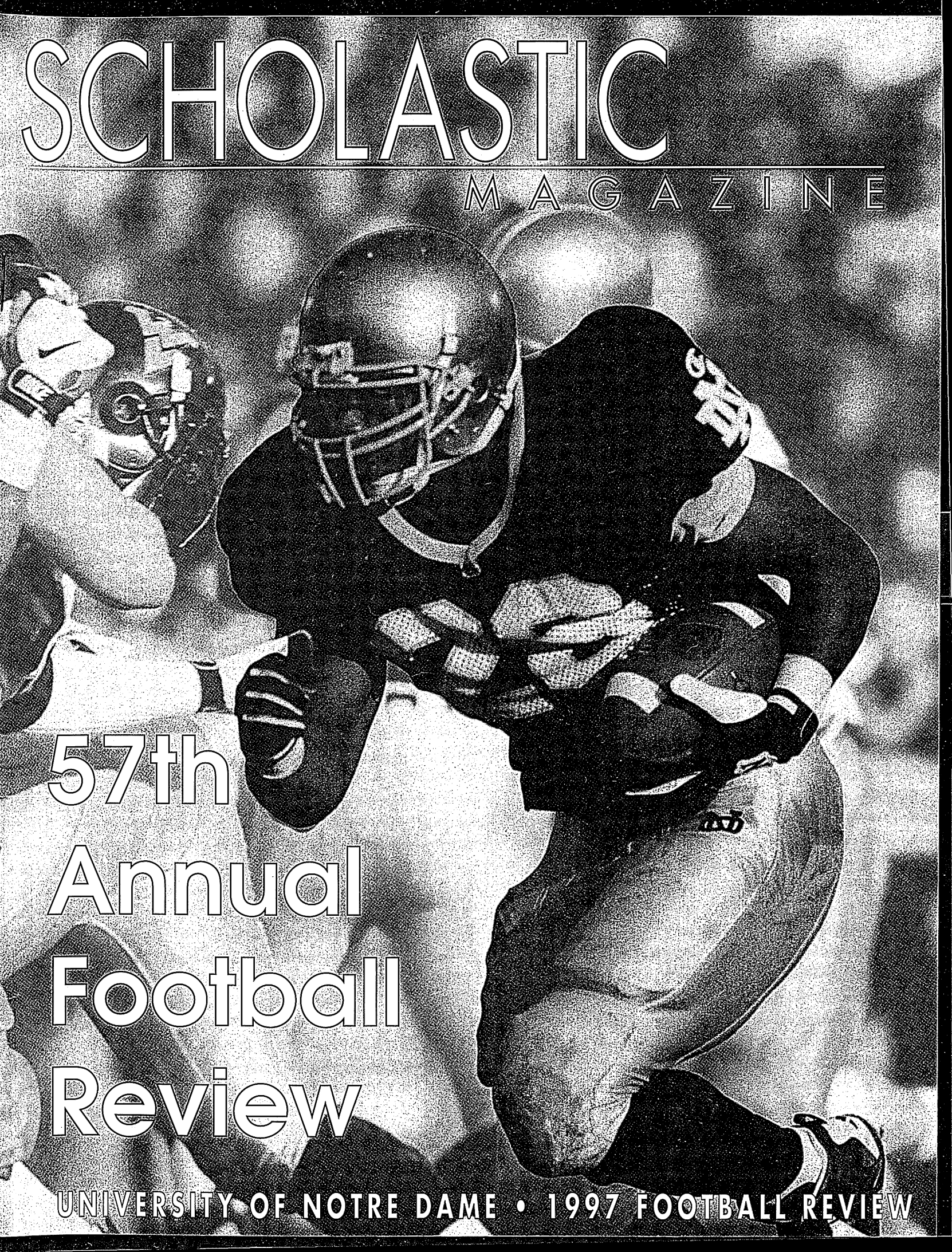


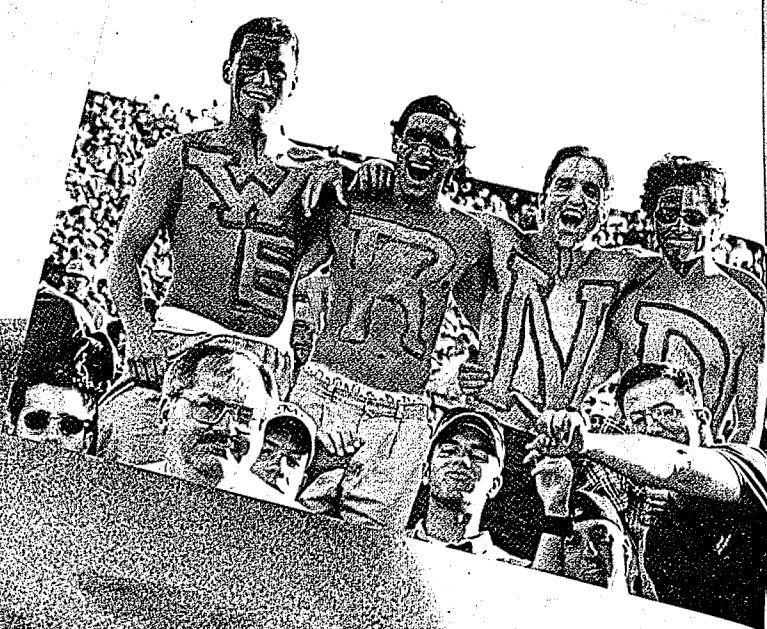
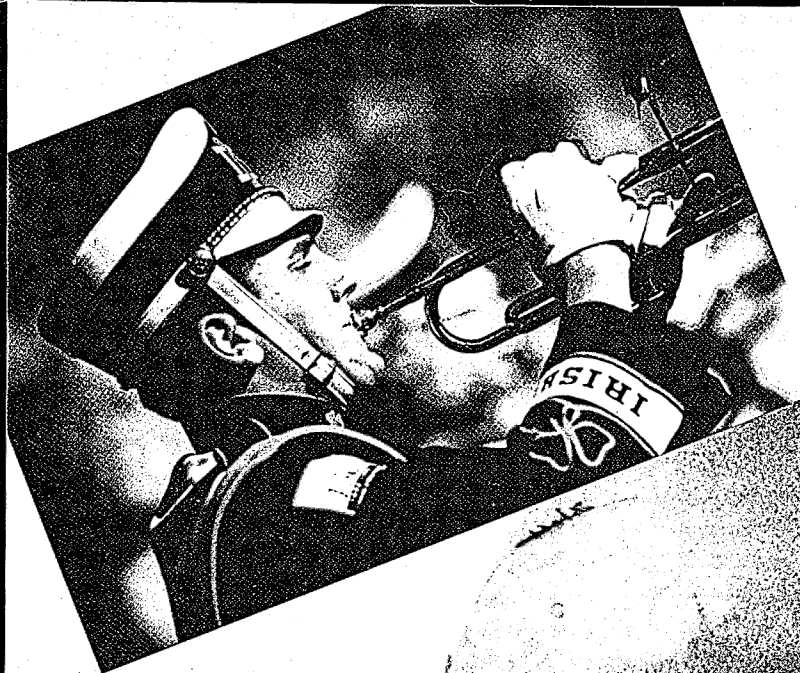
SCHOLASTIC

MAGAZINE



57th Annual Football Review

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME • 1997 FOOTBALL REVIEW



A Year to Remember

Given the outcome of this season, with Notre Dame finishing 7-6, many people would rather forget about this year and start thinking about the next. However, this issue of *Scholastic* is about looking back, remembering the things that happened this season, good or bad. And when I look back, there are a number of memories that will remain with me for a long time.

During the season, I attended 11 of the 13 games (except Stanford and Pittsburgh) and I met a lot of interesting people. Many of them rooted against the Irish, but almost all of them respected Notre Dame. There were the kids from Purdue who, after telling us where the keg was, spent hours telling us how badly the Irish were going to beat the Boilermakers and that they weren't even going to bother going to the game. Sure, they did their share of gloating afterward, but after their initial shock of victory, we all sat down to root against Michigan.

In Ann Arbor we found almost everyone to be very hospitable. Since we arrived on Friday, we had an entire night of hearing how the Wolverines were going to trounce the Fighting Irish. Then, on the morning of the game, in a house full of Michigan fans, we heard Lee Corso add fuel to the fire, saying that the Irish might not even score a point against the vaunted Wolverine de-

fense. At halftime, all I was thinking was how everyone would have to eat their words — especially Corso. Though it didn't work out like that, our team had earned respect for Notre Dame and the Michigan fans acknowledge they were lucky to get the win.

My best road trip of the year coincided with the best game of the year. The 16-hour, six-state drive with five people crammed into a Ford Escort wagon was one of the best experiences of my college years. Listening to a Louisiana radio station speak disrespectfully not only about Notre Dame but also of Catholicism, I had a feeling the Irish would come out strong the following day. When we walked into "Tiger Mania," the LSU souvenir store, a couple of my friends bought LSU shirts. I was going to purchase one as well, until I saw the hat. It had "Battle on the Bayou" written across the top with Notre Dame and LSU helmets facing each other. The date of the game was on the back. For \$25, everyone thought I was crazy for buying it, especially since we had little chance of winning. After I guaranteed the Irish would win, I bought the hat — and now they're all jealous.

There are so many other memories. While it would have been great if Notre Dame had gone to the Orange Bowl and played Nebraska for the national championship, the season wasn't a total loss. Different people will remember it in different ways, some for the great mid-season turnaround, some for the disappointing final record. I will always remember the great times I had with good friends, experiences made possible by the common bond that is Notre Dame football.

Cover photo by Gordie Bell

Inside back: photo by Gordie Bell

Inside front: Helmet photo by Stan Evans, all other photos by Gordie Bell

Thanks

Special thanks to our staff photographers Gordie Bell and Stan Evans; Katie Kroener and the *Observer* photography staff for providing pictures for many away games; John Heisler, Mike Enright and the Sports Information department; Rick Kaczinski (and his father) for the Final Word; and Brian Christ and the layout staff. This issue wouldn't have been possible without you.

Brian Lucas
Sports Editor

11 Years Ago: Words of Hope

In the 1986 football review, new coach Lou Holtz offered his thoughts about his 5-6 inaugural season:

"When the field goal attempt went through the uprights on the last play of the game with Southern Cal to climax a come-from-behind 38-37 victory for the Irish, it culminated my first year at Notre Dame and hopefully set the tempo for the 1987 season. Unfortunately, not all the games ended on such a positive note; we lost five games by a total of 14 points. However, I do believe the foundation has been laid to build a successful program in the future."

We're all hoping history repeats itself.

—WPD

SCHOLASTIC

M A G A Z I N E

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Vol. 139, No. 8 • 1997 Football Review

*Disce Quasi Semper Victurus
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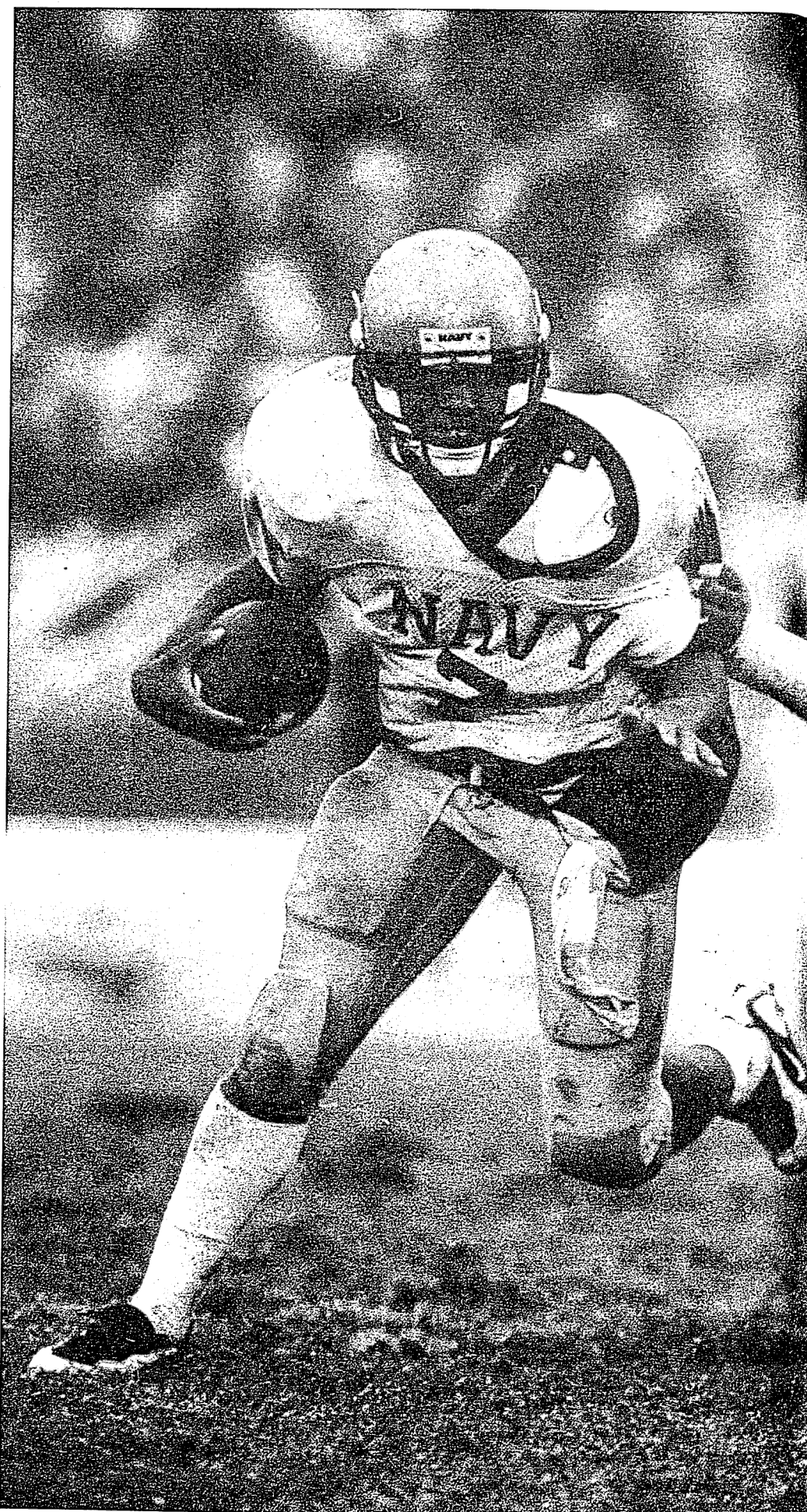
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Gordie Bell

SCHOLASTIC

M A G A Z I N E



1997 Football Review
Volume 139, Number 8

Georgia Tech

NOT IN MY HOUSE. Defensive end Melvin Dansby brings down Georgia Tech quarterback Joe Hamilton.

Stan Evans

Opening Day Jitters

• by Jeff Cox •

DESPITE A NEW COACH AND EXPANDED stadium, the script was all too familiar. Early in the fourth quarter of its opening game, Notre Dame found itself trailing a team generally considered an inferior opponent. In 1995, the Irish couldn't overcome upstart Northwestern and lost 17-15. In 1996, the Irish had again struggled but managed to overcome Vanderbilt 14-7, courtesy of a late

Marc Edwards touchdown.

This year, the Irish had to rally from a fourth quarter deficit to defeat 19-point underdog Georgia Tech 17-13. A 1-yard touchdown run by Autry Denson with 2:37 left propelled Notre Dame to victory. "Sometimes it gets harder before it gets easier," said Notre Dame Head Coach Bob Davie, who, unlike Lou Holtz, won his first game as head coach. "I knew it was going to be hard. You know going in it was going to be that way."

This game, however, was harder than even Davie could have anticipated. Early on, the Irish looked out of rhythm. The offense came out with no huddle and even used the shotgun formation on a couple of plays. "I think the problem we had on offense was we were just feeling our way through," Denson said. "We knew we could do the job. It was just a matter of time."

After exchanging punts to open the game, the Irish marched down the field on the game's first scoring drive. Quarterback Ron Powlus, who was 18 of 29 for 217 yards, did most of the damage, completing two passes for 38 yards and setting up Denson's first touchdown-run, a 3-yard scamper, with 7:56 left in the first quarter. The Irish, however, wouldn't score another touchdown until Denson's game-winner in the fourth quarter.

Notre Dame failed to capitalize on an Allen Rossum

It took a late touchdown to dismiss Georgia Tech

interception on their next drive and gave the ball back to Georgia Tech at their own 34 to start their own scoring drive. Tailback Charlie Rogers did most of the work, rushing for 31 of the 66 yards on the drive. He helped set up an 11-yard touchdown scramble from Hamilton that tied the game at seven. On the drive, the option proved an unforeseen weapon for Georgia Tech. "Georgia Tech ran a little more option than we had anticipated," Davie said. "We had trouble defending it."

Notre Dame's next drive featured Powlus as he accounted for 55 yards in the march to the Georgia Tech 8. He completed a pass to freshman Joey Getherall for 11 yards, then scrambled for 22 yards. The Irish came up empty, however, as a bobbled snap led to a missed 25-yard field goal from Jim Sanson.

Georgia Tech started their next drive on the 20 with an option. Behind Rogers and Hamilton, the Yellow Jackets drove down to the Irish 15, leading to a 33-yard field goal by Frakes that gave Georgia Tech a 10-7 lead with 4:14 left in the first half.

Trailing for the first time in their new stadium, Notre Dame took over on their own 33 and attempted to gain some momentum for the second half. Powlus went six-for-eight on the drive, with Brown, Getherall and Johnson each making receptions. Sanson connected on a last-second, 28-yard field goal that evened the score. "That field goal at the end of the first half was important. It changed the momentum," Davie said. "I really thought Sanson did an excellent job. I'm proud of him."

Georgia Tech seemed eager to regain that momentum at the start of the third quarter. Rogers hauled in a 26-yard pass that moved the Yellow Jackets down to the Irish 14. On

the catch, Rogers broke a Benny Guilbeaux tackle at the 36, but Guilbeaux quickly redeemed himself.

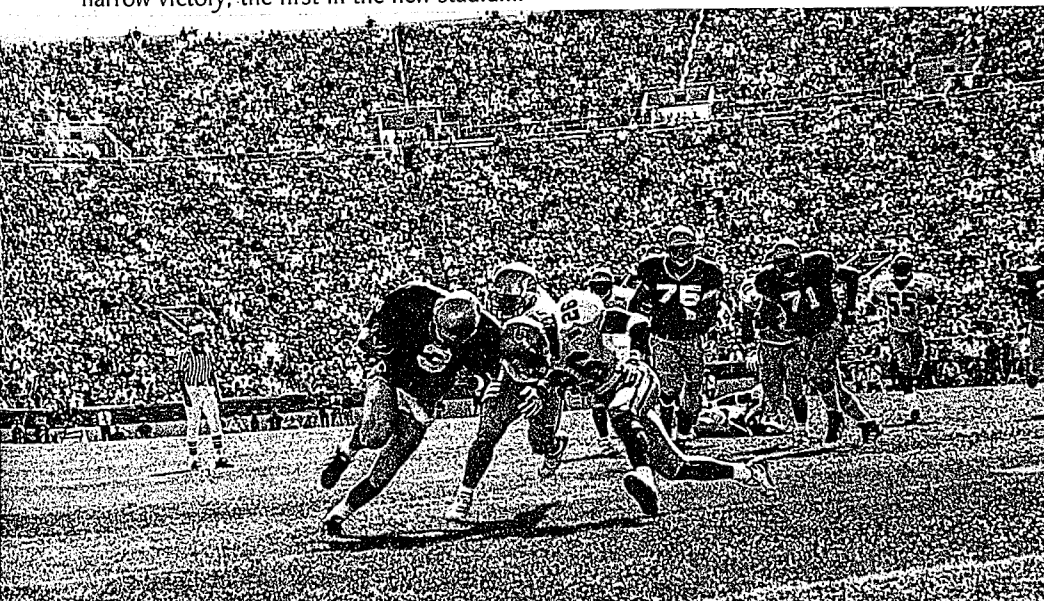
On third-and-two from the Irish 6, Hamilton looked for tight end Matt Gubba in the end zone, but Guilbeaux dove in front of Gubba for an interception. "I had to do something," Guilbeaux said. "I'm a veteran. I can't make those types of mistakes."

Notre Dame appeared ready to take advantage of Guilbeaux's interception. Powlus hit Denson out of the backfield for 47 yards and then found tight end Dan O'Leary for 19 down to the Georgia Tech 4. After gaining three yards on the first two downs, the Irish failed to punch it in on three attempts from the 1-yard line. An offsides penalty against Georgia Tech gave Notre Dame an extra shot, but it didn't help. Ken Barry was stopped on fourth down and the Yellow Jackets took possession. "We only ran four live plays [in goal-line situations in practice] because of the fear of losing kids injury-wise," Notre Dame Offensive Coordinator Jim Colletto said. "It's hard to practice goal-line offense."

Starting deep in their own territory, Georgia Tech went right on the attack as Hamilton hit wide receiver Harvey Middleton for 19 on their first play. Their 14-play, 84-yard drive culminated in a Frakes 32-yard field goal four seconds into the fourth quarter, putting Georgia Tech up 13-10.

The Yellow Jackets had two opportunities, courtesy of Ron Powlus' interceptions, to add to their lead. But with the game on the line, the Irish defense got tough. The Yellow Jackets missed two field goals, the second of which set up Notre Dame's winning drive. Denson was the workhorse for the Irish, gaining 44 of the 70 yards on the

CROWD PLEASER. Ron Powlus and the Irish entertained 80,225 against Georgia Tech with a narrow victory, the first in the new stadium.



GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

177 GT

154 ND

Passing Yards

118 GT

217 ND

Total Yardage

295 GT

371 ND

First Downs

17 GT

22 ND

Time of Possession

29:05 GT

30:55 ND

Penalties (Yards)

30 GT

44 ND

SCORING

Georgia Tech	0	10	0	3	13
Notre Dame	7	3	0	7	17

1st Quarter

ND - Denson 3 run at 7:56 (Sanson PAT)

2nd Quarter

GT - Hamilton 11 run at 13:04 (Frakes PAT)

GT - Frakes 44 FG at 4:14

ND - Sanson 28 FG at 00:00

3rd Quarter

None

4th Quarter

GT - Frakes 32 FG at 14:56

ND - Denson 11 run at 2:37 (Sanson PAT)

SIEN EVANS

drive. He started with a 19-yard scamper that brought Notre Dame to midfield. Three plays later Denson fumbled, but tackle Tim Ridder was there to recover the football.

That near-disaster seemed to refocus the Irish. Powlus scrambled for 11 yards and fullback Joey Goodspeed followed with an 11-yard run to the Georgia Tech 12. On the next play, Powlus hit Brown for one of the senior wide receiver's seven receptions. From there, it was all Denson. His 6-yard run put the ball on the 1-yard line and on the next play he twisted over the goal line to put the Irish in front for the rest of the game.

Sanson boomed the subsequent kickoff for a touchback, leaving Georgia Tech 80 yards to go with only 2:37 remaining. The Yellow Jackets' final chance was halted when senior defensive end Melvin Dansby sacked Hamilton for a 13-yard loss. "It was our turn to step up. We needed to do our part," said Dansby, who had 12 tackles and two sacks for the game. "It comes down to the senior leadership of the team. That's what it's about: gut check time."

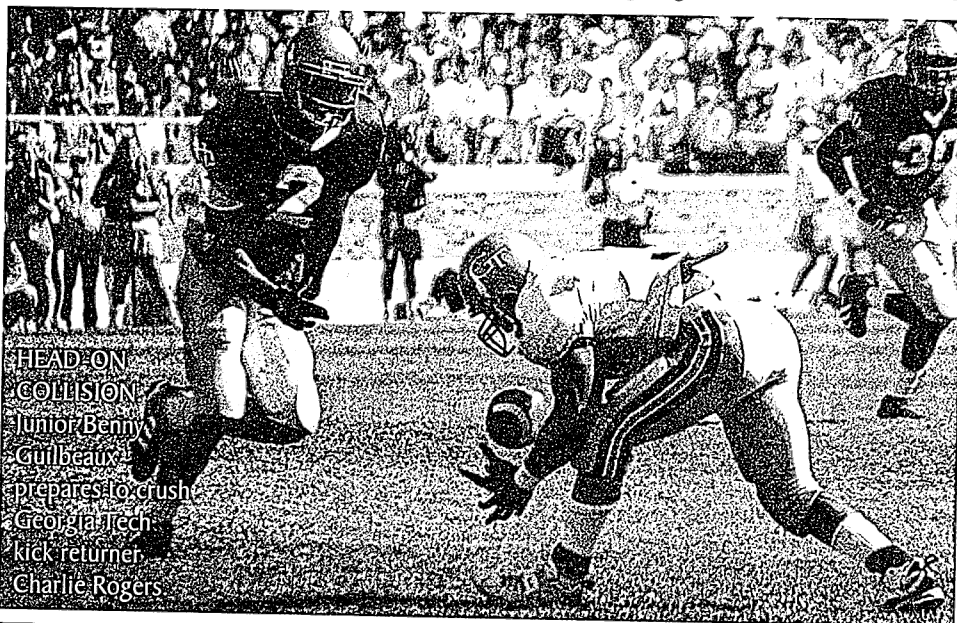
The Yellow Jackets ended up punting. After gaining one first down, the Irish ran out the clock for the victory. Though it was a struggle, players and coaches alike were happy with the win. "It was just a matter of

everyone sucking it up and doing the job," Powlus said. "I never felt like we would lose the game."

Davie believed the win was one of the biggest the Irish had clinched in quite a while. "I told the team anytime you can win the first football game of the season, particularly with a new coaching staff, that is a big, big win," Davie said. "I think the fans stayed in that game and really pulled us through."

The 21,150 extra fans who accounted for a Notre Dame Stadium record crowd of 80,225 made a difference in the contest. "It was pretty loud out there," Goodspeed said. "That was a big difference in the game."

Even though the Irish only managed a four-point win, Davie felt relieved that his first game as Irish coach was in the books. "I hardly ever felt nervous," Davie said. "We have so much invested in this that one grenade is not going to take us down." □



HEAD ON COLLISION Junior Benny Guilbeau prepares to crush Georgia Tech kick returner Charlie Rogers

Gordie Bell

THE 9TH ANNUAL NOTRE DAME STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL

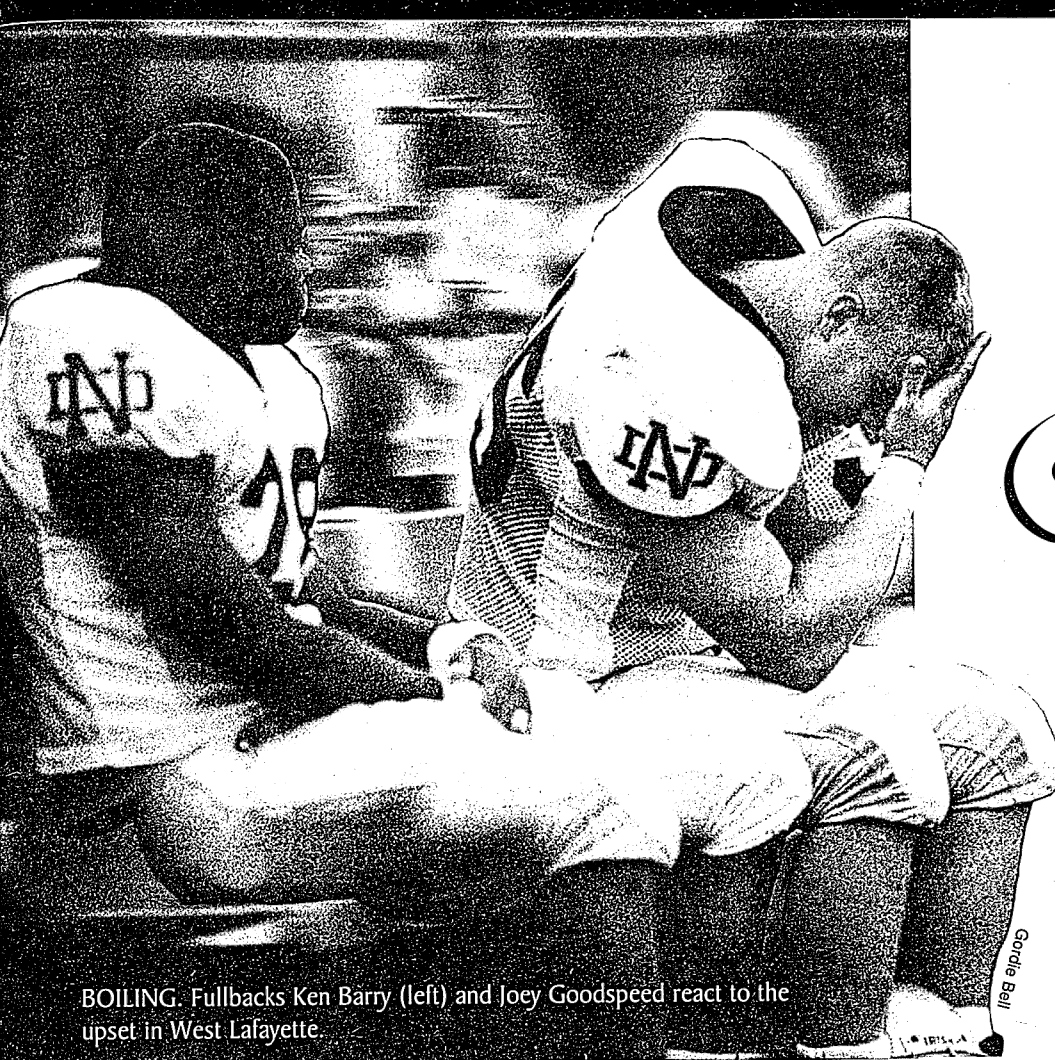
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BOILING: Fullbacks Ken Barry (left) and Joey Goodspeed react to the upset in West Lafayette.

Purdue

New Error

• by Brian Lucas •

IT TOOK BOB DAVIE TWO WEEKS TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING that Lou Holtz couldn't do in 11 years: lose to Purdue.

One week after a shaky 17-13 victory over Georgia Tech, the Irish attempted to right the ship against familiar opponent Purdue. It was the 52nd consecutive meeting between the two schools, with the Irish

winning the last 11 by an average score of 39-11. The oddsmakers thought that this year would be no different and made the Irish 19-point favorites. The bookies won some money on this game.

In a game marked by numerous Notre Dame mistakes and a career day for Purdue quarterback Billy Dicken, the Boilermakers shocked the Irish 28-17 before a sellout crowd of 68,789 at Ross-Ade Stadium. Afterward, players and coaches alike were left searching for answers. "Whatever it is, we're

not getting it done," Irish running back Autry Denson said. "But I can't pinpoint one particular thing."

