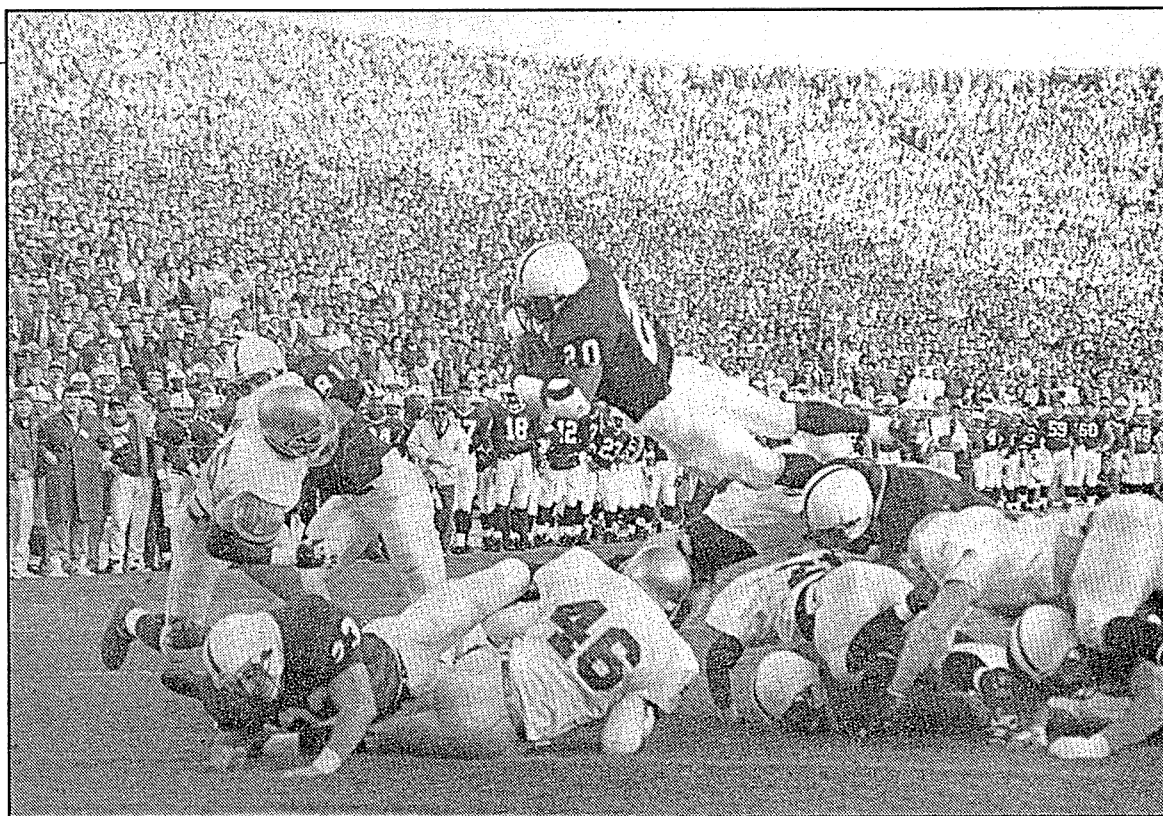
of his post-game press conference.

"In 1987, we lost 21-20 to Penn State and were then blown out by Miami. In 1991, we lost 35-34 to Tennessee and were then blown out by Penn State," said Holtz. "But remember what happened the season after 1987 —

so don't bury us too quick. I don't handle losing two in a row well. We still have Hawaii and the bowl game to rectify this thing. 1992 starts today and we will rejuvenate.

"We will be back."

□



David Lee/The Observer

Penn State's Richie Anderson dives in for one of his first quarter touchdowns.

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	0	7	0	6	13
Penn State	21	0	7	7	35

1st Quarter	PSU: Anderson 3 run (Fayak kick) at 9:57
	PSU: McDuffie 8 pass from Sacca (Fayak kick) at 5:38
	PSU: Anderson 4 run (Fayak kick) at 0:04
2nd quarter	ND: Bettis 2 run (Marsh kick) at 9:39
3rd quarter	PSU: McDuffie 37 run (Fayak kick) at 11:41
4th quarter	PSU: McDuffie 45 pass from Sacca (Fayak kick) at 13:00
	ND: Pollard 38 pass from Mirer (pass failed) at 8:45

Team Statistics

	ND	PSU
First Downs	18	19
Rushing	5	11
Passing	12	8
Penalty	1	0
Rushing	90	239
Passing	216	151
Total Net Yards	306	390
Average Gain Per Play	4.2	5.8
Fumbles-Lost	5-0	1-0
Penalties-Yards	1-5	4-20
Punts-Average	6-37.5	6-38.8
Kickoff Returns	138	44
3rd Down Conversions	7-15	9-15

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Bettis 12-53, T. Brooks 8-21, Culver 3-6, Mirer 6-6, R. Brooks 1-5, Failla 1-(-1) PSU- Anderson 26-136, Gash 13-59, McDuffie 1-37, Hammonds 2-11, Sacca 5-(-4)

Passing: ND- Mirer 16-37-1-198-1, McDougal 2-4-0-11-0, Failla 1-1-0-7-0 PSU- Sacca 14-20-0-151-2

Receiving: ND- T. Smith 5-72, Brown 4-49, Bettis 3-14, I. Smith 2-14 2-14, Pollard 1-38, Griggs 1-15, T. Brooks 1-5, Dawson 1-5, R. Brooks 1-5 PSU- McDuffie 4-86, Brady 4-33, Anderson 3-17, Gash 2-12, T. Smith 1-3

Trouble in Paradise

In their last test before the Sugar Bowl, the Irish narrowly defeat an upstart Hawaii team 48-42

By Chris Fillio

November 30, Honolulu, HI —

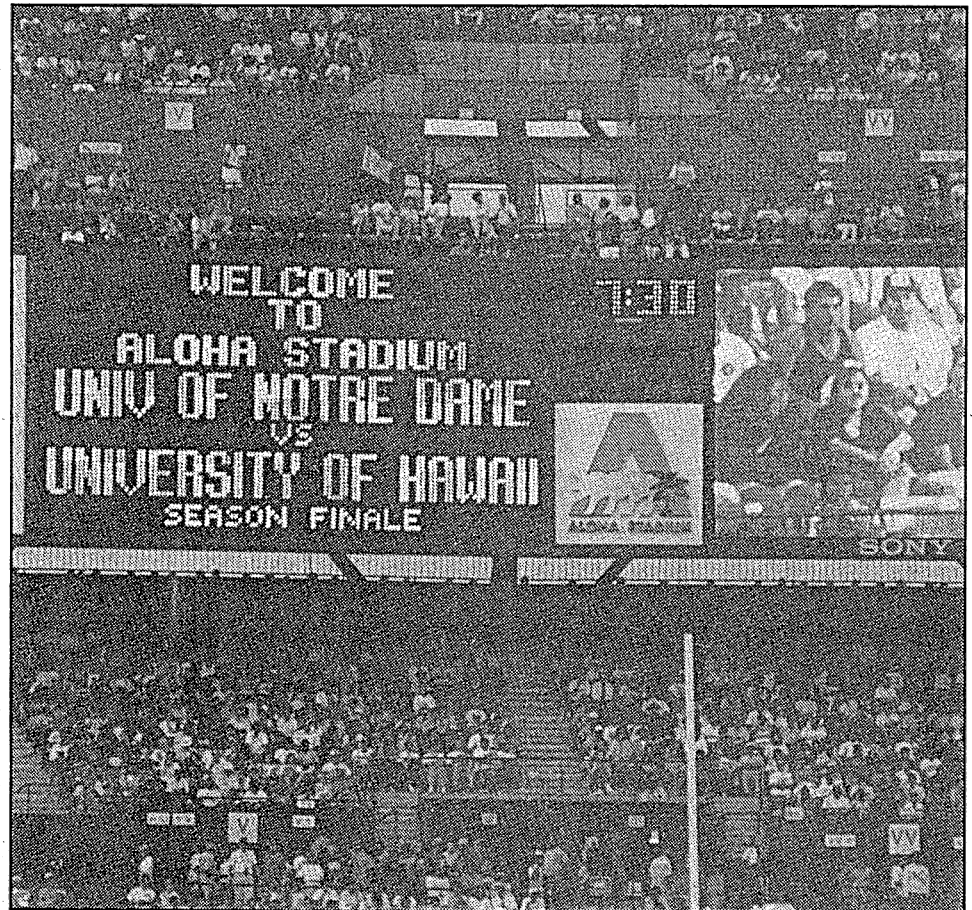
For many of the thousands of Irish fans who travelled across the Pacific Ocean to witness Notre Dame escape Aloha Stadium with a narrow 48-42 victory, there are probably many fond memories of the tropical island paradise.

For Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz, however, "Happiness is a poor memory."

So went his initial recollections of a game which saw the Irish sprint out a halftime lead of 28-10 only to subsequently surrender 32 second half points in barely averting a 20 minute collapse eerily reminiscent of the 35-34 loss to Tennessee just a month prior.

Despite the pre-game spread, which favored Notre Dame over the Rainbows by as much as 24 points on some lines, closer analysis of the situation might warrant a re-evaluation of the two teams.

At game time, the Irish were lacking six starters, including defensive stopper Demetrius DuBose and the kicking game's total package, placekicker and punter Craig Hentrich. In addition, the Rainbows hail from the Western Athletic Conference — the wacky WAC — a conference known for its 90 point games decided by a last-second field goal, where pass plays and options are many and defensive battles are few and far



Chris Fillio

Despite the friendly message on the Aloha Stadium scoreboard, the Rainbows were not ready to roll over and die for Notre Dame.

between.

The Rainbows were averaging just under 27 points per game while surrendering almost 31, including allowing 100 points combined in earlier losses to Iowa and San Diego State. Perhaps less noteworthy, the series history between the two schools was deadlocked — at 0-0.

But the visitors from South Bend were the proverbial wounded tigers. Still smarting from not one but two losses, in succession against Tennessee and Penn State, the Irish coaching staff was intent on not letting the squad feel this game would be just another

day at the beach.

With so many questions on defense throughout the season having gone unanswered, Holtz had concentrated much of his energies from previous weeks working with the defensive unit in hopes of instilling within them a "defensive attitude." He felt it had paid off — to an extent.

"For twenty minutes we were sharp, we were alert, doing what we needed," said Holtz. "But then we starting falling soft on the fullback and that's where we faltered — down and inside — and that's where things started breaking down."

Yet, in light of the absence of defensive stalwarts Germaine Holden, Pete Bercich, Greg Davis, Eric Jones, Demetrius DuBose and Anthony Peterson, Holtz felt encour-

ing in a myriad of ways: the traditional forward pass and straight up the gut run, but as well some surprises including a reverse, a botched fumblerooski play, and onside

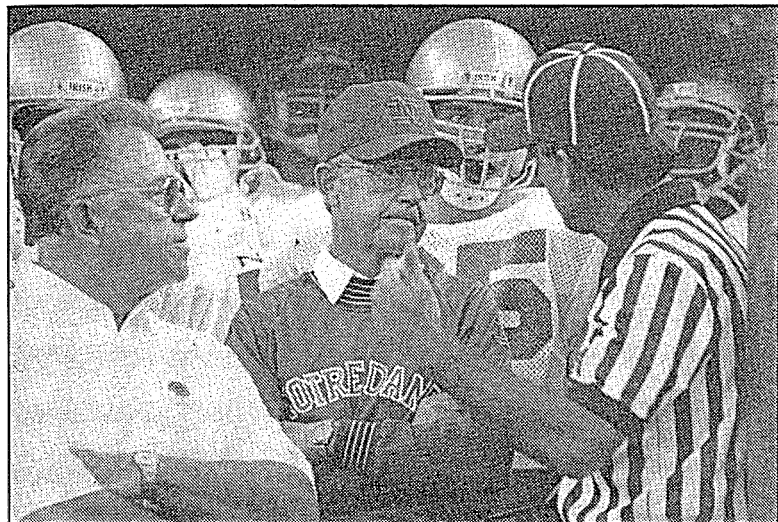
passing.

In the second quarter, Carter directed the Rainbows 89 yards to close to 21-7, culminating with a 4-yard pass to running back Eddie Kealoha. After Brooks scored for the second time of the night, All American placekicker Jason Elam hit from 31 yards out as time expired in the first half to make it 28-10.

Notre Dame sprinted out to an early 21-0 lead. Seniors Culver and Tony Brooks both had first quarter scores on the ground, and Mirer had one of his own on an 11-yard scramble.

In the second half, Carter once again marched the Hawaii offense down the field, this time 59 yards to bring the score to 28-17. Meanwhile, the Irish stuck to their bread-and-butter, the 281 yards on the ground being par for the course for the running attack. Sophomore fullback Jerome Bettis opened the second half scoring for the Irish with a 4-yard run to make it 35-17, making him Notre Dame's all-time single-season leader in touchdowns with his seventeenth of the year.

After Elam again connected for the Rainbows, this time from 41 yards out, it may have appeared as if the Irish defensive woes would be of little consequence for the rest of the contest. Johnson made his return,



Chris Fillo

For Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz, "Happiness is a good memory," on a frustrating night in Honolulu.

aged by the defense's first half performance.

On the offensive side of the ball, there were indeed some bright spots for the Irish. Quarterback Rick Mirer passed comfortably all night, hitting 12-of-19 attempts for 218 yards, without any interceptions. Senior running back Rodney Culver rushed for career-high 118 yards in 13 attempts, while split end Tony Smith was on the receiving end of nine catches for 140 yards, also a career best.

On special teams, the play of the day went to Notre Dame's Clint "Cosmic" Johnson, who answered a third-quarter Hawaii field goal by fielding the ensuing kickoff at the Notre Dame 7-yard line and sprinting with it 93 yards for the score, the first such return of his young career.

"The kicker was the only one left in my way," said the speedy sophomore. "I was thinking, 'I can't let a kicker get me.' I put a move on him and got past him. I took it to the house."

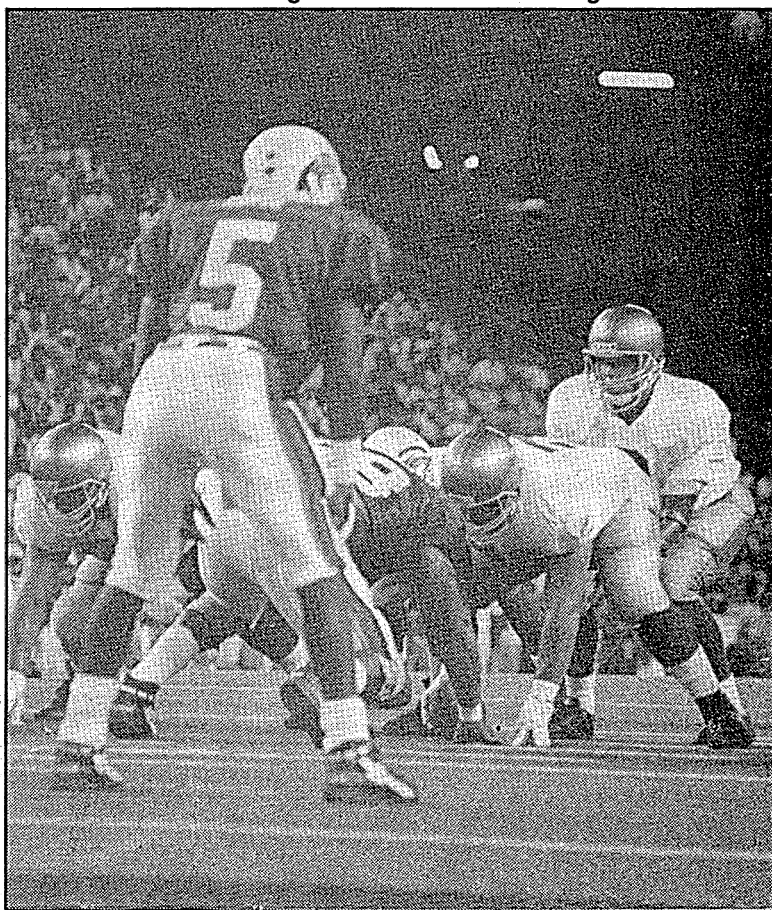
The kicking of Johnson's special teams complement, sophomore Rob Leonard, was encouraging, as he connected solidly on his first six PAT attempts before the Rainbow's right tackle Maa Tanuyasa managed to get a hand on the last one of the evening.

The Irish had the usual offensive fireworks, with 499 total yards. But Hawaii countered with 473 yards of their own com-

host Rainbows, that 24-point Las Vegas spread seemed to be quickly becoming an underestimate as Irish cornerback Tom Carter victimized starting quarterback Ivin Jasper twice with interceptions.

But then Jasper's replacement, Michael Carter, started to heat things up for Hawaii, running the option attack with ease. Carter racked up 133 yards on the ground in 23 attempts with two touchdowns while adding 70 yards and a touchdown connection through the air on 6-of-13

Quarterback Rick Mirer figured 50 points from his offense would be enough — he was almost wrong.



Chris Fillo

to make it 42-20 in favor of the Irish.