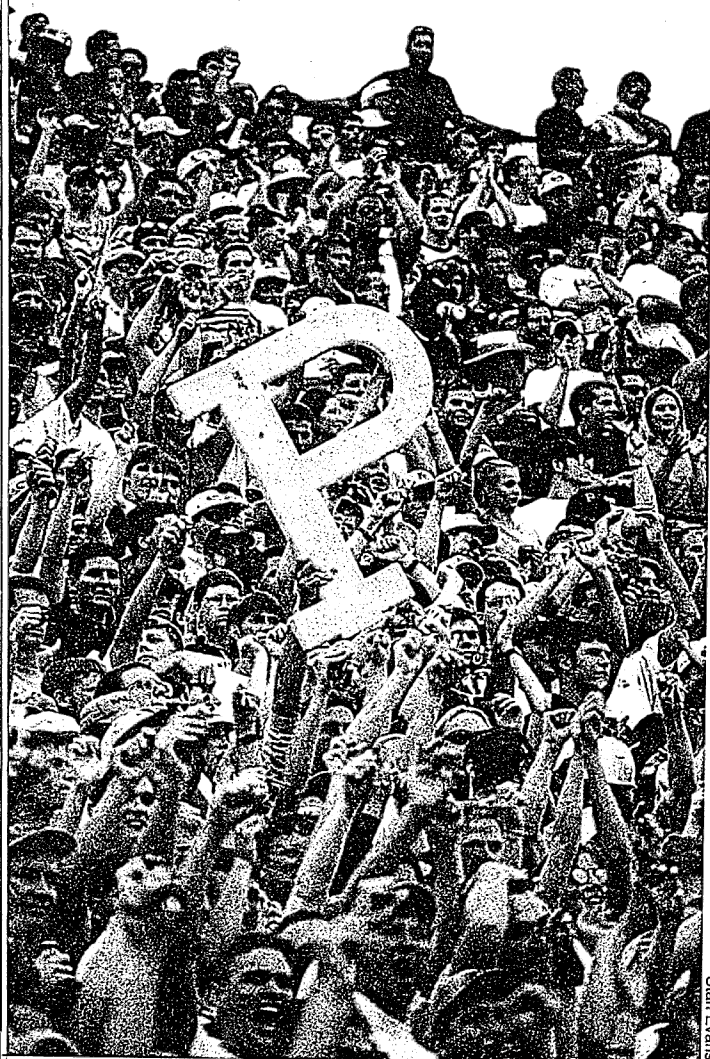
The Irish were in Purdue territory seven times, including five inside the 40, to come away with only two touchdowns and a field goal. The poor execution irked Offensive Coordinator Jim Colletto. "We're not making the plays when it really counts," the former Purdue coach said. "It varies from position to position. It's not just any one guy."

While the offense was problematic, Notre Dame's defense was far from blameless. Facing a Purdue team fresh off a 36-22 loss to Toledo the week before, the Irish gave up 485 yards of total offense, including a career-high 352 yards passing for Dicken. If not for some timely mistakes by the Boilermakers, the final score could have been more one-sided. "In all honesty, they let a couple other opportunities slip away," Davie admitted.

One opportunity Purdue didn't pass up came on its second drive of the game. Pinned on their own 1-yard line, Purdue faced a daunting challenge: gain significant yardage or risk giving the ball back to the Irish in good field position. Things looked promising for Notre Dame after Dicken was tackled for no gain, setting up a third-and-nine. But in a preview of what the day would hold for the Irish defense, Dicken came up with a big play, a 13-yard pass to Brian Alford.

Purdue did not face another third down on the 11-play, 99-yard drive that lasted 4:49. The Irish secondary helped Purdue with

The first defeat of the Davie era was the first loss to Purdue in 11 years



Stan Evans

CHANGE OF PACE. Purdue fans had something to cheer about this year. After beating Notre Dame, they lost only two games en route to an Alamo Bowl victory.

poor tackling. Strong safety Benny Guilbeaux failed to tackle Billy Watson, Purdue's 225-pound tailback, on Watson's 23-yard run. One play later, A'Jani Sanders had Watson lined up in the backfield but failed to wrap him up. The Purdue tailback turned a simple screen pass into a 28-yard gain and scored on a 1-yard run on the ensuing play. "On their 99-yard drive, we had three missed tackles that were huge," Davie said. "We gave them big yards after initial contact."

Though the Irish held the ball for a combined 9:46 on their first two drives, they had no points to show for it. They finally got on the board with a 34-yard field goal midway through the second quarter by Jim Sanson, capping off an 11-play, 60-yard drive. The Irish might have gained more than three points if wide receiver Raki Nelson hadn't dropped a third-down pass inside the Purdue 10.

The Irish followed that mistake with another error, this time courtesy of Deveron Harper's late hit on the kickoff. That pen-

alty gave Purdue the ball at midfield and the Boilermakers capitalized on the opportunity. Needing only five plays, Purdue took a 14-3 lead on Watson's second 1-yard touchdown run of the game. The key play in the drive was a 15-yard pass interference penalty on sophomore linebacker Ronnie Nicks, which gave Purdue the ball on the Irish 14.

Notre Dame answered with an old-fashioned, pound-it-out drive. Starting at the Purdue 16, the Irish went 84 yards, 70 of which were on the ground. Denson, who had 104 yards, finished the drive with a 16-yard run around the right side, cutting the Boilermaker lead to four.

That's how the first half ended, but it could easily have been 21-10. With 41 seconds remaining in the half, Purdue took advantage of a mix-up in the Notre Dame secondary. Isaac Jones caught a 47-yard bomb from Dicken, giving Purdue a first down on the Irish 15. Two plays later, Dicken completed what looked like a

touchdown pass to Jones. A holding penalty nullified the score, however. The Boilermakers were also assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for celebrating after the apparent touchdown. Combined with a delay of game on the next play, the Boilermakers fell out of field goal range and had to punt the ball away.

After exchanging punts to open the second half, the Irish drove to the Purdue 18 where they faced a fourth-and-five. Davie elected to go for it but the gamble backfired when Powlus' pass to fullback Joey Goodspeed fell incomplete. "We knew we would have the match-up we wanted, that they were going to blitz," Davie said. "We just let their nose guard get a little too much pressure."

Looking to capitalize on the Irish failure, Purdue marched to the Notre Dame 19. Facing a second-and-14, Dicken's pass over the middle was intercepted by Kory Minor, who returned it to the Irish 49. Notre Dame could not take advantage of the turnover, though, losing 7 yards on three plays and

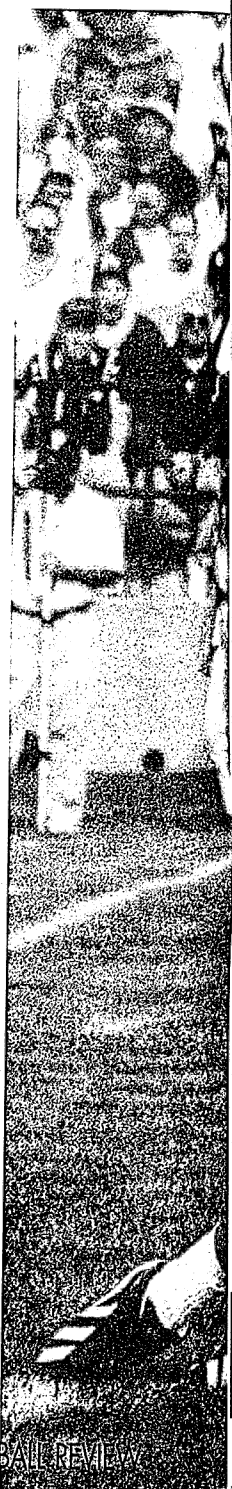
giving the ball back to the Boilermakers. "Our sudden change offense didn't perform well," Davie said. "After Minor's interception we had a penalty and then a run for a loss, then we're third-and-17."

Following a 58-yard punt by Smith that went through the endzone, Purdue got the ball back at its own 20. Dicken and the Boilermakers' offense went back to work. They embarked on a 12-play drive that was halted at the Notre Dame 17. With a chance to put his team up by a touchdown, Purdue kicker Shane Ryan missed a 34-yard field goal attempt wide left.

Still only trailing 14-10, Notre Dame started a march from their 20. A 7-yard run by Goodspeed and completions to Denson and Brown left the Irish with a second-and-five from their own 39. On the next play, Powlus was flushed from the pocket and seemed poised to gain the first down. Purdue defensive end Roosevelt Colvin had other ideas, though, hitting the Irish quarterback from behind and stripping him of the football. Adrian Beasley scooped up the fumble and sprinted 43 yards for the touchdown, upping Purdue's lead to 21-10.

The Irish responded by going three-and-out on their next drive for the first time in the game. On Purdue's subsequent drive, Ryan again kept the Irish close, this time missing a 45-yard attempt. Notre Dame capitalized on this opportunity, driving 71 yards in 11 plays, capped off by a 1-yard touchdown pass to Denson. That cut the Boilermaker lead to five, but an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on Denson pushed the Irish point-after back to the 18, where Davie inexplicably decided to kick the extra point.

Down by four with only 1:47 left, the Irish were



Stan Evans

forced to attempt an onside kick. Sanson's kick went only 7 yards before it was recovered by Purdue, effectively ending the game. The Boilermakers tacked on a touchdown 45 seconds later to make the score 28-17. Purdue had clinched its first win of the season.

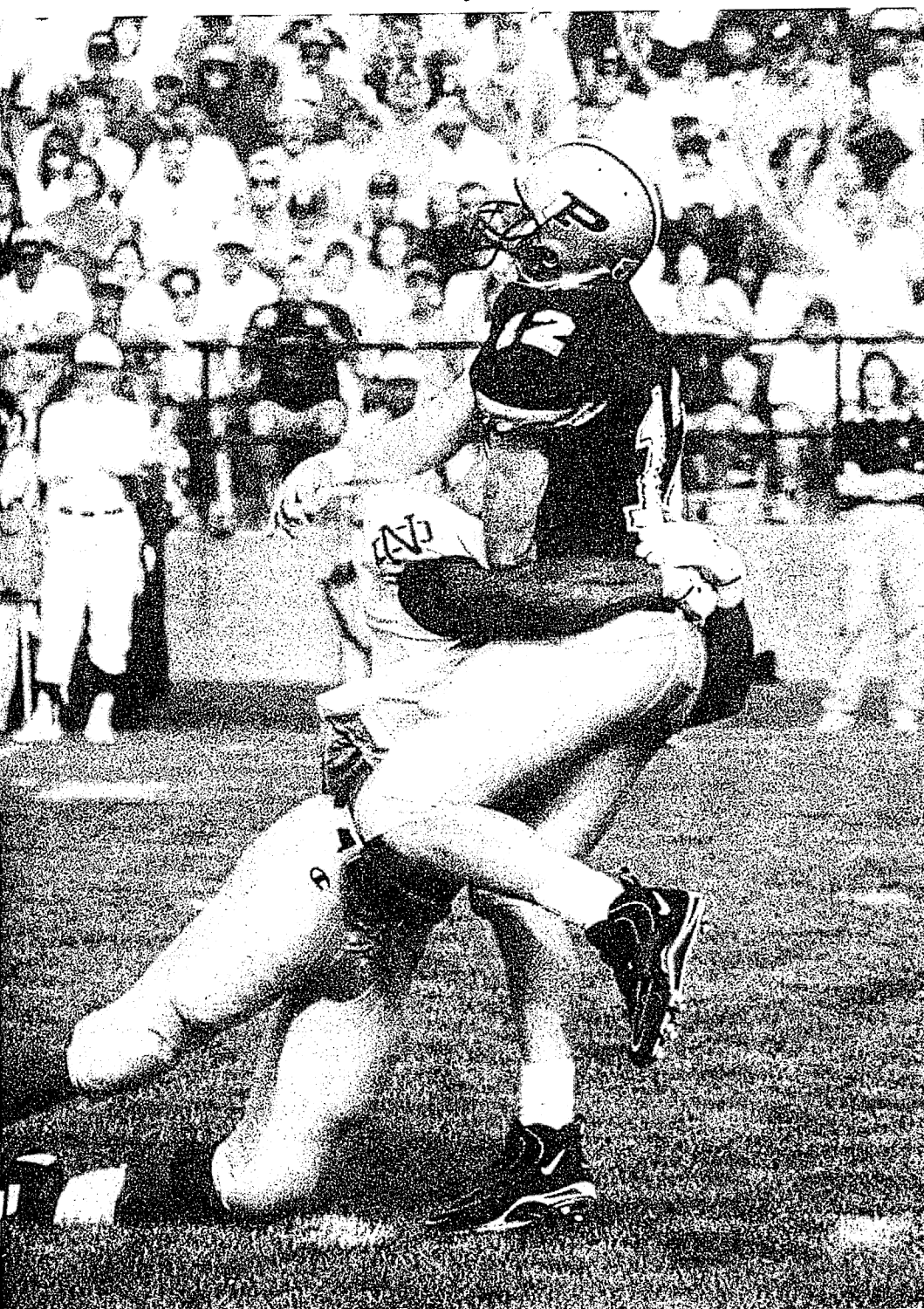
"I don't want to take anything away from Purdue because they played a great game," Davie said. "But we are embarrassed."

Notre Dame's offense, despite scoring only 17 points, moved the ball effectively. They compiled 457 yards of total offense, 164 rushing and 293 passing. The passing

yardage represented a career high for Powlus, as did his 31 completions and 41 attempts. The fifth-year senior wasn't satisfied with the result, however. "We moved the ball pretty well, but we're just not scoring," Powlus said. "There's definitely a problem, we just have to figure out what it is."

Going into their toughest stretch of the season, with three consecutive games against top-25 opponents, the Irish were left searching for answers. And they knew that if they didn't come up with some soon, they would face a long season of questions. □

BEATING THE TAG. Purdue quarterback Billy Dicken had a career game against the Irish.



GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

164 ND

133 Purdue

Passing Yards

293 ND

352 Purdue

Total Yardage

457 ND

485 Purdue

First Downs

26 ND

25 Purdue

Time of Possession

38:51 ND

21:09 Purdue

Penalties (Yards)

67 ND

60 Purdue

SCORING

Notre Dame	0	10	0	7	17
Purdue	7	7	0	14	28

1st Quarter

PU: Watson 1 run at 4:30 (Ryan PAT)

2nd Quarter

ND: Sanson 34 FG at 8:49

PU: Watson 1 run at 6:28 (Ryan PAT)

ND: Denson 16 run at 2:39 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

None

4th Quarter

PU: Beasley 43 fumble recovery at 8:37 (Ryan PAT)

ND: Denson 1 pass from Powlus at 1:47 (Sanson PAT)

PU: Matthews 2 run at 1:02 (Ryan PAT)

Marked Man

•by Corey Spinelli•



Despite frequent
criticism, Ron
Powlus doesn't
regret his decision
to attend Notre
Dame

BITTERSWEET. Senior Ron Powlus faced both highs and lows in four years as Notre Dame's quarterback.

He is still standing. He withstood 16 losses, one tie and three major injuries. He withstood four years of unrelenting criticism and the boos of his fellow students. And not only did he survive, he made his mark by breaking records originally set by Montana, Theisman and Hanratty.

Ron Powlus, however, never won the Heisman Trophy and national championships that many thought would be his. And consequently, many Irish fans will remem-

ber Powlus as the overrated high school All-American who didn't live up to the expectations of both fans and the press. But Powlus has different memories of the five years he spent at Notre Dame.

The two-time Notre Dame captain threw every one of his 1,021 passes before a national audience, some of whom were watching just to see him fail. Since the first time he pulled the number 3 jersey over his pads, he shouldered the immense responsibility

that comes with playing in the role of one of the most scrutinized positions in college athletics. Despite the broken bones, the seemingly endless bad breaks and all the criticism, Powlus insists that he would make the same choice again. "It really came down to the situation that was best for me as a person, as a student and as an athlete, and even though things haven't always gone so well on the football field, five years later I know in my heart that I made the right choice in attending Notre Dame," Powlus says. "Simply being a part of the student body is something special that I take great pride in."

The signal-caller had the chance to be a "regular" student during his first year on campus, thanks to a sandwiching hit by current NFL starters Bryant Young and Jim Flanigan during preseason practice. The impact broke Powlus' right clavicle and ended his freshman season before it started. The injury was particularly difficult to handle considering Powlus' eye-popping numbers during his first two scrimmages: 23 of 36 for 436 yards, five touchdowns and no interceptions. His performance so impressed Lou Holtz that the coach was going to replace senior starter Kevin McDougal in favor of

the 19-year-old freshman.

Spending the 1993 season, in which the Irish went 11-1 and nearly won the national championship, on the sidelines was difficult, but Powlus made the best of it. "Coming in, I didn't know any better," Powlus says of earning the starting role in two weeks. "I came to play, so the injury was tough to take, especially considering that I had never even missed a practice."

While sitting out Powlus saw the difference between being a "regular" student and being the Notre Dame quarterback. "There is a big difference, and in my time here I've tried to make that difference as small as possible," he said. "I'm a student first, and I just happen to be the quarterback. That's how I've always wanted it to be."

The rest of America didn't see it that way, however. From his nearly-perfect beginning against Northwestern in Soldier Field (18 for 24, 291 yards and four touchdowns) through his final game against LSU, Powlus has often been vilified by the press, taking much of the blame for the team's failings. In his first season at the helm, Powlus led a '94 team decimated by injuries, including both starters in the backfield (Lee Becton and Ray Zellers) and several members of the offensive line. Notre Dame lost five games that year, which "equaled as many as I expected to lose in four years here," Powlus says. "I remember struggling, trying to do everything possible to help the team win. The '94 season made me appreciate winning that much more."

In his second and third years as the starting quarterback, Powlus completed 257 of his 449 passes for 24 touchdowns with only 11 interceptions. He did this in Holtz's successful yet conservative offense, which emphasized the run over the pass, and he did it despite having only one big-play receiver, Derrick Mayes. The Irish went 16-5 in '95-'96, losing two games to Ohio State and dropping two home games to heavy underdogs Northwestern and Air Force — games in which Powlus was a combined 33-50 for 443 yards and no interceptions. Yet the Irish faced Florida State in the Orange Bowl on New Year's Day of 1996, and were it not for five fumbles and a missed extra-point against USC, would have had another New Year's date a year later.

The numbers posted by the quarterback from Berwick, Penn., during these two seasons fell short of most Notre Dame fans' expectations, however. And since Powlus never contended for the Heisman he was

supposed to win and didn't lead the Irish to a national championship, he received extensive criticism from the media. "I've always pushed the accolades and, in turn, the criticism, onto the position," Powlus explains. "I love what I do. I'm the quarterback at Notre Dame. Everybody is watching, and everybody has an opinion. The criticism hasn't been that hard for me to take. It's been much harder on my wife, my mom and dad, and my sister and brother-in-law."

Powlus does admit, however, that the personal attacks have been difficult to deal with. "I've done everything I can," he says. "If I hadn't prepared that well, or if I hadn't tried that hard in practice, then I'd understand it. But for five years, I've given everything I have for Notre Dame."

Powlus's return for a fifth year under a new coaching staff, headed by Bob Davie, provided the quarterback with a shot at redemption. With virtually the entire offense returning, the campus was optimistic. "Looking back, it was fun, but I don't think anyone was entirely realistic," Powlus says. "We had the spring to learn the new system, but there's a big difference between playing on Moose Krause Field and in Michigan Stadium."

**"I'm a student
first, and I just
happen to be the
quarterback. That's
how I've always
wanted it to be."**

Consecutive losses to Purdue, Michigan State, Michigan and Stanford left the Irish at 1-4 less than halfway through the season. Another listless performance at home against USC two weeks later dropped Notre Dame to 2-5. Once again, many cast Powlus as the scapegoat. Statistically, Powlus was 104 of 156 for 1,005 yards, five touchdowns, three interceptions and one fumble in the losses (all turnovers took place in the fourth quarter).

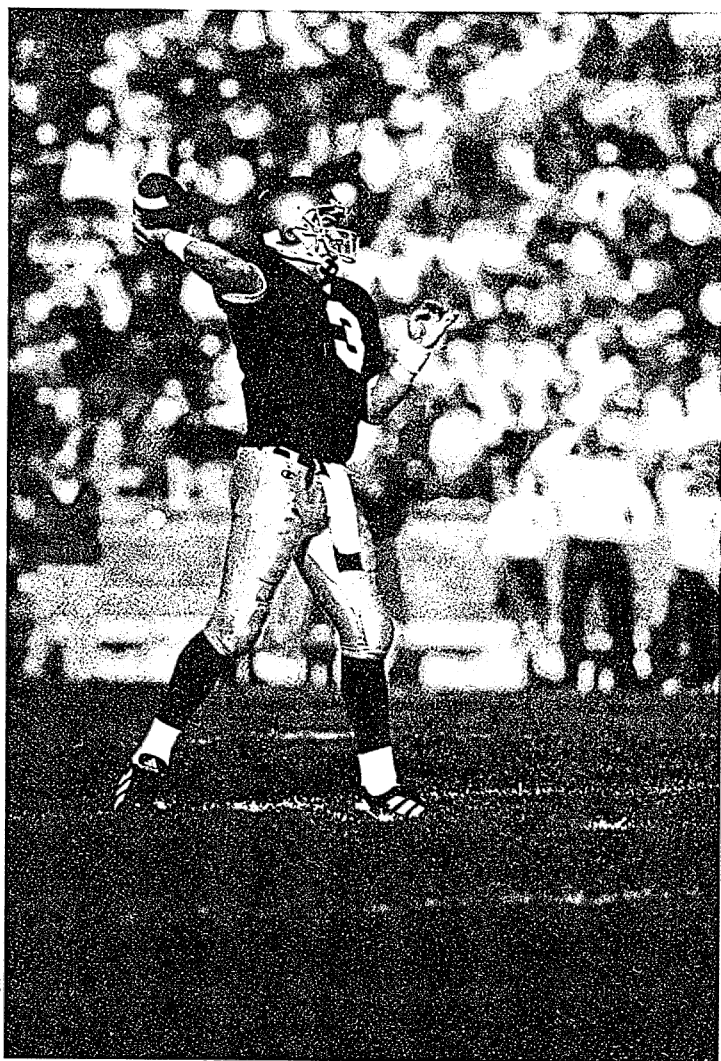
Many fans and members of the press called for junior Jarious Jackson to replace Powlus as the starting quarterback. Though he didn't insert Jackson as the starter, Davie felt confident that the backup could "spark" the offense and assured the media that Jackson would see significant action following the USC game.

Already being replaced by Jackson on short-yardage and goal-line plays, Powlus was now in danger of losing his starting position. But no matter how hard the press tried to ignite a quarterback controversy, Powlus simply replied, "Jarious and I are friends, and I'll be pulling for him and the team while he's in the game."

By that point, some of Powlus' fellow students were booing him every time he re-entered the game. The boos began at the end



Gordie Bell



Gordie Bell

"I've done everything I can. If I hadn't prepared that well, or if I hadn't tried that hard in practice, then I'd understand it. But for five years, I've given everything I have for Notre Dame."

of the Michigan State game, continued through USC and came to a head against Boston College. The comments became so biting and personal that Powlus's wife and mother could not even bear to watch him play in Notre Dame Stadium, and his father and brother-in-law had to leave the Boston College game at halftime. Instead of lashing out at the fans, the only objection that Powlus expressed was not raising his gold helmet to the student section following the games. "In my own little way, I just couldn't salute the students after the game," he recalls. "I felt like I'd be betraying myself and my family by doing it, but I also hated not acknowledging the students who have always been behind me, win or lose."

He admits that being booed by the students was tough to handle. "It hurt my heart, and it is the toughest thing I've ever had to deal with," he says. "I know that the students take great pride in their football, and I take great pride in being a part of this student body. Whether I'm speaking at a Boy Scout Banquet or playing in LSU, I've

always tried to represent Notre Dame to the best of my ability. But because we seem so removed from the students on the field, I don't know if everybody understands how much we care about the students and care how they feel about the team."

Powlus and the Irish finished the regular season in style, winning their last five games and earning an invitation to the Independence Bowl. Powlus' last pass in Notre Dame Stadium was a game-winning touchdown toss to Bobby Brown against West Virginia.

The late-season turnaround helped a grinning Powlus to salute the student body following his last home game. "That week of the West Virginia game was a dilemma and I had been talking to my family about what to do," Powlus says. "I couldn't forget my mom, wife and sister crying in the stands. But it came down to being bigger than the critics and showing my appreciation to the students that always supported me. Because of the way my career has gone here, it was so satisfying to walk off that field for the last

time as a winner."

And so his five years under the spotlight are over. No longer will his every move be scrutinized and the pressure of being the focal point of America's most storied football team will finally subside. "I never really looked at it as pressure," Powlus says. "Pressure is being unprepared, I've always had great confidence in what I do. I'm going to miss the competition, though. There's nothing better than going on the road and into a hostile environment. We haven't always won, but we've played well in places like Washington, Texas and LSU."

More than the excitement of college football, Powlus will miss being a part of Notre Dame. "Coming to Notre Dame and being the quarterback is the hardest thing I've ever done, but it's also the best thing I've ever done," he says. "I don't know if I could have grown as much as a person as I did here, and that's a credit to this place. I'll remember Notre Dame as a great place to go to school and an even better place to be from."

□

BLIND *Sided*

• by Danny Easley •

ONE WEEK BEFORE, NOTRE DAME WALKED off the field at Ross-Ade Stadium devastated after a shocking 28-17 defeat at the hands of Purdue. Following the first Irish loss to the Boilermakers in 11 years, things couldn't get much worse. Or so they thought. That was before

Michigan State marched into Notre Dame Stadium and dominated the Irish, racking up 222 rushing yards en route to a 23-7 victory. The loss snapped Notre Dame's eight-game winning streak against the Spartans, one game short of the longest winning streak in the entire 61-game series.

Many Irish fans viewed the Purdue debacle as a fluke in which Purdue played extremely well and Notre Dame played very poorly. But Notre Dame's performance against Michigan State showed that the loss to Purdue was no fluke. For the first time since 1986, Lou Holtz's debut season, the Irish opened the season with a 1-2 record. "We're in the middle of a hurricane," Head Coach Bob Davie said. "We've got some tough games coming up. None of us wanted to be 1-2, none of us expected to be 1-2."

Coming off home wins against Western Michigan and Memphis by a combined score of 93-31, Michigan State was out to show that it could beat a tough team on the road. Notre Dame, on the other hand, wanted to forget the previous weekend and climb back into the top 25. From the opening kickoff, however, it was the Spartans, not the Irish, who played like they had something to prove. Jim Sanson's kick was fielded by Michigan State's Marc Renaud and returned 52 yards to the Notre Dame 44. With excellent field position, the Spartans were able to roll through the Irish defense and score only 3:32 into the game. The drive was capped off by quarterback Todd Schultz's 5-yard



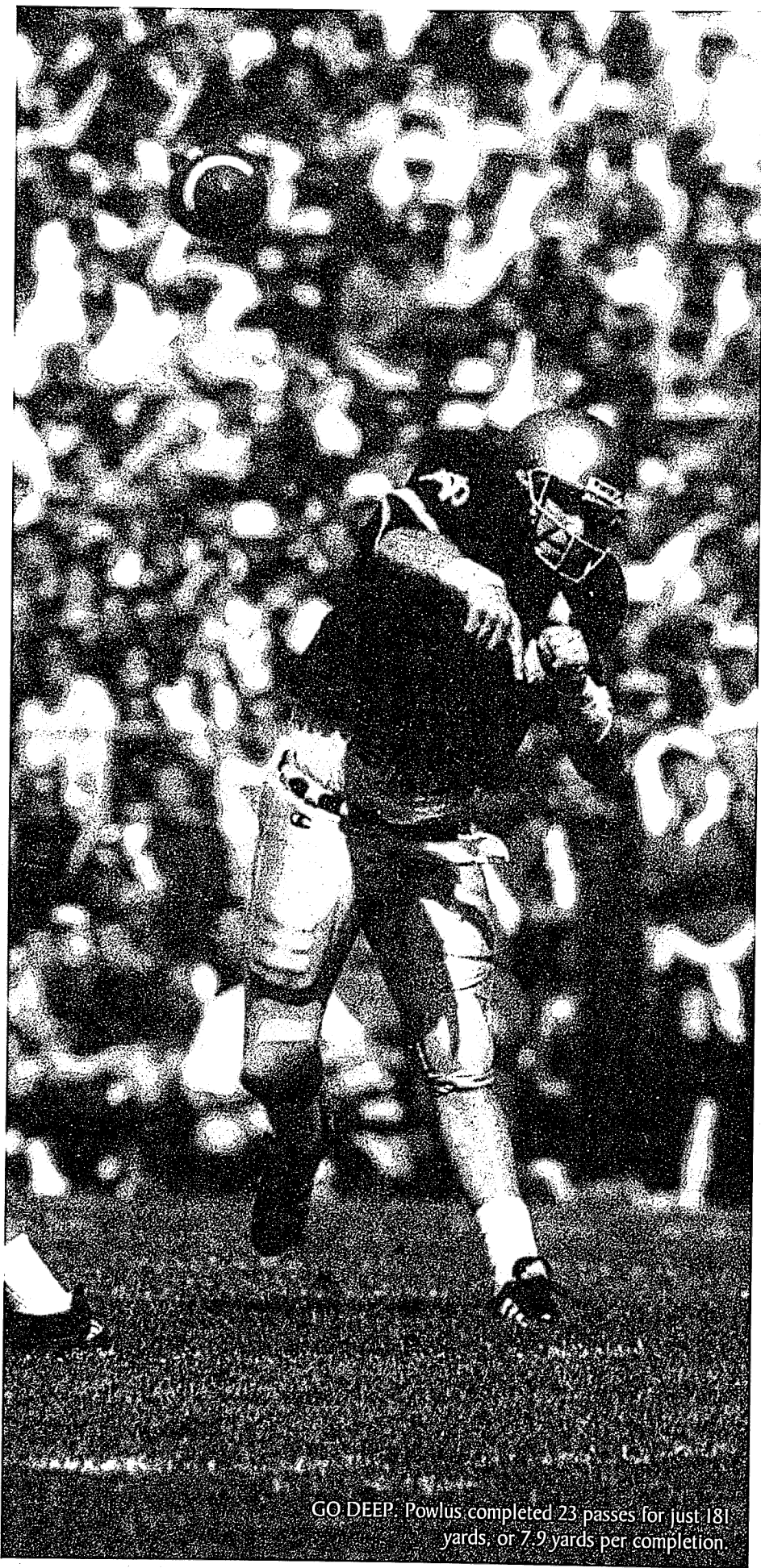
CAUGHT OFF GUARD. Powlus, as well as many Notre Dame fans, were surprised by the Spartans.

Gordie Bell

touchdown pass to wide receiver Josh Keur.