It was perhaps about at this time that many of the fans in more easterly time zones put a "W" in the win column and shuffled off to bed. Slumbering, much like the Irish defense, and much like the defensive unit, shocked when waking to hear of a slim 48-

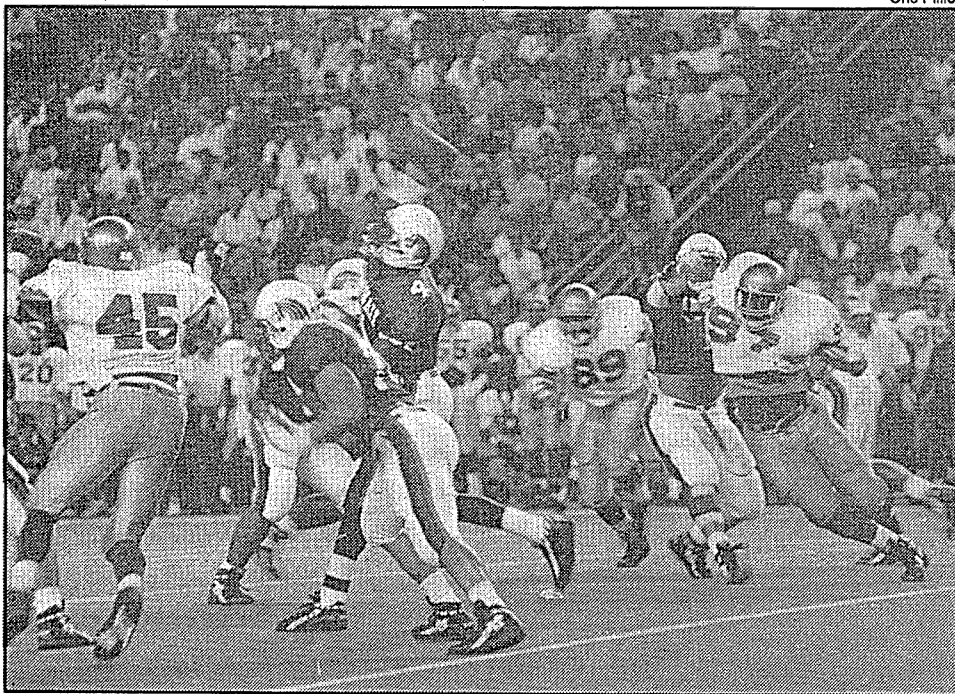
42 Irish victory.

"Hey, we scored 50 points on offense," said Mirer. "That's all I can do."

Six minutes into the fourth quarter, quarterback Carter did what he'd been doing all night, as Hawaii drove 46 yards to make it 42-26. The magician Carter also dashed in

Ivin Jasper launches a pass over the Irish defense. Jasper struggled at first, but given a second chance in the fourth quarter, he led the Rainbows on a 69-yard touchdown drive.

Cris Fillio



for the conversion. It was on the touchdown play, as Carter swung around to his left and then sprinted 11 yards ahead, that Irish free safety Willie Clark met him head-on with a thunderous hit at the 1-yard line. While Clark may have gotten the better of the tackle, the feisty Carter managed to lunge forward for the score, yet had to leave the game due to injury.

The Irish were perhaps relieved that the multi-faceted Carter then gave way to Jasper, who threw two interceptions before being pulled by Hawaii head coach Bob Wagner in the first half.

"I said 'This is crunch time'" said Jasper. "I can't complain about not playing and then not do the job. I went in confident."

When Jasper vindicated himself in directing the Rainbows 69 yards, pockets of Hawaii fans taunted the Notre Dame sideline with chants of "Tennessee! Tennessee!" The memory got worse, when with 1:38 left in the game Kealoha hauled in a seven-yard pass from Jasper to make it 48-42.

"I feel we could have been ... been more intense," said a relieved Tony Brooks after the game. We gave up some big plays ... But what do they say? A win is a win."

Running out the final minute, the Irish escaped a stunning effort by the Rainbows and flew home from paradise with few smiling faces. □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	14	14	14	6	48
Hawaii	0	10	10	22	42

1st Quarter	ND: Culver 3 run (Leonard kick) at 5:50
	ND: T. Brooks 13 run (Leonard kick) at 1:31
2nd Quarter	ND: Mirer 11 run (Leonard kick) at 14:20
	UH: Kealoha 4 pass from Carter (Elam kick) at 2:19
	ND: T. Brooks 9 run (Leonard kick) at 1:17
	UH: Elam 31 yard field goal at :00
3rd Quarter	UH: Carter 1 run (Elam kick) at 11:17
	ND: Bettis 4 run (Leonard kick) at 5:48
	UH: Elam 42 field goal at 2:29
	ND: C. Johnson 93 kickoff return (Leonard kick) at 2:15
4th Quarter	UH: Carter 12 run (Jasper run) at 9:15
	ND: Bettis 2 run (kick blocked) at 5:15
	UH: Jasper 31 run (Elam kick) at 3:42
	UH: Kealoha 7 pass from Jasper (Elam kick) at 1:38

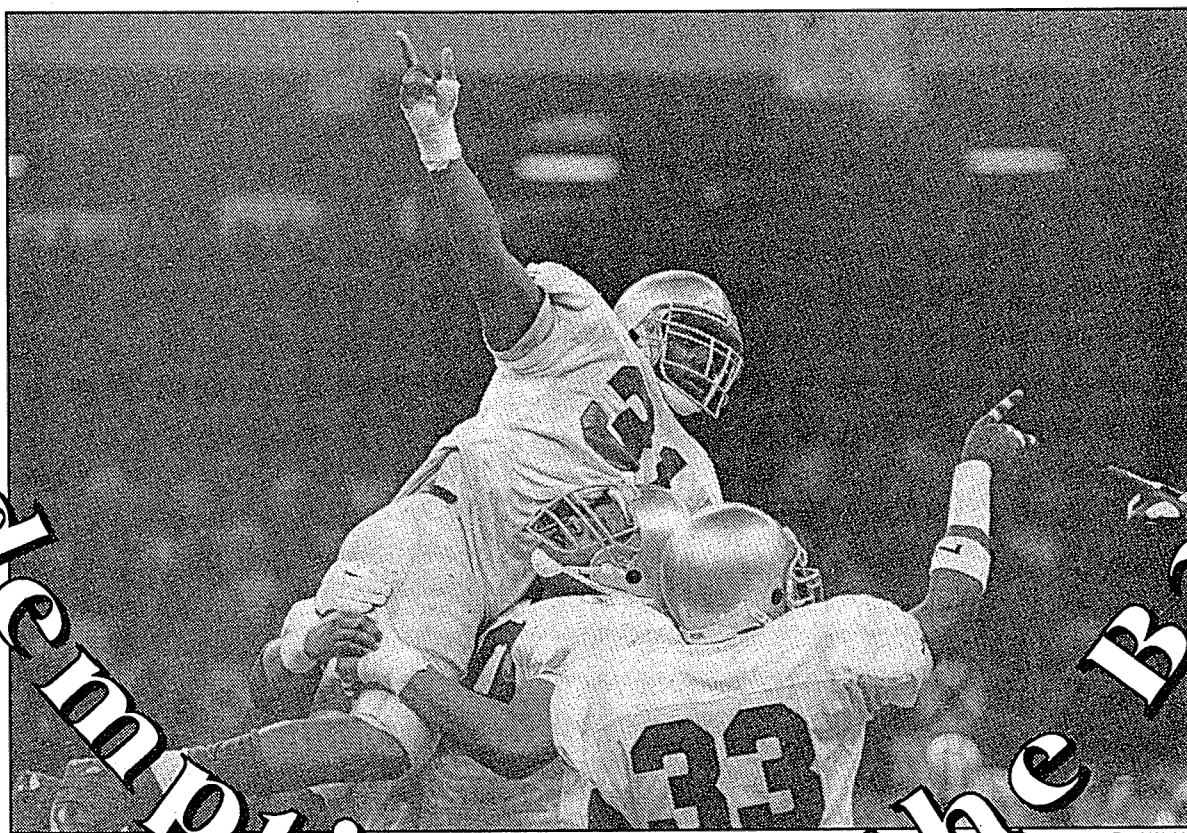
Team Statistics

	ND	UH
First Downs	25	27
Rushing	16	18
Passing	9	7
Penalty	0	2
Rushing	281	326
Passing	218	147
Total Net Yards	499	473
Average Gain Per Play	7.6	6.0
Fumbles-Lost	6-2	4-1
Penalties-Yards	10-75	3-25
Punts-Average	3-35.0	2-48.0
Kickoff Returns	169	165
3rd Down Conversions	5-9	6-12

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Culver 13-118, T. Brooks 9-63, Mirer 11-51, Bettis 12-31, Dawson 1-13, Mihalko 1-5 UH- Carter 21-133, Stevenson 10-62, Sims 9-54, Jasper 5-43, Snyder 4-14, Kealoha 3-12, D. Lewis 1-7, M. Lewis 1-1, Vaiolotti 1-0
 Passing: ND- Mirer 12-19-0-218-0 UH- Carter 6-13-0-70-1, Jasper 6-9-2-77-1
 Receiving: ND- T. Smith 9-140, Dawson 2-31, Culver 1-47 UH- Snyder 3-54, Sims 3-35, Gordon 2-39, Kealoha 2-11, Boult 1-6, Heffernan 1-2

SUGAR BOWL



Paul Webb

Redemption on the Bayou

The Irish pull off an incredible 39-28 upset over the Florida Gators to end a tough season with a thrilling victory in N' Awlins

By Jon Paul Potts

January 1, 1992, New Orleans, LA —

Q: Did you hear the one about the difference between Notre Dame and Cheerios?

A: Only Cheerios belong in a bowl.

So went the joke all of bowl week in New Orleans. The origin of this quip was uncertain: Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz claimed a waiter in a restaurant had come up with this rib-tickler, while the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* wondered if the joke had originated within the ranks of the Notre Dame coaching staff as a motivational tool. Either way, it seemed that the whole college football world was laughing at the Fighting Irish.

The team finished their season ranked

18th and got a bowl bid due largely to television ratings possibilities. After a near-defeat at Hawaii to the mighty Rainbows in the last game of the season, the talk circulating was not *whether* the third-ranked University of Florida Gators would beat the Irish, but by *how much*.

But the team would not listen to the critics. With their collective pride on the line, the Irish exploded for 39 points and adopted an innovative bend-but-don't-break defense to upset the Gators in one of the biggest Notre Dame wins in recent memory, a 39-28 Sugar Bowl victory.

Ha, ha, ha.

The biggest story of this game was the Irish defense. After Notre Dame's regular season ended, Irish defensive coor-

dinators Gary Darnell decided that all the second-guessing and scrutiny of his struggling defense was not worth the headache, and he headed for the University of Texas to assist the Longhorns' new coach, John Mackovic.

That left Holtz without a defensive coordinator for the biggest game of the year — a Sugar Bowl matchup with the Southeastern Conference champion Gators who had rolled through the SEC to a 10-1 record. The strength of the Florida team was its high-octane "Fun-and-Gun" offense, led by quarterback Shane Matthews, who had finished fifth in the 1991 Heisman Trophy race. Holtz's work was cut out for him.

And proving once again that there is perhaps no better "big game coach" in the college ranks, Holtz devised a defensive

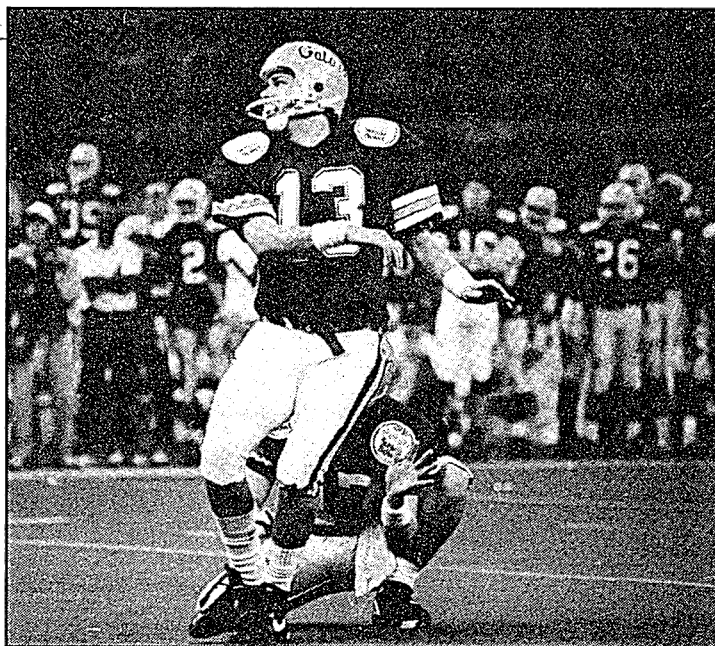
scheme which featured, at times, nine defensive backs and only a two-man rush. At first, it seemed that the same Irish defense that had been burned during the season had showed up in New Orleans. On their first possession, the Gators drove 85 yards on 11 plays — seven passes — for a quick 7-0 lead.

It seemed Matthews had all day. He was looking off two and three receivers and showing little sign of being affected by the knee that had been operated on in December. The touchdown came on a Matthews 15-yard bullet to a wide-open Willie Jackson. It all seemed so easy and so quick. Holtz's game plan wasn't clear yet — but it was there.

"We felt if we didn't give up the big play, we could hold them inside the 20-yard line, change some coverages and force some field goals," said a jubilant Holtz after the game. "I'm shocked that we caused him to pull the ball down and get out of the pocket so much."

The plan began to work later in the first quarter. On Florida's second possession of the game, the Gators drove to the Irish 9-yard line and had first-and-goal. On first down, Gator back Errict Rhett was dropped for no gain by Notre Dame linebackers Devon McDonald and John Covington. The Irish then thwarted two pass attempts and Florida's Arden Czyzewski (pronounced she-SHEF-ski) came on to drill a 26-yard field goal, his first of a Sugar Bowl record five on the night. The score was 10-0 Florida only ten minutes into the game.

Meanwhile, the Irish were struggling on offense. Their first



Florida's Arden Czyzewski hits one of his Sugar Bowl record five field goals.

two possessions resulted in punts and the whole offense seemed nervous. Notre Dame

was penalized three times in their first two drives, including two procedural flags. This did not look at all like the offense which had averaged 35.5 points/game during the season.

Everything seemed out of whack.

But in the second quarter, the Irish came alive. While the defense was limiting the Gators to two more field goals, the offense was waking up and on its first drive of the second stanza, Notre Dame struck fast.

After two Rick Mirer passes to senior split end Tony Smith and sophomore flanker Lake Dawson, the Irish had the ball second-and-one from the Florida 40-yard line. On this short yardage situation, probably everyone in the building expected a fullback run up the middle to get the

first down. But Holtz, who is also his own offensive coordinator, showed some gutsy

Some Green Inspiration

The "Green Jerseys."

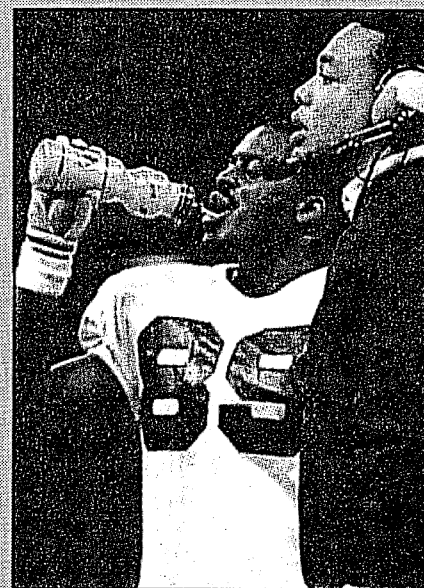
Any college football fan versed in the lore of Notre Dame football know of the Green Jerseys which hold a special place alongside the Gipper and Knute Rockne. But, for the first six seasons he coached the Fighting Irish, it seemed that Lou Holtz knew nothing of the magic which these jerseys had evoked in such games as a 49-19 thrashing of USC in 1977. Holtz had never sent his team onto the field wearing green.

But faced with a formidable task in the 1992 Sugar Bowl of beating the 10-1 University of Florida Gators, Holtz studied his history and decided that a little green inspiration might not be such a bad thing.

"It just thought that it was a special occasion with the adversity we went through at the end of the season," explained Holtz. "The shirts just seemed like a good idea and I went with a gut feeling. But we will always wear blue during the season."

The players were not told of the switch until the day of the game. Holtz had only discussed the matter before game day with his team captain, senior Rodney Culver, and Culver had agreed to keep it quiet.

When Holtz breached the idea to the whole team, the players agreed, but, demonstrating a collective flair for the dramatic, they decided to wear the usual white



Karmeleeayah McGill models the green jerseys.

and gold in warm-ups. Then, the team changed and stormed the field at kick off in the white jerseys with green numbers and green socks.

It seemed to give the players a lift — but not all of them.

"It just made me feel a little bit like Gumby," joked Notre Dame offensive guard Mirko Jurkovic after the game.

— By Jon Paul Potts



Florida quarterback Shane Matthews set five Sugar Bowl records, including 58 passing attempts and 370 yards passing.

play calling.

Mirer dropped back, hitched once, then lofted a soft pass over Gator cornerback Larry Kennedy. Dawson ran an out-and-up and Mirer's pass hit him right in the numbers. He jaunted in for a 40-yard touchdown. Suddenly, the Irish were back in the ballgame.