Notre Dame's opening drive was not quite as successful. After Autry Denson started the drive with four impressive runs totaling 26 yards, the Irish went to the air. Quarterback Ron Powlus' pass to Bobby Brown was broken up by Michigan State cornerback Ray Hill, and on third down he threw behind a wide-open Jabari Holloway. Punter Hunter Smith looked to pin the Spartans deep in their own territory, but his 52-yard punt was fielded on the 6 by Sedrick Irvin, who fin-

The Irish hoped Purdue was a fluke —
until MSU manhandled them at home



GO DEEP: Powlus completed 23 passes for just 181 yards, or 7.9 yards per completion.

Gordie Bell

ished with 212 yards of total offense, and returned 21 yards, allowing the Michigan State offense to go back to work.

They did just that, driving 73 yards in 11 plays for a 14-0 lead. Michigan State running backs Renaud and Irvin led the Spartans' scoring drive, combining for 53 yards on the ground. Following a 12-yard pass from Schultz to Keur, the Spartan quarterback powered into the endzone from 1 yard out. This scoring drive began an impressive day for both Renaud and Irvin, who finished the game with 112 and 106 yards rushing, respectively. "They were both in a rhythm today," Michigan State Head Coach Nick Saban said. "The offensive line opened holes and they were able to create yardage through the openings."

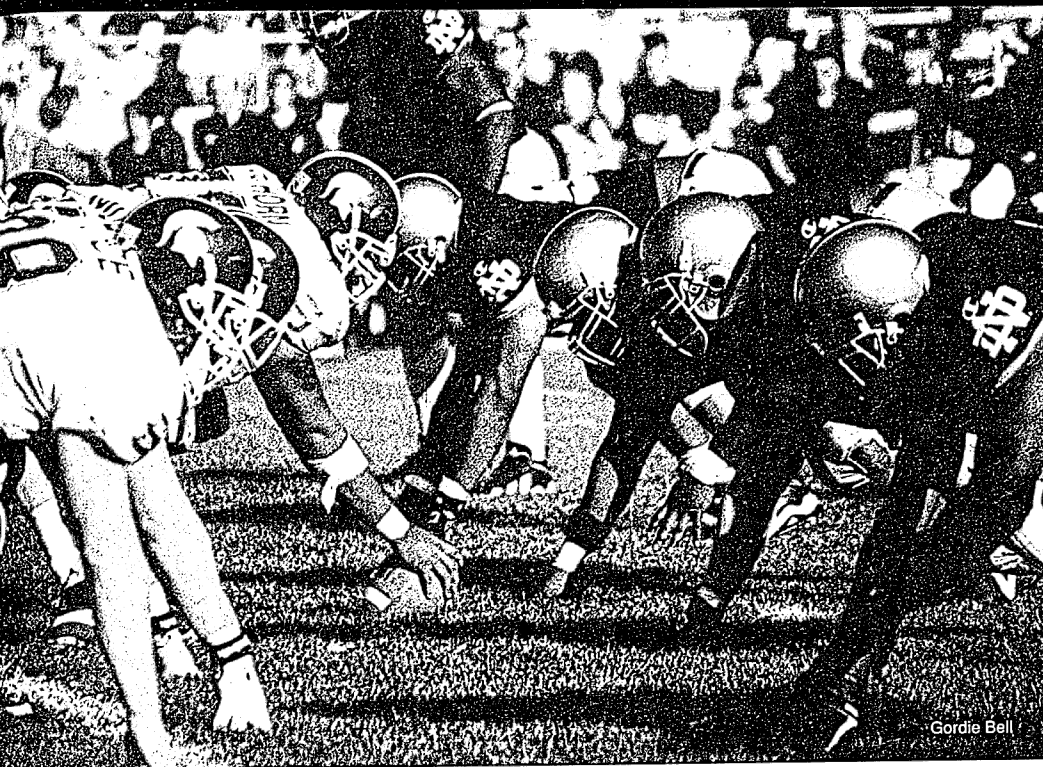
Davie was also impressed with the rushing attack of Michigan State, which outgained the Irish 222-61. "They didn't put themselves in a bad situation with their running game," he said. "In the first half they got 4 or 5 yards per carry. Their backs were physical and pushed us off the line."

The second quarter began the same way the first quarter ended, with Notre Dame unable to move the ball on offense or contain the Spartans' rushing attack on defense. After a defensive stop by the Spartans, their offense marched 67 yards in 12 plays to set up a 31-yard field goal by Chris Gardner. The drive was aided by a roughing the passer call on the Irish after Schultz's second-down pass fell incomplete. The 15-yard penalty moved the ball to the Michigan State 39. From there, Irvan and Renaud were responsible for the last 47 yards of the drive before Ivory Covington broke up a third-down pass and forced Gardner's field goal attempt.

Notre Dame's luck turned at the end of the second quarter. Linebacker Jimmy Friday pressured Schultz on third down from the Michigan State 31 and his pass was intercepted by Kory Minor, the linebacker's second in as many weeks. "His interception sparked our team a lot," Davie said. "He stepped up with the big play that led to our touchdown. I felt that play was going to turn this game around for us."

With only 1:04 left in the first half, the Irish offense tried to enter halftime on a high note. Powlus completed three consecutive passes, the last one a 7-yard scoring toss to Brown, who made a tough catch after adjusting in midair. The touchdown was the first of Brown's career. "I was just happy to come down with the ball," Brown said. "[Powlus] threw it where it had to be thrown."

Notre Dame's momentum from their late first-half scoring drive did not last long. On



MISMATCH. Michigan State's behemoth offensive line dominated the Irish defense as the Spartans raked up 222 yards rushing.

the opening drive of the second half, the Irish shot themselves in the foot. A 14-yard holding penalty on second down left them with a second-and-27 from their own 17. They were unable to recover from the bad field position and were forced to punt. Smith's kick drove Irvin all the way back to his 19, but his 12-yard return gave Michigan State decent field position.

In the Spartans' first drive of the second half, it was obvious that the Irish hadn't made the necessary halftime adjustments to contain MSU's rushing game. The Spartans began their drive with three impressive rushes by Irvin for 28 yards. The Irish secondary also struggled as Schultz went three of four on the drive for 24 yards. Michigan State again had to settle for a Gardner field goal, this one 32 yards, after a holding call halted the drive. "They weren't as aggressive as we thought," Spartans wide receiver Gari Scott said about the Irish defense. "They weren't aggressive at all."

Notre Dame's second possession of the third quarter started on its own 10-yard line after Denson fumbled the kickoff. The Irish did not allow the bad field position to discourage them, however. They converted three third downs, all on Powlus passes, en route to the Michigan State 23-yard line. On fourth-and-12, the Irish lined up to attempt a field goal. Instead, holder Hunter Smith rolled to his left and overthrew an open Joey Goodspeed.

"I am surprised that they didn't kick the field goal," Saban said. "The game would have gone to 20-10. They would have still

needed two scores, but it did surprise me."

The two teams then exchanged punts, with Michigan State getting the better of it. When the Irish were forced to punt from their own endzone, the Spartans took over on the Notre Dame 33. On Michigan State's first play, Schultz pitched the ball back to Irvin who lofted it 24 yards to wide receiver Gari Scott. Notre Dame's defense kept the Spartans out of the endzone but they were able to convert a 31-yard field goal. The Irish offense gained only 35 yards — 15 courtesy of a Michigan State penalty — on their final three possessions to close out their worst home loss since Stanford walked out of Notre Dame Stadium with a 33-16 victory in 1992.

Michigan State's easy win, its first at Notre Dame Stadium since 1983, pushed their record to 3-0. "We played a real good game, we came out aggressive," Schultz said. "Sedrick [Irvin] and Mark [Renaud] played great, they ran and caught well. Our defense knocked some heads and played our game, and didn't let things bother us."

A frustrated Davie couldn't say the same about his troops, but he didn't make any excuses. "We got beat by a better team today. The most disappointing thing about this loss is that we were up for Michigan State," he said. "There are things that we still need to work on, but like I said at the beginning of the year, we are going to finish what we started."

Fans and players alike hoped that, with nine games remaining, the Irish wouldn't finish *how* they started. □

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

222 Michigan St.

87 ND

Passing Yards

131 Michigan St.

181 ND

Total Yardage

353 Michigan St.

242 ND

First Downs

22 Michigan St.

17 ND

Time of Possession

33:35 Michigan St.

26:25 ND

Penalties (Yards)

55 Michigan St.

60 ND

SCORING

Michigan St.	14	3	3	3	23
Notre Dame	0	7	0	0	7

1st Quarter

MSU: Keur 5 pass from Schultz at 11:28 (Gardner PAT)

MSU: Schultz 1 run at 4:47 (Gardner PAT)

2nd Quarter

MSU: Gardner 31 FG at 6:28

ND: Brown 7 pass from Powlus at :27 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

MSU: Gardner 32 FG at 7:12

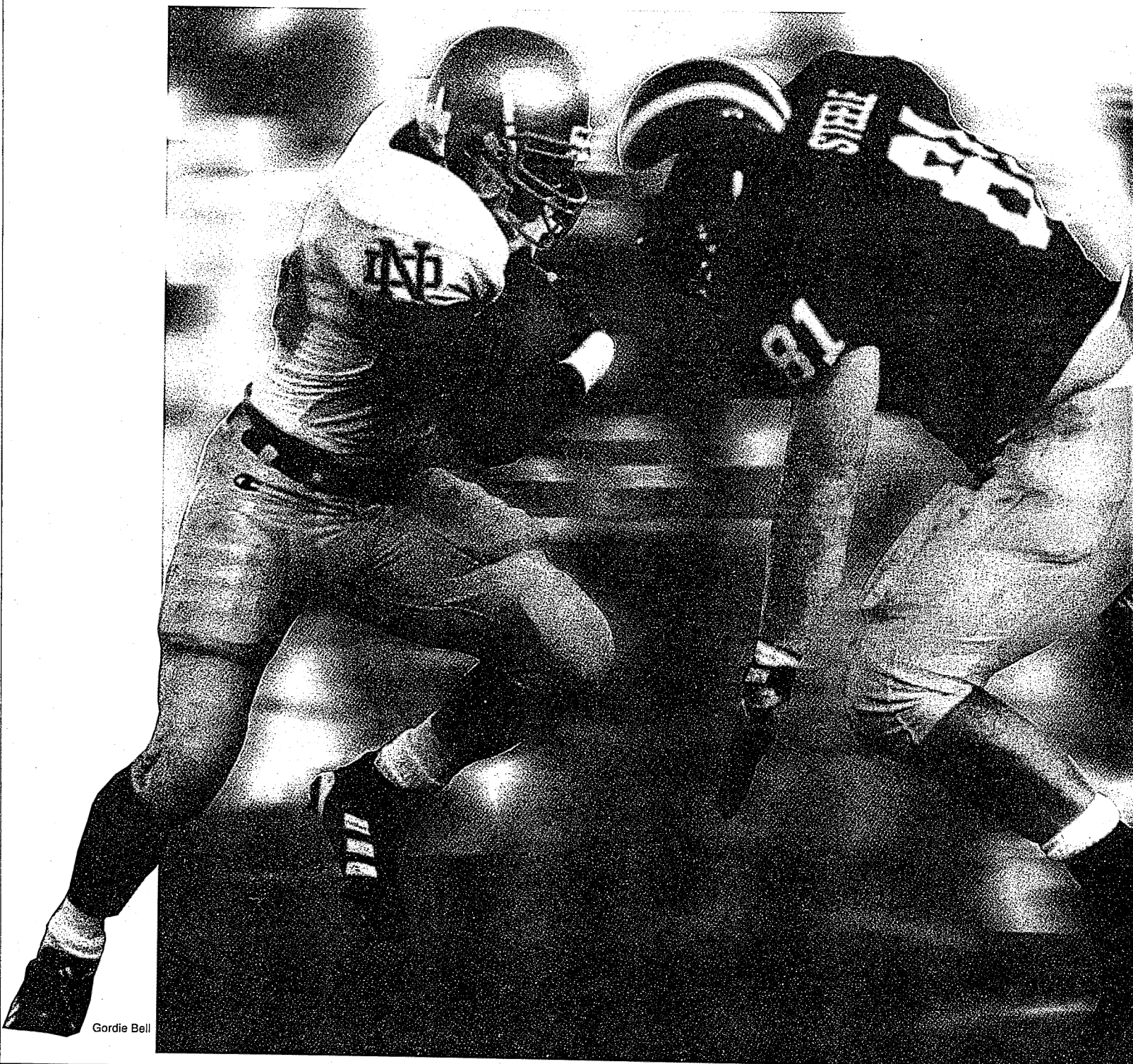
4th Quarter

MSU: Gardner 31 FG at 6:26

Michigan

DOWN to the WIRE

• by Corey Spinelli •



Gordie Bell

Notre Dame couldn't take advantage of three fourth-quarter Michigan turnovers in another close loss to the Wolverines

SEPTEMBER 27, 1997. A DAY CIRCLED ON every Irish fan's calendar since Michigan kicker Remy Hamilton's 42-yard field goal with two seconds left spoiled the home debut of Notre Dame quarterback Ron Powlus three years ago. Few rivalries in college football attract as much national attention or stir as much emotion between two schools as the one between Notre Dame and Michigan.

Though the two teams took a two-year hiatus from playing each other, there was no love lost between the

Irish and the Wolverines, and a preseason glance at both teams' schedules had fans hoping for a match-up of undefeateds in Ann Arbor this September.

But it wasn't meant to be. After stumbling against both Purdue and Michigan State, the Irish limped into the contest unranked with a dismal 1-2 record. The Maize and Blue, however, had trounced both Colorado and Baylor, outscoring them by a combined total of 66-6. Boasting the number-one rated defense in the country, the sixth-ranked Wolverines entered the game as 14-point favorites. On paper, this wasn't much of a match-up, considering that Michigan's defense had yet to allow a touchdown this season and Notre Dame was averaging less than 14 points in its first three games.

What transpired before the 106,508 fans on that sunny day in Ann Arbor, however, is what the Notre Dame-Michigan rivalry is all about. Players from two of the most storied programs in history battled for 60 minutes and thrilled the crowd in a 21-14 Michigan comeback victory. Although the Irish came up just short on the scoreboard, their gutsy performance in a hostile environment reminded their loyal supporters of a hallmark of Notre Dame football: perseverance in the face of adversity.

"I give Michigan credit. They came back in the second half as we knew they could," Notre Dame Head Coach Bob Davie said. "I think you also have to give our team credit

STEELE CURTAIN. Despite the Wolverine's offensive miscues, it was Tim Steele and the Michigan defense who shut down the Notre Dame offense en route to a national championship.



NO LOVE LOST. Chris Floyd and Kory Minor demonstrate the in-your-face attitude that dominated the game.

for hanging in against Michigan's onslaught."

The Irish did have their share of heroes. There was quarterback Ron Powlus, who, with any hopes of that elusive national championship permanently dashed, stood in the pocket and attacked Michigan's defense, completing 20 of 27 passes for 205 yards and a touchdown. There was sophomore linebacker Ronnie Nicks, who filled in for an injured Bobbie Howard and caused two crucial fumbles late in the fourth quarter, giving the Irish a chance to tie the game. Receivers Bobby Brown and Malcolm Johnson, much maligned a season ago, continued their marked improvement against Charles Woodson and company, combining for 10 catches, 137 yards and a touchdown. Despite three Michigan fumbles in the final period, all in their own territory, the Irish couldn't take advantage and walked away with a disheartening loss. "We had three sudden-change turnovers and [didn't] get any points in the second half," Davie said. "We could have very easily won this football game."

Notre Dame received the ball to open the game but did little with it. After the vaunted Michigan offense went three and out on its first possession, the Irish took over for the second time, at their own 22-yard line. Powlus proceeded to pick apart the Wolverine secondary, converting three third-down passes and moving the Irish to the Michigan 7-yard line. A holding penalty, one of four in the game by the Irish, pushed them back to the 15-yard line. Powlus dropped back on second and goal, looking for Brown. The junior wide

receiver, running a fade left, turned back in midair and made a brilliant catch in traffic for the score. Jim Sanson tacked on the extra point and the Irish led 7-0. The 12-play drive featured three catches by Brown for 31 yards, while Powlus was a perfect 6 for 6 for 77 yards.

The explosive Wolverine attack answered right back, as senior quarterback Brian Griese led an 11-play, 66-yard drive highlighted by a 21-yard Tai Streets fingertip catch on a third-and-seven from the Notre Dame 45. Running back Clarence Williams' 4-yard touchdown run five plays later put Michigan on the board, tying the game with 13:40 left in the half. The next four drives ended in punts, two from each team, and when Jason Vinson unloaded a 53-yarder, the Irish found themselves pinned back at their own 2 with 4:13 left in the half.

Five carries by Autry Denson gave Notre Dame some breathing room out to the 20, where it faced a third-and-four. A timely draw to Ken Barry caught the Wolverines

off guard, as the senior fullback dragged would-be tacklers on his way to a 22-yard carry and first down. After an Irish timeout, Powlus hit Johnson on consecutive plays, moving the ball to the Wolverine 15 with under a minute remaining. Denson carried for three yards and Powlus hit Raki Nelson for 10. Freshman running back Tony Driver then scored the first touchdown of his career with a 2-yard run over left tackle. The Sanson kick completed Notre Dame's most impressive drive of the season, a 98-yard, 11-play march in under four minutes. "I really thought we started to turn things around in the first half, particularly that 98-yard drive," Davie said. "Those are the kind of things that give a football team a chance to turn things around."

As the teams headed for the locker rooms at the half, it sounded like bedtime in the

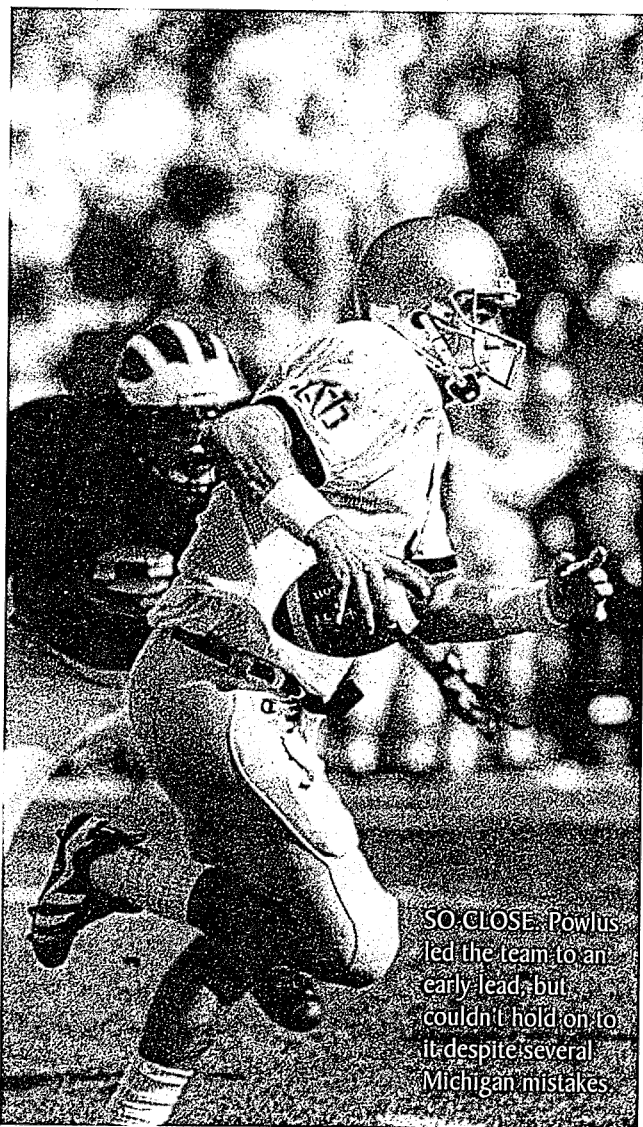
Big House, except for the raucous Notre Dame faithful cheering along to the Victory March. The 1-2 Irish's commanding performance had effectively silenced the fifth-largest crowd in Michigan history. Powlus finished the half 11 of 14 for 138 yards and a touchdown, with two of his incompletions coming as a result of a dropped pass and a spike to stop the clock. The Irish outrushed Michigan by 50 yards and racked up 117 more total yards than the Wolverines in the first 20 minutes. "We felt good about coming up here," Powlus said. "We felt like we had a great effort, especially in that first half. We came out and played the way we wanted to play."

Notre Dame's momentum, however, disappeared quickly at the start of the third quarter. In a matter of



ROCKING THE BIG HOUSE. Tony Driver scored the touchdown that put the Irish ahead at the half.

Georgia Bell



SO CLOSE. Powlus led the team to an early lead, but couldn't hold on to it despite several Michigan mistakes.

Stan Evans

seconds — 24 to be exact — Michigan got the Big House rocking again. Clarence Williams' 28-yard kickoff return to the Michigan 44 set up a two-play quick strike drive as Griese hit Streets across the middle, and the Wolverine speedster outraced the Irish secondary for a 41-yard score, tying the game at 14.

After the ensuing kickoff, with the Irish pinned inside their own 20 and the previously quiet crowd now very much alive, the Notre Dame offense reverted to the mistakes that plagued them in their first three games. They committed three penalties for 28 yards, forcing Hunter Smith to punt from his own 19. Eventual Heisman Trophy winner Charles Woodson took the kick at the Michigan 38 and returned it 20 yards. The Wolverines took immediate advantage of their field position. They needed only 1:45 to score the go-ahead touchdown, a 14-yard run by fullback Chris Floyd. In a little over five minutes, Michigan had regained the lead 21-14.

The fourth quarter began with the Wolverine offense once again driving toward midfield, looking poised to break the game open. The youthful Irish defense stiffened, however, as Nicks' hit on Michigan tight end Aaron Shea caused a fumble that was



Gordie Bell

NOTRE TAMED. Heisman-winning Woodson and company gave the Maize and Blue faithful something to cheer about.

recovered by outside linebacker Lamont Bryant at the Wolverine 47-yard line.

The Irish, trying to take advantage of their good fortune, marched inside the Michigan 10-yard line for a first-and-goal at the 6. Two 1-yard carries by Driver brought up a third-and-goal, where the Irish again committed a critical mistake. A delay of game penalty on Powlus pushed them back another 5 yards and forced a passing situation. Under pressure, Powlus rolled right and saw freshman tight end Jabari Holloway momentarily break open in the endzone. The Irish quarterback's pass was a little low and left, and Michigan safety Tommy Hendricks made the play of the game — a spectacular diving interception that thwarted the drive.

The Notre Dame defense again refused to yield, causing two more turnovers, both setting the Irish offense up in Michigan territory. The offense went three and out after Nicks' fumble recovery with 8:46 remaining, but after linebacker Jimmy Friday pounced on a muffed exchange between Griese and Floyd at the Wolverine 28-yard line with five minutes remaining, the Irish were once again in prime position to tie the game.

Three consecutive carries by Denson left Notre Dame with a fourth-and-two. The Irish called a time out before the play, leaving them with only one and virtually guaranteeing that they would not see the ball again if they failed to convert. Instead of taking advantage of the school's all-time

leading passer and possibly catching Michigan off guard (à la Elvis Grbac to Desmond Howard in that same endzone in 1991), Offensive Coordinator Jim Colletto sent Denson up the middle for no gain on a play that surprised absolutely no one. Michigan then converted one first down, ran the clock out and escaped with the victory. "We called two plays," Colletto said. "And that's my fault. There was too much noise and the kids couldn't hear. The [side of the line] where the ball was going, they didn't even get off on the snap of the ball."

In a game that dropped the Irish to 1-3, the Irish gave indications of brighter days ahead in the Davie era. Defensive Coordinator Greg Mattison's troops played heroically for four quarters, and the offensive unit was finally given a chance to shine as the passing game opened up a bit for three quarters and moved the ball against a top-notch defense.

Playing well, though, was not enough for players and coaches alike. "The bottom line is the final score and it doesn't make me feel any better, or anyone else on this team any better, to know we played a little better," junior guard Mike Rosenthal said.

Coach Davie echoed those sentiments. "I felt like we played better," he said. "But in all honesty, we came up here to win this football game, and totally intended to win this one."

So did the Michigan Wolverines. And, for the second consecutive meeting, they did so in heart-wrenching fashion. □

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

149 ND

168 Michigan

Passing Yards

205 ND

177 Michigan

Total Yardage

354 ND

345 Michigan

First Downs

16 ND

16 Michigan

Time of Possession

35:44 ND

24:16 Michigan

Penalties (Yards)

92 ND

37 Michigan

SCORING

Notre-Dame	7	7	0	0	14
Michigan	0	7	14	0	21

1st Quarter

ND: Brown 15 pass from Powlus at 3:16 (Sanson PAT)

2nd Quarter

UM: Williams 4 run at 13:40 (Baker PAT)

ND: Driver 2 run at 18 (Sanson PAT)

3rd Quarter

UM: Streets 41 pass from Griese at 14:36 (Baker PAT)

UM: Floyd 14 run at 9:21 (Baker PAT)

4th Quarter

None

Stanford

3rd Quarter Blues

• by Chris Hamilton •

NO ONE COULD HAVE EXPECTED THIS. COMING INTO THE 1997 season, Notre Dame was not hailed as a strong national championship contender but they did have their usual lofty expectations — at least a top 20 finish. But five games into the season, Irish fans would have settled for just a winning

We can sit here and say it was this or it was that. But anytime you get handled like we have gotten handled, it's more than just one or two things."

The Irish hung with the Cardinal for almost three quarters before Stanford plowed over Notre Dame's defense en route to a 16-point fourth quarter. Stanford's ground game wore out the Irish defense as the tailback tandem of Anthony Bookman and Mike Mitchell combined for 277 of Stanford's 322 rushing yards.

"We just finally broke at the end," defensive coordinator Greg Mattison said. "The kids battled their hearts out early, and then the dam just broke. Our kids just got worn down, and they started smashing the ball against us. We just can't hold up against that."

The game, played in sunny Palo Alto, Calif., in front of 75,651 fans, began with a

bomb. On the very first play of the game, quarterback Ron Powlus threw a deep pass to freshman split end Joey Getherall. Though the pass was incomplete, it indicated a significant change in the Notre Dame game plan. The Irish coaching staff, widely criticized during the first four games for not throwing the ball downfield enough, was trying to force Stanford to respect the deep threat and open up room for the Notre Dame running game. The tactic seemed to work as the Irish gained 124 yards on the ground in the first half, 106 by junior Autry Denson.

After that incompletion, the Irish failed to get a first down on their next two plays and were forced to punt. Stanford also was unable to score on its first possession but Kevin Miller's 31-yard punt pinned the Irish back at their own 4.

Deep in their zone, Notre Dame's offense began attacking. The Irish mixed up the play-calling, with Denson carrying the ball seven times for 44 yards and Powlus completing four passes for 38 yards, including an 18-yard strike to Bobby Brown. The drive was halted at Stanford's 28-yard line

record. A 1-4 record and the first four-game losing streak in 34 years tends to lower expectations.

After the previous week's 21-14 loss at Michigan, the Notre Dame faithful thought they saw signs that the team was ready to break out of its season-long rut. They played their hearts out against the undefeated Wolverines, leading 14-7 at the half and almost pulling out a victory in the fourth quarter.

Heading into the Stanford contest, many believed this game would be a confidence booster. But the Cardinal killed any momentum the Irish had, handing Notre Dame its worst beating of the season, a 33-15 defeat at Stanford Stadium.

"We need to get more in sync as a coaching staff," Notre Dame Head Coach Bob Davie said. "It's a lot of things and that's what I told the team.

TAKEN DOWN. Stanford proved to be the low point of the season.

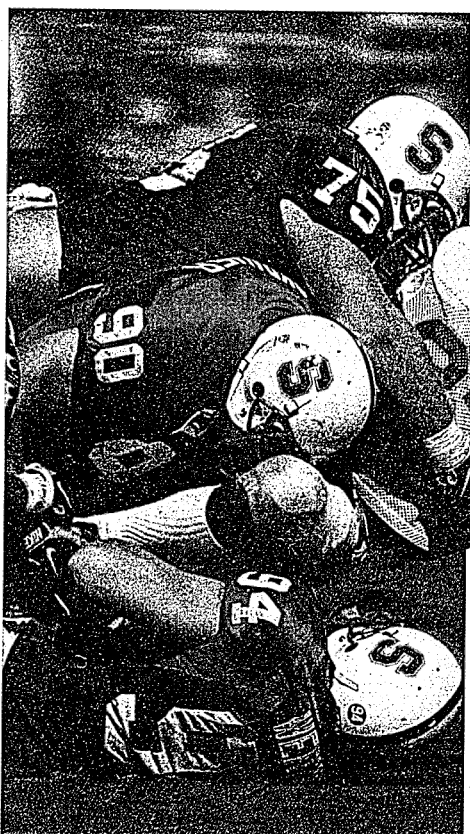


photo courtesy of the Observer/Brandon Candura

The Irish dropped to 1-4 after failing to score in the third quarter for the fifth consecutive time

where Davie called upon place-kicker Jim Sanson. The 45-yard attempt was 6 yards longer than his previous career best but the sophomore drilled it, giving the Irish a 3-0 lead.

Stanford came right back, putting together a scoring drive of their own. Wide receiver Damon Dunn got things started with a 32-yard kickoff return, giving Stanford's powerful offense excellent field position. The Cardinal proceeded to pick apart Notre Dame's defense, with Mitchell doing most of the damage. The senior gained 43 yards on the drive, including the drive-capping touchdown, a 15-yard run with only four seconds left in the quarter.

On Notre Dame's first possession of the second quarter, freshman tailback Tony Driver was inserted into the lineup and gained 20 yards on four carries. Two Irish penalties that the offense was unable to surmount, however, marred Driver's efforts and the drive stalled at the Stanford 33.

The next time the Irish touched the ball, they sustained one of their best drives of the season. Starting on their own 6, Notre Dame needed some breathing room. With the help of a dominating offensive line, Denson gave them that and more. He totaled 61 yards on seven rushes, giving him a whopping 8.7 yards per carry for the drive. Powlus finished the drive with an 11-yard touchdown pass to freshman tight end Jabari Holloway. Sanson, who had looked so qualified just moments before, invited criticism once again by missing the extra point. The 11-play, 94-yard drive took only 3:54 and gave the Irish their second lead of the day, 9-7.

Once again, Stanford answered the Irish scoring drive with one of their own. With 2:58 to go in the half, Hutchinson went to work, completing six of eight passes for 52 yards before the offense bogged down at the Notre Dame 20. The Cardinal settled for a 37-yard field goal by Miller with 18 seconds left in the first half and looked to go into halftime with a 10-9 lead.

But Notre Dame had other thoughts. With the ball on their own 25 and only 18 seconds to work with, the Irish tried to get into field goal range. On the first play, Powlus scrambled out of the pocket and fumbled the ball, which was recovered by Cardinal nose tackle Willie Howard. Luckily for the Irish, Miller's 43-yard field goal attempt was no good and the Irish headed into the locker room down by only one.

Coming out for the second half, Notre Dame knew they had to reverse their season-long trend of flopping in the third quar-

ter if they wanted to win the game. But they didn't. For the fifth consecutive game, the Irish failed to score a point in the third quarter, gaining only 32 yards and running only 10 offensive plays. "The third quarter killed us," Powlus said. "We haven't scored in the third quarter all year. I felt that we let the defense down in the third."

Stanford, on the other hand, composed a 17-play, 87-yard drive that ate up 7:11 of the clock and resulted in a touchdown. Bookman and Mitchell took turns pounding the ball into Notre Dame's defense, combining for 41 yards on the ground. Hutchinson completed six of seven passes and Mitchell scored on a three-yard run off tackle.

Down 17-9 at the end of three quarters, the Irish still appeared to have a shot at a win, but their offense couldn't get going. Three straight passes to open the final quarter left Notre Dame with a fourth-and-five from the Stanford 26. Davie again rolled the dice on Sanson but came up empty.

Stanford took over at its own 27-yard line and let Bookman go to work. He took the Cardinal 73 yards in only two plays, the second of which was a 58-yard touchdown run that put Stanford up 24-9, with 13:42 left in the quarter.

Notre Dame was down by more than two touchdowns, but the Irish refused to give up. In six plays they drove 76 yards for a touchdown. Powlus came up huge, completing a 38-yard pass to Malcolm Johnson and a clutch fourth down, 27-yard touchdown pass to Bobby Brown. Notre Dame decided to go for two, but Powlus' pass fell incomplete. The Irish cut the lead to 24-15, and with more than 10 minutes to play in the game, they needed their weary defense to take a stand.

Instead, the defense allowed Stanford to drive 74 yards on 16 consecutive running plays and consume 7:42. More importantly, the Cardinal scored a touchdown to go up 31-15 with 3:15 remaining, putting the game out of reach.

On Notre Dame's last possession of the game, Powlus was sacked twice. The last one, by Kailee Wong, resulted in a safety. Stanford ran out the clock on its next possession to end the game.

Despite the one-sided loss and a 1-4 record, Davie refused to give up on the season. "I know the problem areas, and I know what it's going to take to get us through those problem areas," he said. "Sometimes, it gets worse before it gets better."

Which left Irish fans wondering if it could get any worse. □

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

121 ND

322 Stanford

Passing Yards

177 ND

192 Stanford

Total Yardage

298 ND

514 Stanford

First Downs

18 ND

34 Stanford

Time of Possession

23:28 ND

36:32 Stanford

Penalties (Yards)

64 ND

64 Stanford

SCORING

Notre Dame	3	6	0	6	15
Stanford	7	3	7	16	33

1st Quarter

ND: Sanson 45 FG at 3:45

S: Mitchell 15 run at 0:04 (Miller PAT)

2nd Quarter

ND: Holloway 11 pass from Powlus at 2:58 (Sanson PAT failed)

S: Miller 37 FG at 0:18

3rd Quarter

S: Mitchell 3 run at 1:23 (Miller PAT)

4th Quarter

S: Bookman 58 run at 13:42 (Miller PAT)

ND: Brown 27 pass from Powlus at 10:57 (pass failed)

S: Bookman 4 run at 3:15 (Miller PAT)

S: Wong safety at 2:35

Just

• by Brian Christ •

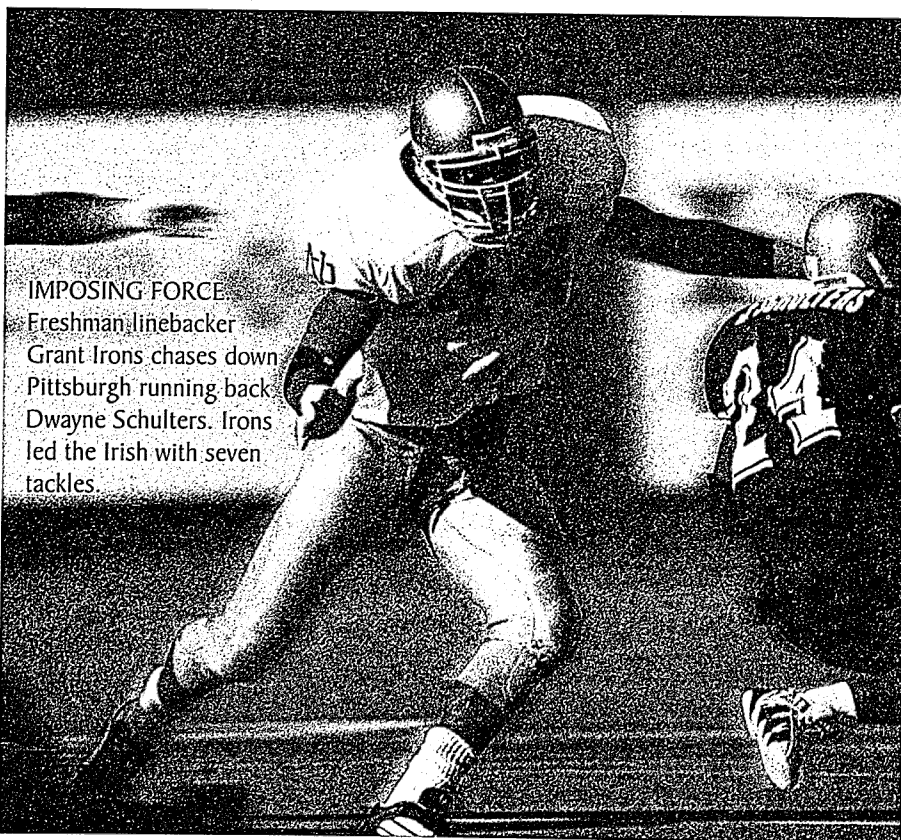
Like Old Times

NOTRE DAME FANS AND PLAYERS HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN WHAT IT FELT LIKE. Something that once was taken for granted had become an infrequent luxury.

"It's nice to see some of those white teeth," Notre Dame Head Coach Bob Davie said as smiles abounded following the 45-21 win over Pittsburgh. "It's been such a long time."

It certainly had been a long time. Prior to the win against the Panthers, the Irish had lost four straight games, their longest losing streak since 1963. With a loss to Pittsburgh, it would have been the first 1-5 start for the team since 1960. The team and the fans badly needed a victory.

And the Irish delivered resoundingly with the first convincing win since Davie



IMPOSING FORCE
Freshman linebacker Grant Irons chases down Pittsburgh running back Dwayne Schulters. Irons led the Irish with seven tackles.

took over as head coach. "Today was a good Saturday," Offensive Coordinator Jim Colletto said.

Quarterback Ron Powlus agreed. "It's a nice feeling going to the plane happy."

When the Irish met Pittsburgh in South Bend the previous year, the Panthers' flight home couldn't have been pleasant after they were routed 60-6. At the beginning of this season, most fans expected another easy victory for Notre Dame when they visited the Steel City, but as the season wore on the sure win over Pittsburgh became doubtful.

Allen Rossum quickly assuaged some of those uneasy feelings. He returned the opening kickoff 93 yards for a touchdown, evoking memories of last year's game in which he returned two punts for touchdowns in the second quarter.

Memories of the previous year continued throughout the game as Notre Dame returned to its old running style. The team ran 52 times for a total of 317 yards,

attempting only 20 passes. For the first time this season, two Irish backs rushed for more than 100 yards. "It felt great," said Autry Denson, who finished the day with 128 yards and two touchdowns. "I hadn't shaken loose in so long."

Denson was quick to credit his teammates on the offensive line for his success. "I don't think it was anything special I did," he said. "It was great blocking."

That great blocking began early. On Notre Dame's first possession, already leading 7-0, the running game went to work. Three rushes by Denson and a completion to Bobby Brown gave the Irish a first-and-10 at midfield. Denson then took the ensuing handoff and, courtesy of a Mike Doughty block, raced 50 yards virtually untouched, giving Notre Dame their second touchdown only 6:48 into the game.

That's how the half ended. The Panthers had missed a first chance to score after Hank Poteat intercepted Powlus near midfield and returned the ball all the way to the Notre Dame 9-yard line. Pittsburgh couldn't punch it into the endzone, though, and had to settle for a 32-yard field-goal attempt by Chris Ferencik that went wide left.

Though Notre Dame dominated the first half on the stat sheet, outgaining Pittsburgh 245-97, they had only 14 points to show for it. "I was concerned [because we hadn't scored more in the first half]," Davie admitted.

After stopping the Panthers on their initial drive of the second half, the Irish tried to reverse a streak: through five games they hadn't scored a point in the third quarter. That ended when Jim Sanson booted a 22-yard field goal 4:58 into the half, increasing Notre Dame's lead to 17.

Pittsburgh's offense showed signs of life on their next drive as they drove 80 yards, 67 through the air, on six plays for their first touchdown of the day. The key play of the drive was a 34-yard flea-flicker from quarterback Pete Gonzalez to Terry Murphy.

With their lead cut to 10, the Irish offense responded. Powlus hit Malcolm Johnson for 19 yards on a third-and-13. Four plays later, Raki Nelson bullied his way for a first down on a third-and-11 play. After a five-yard rush by Denson put the Irish on Pittsburgh's 23, fullback Jamie Spencer followed a block by Luke Pettigout and took the ball downfield for the touchdown.

The Panthers weren't about to roll over, though, as they again cut the lead to 10,

thanks in part to a 41-yard kickoff return by Poteat. Starting with excellent field position, it took Pittsburgh only 3:04 to cover 59 yards and score their second touchdown of the game off a 9-yard run by freshman Kevin Barlow.

As the fourth quarter began, the Irish had the ball at midfield and were clinging to their 10-point lead. Two minutes later, they had expanded their lead to 17. Their eight-play, 78-yard drive was aided by two 15-yard personal foul penalties on the Panthers. Denson ended the drive with his second touchdown of the game, a 2-yard plunge. "The encouraging thing was that every time Pitt scored, we were able to answer it," Davie said.

Pittsburgh threatened once more but the Irish defense stepped up and crushed the Panthers' last hopes. With a first-and-10 at the Notre Dame 12, Barlow fumbled an easy pitch that was scooped up by Irish defensive end Shelton Jordan. "I think the defense really came through for us in the fourth quarter," Powlus said. "It enabled us to keep the ball and score some points and eventually put the game away."

The game was essentially put away on Notre Dame's next drive. The Irish ate up 7:13 with a 13-play, 83-yard drive. Jarious Jackson scored from three yards out to make the score 38-14. Clement Stokes carried the ball seven times for 51 yards on his way to a career-high 109-yard day. Though he came in with only two carries in the previous five games, the senior downplayed his numbers. "I figured that if I kept working, it would pay off eventually," Stokes said. "Today was a good opportunity for me to play, and I'm just glad that it went positive." The final score of the game was 45-21.

Despite the team's success on the field, perhaps the biggest news about the squad came from the media coverage of the game. CBS carried the game and Lou Holtz, now a CBS analyst, broke his silence regarding the team's disappointing start. "It's not talent," Holtz said. "It's also not coaching, I don't think. It goes back to confidence."

Holtz's simple solution for how to get Notre Dame football back on track was addressed to Notre Dame fans: "Get behind those people; they're good coaches. Bob Davie is an outstanding coach and he's very, very smart."

And with fans finally behind them, Davie and his team hoped to turn victory into a tradition. □

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

317 ND

133 Pittsburgh

Passing Yards

160 ND

216 Pittsburgh

Total Yardage

477 ND

349 Pittsburgh

First Downs

27 ND

22 Pittsburgh

Time of Possession

31:17 ND

28:43 Michigan

Penalties (Yards)

47 ND

54 Pittsburgh

SCORING

Notre Dame	14	0	10	21	45
Pittsburgh	0	0	14	7	21

1st Quarter

ND: Rossum 93 kickoff return at 14:43 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Denson 50 run at 8:12 (Sanson PAT)

2nd Quarter

None

3rd Quarter

ND: Sanson 22 FG at 10:02

UP: Schulters 6 run at 7:31 (Ferencik PAT)

ND: Spencer 23 run at 3:49 (Sanson PAT)

UP: Barlow 9 run at 4:45 (Ferencik PAT)

4th Quarter

ND: Denson 2 run at 12:56 (Sanson PAT)

ND: Jackson 3 run at 3:59 (Sanson PAT)

UP: Murphy 9 pass from Gonzalez at 18 (Ferencik PAT)

ND: Jackson 40 kickoff return (Sanson PAT)

USC

MISS Or MAKE

• by Chris Hamilton •

USC VERSUS NOTRE DAME. THOUGH THE two schools are bitter rivals, they have much in common. Both football programs are loaded with tradition, both have distinguished marching bands and both have fans who expect nothing but the best. And this season, both programs were struggling to recapture their winning ways of old.

USC and Notre Dame, one of the best intersectional rivalries in college football, met for the 69th time on October 18. Yet this game didn't have the same feel of typ-

ical Irish-Trojan contests as the two teams entered the game unranked for only the second time in this storied rivalry.

The Irish, 2-4 on the season, came into the game riding high after a 45-21 thrashing of the Pittsburgh Panthers the week before. This game marked the return home for Notre Dame after three consecutive games on the road.

The Trojans, with a record of 2-3, entered the contest on the heels of an embarrassing 28-point loss to unranked Arizona State. They also came into South Bend knowing they hadn't beaten the Irish in Notre Dame

Stadium since 1981.

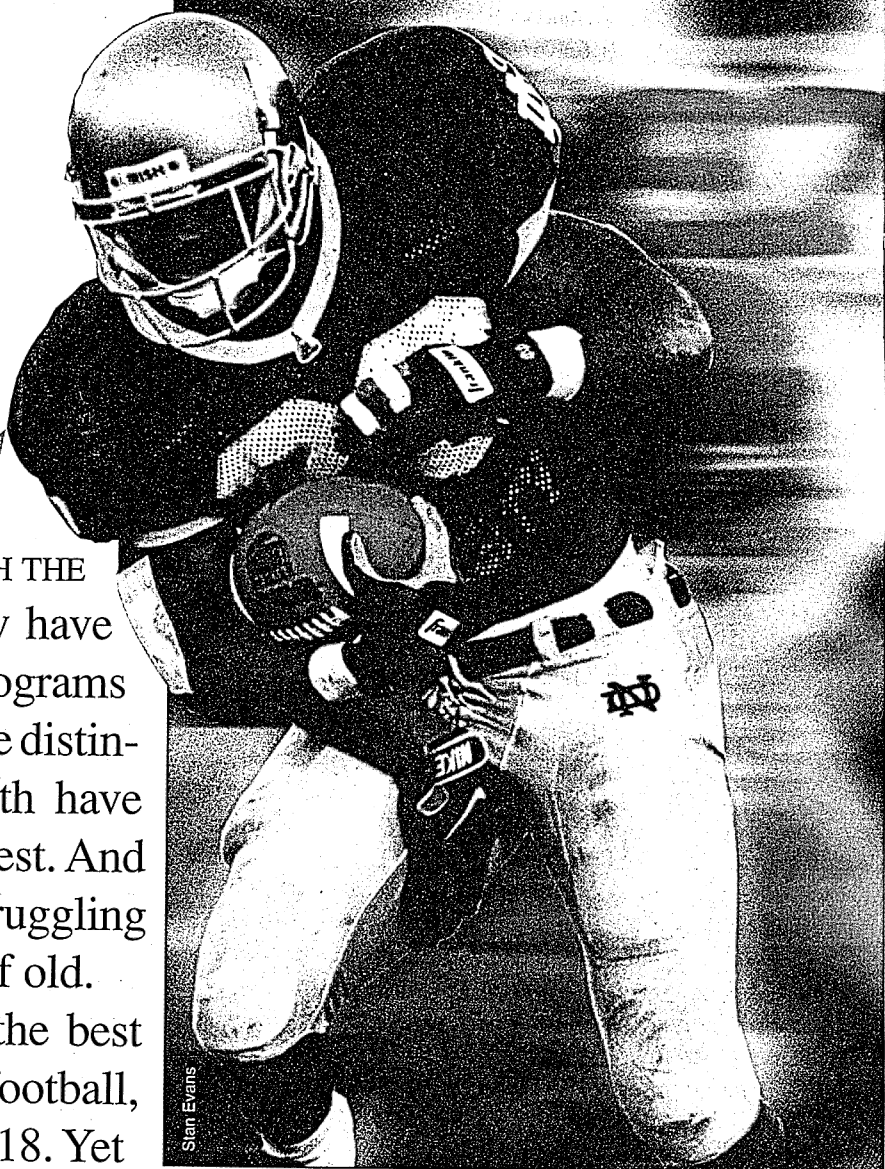
Last season, USC broke Notre Dame's 13-game unbeaten streak over the Trojans. This year they marched into Notre Dame and ended another streak, beating the Irish 20-17 on a last-minute field goal in a sloppy, mistake-filled game. And for the first time since 1981, the men of Troy earned the bragging rights of a winning streak against the Irish — something most Irish followers are unaccustomed to.

"That's a tough, tough loss," said Notre Dame head coach Bob Davie. "I feel bad for our football team. What I told the players

after the game, what they have right now, what's in it for them, is a coaching staff that isn't going to quit, that isn't going to point fingers."

The game started well for the Irish. They won the coin toss and decided to receive the ball. Senior cornerback Allen Rossum fielded the kickoff, broke two tackles and scampered 56 yards to the USC 40-yard line. It took the Irish five plays to go the remaining 40 yards, with junior tailback Autry Denson carrying the ball on all five plays. His 2-yard touchdown run capped off the drive and gave Notre Dame an early 7-

OFF AND ON. Junior Autry Denson rushed for 106 yards in the first half, but was stuffed in the second.



In an ugly game, Notre Dame lost to fierce rival USC
with a last-minute Trojan field goal

0 lead.

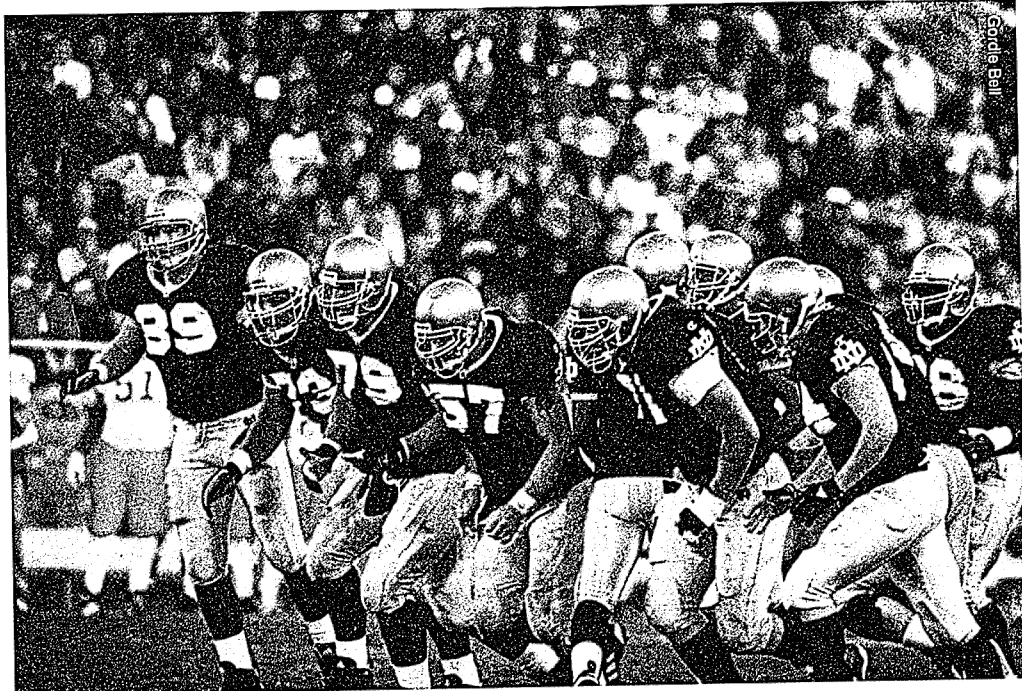
USC answered on its first possession of the game, mimicking Notre Dame's opening drive and establishing their running game. The tailback tandem of Delon Washington and Malaefou MacKenzie combined for the first 27 yards of the drive. Quarterback John Fox then took over, completing three passes, including a 22-yarder to tight end Antoine Harris on third-and-17. A reverse to wide receiver R. Jay Soward picked up 17 yards to the Notre Dame 5. From there, Washington carried twice, his second for 3 yards and a tying touchdown.

Notre Dame looked just as impressive on its second possession as it had on its first. This time the Irish mixed up their play calling, with quarterback Ron Powlus completing three passes for 49 yards and Denson picking up 27 yards on the ground. Freshman tailback Tony Driver completed the drive by diving into the end zone from the USC 1-yard line, giving Notre Dame its second touchdown in as many drives.

On their ensuing possession, the Trojans refused to bow to the Irish. On second-and-six from the Notre Dame 40, Soward took advantage of a breakdown in Notre Dame's defense, turning

HIGH HOPES.

Notre Dame started the day ready for revenge...



a 4-yard pass from Fox into a 31-yard gain. The USC receiver tied the game once again with an 8-yard touchdown grab three plays later.

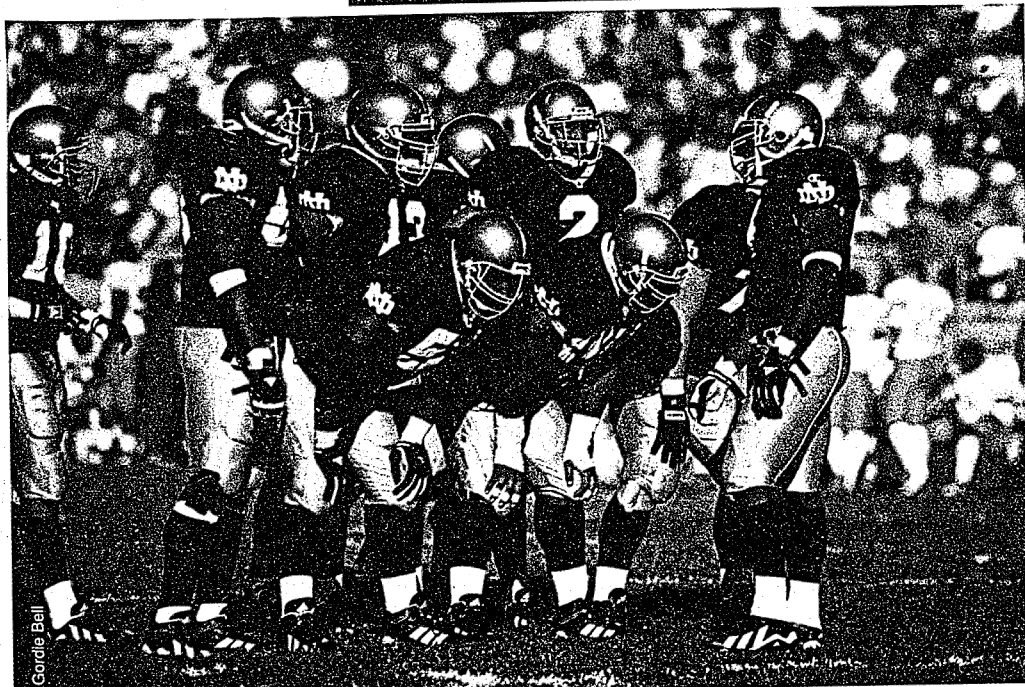
Notre Dame was unable to capitalize on its next two possessions as both drives ended in missed field goals by sophomore kicker Jim Sanson. His first attempt, a 45-yarder, sailed wide left, then he missed his 34-yard attempt wide right. On the other side of the ball, the Irish defense didn't allow USC a single first down on their final three drives of the half. "Offensively, we played well early in the game," Davie said. "Defensively, we didn't play well, and then we settled down."

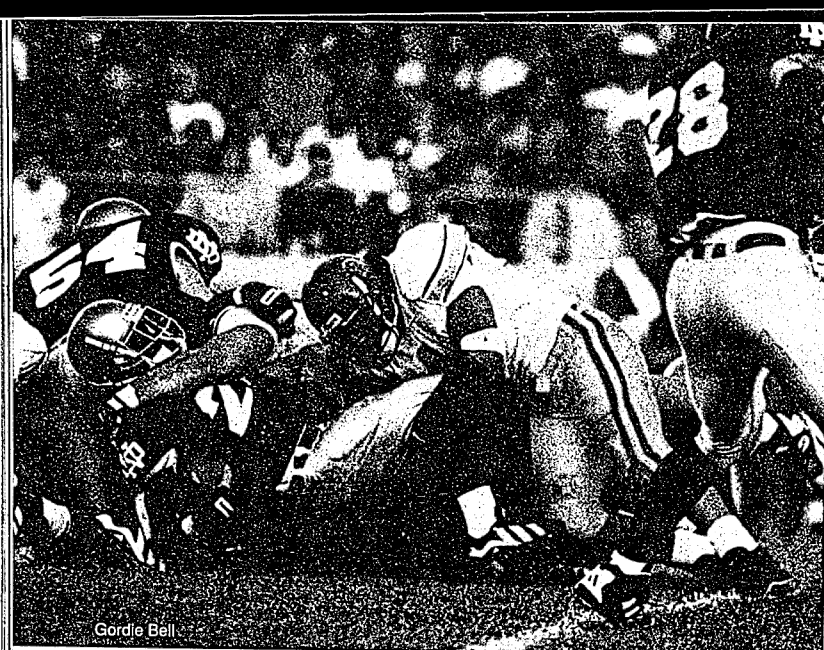
Sanson got a chance to redeem himself right before halftime. His 27-yard attempt with 37 seconds left

... but USC's offense wore down the defense and got the last laugh.

in the half split the uprights, capping a nine-play, 54-yard drive. Though the Irish outplayed USC in almost every respect during the first two quarters, outgaining them 221 to 165 and collecting seven more first downs, they went into the locker room leading by only three.

Sanson's field goal were the last points Notre Dame would score all afternoon, as the Irish offense was shut out in the third quarter for the sixth time in seven games. Denson, who rushed for 106 yards in the first half, was held to a mere 27 in the second





Gordie Bell

CONQUEST. The Trojan defense got tough in the second half.

half.

The Trojans set the tone for a sloppy second half on the opening kickoff as they were penalized 10 yards for a clip on the return. In the half, USC was penalized nine times, setting them back a whopping 106 yards while Notre Dame was flagged six times for 65 yards. "It seemed like there were 140 penalties and 130 field-goal attempts," USC coach John Robinson said.

Though both offenses struggled early in the period, USC showed signs of life, driving 56 yards on its second possession of the half, helped by a late hit out-of-bounds that moved the ball to the Notre Dame 25. That's where the Irish defense stiffened and kicker Adam Abrams came in and nailed a 42-yard field goal for the Trojans, evening the score once again.

The fourth quarter began with USC's punter Jim Wren hitting a 48-yard punt that drove the Irish back to their own 20. With 80 yards to cover, Notre Dame put together their first sustained drive of the half, aided by some timely USC penalties. A pass interference call on cornerback Chris McCutcheon on third-and-eight gave Notre Dame its initial first down of the drive. The drive was eventually stopped at the USC 16, where Sanson lined up to attempt a 33-yard field goal. As a freshman, the kicker received death threats after missing a pivotal extra point in Notre Dame's 27-20 overtime loss to the Trojans. Luck wasn't on his side this year either, as his attempt to put the Irish ahead sailed wide right.

Notre Dame got another chance after its defense held USC. The Irish began what looked to be a promising drive on their own 23 with five minutes left in the game. Again, USC tried to help by committing another

drilled a 37-yard field goal to put the Trojans ahead.

The Irish got the ball back on their own 25 with exactly 1:00 minute to go in regulation, but they were unable to come back. Powlus couldn't find any receivers downfield and dumped the ball underneath the coverage. Following one last incompleteness, the quarterback was greeted with a chorus of boos as he left the field, his 16th loss in 40 career starts.

"It was a strange football game," Davie said. "The game started out like it was going to be high-scoring. Both defenses settled down. Obviously, missing the three field goals was critical, and they made their two field goals. At the end of the game, we had a chance to go in and take the lead. But the ball was tipped, and they made the interception."

Besides not being impressed with his team's performance, Davie also wasn't pleased with the fans' reaction. "One thing that is critical is that when you play at home, you would like to have some momentum from your home crowd," he said. "Late in the football game, you need the crowd to help you win it in these kind of games."

While the lack of crowd support bothered the coach, he knew where the blame belonged. "The bottom line is USC stepped up and made plays," Davie continued. "They made two field goals and we didn't. They had the turnover and ran it back. Their kids stepped up. We had ourselves in a position to win the game and we didn't. That's the bottom line."

The bottom line for the Irish at that point read 2-5. And after yet another disappointing performance, it didn't show any signs that it would improve. □

penalty, this one a late hit on a first-and-32 play. As the Irish pushed towards midfield, Powlus dropped back and threw in the direction of wide receiver Bobby Brown. The pass was tipped and intercepted by USC linebacker Mark Cusano and returned to the Notre Dame 29. Three plays later, with 1:05 on the clock, Abrams

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

179 USC

166 ND

Passing Yards

136 USC

149 ND

Total Yardage

315 USC

315 ND

First Downs

14 USC

24 ND

Time of Possession

28:28 USC

31:32 ND

Penalties (Yards)

156 USC

75 ND

SCORING

USC	7	7	3	3	20
Notre Dame	14	3	0	0	17

1st Quarter

ND: Denson 2 run at 12:42 (Sanson PAT)

SC: Washington 3 run at 6:30 (Abrams PAT)

ND: Driver 1 run at 1:29

2nd Quarter

SC: Soward 8 pass from Fox at 12:11 (Abrams PAT)

ND: Sanson 27 FG at :37

3rd Quarter

SC: Abrams 42 FG at 5:06

4th Quarter

SC: Abrams 37 FG at 1:05

Two Heads Are Better Than One

• by Brian Lucas •



THREE YEARS AGO, NOTRE DAME JOINED THE BIG EAST Conference for every sport except football. Now they're probably wishing that football was part of the deal. For the second time in three weeks, the Irish crushed a Big East opponent, racking up 520 yards of total offense in a 52-20 victory over Boston College.

"The game today was all about pride," Notre Dame

Head Coach Bob Davie said afterward. "When you're 2-5 and you just lost the kind of football game we lost last week and the way Boston College lost to Miami last week, it's about who's going to want to win the most."