The score stood at 16-7 at the half. On the Florida sideline, coach Steve Spurrier saw that things were beginning to unravel for his Gators.

"Coming out of the locker room at halftime, I felt that we needed to score some touchdowns offensively and stay on the field," Spurrier said. "We were sort of hanging by a thread defensively. We weren't able to stay on the field and score touchdowns. We kicked a bunch of field goals and didn't score when we had a chance."

Holtz, meanwhile, considered the

first half action and decided that a return to Notre Dame football — smashmouth, running football — was necessary if his squad was to pull this one out.

"I think that offensively in the first half, we were out of sync," said Holtz. "We decided at the half to go more to a power and ball control game in the second half."

Sophomore fullback Jerome Bettis, who a smiling Holtz referred to as "my main man!" during the postgame press conference, agreed with his coach's assessment.

"We knew that we could control the ball against them because we began to do it at the end of the first half," he said. "Early in the game they played good defense and had us out

of rhythm, but in the second half, we got into a rhythm and really moved the ball well."

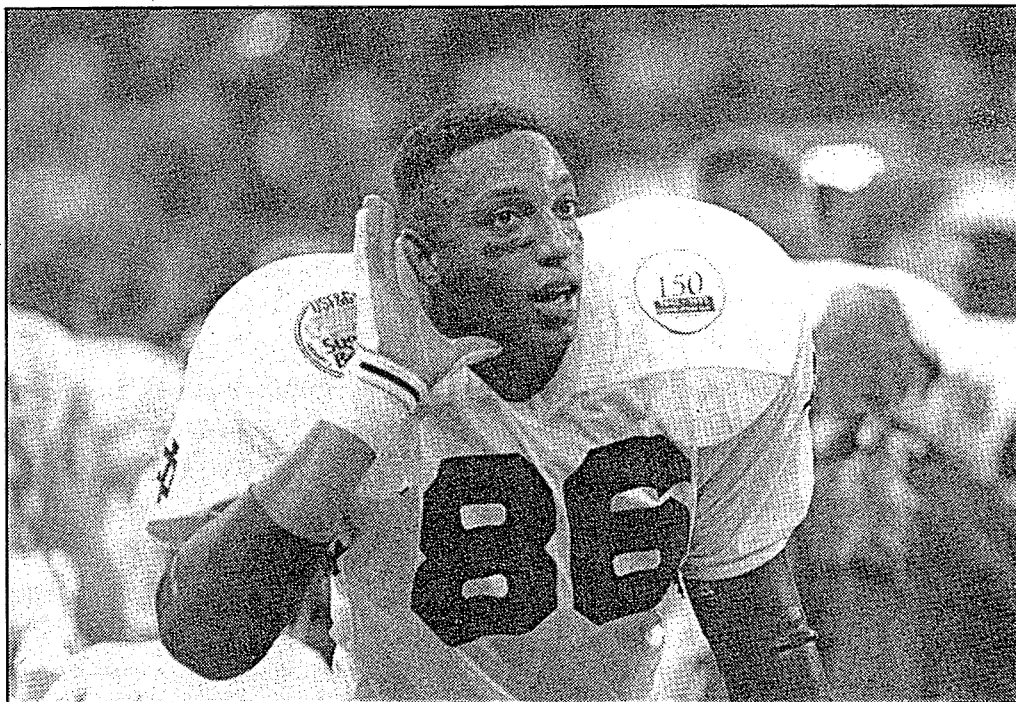
"Well" might be an understatement. At halftime, the Irish had rushed for only 34 yards on 10 carries. They had the ball on offense for only 10 minutes and change while the Gators had the ball for almost 20 minutes. But the second half was a complete turnaround.

On their first drive of the second half, the Irish put on a clinic in "smashmouth football." Highlighted by a senior captain Rodney Culver's 19-yard gain on a draw play, the offense drove 64 yards on 12 plays — all running plays. Then on fourth-and-five from the Florida six, Notre Dame's walk-on soccer player Kevin Pendergast drilled a 23-yard field goal.

"That drive really set the tone for the second half," said senior guard Mirko Jurkovic. "That's when we got comfortable and saw how well the run would work."

"I think we came out in the first half so hard, we charged too hard and hit the ground a lot, and those guys [Florida] got by us," continued Jurkovic. "We got comfortable in the second half and made sure we got our blocks and stayed with our blocks."

The Irish scored one more touchdown in the third quarter on a Mirer pass to junior tight end Irv Smith and the score stood at 17-



Senior Derek Brown listens in vain for the, "It's great to be a Florida Gator" cheer after the Irish had secured the victory in the fourth quarter.

16, Notre Dame, with 15 minutes to go. The fans in the Superdome and watching bleary-eyed after a full day of bowl telecasts could not be prepared for the wild football to come.

The fourth quarter could aptly be called the "Jerome Bettis Show." The punishing 247-pound fullback rumbled for three touchdowns and 100 yards in the final quarter *alone*. This tremendous effort earned him the Maxwell-Digby Award as the MVP of the Sugar Bowl.

Bettis' first score came with 6:33 to go in the game. After 13 plays, 11 running, the Irish drove 60 yards to the Gator 4-yard line. Florida had drawn first blood in the last quarter and led 22-17 on two more Czyzewski field goals. The Irish desperately needed a score so Holtz turned to Notre Dame's paydirt specialist — Bettis — who had scored 20 touchdowns during the season.

And Bettis delivered, blasting through a full-house Irish line for the score. Holtz opted for the two-point conver-

sion and Mirer hit senior fullback Tony Brooks on a rollout for the successful conversion. Notre Dame led 25-22.

Now it was the defense's turn to be the heroes. Starting from their own 34-yard line, the Gators had six minutes to score and 66 yards to go. Florida got to its own 49-yard line and had first-and-ten. It was gut-check time for the Irish defense and the beleaguered unit dug deep and proved its skeptics wrong.

"People were talking about how many yards we'd given up. We were used to it,"

"The Most Fabulous Building in the World"

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the 58th USF&G Sugar Bowl.

It is raining in Miami on the Orange Bowl. It is cold and drizzling on the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

But here in the Louisiana Superdome, the weather is perfect!"

— Superdome PA announcer

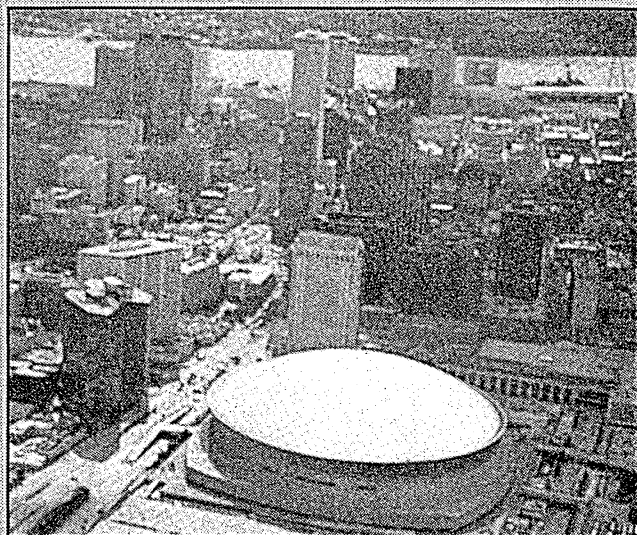
Perfect, indeed.

The Superdome is an amazing structure. The Sugar Bowl media guide describes this stadium as, "The most fabulous building in the world." Irish fans who witnessed Notre Dame's tremendous 39-28 victory over the Gators of the University of Florida might agree.

On the evening of January 1, 1992, 76,447 fans crowded into the largest enclosed stadium in the history of mankind. With a full capacity of 77,446 for football, the Superdome is larger than the Kingdome of Seattle, the Metrodome of Minneapolis, the Astrodome of Houston, or any other domed arena anywhere else in the world.

At the center of the dome, the ceiling reaches as high as a 27-story building. The roof encloses an area of 13 acres and has a diameter of 680 feet. And the acoustics are almost perfect. As the Notre Dame Marching Band played the "Notre Dame Victory March," spectators in any part of the stadium could hear each note clearly.

After the game, I went and stood on the 50-yard line and looked up and around. The sheer immensity of the building was stunning.



Courtesy of the USF&G Sugar Bowl Media Guide

The huge Superdome dominates the New Orleans skyline.

Hanging in each endzone were two huge Diamond Vision screens, each 28'x36'. The clarity and sharpness of the picture were like a television.

However, being a sports purist at heart, I was slightly turned off by the turf and the dome. Football is a game to played on grass under the open sky. Sitting in the press box prior to kick off, I kept expecting a basketball game or an indoor soccer match to break out. After all, the only games most of us have watched indoors are basketball, hockey and the like — indoor, winter sports.

But, personal aesthetics aside, the Superdome is a truly spectacular structure.

And it was a truly spectacular setting for Notre Dame's biggest upset in quite some time.

— By Jon Paul Potts

said senior strong safety Rod Smith, who finished the game with a stunning 18 tackles, a huge number for a defensive back. "But Coach got us jacked up and we did some intelligent things tonight."

On first down, Matthews tossed an incomplection under a heavy rush from Notre Dame's left end Karmeleeyah McGill, who finished with six tackles and two sacks on the night. On second and third downs, the Gator quarterback overthrew his receivers. Then, on fourth down and the game on the line, Florida coach Spurrier called a timeout

and opted to go for it. Matthews lofted a pass down the middle and Demetrius DuBose, back in coverage as part of Holtz's gameday defense, broke up the pass at the last second. The Irish fan section exploded and it seemed the victory was sealed.

"We [the defense] were criticized all year," said the Notre Dame eagle backer DuBose after the game. "You know, ESPN rags on us and said we had the worst defense of all the bowl teams — all of them. It's tough to listen to that stuff all year. But tonight, we played like a family and won the

game."

Bettis scored his other two touchdowns blasting through a weary Florida line. Taking over after DuBose's big play, the Irish handed off to the fullback and he cut back against the grain and burst up the middle to go 49 yards for the touchdown. After a meaningless Florida touchdown, Bettis scored again when he busted through a pile-up at the line of scrimmage to go 39 yards for the insurance touchdown with 2:04 to go. The game was over.

"It's a great feeling I have right now," said a smiling Dubose after the game. "We played our hearts out. It's a big win for us. It's the biggest win I've been associated with at Notre Dame."

It was a big win. But for the Gators, it had to be disheartening. SEC champions and pre-game favorites, Florida had been thoroughly beat up by Notre Dame.

"Obviously, we weren't good enough to beat Notre Dame to-



Paul Webb

The physically superior Irish simply beat the Gators up on both defense and offense, playing classic "smashmouth football."

day," said a dejected Spurrier after the game. "We sort of got worn down defensively and got some guys hurt, but we were able to put 11 men on the field. We don't have any excuses, we got beat."

"The loss takes away from the season a little," said Florida's only hero, Czyzewski. "Our goal was to win the SEC title and win the Sugar Bowl, but we fell short. This loss will be tough to deal with."

And what of Holtz? After one of his biggest wins, what was his reaction?

"I just had a feeling that we would play very well... I plan on getting into Pat O'Brien's [a popular nightclub in New Orleans' French Quarter] tonight, I've been waiting to go there since we got here, but I haven't left the hotel yet!"

And with a wink, Holtz was off to savor his biggest win in at least the last two years with the rest of the Notre Dame revelers. □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	0	7	10	22	39
Florida	10	6	0	12	28

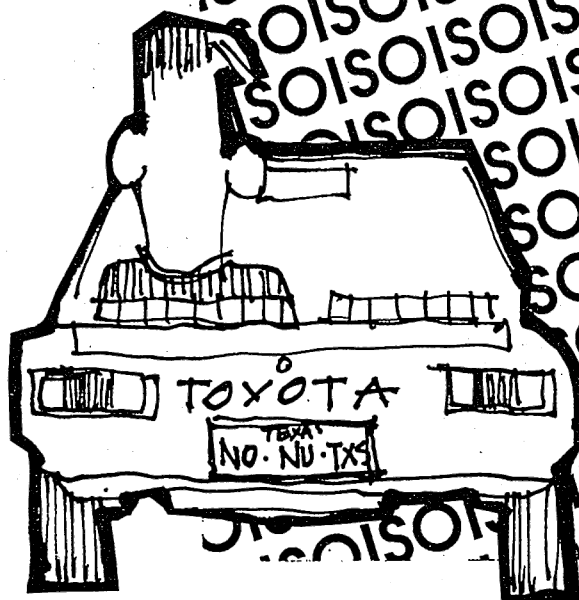
1st Quarter UF: Jackson 15 pass from Matthews (Czyzewski kick) at 10:40
UF: Czyzewski 26 field goal at 3:36
2nd Quarter UF: Czyzewski 24 field goal at 10:29
ND: Dawson 40 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick) at 8:01
UF: Czyzewski 36 field goal at 0:20
3rd quarter ND: Pendergast 23 field goal at 10:03
ND: T. Smith 4 pass from Mirer (Pendergast kick) at 2:12
4th quarter UF: Czyzewski 37 field goal at 13:42
UF: Czyzewski 24 field goal at 11:21
ND: Bettis 3 run (Brooks pass from Mirer) at 4:48
ND: Bettis 49 run (Pendergast kick) at 3:28
UF: Houston 36 pass from Matthews (pass failed) at 2:28
ND: Bettis 39 run (Pendergast kick) at 2:04

Team Statistics

	ND	UF
First Downs	23	29
Rushing	18	13
Passing	4	16
Penalty	1	0
Rushing	279	141
Passing	154	370
Total Net Yards	433	151
Average Gain Per Play	6.4	5.6
Fumbles-Lost	4-3	0-0
Penalties-Yards	3-15	4-40
Punts-Average	2-34.0	2-52.5
Kickoff Returns	188	90
3rd Down Conversions	8-13	11-20

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Bettis 16-150, Culver 13-93, T. Brooks 13-68, Mirer 6-(-30), Failla 1-(-2) UF- Rhett 15-63, McClendon 7-34, Matthews 7-27, McNabb 4-17
Passing: ND- Mirer 14-19-1-154-2 UF- Matthews 28-58-2-370-2
Receiving: ND- T. Smith 7-75, Dawson 2-49, Brown 1-11, Culver 1-6, Bettis 1-5, L. Smith 1-4, Pollard 1-4 UF- W. Jackson 8-148, Houston 3-52, Sullivan 4-47, Hill 3-41, Rhett 4-38, McClendon 3-19, Everett 2-18, McNabb 1-7



George Bush in his New Car .

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1991 Final Regular Season Statistics

RESULTS AND ATTENDANCE

9/7	INDIANA	W	49-27	59,075
9/14	at Michigan	L	14-24	106,138
9/21	MICH STATE	W	49-10	59,075
9/28	at Purdue	W	45-20	67,861
10/5	at Stanford	W	42-26	70,798
10/12	PITTSBURGH	W	42-7	59,075
10/19	at Air Force	W	28-15	52,024
10/26	USC	W	24-20	59,075
11/2	NAVY	W	38-0	59,075
11/9	TENNESSEE	L	34-35	59,075
11/16	at Penn State	L	13-35	96,672
11/30	at Hawaii	W	48-42	50,000

TEAM STATISTICS ND OPP

TOTAL FIRST DOWNS.....	272	260
Rushing.....	171	146
Passing.....	93	105
By Penalty.....	8	9
3rd Down Conv.....	71/145	72/164
TOTAL NET YARDS.....	5467	4588
Avg. Per Game.....	455.6	382.3
Total Plays.....	830	863
Avg. Per Play.....	6.6	5.3
NET YARDS RUSHING.....	3229	2458
Avg. Per Game.....	269.1	204.8
Total Rushes.....	584	547
NET YARDS PASSING.....	2238	2130
Avg. Per Game.....	186.5	177.5
Interceptions.....	10	15
PENALTIES /YARDS.....	67/516	52/429
FUMBLES /BALLS LOST.../	27/11	24/11
TOUCHDOWNS.....	57	34
Rushing.....	37	21
Passing.....	18	12
Return.....	2	1
TIME OF POSSESSION.....	339:47	376:58

SCORE BY PERIOD 1 2 3 4 TOT

ND.....	84	153	108	81	426
OPPONENT.....	30	82	48	101	261

Scoring TDR TDP TDRt PAT FG Pts

Bettis, J	16	4	—	—	—	120
Hentrich, C	—	—	—	48	5	63
Mirer, R	9	—	—	—	—	54
Brooks, T	5	1	—	—	—	36
Brown, D	—	4	—	—	—	24
Smith, T	—	4	—	—	—	24
Brooks, R	2	—	1	—	—	18
Smith, I	—	3	—	—	—	18
Culver, R	2	—	—	—	—	12
Leonard, R	—	—	—	7	—	7
Johnson, C	—	—	1	—	—	6
Pollard, W	—	1	—	—	—	6
Carter, T	—	—	—	—	—	6
McDougal, K	1	—	—	—	—	6
Dawson, L	—	1	—	—	—	6
Mihalko, R	1	—	—	—	—	6
Clark, W	1	—	—	—	—	6
DuBose, D	—	—	1	—	—	6
Marsh, D	—	—	—	2	—	2
ND TOTALS	37	18	4	57	5	426
OPP TOTALS	21	12	1	28	9	261