Coming off a disheartening last-minute loss to rival USC, in which an Adam Abrams field goal with 1:05 left in the game sent the Irish to a 20-17 loss, Notre Dame needed a quick start against the Eagles. Benny Guilbeaux saw to that, intercepting a Matt Hassleback pass on Boston College's third play from scrimmage, giving the Notre Dame offense great field position. Starting from the Eagles' 25, the Irish needed only five plays to reach the endzone, with running back Autry Denson scoring on a 1-yard run. After Scott Cengia missed the extra point, Notre Dame led 6-0 only 1:48 into the game.

The Irish wasted little time increasing that lead. The defense held the Eagles on three plays, forcing Jason Malecki to punt from his own 20-yard line. On first down

from their own 38, Notre Dame did something no one could have expected: quarterback Ron Powlus faked a handoff to Denson and looked for wide receiver Malcolm Johnson on a deep post route. Johnson made a diving catch 36 yards later and the Irish were back on the attack. Four rushes, three by Denson, left the Irish with a third-and-goal from the 3-yard line. Again Powlus looked for Johnson, this time on a fade to the right corner of the endzone. Johnson made the catch and when Powlus hit tight end Jabari Halloway for the two-point conversion, Notre Dame held a 14-0 lead.

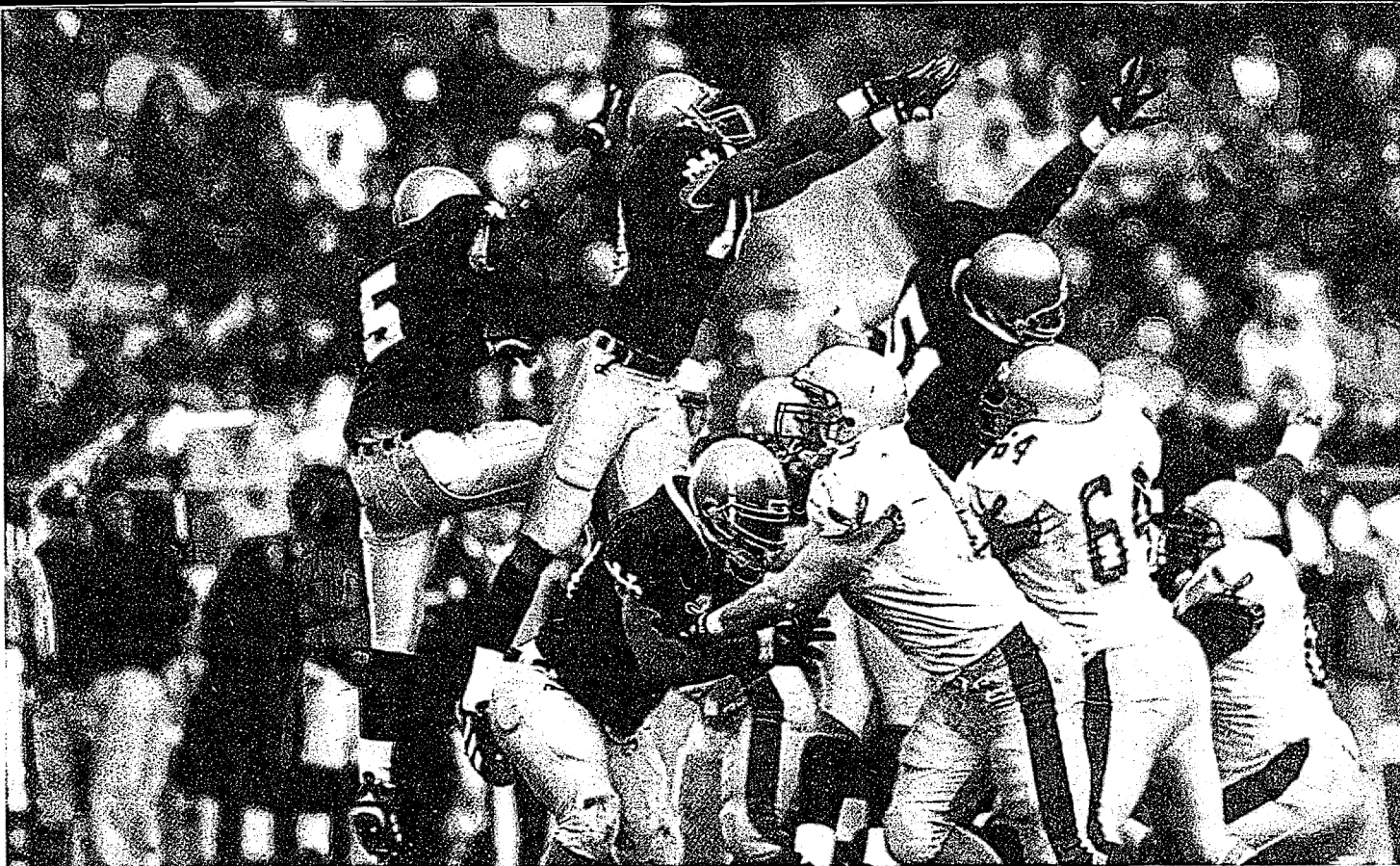
The Irish defense forced Boston College to go three and out again on their ensuing drive, giving the offense the ball at their own 43. Four straight incompletions, though,

Notre Dame dominated BC by shuffling quarterbacks



IN THE GRASP: Raki Nelson was on the receiving end of this 44-yard Powlus bomb

Gordie Bell



RISING TO THE OCCASION. Irish defenders attempt to block a Boston College kick.

including a drop by Johnson at the 17-yard line on third-and-10, halted the drive.

The stop seemed to give the Boston College offense some life as the Eagles gained their first first down of the game, coming on an 11-yard completion from Hassleback to tight end Scott Dragos with 2:33 left in the first quarter. Notre Dame's defense stiffened after that as Guilbeaux sacked the Eagles' quarterback on third-and-10.

When the Irish got the ball on their own 17, they came out with a new look. Junior Jarious Jackson got his highly anticipated shot at directing the offense with 1:26 left in the quarter. Notre Dame fans couldn't have expected a better result from the young quarterback. Jackson led the Irish on a nine-play, 83-yard drive that culminated in a 3-yard run for the touchdown. Receiving the first significant action of his career, Jackson completed his first two passes this year, a 17-yarder to Joey Getherall and a 7-yarder to Raki Nelson. The other 59 yards were accumulated on the ground, with Denson running for 39 on three carries. The debut of Jackson satisfied his coach. "We accomplished what we wanted to accomplish by playing Jarious," Davie said. "When our offense bogs down, we wanted to see if Jarious provided us with an option to put him in the game. Based on the way he played today, he provides us with that option."

After stopping the Boston College of-

fense once again, Powlus came back out to lead the offense and picked up right where he left off. On first down, the senior rolled right and hit Halloway, who broke a George White tackle and rumbled 20 more yards; finally being dragged down at the 19-yard line. One play later, Powlus looked for Bobby Brown in the left corner of the endzone. The junior wide receiver was double-covered and White, trying to make up for his poor tackling, made an acrobatic catch but was ruled out of bounds. Boston College's sideline threw a fit, as one of the assistant coaches walked out on the field and drew an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. That put the ball on the Eagles' 8-yard line and on the next play, Denson exploded 8 yards up the middle. Cengia's extra point put the Irish up 28-0 less than 20 minutes into the game.

Boston College finally got on the scoreboard late in the second quarter. After Walker returned a Smith punt 11 yards, the Eagles had a first-and-10 from their own 31. Hassleback opened the drive with a 30-yard pass to tight end Todd Pollack. Two plays later, Hassleback found Anthony DiCosmo alone in the endzone. The junior wide receiver got behind Irish free safety Deke Cooper and made a diving catch, putting the Eagles on the board with 1:20 left in the first half. After a last-second 47-yard field goal attempt by Cengia fell short, the Irish went into the locker room with a commanding 28-7 lead.

"This was the first time since Georgia Tech that we had a chance to have all 11 starters out there," Davie said. "I don't know if people realized how young and inexperienced we were in the beginning of the season. I think [the success] is just having our players back."

Notre Dame tried to carry that momentum into the third quarter, something it hadn't done for most of the season. Unfortunately, this game was no different. On the first play of the half, the Irish were whistled for illegal procedure. Following a dropped pass by Brown, Powlus was sacked on second down and threw incomplete on third. The defense held after Smith's 41-yard punt and the Irish got the ball back on their 20-yard line.

On the first play of the drive, Boston College nose tackle Chris Hovan broke through the line and hit Denson just as he was receiving the handoff. The junior running back fumbled and the ball was recovered at the 15 by Andrew Krauza. Again, Notre Dame's defense rose to the occasion, allowing the Eagles to advance only 5 yards. From there, John Matich split the uprights with a 27-yard field goal.

The next Notre Dame possession looked remarkably similar to the first two of the half. Penalties on two consecutive plays left Powlus and company with a first-and-29 from their own 21-yard line. That's when Boston College decided it was their turn to

make a mistake, registering a late hit on running back Clement Stokes after a 1-yard gain. The 15-yard penalty gave the Irish a first down and they capitalized on their good fortune. After two Denson runs gained 10 yards, Powlus took a deep drop and looked long. He heaved the ball toward Nelson, who hauled in the 44-yard completion, the longest to a wide receiver all season, putting Notre Dame on the Eagles' 9. On third-and-goal from the two, Jackson, replacing Powlus in the goal-line offense, overthrew tight end Tim Ridder in the back of the endzone and the Irish had to settle for a 20-yard field goal by Cengia, restoring their 21-point lead.

The Eagles stormed right back on their next possession, with Hassleback leading the way. In the midst of a streak of 14 straight completions (tying a record held by Doug Flutie), the Boston College quarterback drove the Eagles 80 yards in only six plays for a touchdown. On the drive, Hassleback was three for three for 68 yards. A 1-yard run by Mike Hemmert cut the Notre Dame lead to two touchdowns, 31-17.

Not to be outdone in front of his home crowd, Powlus engineered an eight-play, 78-yard touchdown drive of his own. Again the key play was a penalty on the Eagles, this one a late hit on Powlus after a second down incompleting, putting the ball on the Boston College 28. Stokes carried the ball three times for 18 yards, and on third-and-three from the 10, Powlus rolled to his left and found Brown for the touchdown, the quarterback's second of the game.

The Notre Dame defense, impressive in the first half, started to show signs of fatigue. For the third consecutive drive, Boston College scored, this time courtesy of a 36-yard field goal by Match. Hassleback, in the midst of a 23 for 33 day, went five for seven on the drive for 60 yards.

On the ensuing kickoff, senior cornerback

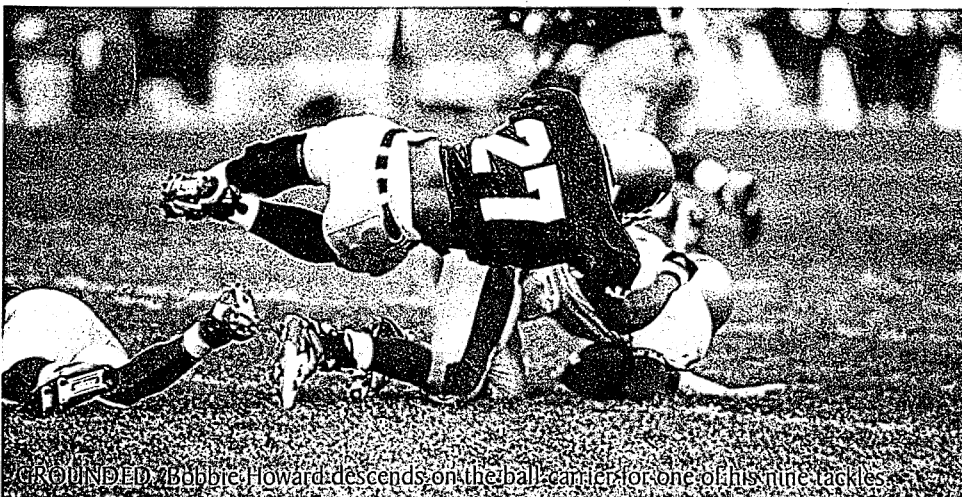
Allen Rossum thwarted the Eagles' comeback attempt. After fielding the kick at the 20, last year's AT&T Long Distance award winner appeared to be hemmed in at the 30. In an instant, Rossum broke out of the pack and was gone. It was the captain's eighth career return for a touchdown (three punts, three kickoffs and two interceptions), tying an NCAA record held by Errol Tucker of Utah in 1985. Rossum's all-around play earned praise from his coach. "Allen Rossum is a warrior," Davie said. "After that long kickoff return, that next series he came back on defense. We had some guys out but Allen Rossum stayed in there and could barely stand at the end of that football game."

After Rossum's return, Boston College drove the length of the field, only to be stopped when Hassleback's fourth-down pass to DiCosmo was tipped away in the endzone by linebacker Bobbie Howard. Jackson then made his return at quarterback for the Irish and led another touchdown drive, going the last yard on an option keeper for the final points of the day.

Notre Dame's quarterback experiment passed the test, with Powlus and Jackson combining for 21 of 35 for 323 yards. Powlus threw for two touchdowns and Jackson ran for two. Though Jackson was impressive, Davie reiterated that this was Ron Powlus' team. "Ron Powlus played extremely well," he said. "He's a tremendous competitor. He responded the way you're supposed to respond when you're challenged."

While the senior captain didn't enjoy being yanked from the game, he downplayed his feelings and stressed the success of the team. "There is no controversy," Powlus said. "I don't like to come out of a game but it was a decision that was made. I wanted to come out and play a good game and win a football game and we accomplished that."

If only it were that easy all year. □



Gordie Bell

CROUNDED Bobbie Howard descends on the ball carrier for one of his nine tackles.

GAME — a — GLANCE

Rushing Yards

83 Boston College

203 ND

Passing Yards

277 Boston College

323 ND

Total Yardage

360 Boston College

526 ND

First Downs

19 Boston College

29 ND

Time of Possession

30:24 Boston College

29:36 ND

Penalties (Yards)

25 Boston College

61 ND

SCORING

Boston College	0	7	10	3	20
Notre Dame	14	14	3	21	52

1st Quarter

ND: Driver 1 run at 12:00 (kick blocked)

ND: Johnson 4 pass from Powlus at 8:18 (Holloway pass)

2nd Quarter

ND: Jackson 3 run at 13:33 (Cengia PAT)

ND: Denson 8 run at 10:09 (Cengia PAT)

BC: DiCosmo 27 pass at 1:20 (Match PAT)

3rd Quarter

BC: Match 27 FG at 9:14

ND: Cengia 20 FG at 4:07

BC: Hemmert 1 run at 2:01 (Match PAT)

4th Quarter

ND: Brown 10 pass from Powlus at 13:44 (Cengia PAT)

BC: Match 36 FG at 10:14

ND: Rossum 80 kickoff return at 9:56 (Cengia PAT)

ND: Jackson 1 run at 9:33 (Cengia PAT)

The Catalyst

Though he missed five games this year, linebacker Bobbie Howard emerged as a leader on the Notre Dame defense

BY JAMES PASTORE

Linebackers patrol the gridiron. They stare through the line, eager for the next opportunity to crush an unsuspecting running back. Surely their helmets conceal a vicious snarl — the faces of men ready to pounce. Bobbie Howard's helmet, however, probably conceals a smile or perhaps a contemplative expression.

While the junior inside linebacker may not fit the mold of the fierce football player, he certainly makes an impact on the field. Coming into the 1997 season, Howard was expected to step up and become a more integral part of the defense. Despite making only one start in the 1995 season and recording just 20 tackles last year, Howard was slated as a starting inside linebacker for this season. As a starter, Howard has matured into a stabilizing force on the defense. Irish fans had to wait to see Howard reach his full

potential after he injured his knee in the season-opener against Georgia Tech. During the five games he missed, the Irish went 1-4.

Howard's return coincided with Notre Dame's turnaround. The team's record after his return was 5-2, with the only losses coming against USC in his first game back and in the bowl game against LSU. Although it's impossible to credit a single factor for the late-season Irish success, Howard's play certainly aided the team's turnaround. "He's our only experienced inside linebacker," Head Coach Bob Davie says. "He allowed us some stability and allowed us to do more things scheme wise, X-and-O wise. In addition, he provides us with a guy that can make some plays, that can cause some negative plays for other teams' offense."

But Howard, who had 101 tackles, re-

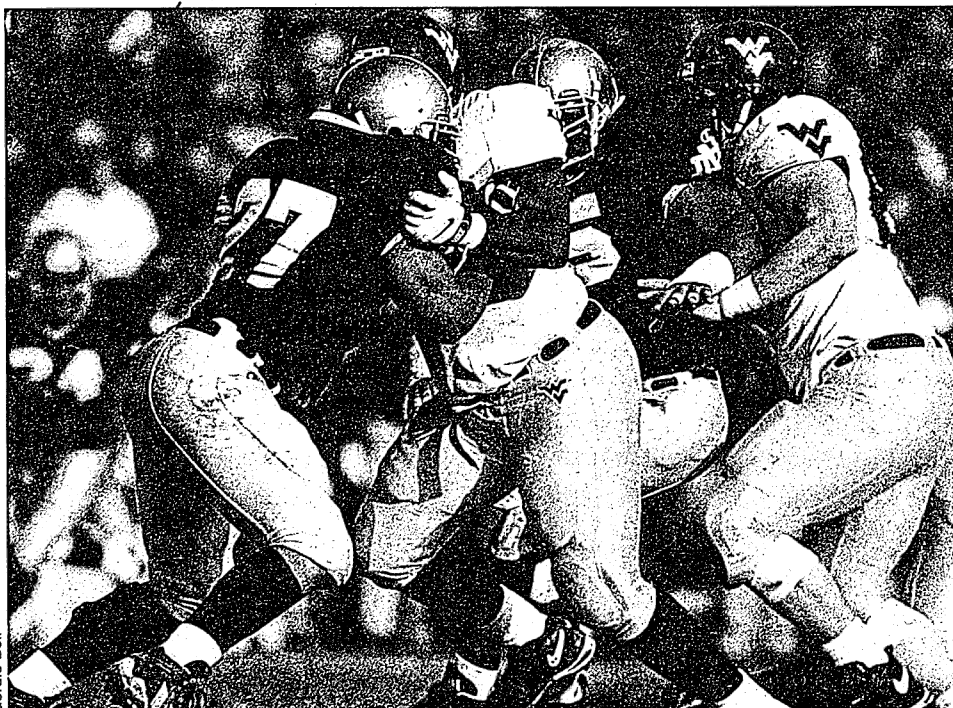
fuses to take credit for the team's improved play. "I really didn't think that I could give the team a lift," he says. "It was a team effort with lots of hard work. The team's been working hard all year."

Along with the statistical boost that Howard provided, he added certain intangible benefits. "He's a guy that everyone enjoys being around ... a very positive person," Davie says. "He's always got a smile on his face, and I think that's contagious."

Howard also brought leadership to Notre Dame's table. Far from vocal on the field, he prefers to lead by example. "It's weird. He's one of the most active guys by far, but he doesn't really say much," freshman linebacker Grant Irons says. "He's not a player that's about talk. He was a spark in the team by his presence. ... So many people respect him."

For a defense built around hard work and

COMEBACK KID. Howard, shown going head to head with a West Virginia lineman, racked up nine tackles against the Mountaineers.



Gordie Bell

**"He's always
got a smile on
his face, and I
think that's
contagious."**

— Bob Davie

dedication, respect for Howard is understandable. On his own initiative, he often takes time to review game tapes of upcoming opponents. By studying opposing offenses, Howard has turned himself into a more knowledgeable defensive player.

Howard also credits the coaching staff for his success. "Coach Mattison has helped me a lot," he says. "I understand the defense a little more and I know more about the game now."

Teammates and coaches alike have noticed Howard's hard work. "[Bobbie's] very intelligent with a lot of knowledge of the game," Irons says.

Davie offers similar praise for Howard. "You know exactly what you're getting," the coach says. "He plays hard every game, provides leadership and does what the coaches ask him. Bobbie has just busted his rear end in this program."

Howard did not always have such a fond attachment to the Notre Dame program. He grew up in Rand, W. Va., rooting against the Irish. "I had a couple of friends who really liked the team, so I would root against Notre Dame," he explains.

While his affinity for the Notre Dame program developed over time, his love for the game of football started at an early age. Howard says he first became interested in football out of necessity. "My mom wouldn't let me stay in the house and watch TV all day," he says, so he grew up with a football in hand. "I guess I've been playing ever since I could walk. People have always thrown me a ball since I could walk."

Howard found support and encouragement from his family right from the beginning, and they continue to support his efforts today. "His mom and dad are really neat," Davie says. "He's just like them. He's a great kid from a great family."

In his early days, when college football seemed a long time off, Howard gave little thought to playing for Notre Dame and focused on his game at DuPont High School in Belle, W. Va. Howard played linebacker and fullback at DuPont, helping the team to consecutive state titles in 1992 and 1993. After posting impressive numbers in high school, including 125 tackles and an average of 11.5 yards per carry in his senior year, Howard attracted the attention of Notre Dame. Once he was offered a scholarship, Howard felt the choice was obvious. "I could've gone to Marshall or WVU, but I couldn't pass up the opportunity [to play at Notre Dame]," he says.



Gordie Bell

A QUIET PRESENCE: Bobbie Howard is one of the team's most respected leaders.

Life at Notre Dame has not always been easy. Like many student athletes, Howard feels that the most difficult thing about playing for Notre Dame is balancing academic work with a rigorous practice schedule. And he faced an even more difficult situation when he was forced to deal with an injury. "It was rough because it was the first time that I had been hurt," he says.

Fortunately, the damage done to his knee in the Georgia Tech game was a strain and not a tear. His injury required six weeks of rehabilitation rather than surgery. However, watching the team lose in the first half of the season was difficult for Howard. "It was tough because I had to sit over there and watch," Howard comments.

Despite the injury, Howard returned to his original level of play. Other than forcing him to take a five-game break and undergo

rehab, the injury didn't negatively affect the way Howard views the game. He feels lucky to have made a full recovery. "I try not to pay attention to it. [Being injured] gave me a better appreciation of the game and made me realize not to take playing for granted," he says.

While Howard's philosophy on the future is to live "day by day," he would like to play in the NFL. "Obviously, if I had the opportunity to play at the next level, [I'd take it]."

For now, Howard is content to focus on next season. "I just want to be the best player I can be and to win the national championship," he says. "We're going to go out and try to win, and everything else will fall into place."

And with Howard patrolling the middle for a full season, Notre Dame's chances of winning will likely increase. □

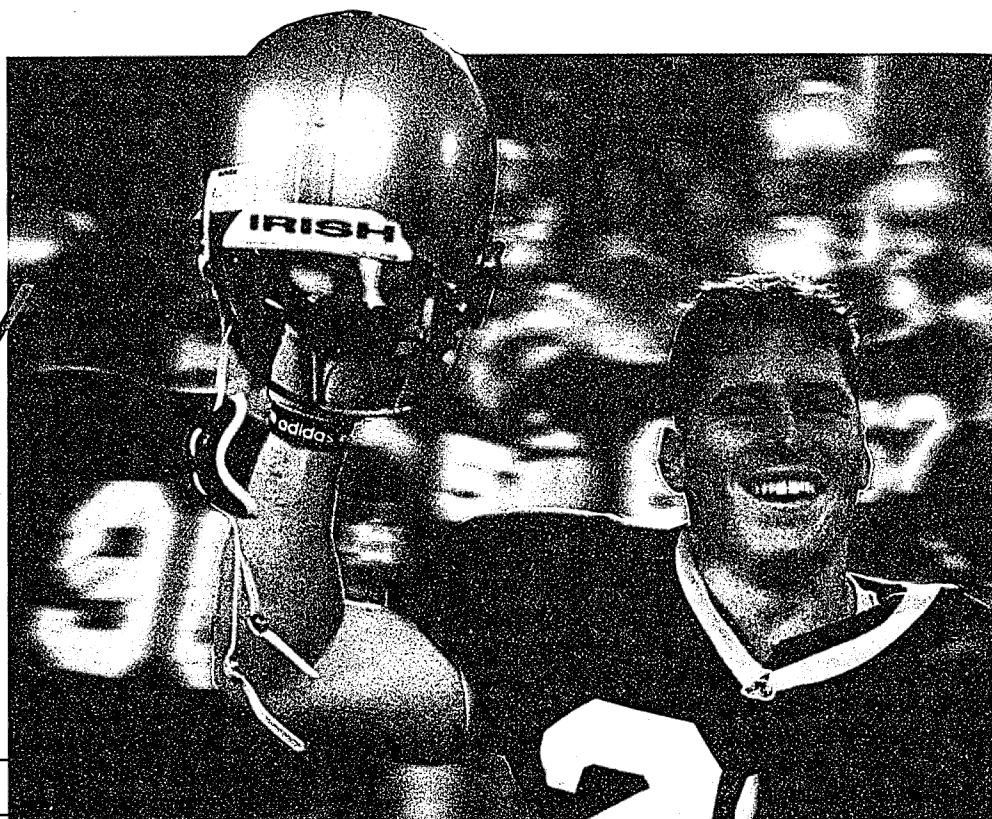


Hail Mary

• by Patrick Downes •

THE BALL HUNG IN THE AIR for a few seconds, spiraling through a gray, rainy sky, before it started its descent. With that ball hung any lingering bowl hopes that both the Irish and the Naval Academy still had on the first of November — and it was up for grabs.

The ball descended into a crowd of four or five Irish jerseys, was tipped by safety Deke Cooper and scooped up at knee-level by Navy receiver Pat McGrew, who continued to streak down the sideline. The shock of a near-loss had just begun to register on the drenched crowd when senior cornerback Allen Rossum alertly hustled in from the middle of the field to knock McGrew out of bounds at the 2, preserving Notre Dame's 21-17 victory, their 34th in a row over the Naval Academy.



ALL SMILES. Kicker Kevin Kopka smiles with relief as the Irish lift their helmets to the stands.

The teams entered the game with a combined 6-8 record, fighting for a post season berth. One more loss for either team would likely have knocked them out of contention. This desperation showed in the tightly fought battle that included three lead changes in the second half.

The final play was a thrilling end to the tight game, but Rossum's heroics could have been avoided. Notre Dame seemingly had the game won when a Midshipman stepped offsidelines on fourth-and-one and gave the Irish a first down on Navy's 19-yard line with a little over a minute left to play.

On first down, fullback Jamie Spencer carried the ball up the middle for a 2-yard gain, and Navy immediately called a time out. Fifty-three seconds remained. Following the timeout, quarterback Ron Powlus took a knee and Navy called its last timeout with 49 seconds left. On third and fourth downs, Powlus sat on the ball again in an attempt to run out the clock. But that attempt was unsuccessful and Navy got the ball back with three seconds and 71 yards to go for the win. They covered 69 of those yards.

"We kind of miscalculated a little bit," admitted Jim Colletto, Notre Dame's offensive coordinator. "We shouldn't have taken a knee quite so fast."

Notre Dame Head Coach Bob Davie defended the decision. "We didn't want to hand the football off," he said. "I think we made the right decision. ... To give them the football back with one play left in the game, I'll take our chances on that one."

But Davie did not want to dwell on the game-ending adventure. "I'm not going to let the last play of the game take away from what a big, big win this was," he said. And there was little doubt that this was a big win for a team that entered the game with a 3-5 record.

Even before the last play of the game, though, the Irish were outsmarted, outcoached and simply out-McCoyed by the Midshipmen. Quarterback Chris McCoy, Navy's erstwhile Heisman candidate, showed why the Academy was hyping him for the award by rushing for 147 yards, seven first downs and both of Navy's touchdowns. After a 29-yard kickoff return put Navy on its own 40, McCoy took the ball straight to the Irish and straight to the endzone, evoking unpleasant memories of another service academy quarterback by the name of Beau Morgan. He began the drive with a 27-yard option run off right tackle and finished it with a 9-yard touchdown run around the left end.

After a scare, Allen Rossum kept Notre Dame's bowl hopes alive

"It's always tough that first series, playing option teams," Davie said. "It's tough to get comfortable with it."

After that impressive beginning, though, McCoy showed why most sportswriters took him off their short lists for the Heisman. He kept the Irish in the game with three interceptions — two of them in his first three passing attempts.

On Navy's second drive, linebacker Kory Minor picked off the option quarterback's first passing attempt at the Navy 28. It was the junior's third interception of the year and it left the Irish 16 yards from the end zone. Wide receiver Bobby Brown scored two plays later on a 14-yard pass from Powlus to tie the game at seven.

But Powlus' touchdown pass didn't keep him off the bench for the entire game, as another chapter in the season-long quarterback drama was played out. Junior Jarious Jackson was inserted on the first drive of the second quarter and showed his inexperience. He completed one of three passes and handed the ball off once, but then Jackson

lobbed an interception to Navy linebacker Russ Tate in an attempt to avoid being sacked.