Rushing ATT YDS LG AVG TD

Bettis	168	972	53	5.8	16
Brooks, T	147	894	57	6.1	5
Culver	101	550	52	5.4	2
Mirer	75	306	46	4.1	9
Brooks, R	18	122	65	6.8	2
Clark	18	114	19	6.3	1
Becton	15	62	28	4.1	0
Mihalko	14	62	15	4.4	1
Zellers	6	51	28	8.5	0
McDougal	4	30	13	7.5	1
Failla	10	39	12	2.9	0
Dawson	1	13	13	13.0	0
Poorman	1	10	10	10.0	0
Hentrich	1	7	7	7.0	0
Johnson, C	1	5	5	5.0	0
Lozano	1	3	3	3.0	0
Johnson, M	1	3	3	3.0	0
Davis, T	1	-2	-2	-2.0	0
Smith, T	1	-2	-2	-2.0	0
ND TOTALS	584	3229	—	5.5	37
OPP. TOTALS	547	2458	—	4.5	21

Passing C A YDS LG TD INT

Mirer	132	234	2117	83	18	10
McDougal	5	8	46	17	0	0
Hentrich	1	1	42	42	0	0
Failla	2	2	17	10	0	0
Brooks, T	1	1	16	16	0	0
ND TOTALS	141	246	2238	—	18	10
OPP. TOTALS	194	316	2130	51	12	15

Receiving NO YDS LG AVG TD

Smith, T	42	789	83	18.8	4
Dawson	24	433	49	18.0	1
Brown	22	325	55	14.8	4
Bettis	17	190	25	11.2	4
Brooks, T	11	126	30	11.5	1
Smith, I	6	86	58	14.3	3
Culver	6	76	47	12.7	0
Griggs	5	66	17	13.2	0
Pollard	2	50	38	25.0	1
McBride	2	18	9	9.0	0
Davis	1	42	42	42.0	0
Mirer	1	16	16	16.0	0
Brooks, R	1	4	4	4.0	0
ND TOTALS	140	2221	—	15.9	18
OPP TOTALS	194	2130	51	11.0	12

Punt Returns NO YDS LG AVG TD

Burris	18	227	42	12.6	0
Brooks, R	1	26	26	26.0	1
Miller	1	5	5	5.0	0
ND TOTALS	20	258	—	12.9	1
OPP TOTALS	17	92	15	5.4	0

Kickoff Ret. NO YDS LG AVG TD

Johnson, C	9	217	93	24.1	1
Brooks, R	9	198	42	22.0	0
Clark	5	85	23	17.0	0
Culver	3	56	27	18.7	0
Burris	3	54	26	18.0	0
Miller	3	19	14	6.3	0
Johnson, M	2	25	17	12.5	0
Ratigan	1	7	7	7.0	0
Flanigan	1	3	3	3.0	0
Lytle	1	0	0	0.0	0
ND TOTALS	37	664	—	17.9	1
OPP TOTALS	48	935	62	19.5	0

Tackles (Totals-Solos-Assists): DuBose (127-76-51), R. Smith (69-45-24), Bercich (69-41-28), Burris (63-48-15), McDonald (60-29-31), Covington (58-31-27), Young (50-32-18), Clark (46-33-13), Ridgley (40-22-18), G.Davis (39-24-15), Flanigan (36-19-17), Peterson (35-18-17), Carter (30-22-8), Bryant (27-13-14), Ratigan (25-15-10), Jones (23-12-11), Goheen (18-10-8), McGill (15-11-4), Saddler (15-9-6), Gibson (15-7-8), Holden (14-6-8), Lane (13-9-4), Taliaferro (10-8-2), Mihalko (8-7-1), N. Smith (8-4-4), Lytle (6-1-5), Hamilton (3-3-0), Robinson (2-0-2), T. Davis (1-0-1)

Sacks: McDonald (2/10), Young (4/28), Peterson (1/4), Jones (1/8), Gibson (2/17), Taliaferro (1/7), Lytle (1/7)

Notre Dame Award



Tony Brooks, senior tailback
Football News All-America (honorable mention)
 NBC/Chevrolet MVP vs. Tennessee (20
 for 126 1 TD)
 Selected to play in Senior Bowl



Lindsay Knapp, senior offensive tackle
 1991 GTE District V Academic All-America
 (3.26 GPA in economics)
 Notre Dame Club of St. Joseph Valley Student-
 Athlete Award
 Toyota Leadership Award for ESPN telecast of
 Hawaii game



Derek Brown, senior tight end
 Walter Camp Foundation All-America (first
 team)
Football News All-America (third team)
 Selected to play in Hula Bowl and East-West
 Shrine Game



Devon McDonald, senior defensive end
Football News All-America (honorable mention)



Rodney Culver, senior tailback
 ESPN MVP vs. Hawaii (13 for career-high 118,
 1 TD)
 Selected to play in Hula Bowl and East-West
 Shrine Game



Gene McGuire, senior center
Football News All-America (honorable mention)
 Selected to play in Japan Bowl



Justin Hall, senior offensive tackle
Football News All-America (honorable mention)



Ryan Milhalko, senior fullback
 Nick Pietrosante Award (by vote of players to
 individual who best exemplifies the characteris-
 tics of the late Irish All-America fullback)



Mirko Jurkovic, senior offensive guard
 Walter Camp Foundation, *College & Pro Football*
Newsweekly and *Football News All-America* (first
 team)
 Associated Press All-America (second team)
 Notre Dame Lineman of the Year by Moose
 Krause Chapter of National Football Foundation and Hall of
 Fame



Rod Smith, senior strong safety
 Selected to play in Japan Bowl

Honors and Winners



Tony Smith, senior split end
Football News All America (honorable mention)
 ABC/Chevrolet MVP vs. Michigan (5 for 121, 1 TD)
 ESPN/VISA MVP vs. Air Force (4 for 134, 1 TD—including 83-yarder)



Pete Bercich, sophomore inside linebacker
Football News All-America (honorable mention)
 Toyota Leadership Award for ESPN telecast of Air Force game (3.23 grade-point average)



Jeff Baker, senior split end
 Hesburgh/Joyce National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame Scholarship



Jerome Bettis, sophomore fullback
Football News and *College&Pro Football Newsweekly* All-America (second team)
 Notre Dame National Monogram Club team co-MVP (by vote of players; shared with Rick Mirer)



Demetrius DuBose, junior inside linebacker
Football News All America (first team)
 One of 10 semifinalists for Butkus Award
 ABC/Chevrolet MVP vs. Penn State (6 tackles)

ESPN/VISA MVP vs. Stanford (24 for 179 rushing, 3 TDs; 1 for 13 receiving, 1 TD)
College&Pro Football Newsweekly offensive player of the week vs. Stanford
 NBC/Chevrolet MVP vs. USC (24 for 178 rushing, 2 TDs)
 Football News Player of the Week vs. USC
 Miller-Digby Award Winner (MVP of Sugar Bowl)



Craig Hentrich, junior punter
Football News All America (honorable mention)



Lake Dawson, sophomore flanker
Football News All-America (honorable mention)



Rick Mirer, junior quarterback
Football News All America (honorable mention)
 Notre Dame Monogram Club team co-MVP (by vote of players; shared with Jerome Bettis)
 NBC/Chevrolet MVP vs. Indiana (11 of 17 for 209, 1 TD; 50 rushing yards, 3 TDs)
 NBC/Chevrolet MVP vs. Michigan State (11 of 16 for 208, 3 TDs; 27 rushing yards, 1 TD)
 One of 10 semifinalists for *Football News* Offensive Player of the Year Award
 NBC/Chevrolet MVP vs. Navy (17 of 23 for career-high 303, 3 TDs)



Tim Ruddy, sophomore offensive guard
 State Farm/Mutual Broadcasting Student-Athlete of the Year



Aaron Taylor, sophomore offensive guard
 NBC/Chevrolet co-MVP vs. Pittsburgh (helped Irish rush for 327 yards)

The 1991 Scholastic All-



Mark D'Onofrio
Linebacker/Penn State



Leonard Humphries
Cornerback/Penn State



Stephon Pace
Defensive Back/USC



Erick Anderson
Linebacker/Michigan



Chuck Smith
Defensive End/Tennessee



Desmond Howard
Wide Receiver/Michigan



Eric Seaman
Tight End/Pittsburgh



Derrick Deese
Offensive Guard/USC



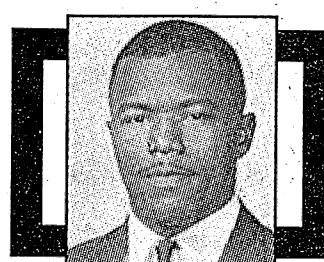
Greg Skrepenak
Offensive Tackle/Michigan