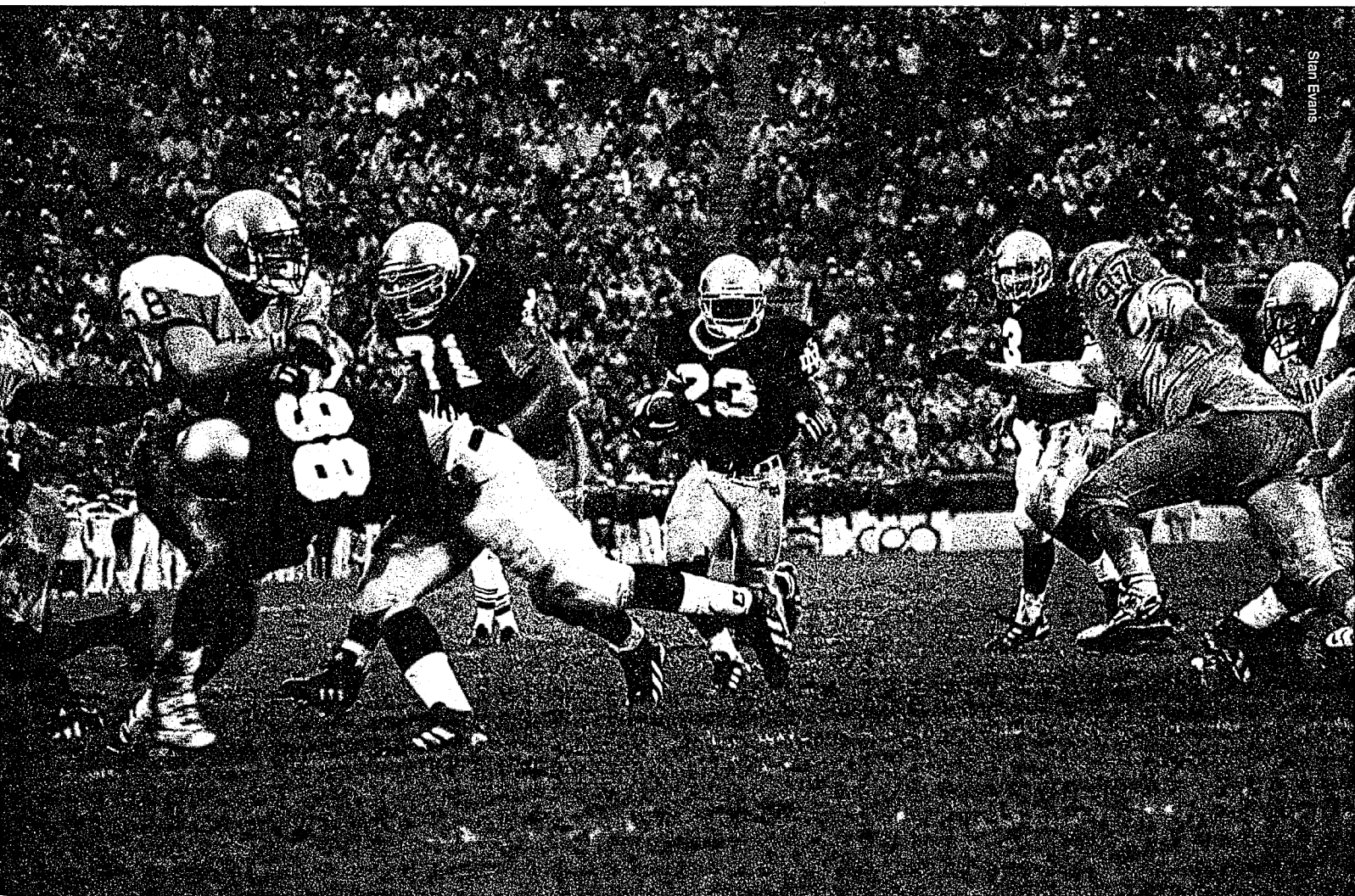
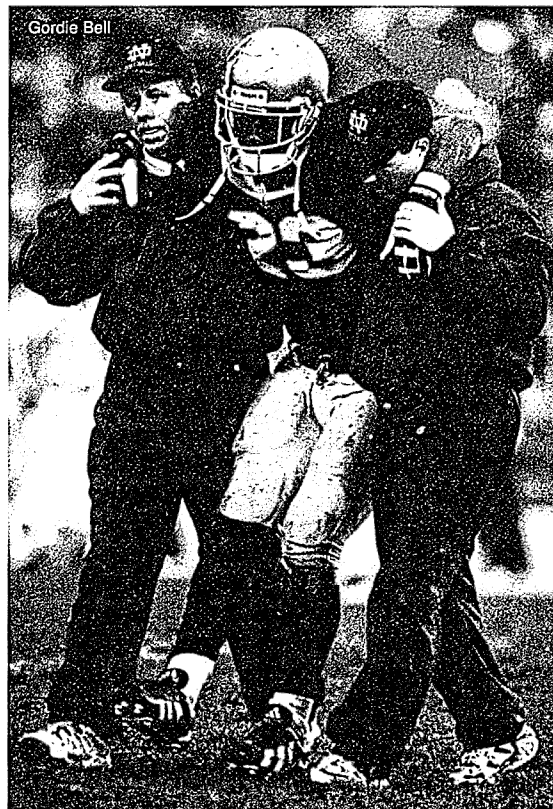
Powlus played the rest of the game. While Davie did intend to give Jackson another chance, it was not to be. "I was going to get Jarious back in, but those possessions are so critical," the coach said.

Navy, starting at the Notre Dame 35-yard line, capitalized on the miscue. The Midshipmen drove 30 yards on eight plays before place-kicker Tom Vanderhorst put them in front 10-7 with a 22-yard field goal.

Despite bruising his left knee in the first quarter, Powlus came back in and shined with a clutch performance. Though the rain hampered the passing game — Powlus completed only seven of 17 passes for 99 yards — he did connect on several key plays, including a fourth-and-10 pass to Bobby Brown during a critical fourth-quarter drive.

The defense showed some impressive play as well. After Navy's disastrous opening drive, the defense held together well and allowed only 10 points in the final 57 min-

RETURN MAN. Autry Denson was carried off the field at the beginning of a critical fourth quarter drive, but came back in time to carry the ball into the endzone.



utes of the game. Defensive end Melvin Dansby amassed a season-high 18 tackles, and linebacker Bobbie Howard pitched in with a few big plays of his own.

In just his second week back from injury, Howard stifled both running back Manny Metcalf and an early second quarter Navy drive with a huge hit for a 2-yard loss. And in the fourth quarter, Howard kept Navy from responding to Notre Dame's critical final touchdown by batting down a fourth-down pass intended for McGrew. "All you have to do when you watch our defense is watch Bobbie Howard," said Defensive Coordinator Greg Mattison of the junior linebacker. "I knew at the start of the season ... he has the chance to be one of those linebackers who leads."

Junior running back Autry Denson turned out to be another gutsy performer, gaining 125 yards on the ground. As the Irish trailed 10-7 after halftime, the slippery junior took a pitch and went 48 yards down the left sideline for the go-ahead touchdown just 1:12 into the second half. Later, on Notre Dame's game-winning march, with only 5:48 left in the game, Denson picked up his second touchdown to cap off a 17-play, seven-and-a-half minute drive that included three third-down conversions and one on fourth down.

What was incredible about Denson's 5-yard scoring run was that on the first play of the same drive, it appeared he had seriously injured his right knee. After several minutes of thrashing painfully in the grass, Denson was assisted off the field. The apparent injury to the team's leading rusher worried several Irish players and coaches. "If he's down on that field, he's hurt," Davie said of the tailback.

Denson had only bruised his knee, how-

ever, and before long, he was begging the coaches to go back in. "I had to kind of sell him on it," Denson said. "He wanted to hold me out. I mean after all, Clement [Stokes, the backup tailback] was doing a good job. But with the game on the line, I would hate to be on the sidelines."

Davie did not need much convincing. "He's a competitor. Trust me, if he wants to go back in, he'll go back in," the coach said.

And when he did go back in, Denson's healed legs carried the ball over the goal line for a 21-17 lead that the Irish would just barely hold on to.

After the final gun sounded, Navy didn't want their unsuccessful Hail Mary to be the last prayer of the day. "We always go to the middle of the field after the game, and one of the players usually leads us in a prayer," Navy Head Coach Charlie Weatherbie said.

And that they did, paying no attention to the Notre Dame Marching Band, who were attempting to play the Alma Mater, their own post-game tradition.

Navy players reportedly attacked some band members during their prayer time, and when Irish Guard members asked the team to leave, the guard was rebuffed. "We weren't doing anything different than we normally do," Weatherbie explained. "We have never been asked to get off the field before, to say a prayer." Navy finished their prayer and the players were roundly booed for their intrusion.

Despite his nonchalance about the final play, Davie did go home with more experience and new insight into winning football games. "It's a great, great lesson, and what it teaches me is how hard it is to win football games. ... And that's why I never take these wins for granted."

These days, the fans don't either. □

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

260 Navy

160 ND

Passing Yards

122 Navy

123 ND

Total Yardage

399 Navy

283 ND

First Downs

19 Navy

18 ND

Time of Possession

33:01 Navy

26:59 ND

Penalties (Yards)

40 Navy

5 ND

SCORING

Navy	7	3	7	0	17
Notre Dame	7	0	7	7	21

1st Quarter

N: McCoy 9 run at 12:02 (Vanderhorst PAT)

ND: Brown 14 pass from Powlus at 4:37 (Cengia PAT)

2nd Quarter

N: Vanderhorst 22 FG at 8:07

3rd Quarter

ND: Denson 48 run at 13:36

N: McCoy 2 run at 2:59 (Vanderhorst PAT)

4th Quarter

ND: Denson 5 run at 5:48 (Cengia PAT)

Gordie Bell

THE REAL MCCOY: Navy quarterback Chris McCoy outpaced the Irish for 147 yards rushing and almost won the game with a 67-yard bomb.



Southern HOSPITALITY

• by Brian Lucas •



THE STADIUM WAS VIRTUALLY EMPTY EXCEPT FOR A section of about 5,000 people in the corner of the endzone. Despite the un-Baton Rouge-like chill and the steady drizzle, the group remained, cheering their triumphant team for about 20 minutes after the final gun had soun-

ded. The players joined the celebration, high-fiving their faithful fans and exchanging hugs. It wasn't the national championship, but for them it may have been more important. After being declared dead five weeks into the season, Notre Dame football was back.

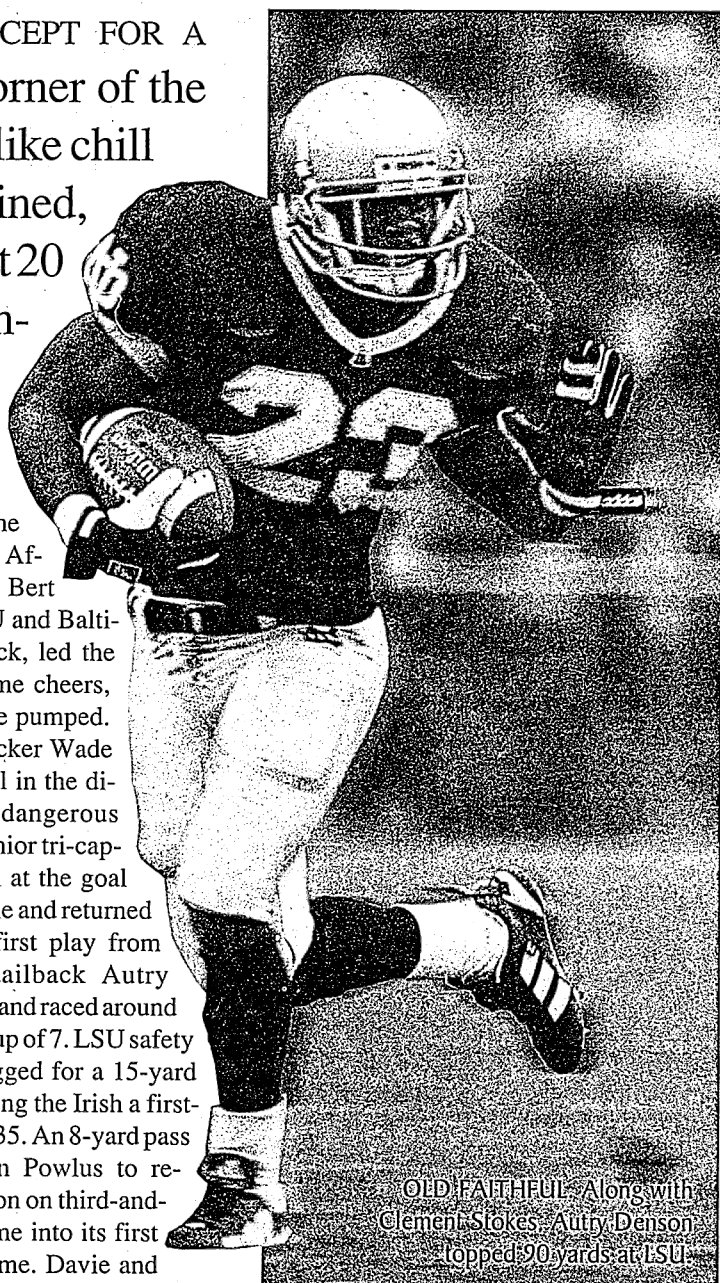
"When we walked off that field at Stanford, having lost four straight games, that was about as bad as it could get," Notre Dame Head Coach Bob Davie said. "I really think this team hung in there and we've made improvement. This was our opportunity to show people across the country the kind of improvement we've made."

This improvement was witnessed by millions around the nation and 80,566 fans in Tiger Stadium. What they saw must have shocked most of them as the Irish marched into Death Valley for the first time since 1986 and walked out with a dominating 24-6 win over the 11th-ranked LSU Tigers. The win evened Notre Dame's record at 5-5, reaching the .500 mark for the first time since the second week of the season.

"I felt like we got outplayed in every aspect of the game," said LSU Head Coach Gerry DiNardo, a former All-American

guard at Notre Dame. "We kind of got our butts kicked. That was what I watched."

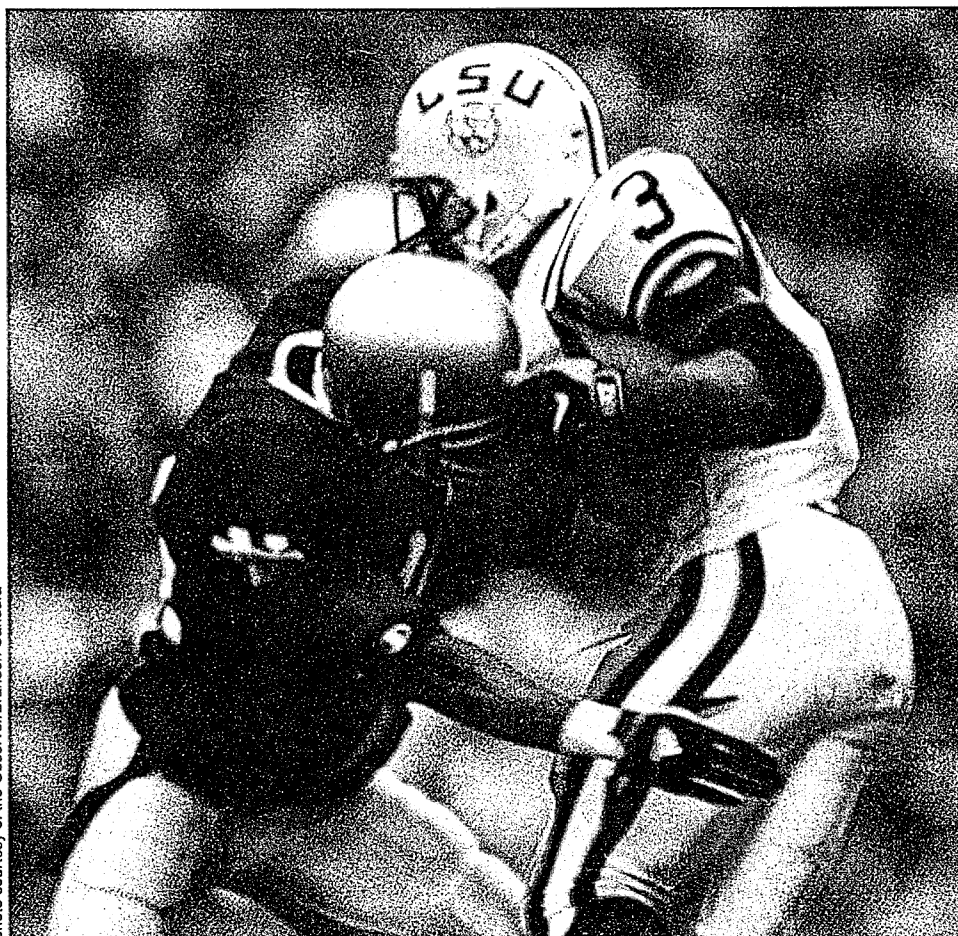
The Irish started the onslaught right away. After honorary captain Bert Jones, the former LSU and Baltimore Colts quarterback, led the capacity crowd in some cheers, the Tiger faithful were pumped. Amid the din, LSU kicker Wade Richey booted the ball in the direction of the ever-dangerous Allen Rossum. The senior tri-captain hauled in the ball at the goal line, burst up the middle and returned it 43 yards. On the first play from scrimmage, junior tailback Autry Denson took a handoff and raced around the right end for a pickup of 7. LSU safety Mark Roman was flagged for a 15-yard facemask penalty, giving the Irish a first-and-10 from the Tiger 35. An 8-yard pass from quarterback Ron Powlus to receiver Malcolm Johnson on third-and-nine forced Notre Dame into its first big decision of the game. Davie and



OLD FAITHFUL: Along with Clement Stokes, Autry Denson topped 90 yards at LSU.

photo courtesy of the Observer/Brandon Candura

No turnovers. No penalties. No doubt about it.
Notre Dame was back, crushing LSU 24-6



DEAD END. LSU tailback Kevin Faulk struggled to get past the Irish defense.

his staff didn't hesitate: they sent in the short-yardage personnel.

Seven weeks earlier, the Irish had faced a similar situation. Trailing Michigan 21-14 in the fourth quarter, Notre Dame had a fourth-and-two from the Wolverine 23-yard line. Offensive Coordinator Jim Colletto had decided to send Denson up the middle for the third consecutive play, and the junior running back was stopped well short. At LSU, again facing a hostile crowd, Colletto surprised nearly everyone. Powlus faked a handoff to Denson running left and the quarterback rolled to his right where tight end Jabari Holloway was wide open. The freshman caught the ball and rumbled 17 yards to the LSU 9-yard line. On the next play, Denson, who would rush for 92 yards, scored on a nifty cutback. Scott Cengia tacked on the extra point and the Irish held an unexpected 7-0 lead.

The home crowd was stunned but remained confident: LSU hadn't even touched the ball yet. The Tigers started their initial drive on their own 22. Two rushes by All-American candidate Kevin Faulk gained 14 yards and calmed the partisan crowd. But a false start on LSU backed it up 5 yards and after Faulk got back only to the

original line of scrimmage with two runs, the Tigers faced a third-and-10. Quarterback Herb Tyler was forced out of the pocket and picked up only 4 yards before being dragged down by defensive lineman Corey Bennett. Chad Kessler, who entered the game leading the nation with an average of 50.7 yards per punt, managed a mere 32-yarder and gave the Irish the ball at their own 28.

After two runs by Denson, Powlus hit Holloway for a 5-yard gain on third-and-four. On first down, Notre Dame again ran play-action, this time hitting a leaping Bobby Brown across the middle for 31 yards to the LSU 29. Denson picked up 12 yards on three rushes and, after an incompletion on second down, Powlus' scramble came up 3 yards short of a first down. Cengia came on and hit a 29-yard field goal, increasing Notre Dame's lead to 10.

The LSU faithful could hardly believe what was happening. The Tigers got the ball back on their own 20 and after an incompletion and a 2-yard run by Faulk, LSU faced a third-and-eight. Tyler dropped back and looked over the middle but badly overthrew his intended receiver. The ball was picked off by free safety A'Jani Sand-

ers and returned 26 yards. With a first down on the 15, the Irish needed only three plays to punch the ball into the endzone. A 6-yard run by senior Clement Stokes, who matched Denson's 92-yard effort, gave Notre Dame an astonishing 17-0 lead only 13:23 into the game. "I thought it was important that we got off to a quick start," Davie said. "It was critical that we get out to an early lead [to take the crowd out of the game]. The opening kickoff by Rossum set the tone and we just built on that."

As the second quarter began, LSU was in the midst of its third possession. The Tigers drove down to the Notre Dame 30-yard line but the Irish defense stiffened, forcing Tyler into an incompletion on fourth-and-nine. When Notre Dame took over, junior Jarious Jackson came out to lead the Irish offense. Five rushes and one pass moved the Irish down to the LSU 32 where they faced a fourth-and-seven. Jackson found Denson wide open in the flat but the running back dropped the pass, preventing Notre Dame from padding its lead.

Given new life, the Tigers attempted to put some points on the board. After driving from its own 32, LSU had a third-and-seven from the Notre Dame 41. The Irish secondary stepped to the fore once again, intercepting Tyler for the second time in six attempts. For the half, Tyler completed only four of 12 passes and had two interceptions. This time it was strong safety Benny Guilbeaux, a native of nearby Opelousas, La., who stepped in front of the intended receiver and returned the ball 44 yards to the Tigers' 24-yard line.

With an opportunity to bury the Tigers, the Irish stopped themselves again by dropping a pass. Johnson was the culprit this time, dropping a wide receiver screen with blockers in front of him. Cengia then trotted on the field and missed the 37-yard field goal attempt wide left.

LSU threatened on its next drive, but linebacker Bobbie Howard sacked Tyler on third down, setting up a fourth-and-16 from the Irish 29. For the second time in the half, the Tigers went for it and came up empty as Tyler's pass fell incomplete. Notre Dame took over and ran out the clock, entering the locker room up 17-0 but not totally satisfied.

"Actually, at halftime I was nervous because it was 17-0 and I knew we should have had more points," Davie said. "We dropped a couple balls and we missed a field goal."

Davie also realized that, since LSU got the ball to open the half, their fans would

come out ready to cheer on a second-half comeback. On the first drive, it looked as if the Tigers were on their way. They drove to midfield and, on fourth-and-one, Tyler sneaked behind his center for 2 yards and a first down. On the next play, wide receiver Larry Foster made a diving catch along the right sideline at the Notre Dame 28. The Irish defense halted the drive after Faulk gained only 7 yards on three carries and LSU sent Richey onto the field for his first field goal attempt of the game. DiNardo probably wished that he had stuck with his pattern of going for it on fourth down as the sophomore hit the left upright, missing the 38-yard attempt.

Escaping unscathed, the Irish looked to put the Tigers in a deeper hole. They did just that, as Stokes capped off a nine-play, 79-yard drive with a 1-yard touchdown run. The key play on the drive was a 34-yard run by Denson that moved the Irish down to the LSU 3-yard line. That made the score 24-0 and effectively silenced the crowd for the rest of the game.

But a botched fake punt attempt, resulting from a miscommunication between the coaches and players, gave LSU an opportunity to avoid the shutout. Taking advantage

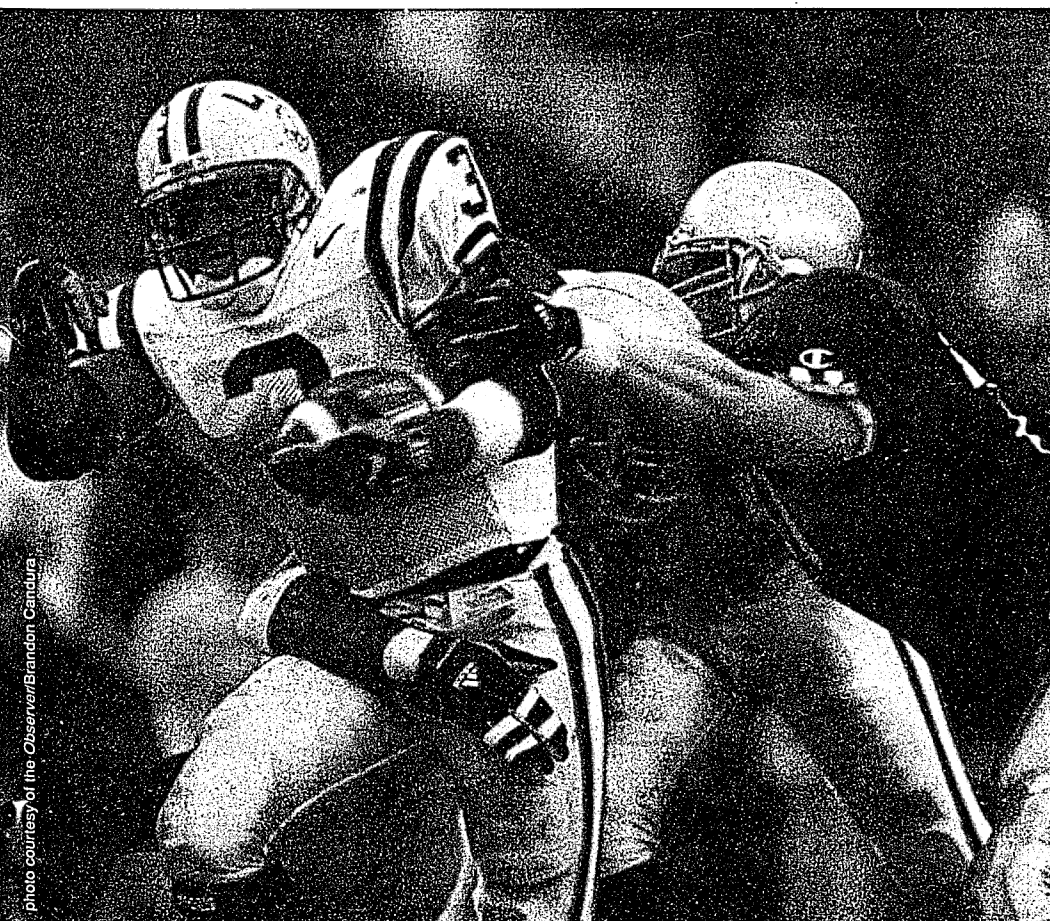
of the miscue, the Tigers finally got on the board courtesy of a 2-yard run by Faulk. Freshman Abram Booty caught a 26-yard pass from Tyler, putting the LSU on the Notre Dame 13. Faulk did the rest, gaining the 13 yards on three carries, including the touchdown.

By the time the Tigers scored, more than half of the crowd had left and the Notre Dame contingent was the loudest group remaining. Much to their enjoyment, Sanders ended the final Tiger drive with his second interception of the game, picking off a Tyler bomb on the Notre Dame 14. The Irish simply ran out the clock and the celebration began.

Davie was certainly glad to clinch the win. "The reason you're in [coaching] is so guys get rewarded for their hard work," he said. "You look forward to winning because it affects other people. You're glad to see those Notre Dame people still in those stands when nobody else is left out there. You're glad to see those kids go over there and hold those gold helmets up."

After the 1,000 mile trip to Baton Rouge, the fans couldn't have enjoyed anything else quite as much. And it sure made the return trip to South Bend a lot easier. □

GOTCHA. By the time Faulk broke loose, it was too little, too late.



GAME — at a — GLANCE

Rushing Yards

279 ND

153 LSU

Passing Yards

79 ND

167 LSU

Total Yardage

339 ND

288 LSU

First Downs

20 ND

19 LSU

Time of Possession

30:34 ND

29:26 LSU

Penalties (Yards)

0 ND

30 LSU

SCORING

Notre Dame	17	0	7	0	24
LSU	0	0	0	6	6

1st Quarter

ND: Denson 9 run at 12:30 (Cengia PAT)

ND: Cengia 29 FG at 4:14

ND: Stokes 6 run at 1:37 (Cengia PAT)

2nd Quarter

None

3rd Quarter

ND: Stokes 1 run at 5:58 (Cengia PAT)

4th Quarter

LSU: Faulk 2 run at 6:35 (pass failed)

Half Empty or Half

Don't expect any miracles from Davie

BY COREY SPINELLI

When Bob Davie was named Notre Dame's 26th head coach last November, I was pleased that in choosing Lou Holtz's successor, Mike Wadsworth decided to stay within the program. And why not? Davie is a youthful, energetic coach who promised to "put the fun back in Notre Dame football." Sounded good — as long as he didn't stray too far from Holtz's formula for success.

Davie said the right things last spring and in August, using fan-friendly phrases as "blitzing more," "throwing deeper and more often" and my personal favorite, "putting the fire back in Notre Dame football." But ironically, in his attempt to ignite this "fire," Davie made the mistake that laid the foun-

dation for the tumultuous '97 campaign. He fired Offensive Line Coach Joe Moore and hired Jim Colletto as line coach and offensive coordinator.

Fans might know Colletto as the man who's so busy that, as he said on one occasion, "I don't hardly watch the game [when calling plays]." Saying the wrong thing isn't the only misstep that the former Purdue coach has taken during his first year on the job. Colletto's new offense averaged 14 fewer points per game and gained 886 fewer yards rushing than last year. The highly anticipated passing game actually resulted in eight fewer passing yards per game despite completing 45 more passes.

While the offense is Colletto's responsibility, the head coach is ultimately respon-

sible for his staff. Where Davie chose a former Purdue coach who had never beaten Notre Dame and had a 17-42-3 record over six years, Holtz surrounded himself with men like Dave Roberts, Barry Alvarez and seven others who went on to college head coaching positions after coaching at Notre Dame. Besides Moore, Davie also dismissed Running Backs Coach Earle Mosley, who was then hired by Stanford, a team that defeated the Irish with a season-high 322 yards.

Considering the losses this year along the defensive front, it was assumed the offense would pick up the slack for the inexperienced unit. It wouldn't have been a problem if the six losses were due to an inability to stop opposing offenses. Instead, the exact opposite was the case.

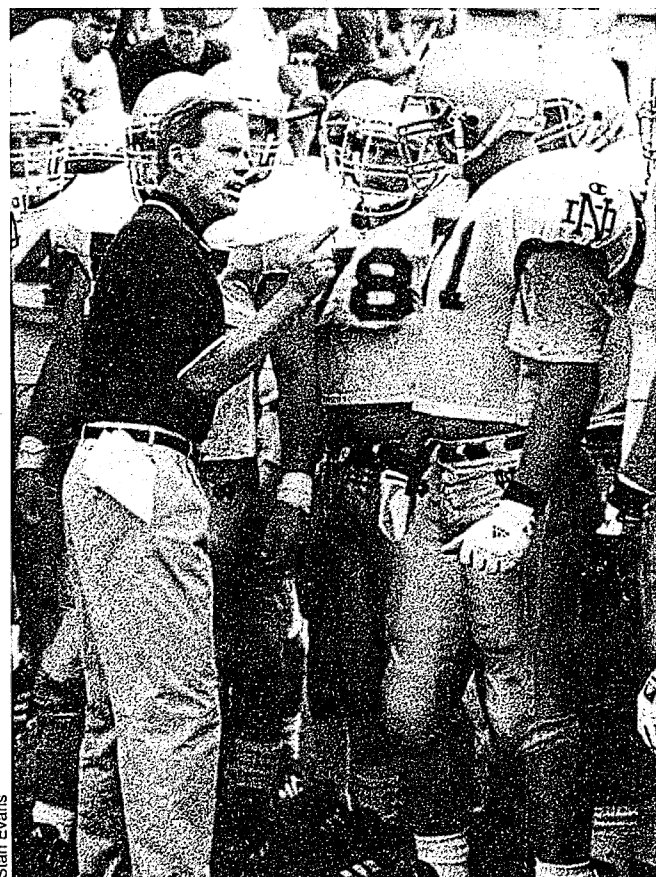
Greg Mattison's defense played courageously for 12 games, despite injuries to Bobbie Howard and Corey Bennett for a good portion of the season. Clearly, Davie is an excellent defensive coach with a sound philosophy, and the performance of this undersized unit is his first season's greatest accomplishment. But the play of an offense featuring the school's leading career passer, its possible all-time leading rusher, a veteran offensive line and an improved receiving corps is another matter entirely.

Despite promises to be more diversified, the Irish offense became noticeably predictable. They were stopped five times on five rushes inside the 5-yard line against Georgia Tech, stopped again in an identical situation at Pittsburgh and stopped throughout the second half of the USC game. And then there was one of the most important plays of the season, a play that could have given the Irish a chance to beat the eventual national champions in their own backyard. On fourth-and-two, Davie sent Autry Denson into the middle of a stacked Michigan front for the fourth consecutive play. Number 23 never even crossed the line of scrimmage.