Eric Bruun
Punter/Purdue



Arden Czyzewski
Kicker/Florida

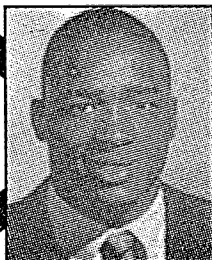


Courtney Hawkins
Kick Returner/Michigan State

Opponent Team



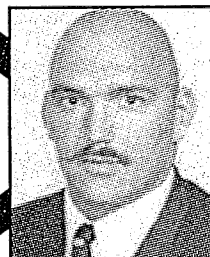
Vergil Simpson
Linebacker/Air Force



Dale Carter
Defensive Back/Tennessee



Lance Dottin
Cornerback/Michigan



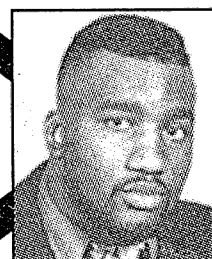
Chuck Bullough
Linebacker/MSU



Willie Jackson
Wide Receiver/Florida



Chris Hutchinson
Defensive Tackle/Michigan



Keith Hamilton
Defensive End/Pittsburgh



David Young
Center/Air Force



Bob Whitfield
Offensive Tackle/Stanford



Tom Myslinski
Offensive Guard/Tennessee



Tommy Vardell
Fullback/Stanford



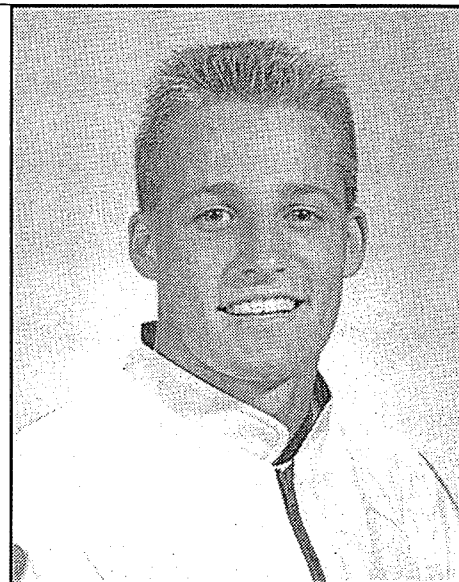
Andy Kelly
Quarterback/Tennessee



Vaughn Dunbar
Running Back/Indiana

Reflections of a Walk-on

by Kevin Pendergast



When the Notre Dame soccer season ended on the second weekend in November, I figured that my next organized sports activity would be spring soccer practice in early February. Well, it's almost February now — and the last few months have definitely not been anything like what I expected.

From November until Notre Dame's spectacular 39-28 Sugar Bowl victory over Florida, I was a Notre Dame football player.

My chance to play football for the Irish came under some unusual circumstances. The soccer season ended a bit earlier than I had expected. A disappointing loss to Evansville in the MCC final denied the team the NCAA tournament bid that we had been anticipating. Then, when the football placekicker Craig Hentrich suffered a knee injury in the Tennessee game, Coach Holtz came looking for a replacement kicker on the soccer team. I made the team.

My first game as a football player was exciting — but a big disappointment. I was thrilled to be playing football for Notre Dame on television and in front of 97,000 fans at Penn State. However, we lost the game 35-13 and my two kickoffs were not exactly Hall of Fame material.

I was lucky enough to get a second chance — at the Sugar Bowl.

I remember being so fired up just to be dressing for the Sugar Bowl, but I never really figured that I'd get a chance to play. But that game definitely turned out to be the biggest thrill of my life. Just to be on the field to watch the Irish beat the heavily favored Florida Gators would have been great ... but kicking a field goal and a few extra points made that game an experience that I cannot describe. My

kickoffs were still horrendous, but I guess that's okay.

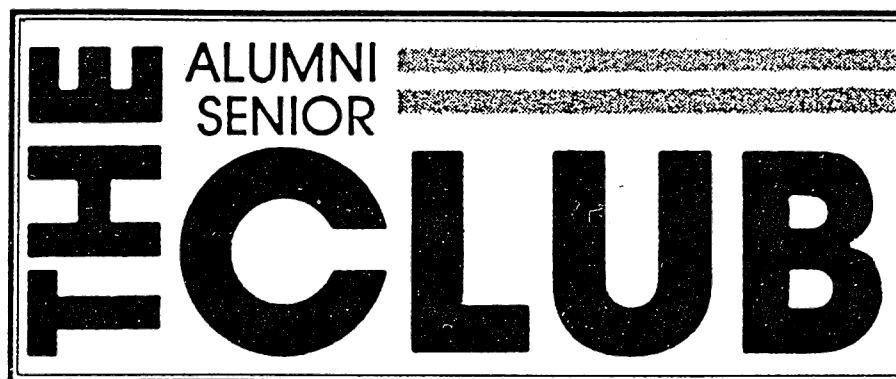
After the Sugar Bowl, the experience of playing Notre Dame football took on new meaning for me. When I went home to Simsbury, Conn., the people in my town were so proud. My high school is not exactly a breeding ground for college football talent, so this was something special. Every person that I saw or talked to remembered where they were and how they reacted when the game was on. One of the greatest pleasures of my Sugar Bowl experience has been seeing the excitement and pride that people in my hometown have felt because one of their kids got a chance to play in such a big game.

The most important way that this game has touched the life of my family and myself came through the hands of Coach Holtz. After we won the Sugar Bowl, he presented me with a game ball after he told my teammates in the locker room that my mother was battling cancer. Coach Holtz told me to give the ball to my mom. This gesture showed me a side of Coach Holtz that people do not always see. What that game ball meant to my mom, what it meant to me, what it meant to my whole family, is more than Coach Holtz or anyone will ever know.

I do not want to sound like I am telling just another "rah-rah" Notre Dame story, however, I think that Notre Dame football is a lot more powerful than many of the players and the students realize. My opportunity would not have meant as much to so many people if I had been playing for another school.

It happened, and whatever happens to me in the future, I will always be grateful that I had a chance to play against Penn State in November and against Florida in our Sugar Bowl victory. □

Kevin Pendergast is a junior forward on the Notre Dame men's soccer team. In his spare time, he dabbles in placekicking as a walk-on for the Fighting Irish football team.



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

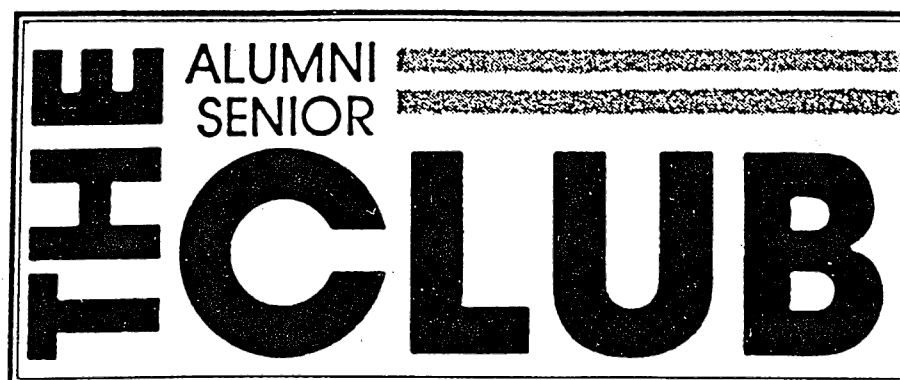
THE "MOST VALUABLE PLAYER" FOR THE 1991 FOOTBALL SEASON GOES TO THE COVERS OFFENSE, DEFENSE AND LOTS OF SPECIAL TEAMS (BAR BACKS, FENCE DUTY, BRATS, ETC.)

Marc Cerrone
Pat Clarke
Mike Ferguson
Jeff Guckert
Jane Hughes
Kathy Lamprecht
Cristin McCarthy
Blair O'Connor
Robb Schoenbauer
Heather Welcome
Sarah Williams

Joe Christaldi
Mark Donahue
Angela Gentile
Kevin Harnisch
Dan Laboe
Kristine Lazar
Laura Mollach
Jill Saenger
Theresa Squyres
Mackay Williams

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AND THANKS FOR ANOTHER WINNING SEASON!



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O'Laughlin Box Office

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General Admission: \$14
Senior Citizens, Children under 10: \$12

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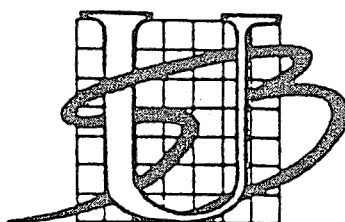
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