Although Holtz and Davie both lost at least five games, their first seasons are in no way similar. Holtz inherited an inferior squad and immediately made them competitive, while Davie inherited a veteran team and underachieved. Lou Holtz was a brilliant game coach who made halftime adjustments. Last year the Irish outscored opponents 192-88 in the second half of games while Davie's crew was outscored 150-115. Lou Holtz was a riveting speaker who accepted the blame for losses, rather than spreading it among his players or the fans. Not many people will forget Davie's tirade on the stadium crowd following the USC loss.

Loyal supporters of the Irish can only hope that Bob Davie's tenure is a successful one. But until he proves himself worthy of the status held by his predecessor, the new version of the *1812 Overture* will remain a cheap imitation of the original. □

A PLAYER'S COACH. Head Coach Bob Davie instructs offensive lineman Jerry Wisne.



Stan Evans

Full?

Davie will prove an outstanding coach

BY BRIAN LUCAS

"Bob Davie will win a hundred games. I'll bet my ass on that. Thank you."

When John Robinson made that proclamation about Notre Dame's first-year head coach, many Notre Dame fans thought that the USC coach had gone crazy. After all, following a 20-17 loss to the Trojans, Davie's Irish had a 2-5 record and weren't playing well at all. In their first seven games, they averaged merely 18.9 points and committed six penalties a game. "I feel bad for our football team," Davie said after the USC game.

But he then made it clear that the season wasn't over. "What I told the players after the game, what they have right now ... is a coaching staff that isn't going to quit," he said.

And they didn't. In an improbable turnaround, the Irish bounced back after that excruciating loss to their bitter rival and won their final five games of the regular season, earning an invitation to the Independence Bowl. Included in that run were victories over LSU and West Virginia, the first time the Irish had defeated ranked foes in consecutive weeks since defeating Boston College and Penn State in 1992.

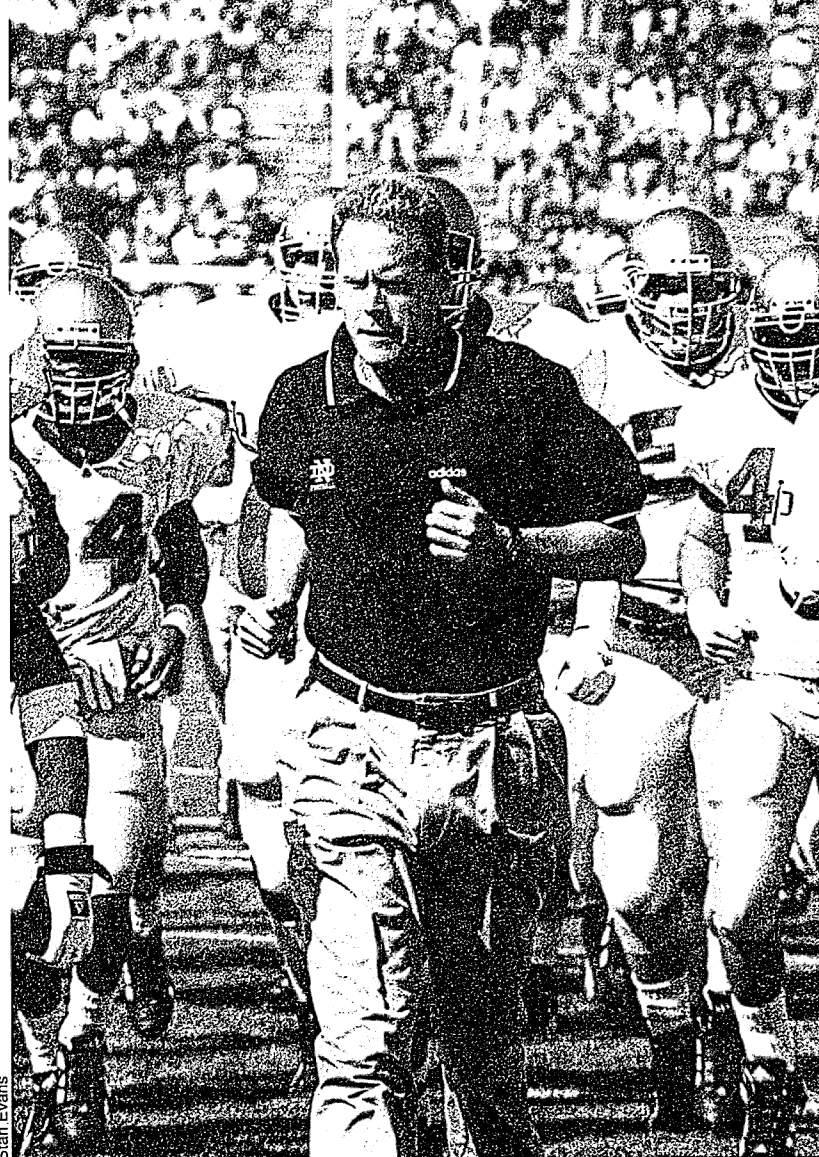
Much of the credit for the turnaround has to go to Davie and his staff. He never stopped believing that the team could be successful this year, despite sentiment that they should build toward next season. "Everyone wants to find quick solutions. Everyone wants to find simple solutions," Davie said the week before the Boston College game. "But it's really important that we, as a coaching staff and as a team, stay focused and really keep our eye on the target."

The one change that Davie did make was to give back-up quarterback Jarious Jackson more playing time. Jackson, who normally just came in for short-yardage situations, began to take more control of the offense during the Boston College game

and led two touchdown drives. The experiment was deemed a success and continued throughout the season. "We accomplished what we wanted to accomplish by playing Jarious," Davie said after the 52-20 victory over Boston College. "When our offense bogs down, we wanted to see if Jarious provided us with an option to put him in the game. Based on the way he played today, he provides us with that option."

Another adjustment Davie made was renewing his commitment to the running game. During the five-game winning streak, Notre Dame ran the ball more than twice as many times as they passed it, 225-111, as opposed to the first seven games when it was more balanced, 268-203. During Notre Dame's 24-6 upset of LSU, the Irish ran the ball a whopping 48 times while attempting only 15 passes. The result was 260 yards rushing and Notre Dame's biggest win of the season.

In that game, Davie showed that he can learn from his mistakes. Facing a critical fourth-and-one on LSU's 26 on their first possession of the game, Notre Dame called timeout. Irish fans remembered a similar situation six weeks earlier when Notre Dame had a fourth-and-two at the Michigan 20-yard line and Autry Denson was stopped short of the first down. Davie and his staff had something up their sleeves this time, though. Quarterback Ron Powlus faked a



LEADING THE TROOPS. Davie led the team onto the field every game this season, but he had already experienced the privilege in 1995, acting as head coach when Lou Holtz had neck surgery.

handoff to Denson around left end and rolled to his right where tight end Jabari Holloway was wide open in the flat. Powlus hit him for a 17-yard gain and Denson scored on the next play.

Though many people this year were ready to give up on Davie — some comparing him to the infamous Gerry Faust — other coaches have had rough beginnings. By now, everyone knows that Lou Holtz started his Notre Dame career 1-4 and ended up a legend. But many people forget, especially this year, that Lloyd Carr's Michigan Wolverines had four losses in each of his first two seasons as head coach. This year, Michigan went undefeated and captured the national championship. Carr was the defensive coordinator under Gary Moeller, the same title Davie held under Holtz. I'm not predicting a national championship in two years, but the fans should give Davie some time. If he turned this season around, he can handle just about anything. □



Coming Around the Mountain

• by John Lukacs •

LIKE A VICTORIOUS GUNSLINGER RIDING OUT OF TOWN AT SUNSET, RON POWLUS WALKED out of Notre Dame Stadium for the last time on November 22 with a 21-14 victory over West Virginia in the 1997 home finale.

Silhouetted against a battleship-gray evening sky, Powlus left his critics

and the constant attention behind, the ghosts of interceptions past and of devastating losses.

But most of all, Powlus — who finished nine of 17 for 156 yards and a touchdown — and his teammates played with heart in beating the 22nd-ranked team in the country. The quarterback and the rest of the squad could bask in the glow of the hard-fought victory over the Mountaineers, a game so even that the two teams were separated by merely 23 yards of total offense and 30 seconds of possession time, both in West Virginia's favor. The scoreboard, however, was the only thing that concerned Notre Dame.

"We never gave up hope," Powlus said. "We never gave up on ourselves."

After limping out of the gate to a 1-4 start, most college football experts had begun to fill out Notre Dame's organ donor cards, but after surviving "Famous" Amos Zereoue's 234-yard rushing onslaught and a late rally by the Mountaineers, the Irish proved they were anything but dead. They emerged victorious and moved above the .500 mark for

the first time since early September. "I think it just characterizes our whole team, not just the seniors. We came from behind in the beginning of the year and we just showed our character and prevailed in the end," senior center Rick Kaczinski said. "We kind of went out with some style. It's one of the best games I've ever been a part of in my life."

Coupled with the surprising 24-6 upset of LSU the previous week, the conquest of the Mountaineers marked the first time the Irish had defeated ranked foes in consecutive weeks since back-to-back victories over Boston College and Penn State in November 1992. "We knew coming in here [that] we got the ball rolling against LSU and we wanted to finish the season strong," Kaczinski said. "We knew West Virginia was a good team and if we beat them maybe some people would start believing in us."

The students certainly believed in the team. They stormed the field following the victory in support of their classmates. Filing out of the stadium en masse through the tunnel, they stopped to pay homage to the

players.

But after West Virginia took the opening kickoff and casually marched 63 yards for a touchdown on their first possession, converting all four of their third-down opportunities along the way, it looked as if there would be no celebrating for Irish fans.

Notre Dame retaliated on their second possession, though, moving the ball down the field on a 48-yard bomb from Powlus to tight end Jabari Holloway. Seconds later, Clement Stokes dove across the goal line from 1-yard out to tie the game 7-7.

On West Virginia's next possession, however, the Irish got their first glimpse of the wrong side of Amos Zereoue — his back.

After containing last year's Big East Rookie of the Year on West Virginia's first two drives, the Irish let Zereoue break loose. He took a pitch left and raced untouched for 60 yards all the way down to the Irish 6. A few seconds later, Zereoue finished the job, taking a handoff up the middle and into the endzone for a 14-7 Mountaineer lead.

Notre Dame's next possession ended with a fumble by Stokes at the West Virginia 29

With their 21-14 victory over West Virginia, the Irish played themselves back into bowl contention

but the Mountaineers were unable to capitalize on the mistake. When the Irish got the ball back, they had a new look. Jarious Jackson replaced Powlus for a series and gave the coaching staff some much-needed relief.

Jackson led the offense on a six-play, 67-yard touchdown drive highlighted by Malcolm Johnson's sensational over-the-shoulder catch. The 45-yard grab was the longest of the season for an Irish wideout. "Jarious made a great throw," Johnson said. "He put it where only I could get it, and fortunately I was able to adjust to the ball."

Jackson and Johnson connected again two plays later on a 7-yard slant for the second Irish touchdown, tying the game at 14 before the teams went into halftime.

Following a third quarter in which neither team scored, West Virginia squandered an opportunity to take the lead midway through the fourth quarter when Ivory Covington intercepted quarterback Marc Bulger's pass at the Notre Dame 5-yard line.

The Irish offense immediately attempted to cash in on Bulger's miscue. Running back Autry Denson, who churned out 146 yards and went over the 1,000 yard mark for the season, ripped off a 36-yard gain on the first play and set the tone for the drive. Two

plays later, Johnson, whose 125 yards receiving were the most for an Irish receiver since Derrick Mayes had 146 yards against Texas in 1995, pulled in a key 26-yard pass from Powlus that propelled Notre Dame to the Mountaineer 16. Denson gained 5 yards on two carries, then the Irish faced a critical third-and-five. After a Notre Dame timeout, Powlus dropped back and hit Bobby Brown for an 11-yard touchdown with 4:56 left for what proved to be the game-winner.

"For a young man to come back like that and actually win the game with that great route and great catch — that's the sign of a guy not a sophomore anymore, he's turning into being a junior," receivers' coach Urban Meyer said about Brown's on-field maturity.

But that wasn't the end of

it.

Bulger, whose father was a backup quarterback at Notre Dame from 1970-72, moved the Mountaineers down to the Notre Dame 26, with the majority of the damage coming on a 37-yard bomb to Jerry Porter that barely eluded the grasp of Deveron Harper. But three plays later, the Irish secondary would get their hands on the ball.

Senior cornerback Ty Goode, who had replaced Allen Rossum three minutes into the game after Rossum suffered a concussion, intercepted a Bulger pass in the endzone on fourth-and-11 with eight seconds left to clinch the victory. "I just feel great that I can

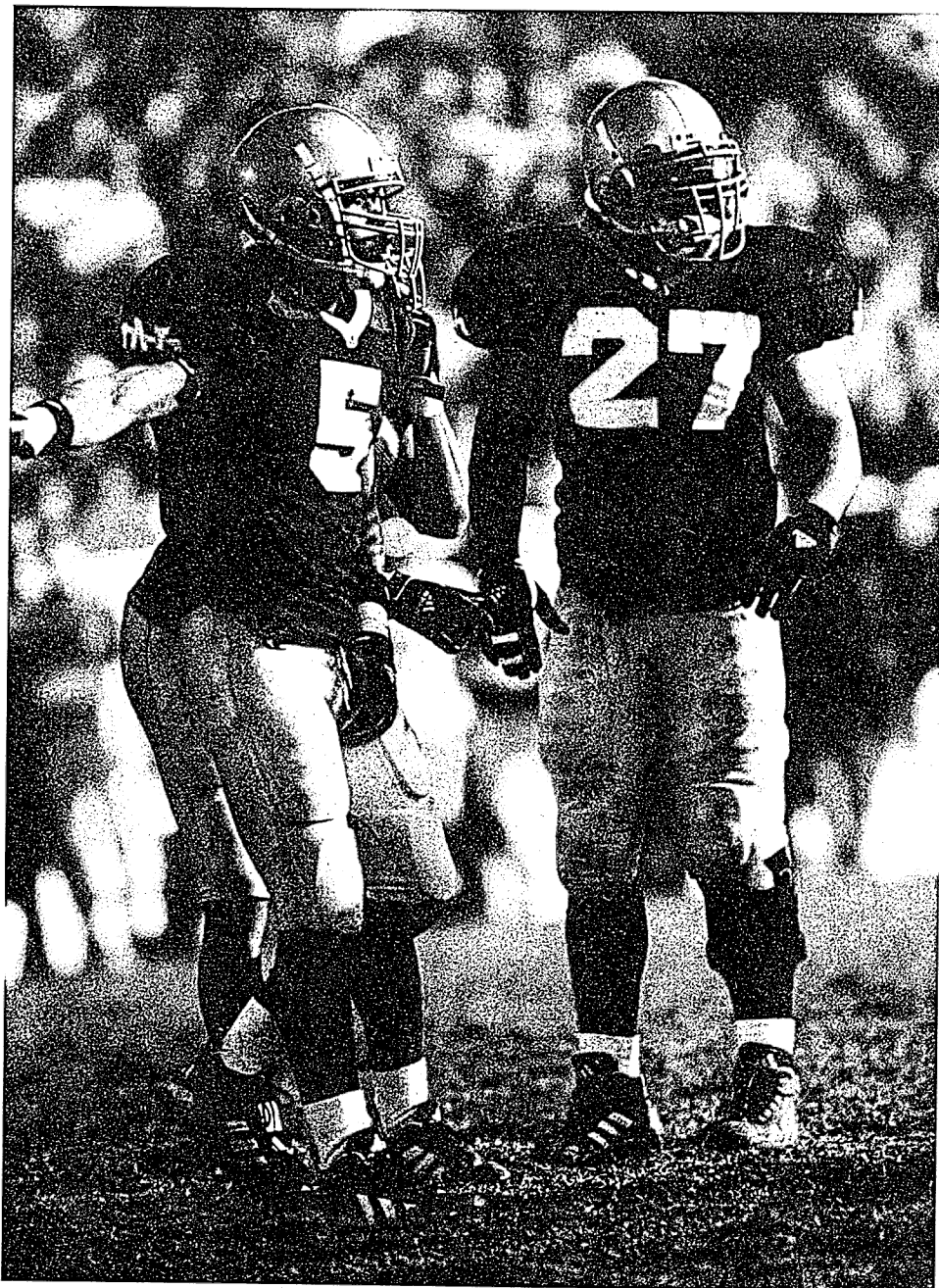
come in and do my job the way that [the coaching staff] expects me to,"

Goode said. "It helps a lot if you can have substitutes come in and do their job the way they are supposed to."

Eight seconds later, Powlus took a knee and collected Notre Dame's sixth victory — their third late-game comeback



CARRYING THE LOAD. Wide receiver Malcolm Johnson caught six passes for 125 of Notre Dame's 217 yards passing.



Gordie Bell

CONFERENCE CALL. Defenders A'jani Sanders and Bobbie Howard discuss a play.

(Georgia Tech and Navy) — was in the books.

"The key to the game was holding Zereoue to 234 yards," Davie joked after the game. Zereoue's output, coming on 32 carries, was the most by an opposing running back since Charles White of USC rushed for 261 yards on 61 carries.

After surviving West Virginia's relentless running game, only one thing was on the minds of Irish players — the next week's game against the University of Hawaii Rainbow Warriors. With a win against the 3-8 'Bows, the Irish would be assured of a trip to a bowl game over the holidays.

Not that anyone was taking Hawaii lightly. The last time Notre Dame traversed the

Pacific in 1991, they almost got burnt by more than the sun, barely escaping with their luggage and a 48-42 victory. Continuing his businesslike approach to the end of the season, Davie stressed that the final regular season game in Oahu would not be a pleasure trip. "We're not going to the beach, we're not going to get on surfboards, we're not going to snorkel and we're not going to get sunburned," the coach said following the West Virginia game. "We're going over there to take one more step [toward a bowl]."

And a bowl trip was one step closer after the victory over the Mountaineers. □

John Lukacs is a contributing writer on the staff of Blue and Gold Illustrated.

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards

248 WVU

148 ND

Passing Yards

140 WVU

217 ND

Total Yardage

388 WVU

365 ND

First Downs

19 WVU

16 ND

Time of Possession

30:15 WVU

29:45 ND

Penalties (Yards)

89 WVU

52 ND

SCORING

West Virginia	7	7	0	0	14
Notre Dame	0	14	0	7	21

1st Quarter

WV: Zereoue 11 run at 8:21 (Taylor PAT)

2nd Quarter

ND: Stokes 1 run at 14:08 (Cengia PAT)

WV: Zereoue 6 run at 13:28 (Taylor PAT)

ND: Johnson 7 pass from Jackson at 4:22 (Cengia PAT)

3rd Quarter

none

4th Quarter

ND: Brown 11 pass from Powlus at 4:56 (Cengia PAT)

A late field goal preserved a shaky Irish victory



• by Brian Lucas •

The Great Escape

THEY HAD COME SO FAR IN THE PAST MONTH AND A HALF. FOUR CONSECUTIVE VICTORIES, including two over top-25 teams, had put them in position for a bowl invitation. All that lay between the Notre Dame football team and a holiday excursion

were the lowly Hawaii Rainbow Warriors, 3-8 overall and losers of five straight. But as Irish fans have learned this season, nothing can be taken for granted.

With 13:39 left in the game, the 'Bows held a 22-14 lead and Notre Dame's bowl hopes were on the line. Aloha Stadium, only three-quarters full, seemed more intimidating than Death Valley, and the Irish appeared confused. Things looked bleak, but the players remained positive. "We were going to go down and score," Powlus said. "I never thought, 'Oh my God, we could not score, we could lose this game.' I had complete confidence in the team."

Autry Denson, who rushed for 143 yards, provided the spark that began the comeback. With a first-and-10 near midfield, the junior took the handoff and burst up the middle for 43 yards before he was dragged down at the 9-yard line. Three plays later, Denson scored his second touchdown and brought the Irish within two. The two-point conversion failed as Powlus' pass to Bobby Brown went off the diving receiver's fingertips. With just over 11 minutes remaining, Notre Dame found itself in a familiar position, trailing late in the game and in need of a defensive stop. And as has been the case many times this year, the defense responded.

Hawaii had three possessions after Denson's touchdown but failed to get a first down. "To the credit of our defense, they found a way late in that game to force Hawaii to punt," Notre Dame Head Coach Bob Davie said. "That was critical, obviously."

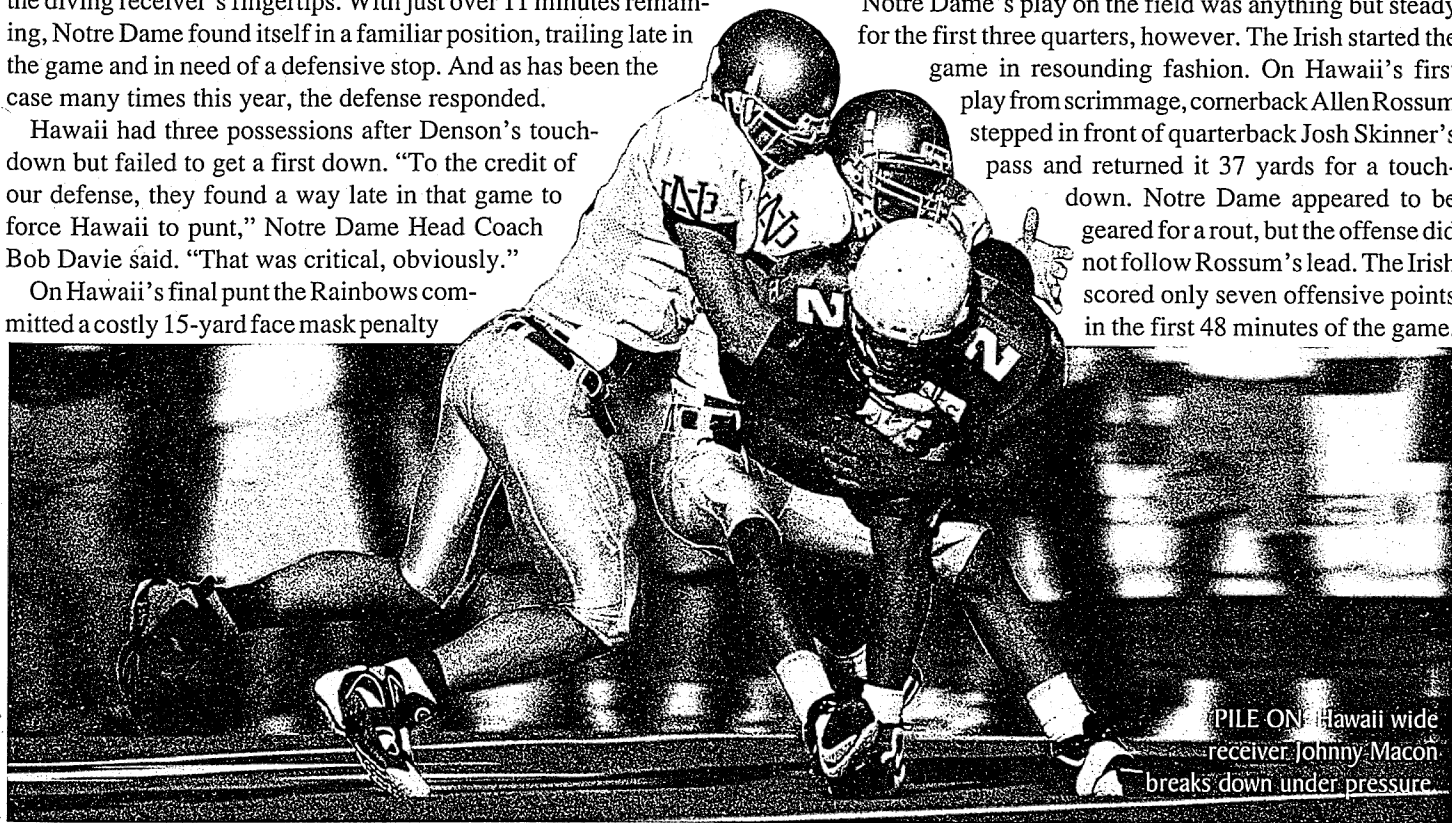
On Hawaii's final punt the Rainbows committed a costly 15-yard face mask penalty

that put the ball on the Hawaii 49 with 2:20 remaining. The Irish offense didn't seem to be in much of a hurry. Losing 7 yards on the first two plays, they faced a third-and-17.

In dire need of a big play, the Irish got one. With his offensive line providing good protection, Powlus stepped back in the pocket and delivered a perfect pass to Raki Nelson, who was streaking across the middle. Nelson didn't have to break stride and wasn't brought down until he reached the 9-yard line. "Raki was the third look," Powlus said. "He ran a great route. I got some time to throw it. Again, it's making a play when we had to."

Three straight runs by Denson moved the Irish to the 3-yard line. From the right hash mark, senior Scott Cengia nailed the 20-yarder to give the Irish their fourth late-game comeback of the season and a 23-22 victory. "I'm really proud of the way our team came back," Davie said. "I thought that if there was a way, our players would pull it out because the attitude on that sideline was steady."

Notre Dame's play on the field was anything but steady for the first three quarters, however. The Irish started the game in resounding fashion. On Hawaii's first play from scrimmage, cornerback Allen Rossum stepped in front of quarterback Josh Skinner's pass and returned it 37 yards for a touchdown. Notre Dame appeared to be geared for a rout, but the offense did not follow Rossum's lead. The Irish scored only seven offensive points in the first 48 minutes of the game.



PILE ON: Hawaii wide receiver Johnny Macon breaks down under pressure.

photo courtesy of the Observer/Brandon Candura

"Once again we shot ourselves in the foot at times," Davie said. "We just didn't play real well offensively but we played well enough to win the game."

After Rossum's touchdown, both teams wasted drives. Notre Dame punter Hunter Smith pinned Hawaii back at its own 11 where the Rainbows started their first scoring drive. Under the direction of senior Tim Carey, who replaced Skinner after the starter was injured, Hawaii drove 89 yards and capped it off with a 1-yard touchdown run by Charles Tharp. Eric Hannum missed the extra point, allowing the Irish to hold on to a one-point lead.

Notre Dame's offense responded with a long drive of its own, going 80 yards (70 on the ground) in 12 plays before a 12-yard touchdown run by Denson put Notre Dame ahead 14-6.

On Hawaii's next possession, the Rainbows cut that lead to five with a 23-yard field goal following an apparent pass interference on the Irish that, if called, could have given the 'Bows a touchdown.

Neither team could move the ball on their final possessions of the half, so the Irish took a five-point lead into the locker room. Though they held the lead, Hawaii dominated on the stat sheet. The 'Bows held the advantage in first downs, total yards and time of possession. The most interesting statistic may have been Powlus' halftime line: one completion, three attempts, 10 yards. "We wanted to establish the running game so we weren't throwing the ball, really," Powlus said. "It's hard to get in a rhythm when that happens."

That showed in the second half as the Irish reverted to an early-season trend of third-quarter struggles. The opening drive of the second half stalled near midfield and Hunter Smith came on and pinned Hawaii at its 12-yard line with a 39-yard punt. The

Irish defense continued its bend-but-don't-break policy as the Rainbows drove to the Notre Dame 28 but couldn't get any closer. Hannum kicked a low, line-drive 45-yard field goal that somehow made it through the uprights and pulled the Rainbows within two.

After Notre Dame went three-and-out, Smith's punt was partially blocked and downed at the Notre Dame 46. With most of the 35,177 people in Aloha Stadium on their feet, Hawaii again couldn't punch the ball into the endzone. But Hannum booted a 33-yard field goal and the Rainbows had their first lead of the game, 15-14.

Notre Dame and Hawaii alternated three-play series and the Irish got the ball back on their 20. But the Irish again failed to get a first down. Smith came out for his sixth punt of the day and unloaded a 45-yarder. Eddie Klaneski hauled it in at his own 40 and returned the ball to the Notre Dame 8. From there Tharp scored his second touchdown, giving the Rainbows an eight-point lead and setting the stage for the Irish comeback.

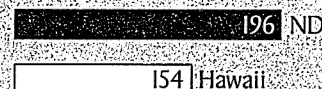
Though the Irish didn't play as well as they would have liked, Davie and his players were quick to point out that Hawaii played an excellent game. "It wasn't a case of us just not playing," Davie said. "It was a case of Hawaii coming out there and playing. They're headed in the right direction."

The Irish, too, were headed in the right direction — toward a bowl game. "I think we deserve to go to a bowl game," Davie said. "We were able to win six of our last seven games. We want to go and we need to go. As far as where we go ... I have no idea."

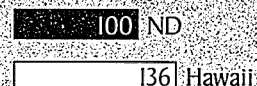
The way the season began, Irish fans doubted that a bowl game was even a possibility. So for everyone involved, not knowing where they were going sure beat knowing they weren't going anywhere. □

GAME at a GLANCE

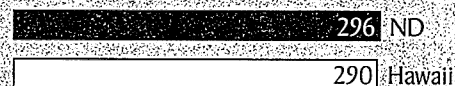
Rushing Yards



Passing Yards



Total Yardage



First Downs



Time of Possession



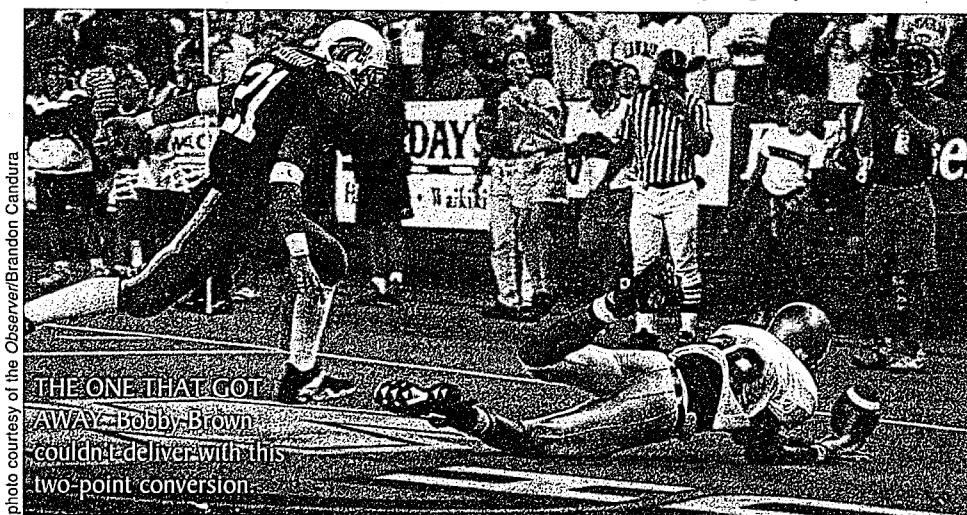
Penalties (Yards)



SCORING

Notre Dame	7	7	0	9	23
Hawaii	0	9	6	7	22

1st Quarter
ND: Rossum 37 interception return at 14:42 (Cengia PAT)
2nd Quarter
UH: Tharp 1 run at 13:49 (PAT failed)
ND: Denson 12 run at 7:54 (Cengia PAT)
UH: Hannum 23 FG at 4:05
3rd Quarter
UH: Hannum 45 FG at 9:25
UH: Hannum 33 FG at 2:31
4th Quarter
UH: Tharp 8 run at 13:34 (Hannum PAT)
ND: Denson 4 run at 11:36 (pass failed)
ND: Cengia 20 FG at :05



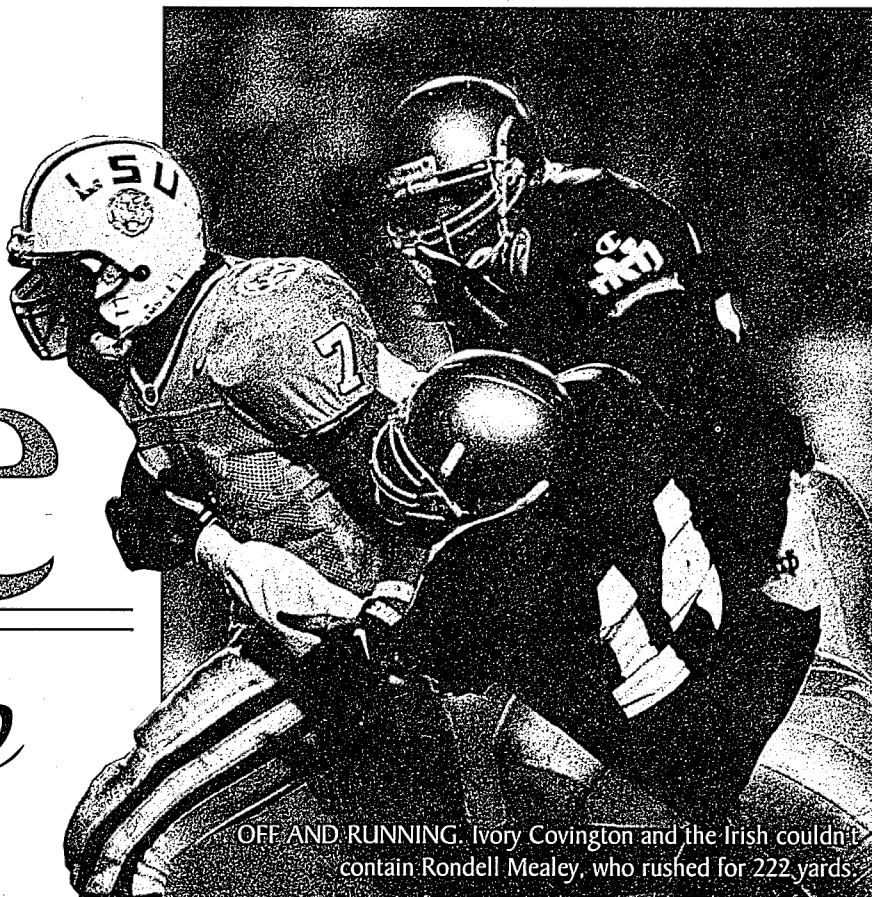
THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY: Bobby Brown couldn't deliver with this two-point conversion.

photo courtesy of the Observer/Brandon Candura

Independence Bowl

Take Two

• by Brian Lucas •



OFF AND RUNNING. Ivory Covington and the Irish couldn't contain Rondell Mealey, who rushed for 222 yards.

photo courtesy of the Observer/Brandon Candura

WHEN NOTRE DAME ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO THE 1997 INDEPENDENCE BOWL, they faced a difficult task. Not only had they defeated their bowl opponent, LSU, six weeks beforehand, but they had embarrassed the Tigers in front of a national television audience in their home stadium. The 24-6 victory on November 15 was the best performance of the year for the Irish, as they recorded no penalties or turnovers for the first time in school history and held LSU to 121 yards rushing, 155 below their average. The Tigers wanted revenge — and they got it in a big way.

Trailing 6-3 at halftime, LSU was doing little to erase the memory of the previous meeting between the two teams. With the performance of backup running back Rondell Mealey, however, the Tigers dominated the second half, outscoring the Irish 24-3 on their way to a 27-9 victory.

"It's hard to win when you don't play well in the second half," Notre Dame Head Coach Bob Davie said. "I felt really good at halftime. ... The problem was that in the third quarter we couldn't stop the run."

During that decisive third quarter, Notre Dame tried helplessly to contain Mealey, who rushed for 186 of his game-high 222 yards in

the second half and helped LSU turn their deficit into a 13-6 lead heading into the fourth quarter. For the ninth time in 13 games, the Irish failed to score in the third quarter. This time, the Tigers gained 102 yards on 23 while Notre Dame managed only nine plays and 14 yards.

After getting the ball on their own 29 to open the second half, the Tigers established their running game. Mealey, subbing for the injured Kevin Faulk, gained 39 yards on the first six plays of the drive. LSU quarterback Herb Tyler then hit freshman Abram Booty for 14 yards on a third-and-six from the Notre Dame 33, setting up

Taking a gamble on a second chance, the Irish luck ran out

Wade Richey's 42-yard field goal that knotted the score at six.

The Irish, who began their initial possession of the second half at their own 6-yard line after Allen Rossum slipped on the kick-off return, were unable to dig themselves out of the hole. They gained just six yards, forcing Hunter Smith to punt out of his own endzone. The result was great field position for LSU, starting at the Notre Dame 49. Mealey picked up where he left off, gaining 26 yards on five carries before Tyler and Booty hooked up again, this time for a 12-yard scoring pass that gave LSU their first lead of the season against Notre Dame. The touchdown also ignited the Independence Bowl record crowd of 50,459, most of whom had traveled to Shreveport to see the Tigers avenge their loss to the Fighting Irish. "The other thing that happened in the second half was that we let the crowd become a factor," Davie said. "In the third quarter they gained momentum, and once they got that going,

they fed on that."

Notre Dame tried to steal some of that momentum for the fourth quarter when Scott Cengia's 33-yard field goal cut the LSU lead to four. A 15-yard roughing the passer penalty on the Tigers helped the Irish drive. Quarterback Ron Powlus followed immediately with his longest run of the season, a 26-yard scramble down to the LSU 17. For the third time in the game, however, a Notre Dame drive stalled in the red zone when Powlus' pass to Malcolm Johnson on third-and-six fell incomplete. The Irish had to settle for Cengia's third field goal of the game.

The Irish comeback attempt didn't last long, though. After Jim Sanson booted the ensuing kickoff into the endzone, the Tigers started from their own 20-yard line. On first down, Mealey took a handoff and headed off left tackle. He did not stop until Allen Rossum dragged him down 78 yards later. Mealey scored on the next play, giving LSU

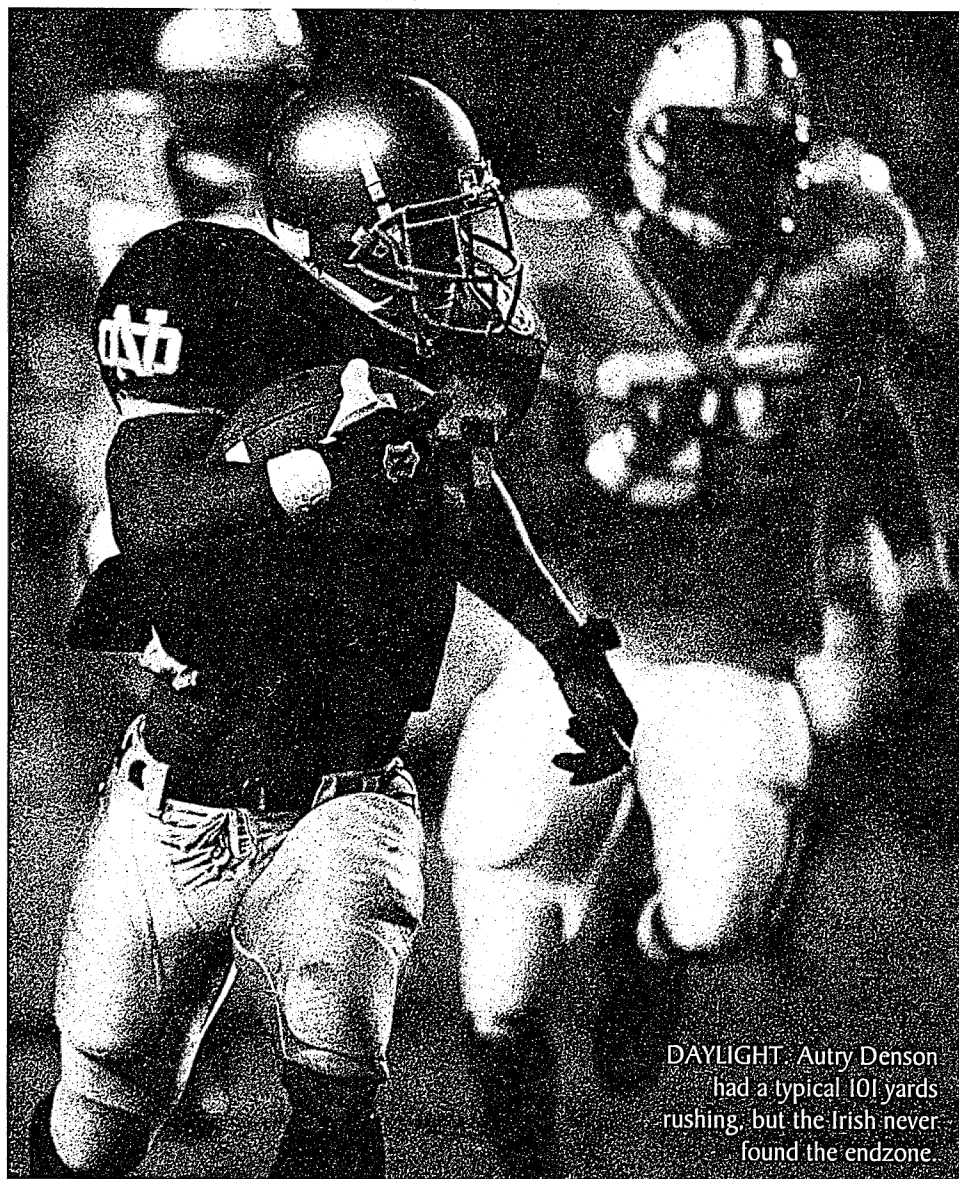
a 20-9 lead and essentially crushing Notre Dame's hopes of victory. "Football is a game of momentum and once they got the momentum, they sustained it," Powlus said. "We just weren't able to flip it and get ourselves going."

Mealey's run, the longest in Independence Bowl history, wasn't due solely to excellent execution by the Tigers' offense. The Irish made a key mental mistake. "What happened was we had one of our outside linebackers on the wrong side," defensive end Brad Williams said. "We didn't have an outside linebacker on the side Mealey went."

The junior running back wasn't finished tormenting the Irish. After Powlus was sacked for an 11-yard loss on fourth-and-five, LSU took over at the Notre Dame 35. The Tigers gained one first down and, after Mealey lost three yards on two carries, faced a third-and-13 from the 28. LSU caught the Irish by surprise, sending Mealey up the middle on a well-executed draw which he took all the way down to the 1-yard line. From there, Mealey scored his second touchdown in a little over 10 minutes and sent the Irish home with their third consecutive bowl loss. After the game, Davie didn't make any excuses. "It really had nothing to do with playing them a second time, and it really had nothing to do with playing them in Shreveport," he said. "It had to do with what always happens in football. If you don't execute, you don't win, and I give LSU credit because they played well."

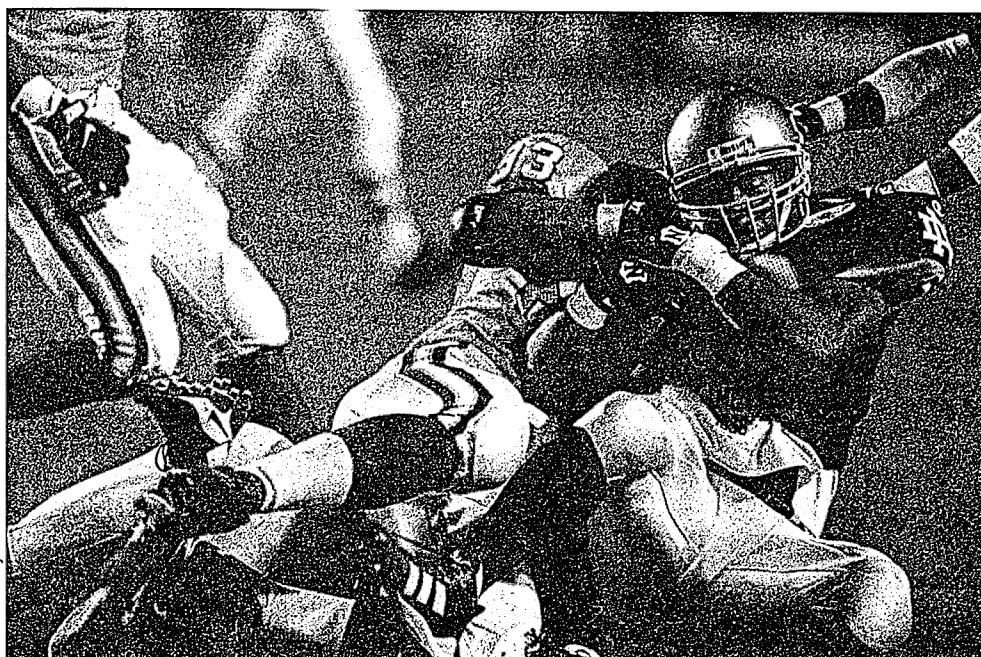
But in the first half, it was the Irish who played well. They dominated the Tigers at times, but didn't get the results on the scoreboard. After rushing for 260 yards in the first meeting, there was little doubt as to Notre Dame's game plan for the rematch. And to the surprise of many people, the Irish continued to run all over LSU in the first quarter, amassing 81 yards on 12 rushes. The main culprit was Autry Denson, who gained 51 yards in the quarter on his way to a 101-yard game, the eighth time this season he had gone over the century mark.

Though the Irish outgained the Tigers 98-57 in the first quarter, Notre Dame managed only three points as their nine-play, 70-yard drive stalled at the LSU 16, forcing Cengia to kick his first field goal. The drive started deep in Irish territory but consecutive 12-yards runs by Denson and fullback Ken Barry brought the Irish out to their own 38. Two plays later, Denson took a handoff around right end and raced 35 yards before he was pushed out of bounds. Three straight



DAYLIGHT Autry Denson had a typical 101 yards rushing, but the Irish never found the endzone.

photo courtesy of the Observer/Brandon Candura



FALLING DOWN. Running back Ken Barry is taken down by a pair of LSU defenders.

rushes by the junior yielded -3 yards, setting the stage for Cengia's kick.

The Tigers blew an opportunity to tie the game on their next possession when Wade Richey missed a 42-yard field goal. LSU evened the score early in the second quarter, though, following a failed option attempt by Jarious Jackson. Jackson, in his first play from scrimmage, went down the line to his left and was wrapped up for no gain. Instead of eating the ball and settling for second-and-10, the back-up quarterback attempted to pitch the ball to Denson. The ball never reached its destination as it fell to the ground and was recovered by Mark Roman at the Notre Dame 24. The Irish defense held its ground, aided by an illegal procedure penalty on LSU, and forced the Tigers to settle for a 37-yard field goal by Richey.

Allen Rossum gave the Irish a spark on the ensuing kickoff, returning the kick 30 yards and setting Notre Dame up with a first-and-10 from their own 36. The Irish mixed the pass and run effectively, moving down to the LSU 4-yard line for first-and-goal. Notre Dame's goal-line offense, minus Powlus and Denson, then took the field. After Barry and freshman Tony Driver each gained a yard, Clement Stokes ran off right tackle on third down and was met by linebacker Charles Smith for a 2-yard loss. The 60-yard drive took 6:52 but resulted only in a field goal. The failure to convert the drive into seven points set the stage for the disastrous second half.

Though the personnel from the first game was mostly the same for both teams at the rematch, there was one glaring change.

LSU's defensive coordinator Carl Reese left after the regular season finale to take the same position on Mack Brown's staff at Texas. Former Illinois head coach Lou Tepper was hired in his place and changed the Tigers' defensive scheme. Using a nickel as their base defense, LSU couldn't stop Notre Dame's running game in the first meeting. This time around, the Tigers came out in a 5-2 defense designed to stop the run. "We played four secondary guys on first down," LSU coach Gerry DiNardo said. "That was the biggest change. We wanted to defend the run on first down."

By stopping the run, especially in the second half, LSU forced the Irish to throw the ball. When they did, the Tigers were ready, sending numerous blitzes at the Notre Dame front five that resulted in an Independence Bowl record of eight sacks. "We put ourselves in some passing situations, and they put their ears back and rushed the passer," Davie said. "Their staff did a great job. ... They got after us."

Even with the changes in strategy, players and coaches both knew that the key to the game was the players' performance. "LSU came out and made the plays," Denson said. "I'm not going to make any excuses. LSU is a good team and we didn't execute."

Davie agreed. "It really comes down to execution, and we did not execute. We had a good feel for what they were doing. They just executed better."

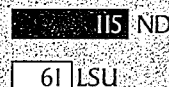
The two teams are set for another rematch next November at Notre Dame Stadium. Irish fans hope the third time will be the charm.

GAME at a GLANCE

Rushing Yards



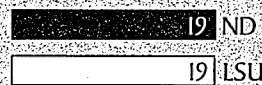
Passing Yards



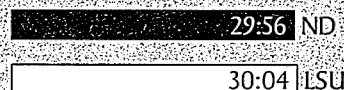
Total Yardage



First Downs



Time of Possession



Penalties (Yards)



SCORING

Notre Dame	3	3	0	3	9
LSU	0	3	10	14	27

1st Quarter

ND: Cengia 33 FG at 7:13

2nd Quarter

LSU: Richey 37 FG at 7:12

ND: Cengia 21 FG at :20

3rd Quarter

LSU: Richey 42 FG at 9:17

LSU: Booty 12 pass from Tyler at 4:05 (Richey PAT)

4th Quarter

ND: Cengia 33 FG at 13:10

LSU: Mealey 2 run at 12:47 (Richey PAT)

LSU: Mealey 1 run at 2:22 (Richey PAT)

The All-Opponent Team

Scholastic's picks of the most dangerous competitors

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

Rondell Mealey, RB
LSU

Mealey rushed for 222 yards on 34 carries in the Independence Bowl. Amos Zereoue had a better game, but Mealey surprised the Irish and his team won. He averaged 6.5 yards per rush and scored two touchdowns in the Tigers' 27-9 bowl victory.

COACHES

Joe Tiller, Head Coach
Purdue
Though Michigan State Head Coach Nick Saban did a great job of guiding his

team to victory, Tiller used players recruited by Jim Colletto in Purdue's first victory against the Irish since 1985. Tiller's team made the big plays and his WAC-offense left the Irish searching for answers.

Dana Bible, Offensive Coordinator
Stanford

The Cardinal offense was responsible for the most points (33), total yards (514), rushing yards (322) and first downs (34) against the Irish this season. They also controlled the ball for 36:32 compared to Notre Dame's 23:28.

Lou Tepper, Defensive Coordinator
LSU

Carl Reese was the defensive coordinator in the Tigers' 24-6 loss to the Irish. He left following the regular season-finale and was replaced by Tepper. The former Illinois head coach implemented a more Big Ten-like defense that shut down the Irish offense in the bowl game, limiting them to just nine points.

OFFENSE

Billy Dicken, QB
Purdue

Dicken engineered Joe Tiller's offense to perfection in the Boilermakers' surprising upset. He passed for a career-high 352 yards and completed 26 of 39 passes.



◀ **Amos Zereoue, RB**
West Virginia

Zereoue sparked even in his team's loss, running for 241 yards on 32 carries, an average of 7.5 yards per carry. Zereoue also scored both of the Mountaineers' touchdowns on the day.

Sedrick Irvin, RB
Michigan State

Michigan State's go-to guy did it all as his

team routed the Irish, tallying 212 all-purpose yards. The breakdown: 26 rushes for 106 yards, 5 punt returns for 60 yards, 1-1 passing for 24 yards and two receptions for 22 yards.

Vinny Sutherland, WR
Purdue

Just a freshman, Sutherland hauled in eight receptions and was the only player to accumulate 100 yards receiving against the Irish defense this season.

Todd Pollack, TE
Boston College

Tight ends didn't hurt the Irish defense in receiving this season, but Pollack snagged five receptions for 69 yards as the Eagles lost 52-20.

Flozell Adams, OT
Michigan State

This All-American created gaping holes in the Irish defense which resulted in two Spartan backs going over 100 yard rushing.

Solomon Page, OT
West Virginia

This 300-pound sophomore helped Zereoue run wild and limited the Irish to just one quarterback sack.

Alan Faneca, OG
LSU

The consensus All-American was pivotal to the Tigers' Independence Bowl record 260 yards rushing. The junior won't be back for the rematch, though, as he entered the NFL draft following this season.

Andrew Kroeker, OG
Stanford

He was part of a Stanford line that pounded the Irish for 322 yards rushing. With Kroeker's strong line play the Cardinal posted 514 yards of offense.

Todd McClure, C
LSU

The Irish will see this first team All-SEC member again when the Tigers travel to South Bend next November.

DEFENSE

Arnold Miller, DL
LSU

Miller had seven tackles against the Irish in the second meeting, four of which were for a loss of yards, and was named Independence Bowl Defensive Player of the Game.

Henry Slay, DL
West Virginia

The senior captain racked up nine tackles, including a sack and two for a loss, in his team's loss to Notre Dame. The game marked Slay's 27th consecutive start.

Mike Willetts, DL
Boston College

His defense let up 52 points, but his 10 tackles were the most of any defensive linemen the Irish faced. He also had three tackles for losses.

**Sam Sword, LB
Michigan**

Sword was one of the main reasons why Michigan had the top-rated defense in the country and won the national championship. Against Notre Dame, the senior led the Wolverines with 15 tackles, 13 solo.

**Mark Cusano, LB
USC**

For the second straight year he made the big play against the Irish. Caught the late fourth-quarter interception that set up the Trojans' winning field goal.

**Ron Rogers, LB
Georgia Tech**

He played an all-around game in the season opener. Rogers had 13 tackles (nine solo) and his fourth-quarter interception put the Yellow Jackets on Notre Dame's side of the field with a chance to put the game away.

**Chuck Wiley, LB
LSU**

A great pass rusher, this first team All-SEC selection had five tackles in the Independence Bowl, including three quarterback sacks.

**Hank Poteat, CB
Stanford**

Poteat recorded 12 tackles, 11 solo, against the Irish. He also helped limit the passing game with an interception.

**Ray Hill, CB
Michigan State**

Hill helped the Spartans keep the Irish offense to a season-low seven points, tallying nine tackles and picking off a Ron Powlus pass.

**Adrian Beasley, S
Purdue**

Beasley had six tackles against the Irish, but made a pivotal play, recovering Powlus' fumble and returning it 43 yards for a touchdown, giving Purdue a 21-10 lead.

**Alex Morris, S
Michigan State**

Another reason the Irish scored only seven points in their home loss to the

Spartans, Morris made seven tackles, five solo and two for losses. Morris also upset the Irish passing game with two pass break-ups.



GO-TO GUY. MSU's Sedrick Irvine rushed for 106 yards against the Irish.

SPECIAL TEAMS

**Adam Abrams, K
USC**

He was two for two against the Irish, including the 37-yard game winner with 1:05 left to play in the game.

**Chad Kessler, P
LSU**

The consensus All-American averaged over 50 yards a punt on the season and over 43.5 in the two games against the Irish.

**Eddie Klaneski, KR
Hawaii**

The only Rainbow Warrior to make the squad, he averaged 34.3 yards on his three punt returns, including a 52-yarder that set up Hawaii's final touchdown.

— compiled by
Jerry Barca and Brian Lucas

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RESULTS AND ATTENDANCE

Sept. 6	GA TECH	W	17-13	80,225
Sept. 13	at Purdue	L	28-17	68,789
Sept. 20	MICH. ST.	L	23-7	80,225
Sept. 27	at Michigan	L	21-14	106,508
Oct. 4	at Stanford	L	33-15	75,651
Oct. 11	at Pittsburgh	W	45-21	47,306
Oct. 18	USC	L	20-17	80,225
Oct. 25	BC	W	52-20	80,225
Nov. 1	NAVY	W	21-17	80,225
Nov. 15	at LSU	W	24-6	80,566
Nov. 22	W. VIRGINIA	W	21-14	80,225
Nov. 29	at Hawaii	W	23-22	35,177
Dec. 28	LSU*	L	27-9	50,459

* Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La.

TEAM STATISTICS	ND	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	245	243
Rushing	111	118
Passing	112	109
Penalty	22	16
3rd Down Conv.	45%	42%
4th Down Conv.	28%	33%
TOTAL PLAYS	824	832
TOTAL NET YARDS	4323	4381
Avg. per play	5.2	5.3
Avg. per game	360.3	365.1
RUSHING YARDAGE	2099	2217
Avg. per rush	4.1	4.5
Avg. per game	174.9	184.8
Rushing TDs	22	22
PASSING YARDAGE	2224	2164
Attempts	317	338
Completions	190	194
Interceptions	8	14
Percentage	.514	.574
Avg. per catch	11.7	11.2
Avg. per game	185.3	180.3
Passing TDs	10	5
FUMBLES-LOST	12-5	11-4
PENALTIES-YARDS	69-623	88-791
TIME OF POSS.	30:25	29:35

SCORE BY QTR.	1	2	3	4	Tot.
NOTRE DAME	90	71	27	85	273
OPPONENTS	49	63	64	62	238

PUNT RETURNS	No	Yds	Avg	TD	LP
Rossum, A.	12	83	6.9	0	23
Denson, A.	7	68	9.7	0	20
Total	19	151	7.9	0	23
Opponents	23	299	13.0	0	52

PATs

SCORING	TD	FG	Kick	Run	Rec	Pts
Denson, A.	13	—	—	—	—	78
Brown, B.	6	—	—	—	—	36
Sanson, J.	—	5-10	15-16	—	—	30
Cengia, S.	—	3-5	16-17	—	—	25
Jackson, J.	4	—	—	—	—	24
Driver, T.	3	—	—	—	—	18
Rossum, A.	3	—	—	—	—	18
Stokes, C.	3	—	—	—	—	18
Johnson, M.	2	—	—	—	—	12
Holloway, J.	1	—	—	—	1	8
Spencer, J.	1	—	—	—	—	6
Total	36	8-15	31-33	—	1	273
Opponents	28	14-22	26-27	—	—	238

RUSHING	Att	Yds	Avg	/G	TD	LP
Denson, A.	264	1268	4.8	105.7	12	50
Stokes, C.	75	351	4.6	31.3	3	20
Barry, K.	35	196	5.3	15.5	0	23
Driver, T.	35	133	3.6	10.4	3	12
Spencer, J.	24	108	4.4	8.8	1	23
Goodspeed	18	86	4.5	27.0	0	14
Jackson, J.	8	36	4.5	5.1	3	14
Rossum, A.	1	4	4.0	0.3	0	4
Getherall, J.	1	-1	-1.0	-0.1	0	-1
Powlus, R.	46	-49	-1.1	-4.1	0	22
Total	507	2362	4.1	174.9	22	50
Opponents	494	2407	4.5	184.8	22	60

PASSING	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD	Int	LP
Powlus, R.	182	298	2078	9	7	48
Jackson, J.	8	17	146	1	1	45
Smith, H.	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total	190	315	2224	10	9	48
Opponents	194	338	2164	5	14	69

PUNTING	No	Yds	Avg	Long	Blkd
Smith, H.	50	2132	42.6	64	1
Total	50	2132	42.6	64	1
Opponents	53	2229	42.1	61	0

INT. RET.	No	Yds	Avg	TD	LP
Guilbeaux, B.	4	76	19.0	0	44
Minor, K.	3	50	16.7	0	33
Rossum, A.	2	38	19.0	1	37
Covington, I.	2	17	8.5	0	17
Sanders, A.	2	26	13.0	0	26
Goode, T.	1	0	0.0	0	0

continued at top of next column

INT. RET.	No	Yds	Avg	TD	LP
Total	14	207	14.8	1	44
Opponents	8	89	11.1	0	42

RECEIVING	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Brown, B.	45	543	12.1	6	39
Johnson, M.	42	596	14.2	2	45
Denson, A.	30	175	5.8	1	47
Nelson, R.	23	341	14.8	0	47
Barry, K.	10	97	9.7	0	23
Getherall, J.	9	103	11.4	0	20
Holloway, J.	8	144	18.0	1	48
Spencer, J.	7	30	4.3	0	14
O'Leary, D.	6	81	13.5	0	19
Johnson, J.	3	76	25.3	0	32
Goodspeed, J.	3	12	4.0	0	4
Stokes, C.	2	9	4.5	0	6
Denvir, M.	1	15	15.0	0	15
Driver, T.	1	2	2.0	0	2
Total	190	2224	11.7	10	48

KICK RET.	No	Yds	Avg	TD	LP
Rossum, A.	20	570	28.5	2	93
Driver, T.	11	214	19.5	0	49
Harper, D.	6	84	14.0	0	23
Denson, A.	5	93	18.6	0	33
Sanders, A.	3	39	13.0	0	20
Brown, B.	1	5	5.0	0	5
Jackson, J.	1	40	40.0	1	40
Total	47	1045	22.2	3	93
Opponents	43	869	20.2	0	52

TACKLES: Friday 109, Dansby 103, Howard 91, Minor 85, Bryant 78, Guilbeaux 68, Covington 66, Harper 60, Sanders 58, Rossum 53, Irons 50, Bennett 38, Goode 33, Edison 26, Cooper 26, Nicks 17, Legree 16, Ferrer 14, Belisle 14, Bra. Williams 12, A. Jones 11, Lafayette 9, Mitoulas 8, Jordan 7, Denman 6, Stokes 6, Brannan 5, Bro. Williams 3, Sanson 2, Goodspeed 2, Spencer 2, Mulvena 2, Driver 2, Barry 1, Wellington 1, Smith 1, Murray 1, Doughty 1, Phelps 1, J. Jones 1, Holmes 1

SACKS: Minor 3.5-32, Bryant 3-17, Rossum 2-14, Bennett 2-12, Friday 2-10, Dansby 1.5-26, Howard 1-7, Harper 1-7, Guilbeaux 1-6, Legree 1-1

Ivory Covington, cornerback

- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. West Virginia (8 tackles, 1 int.)

Melvin Dansby, defensive end

- *Football News* All-America
- *Football News* All-Independents team
- Notre Dame Lineman of the Year by Moose Krause Chapter of National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame
- Nick Pietrosante Award (by vote of teammates; best personifies characteristics of late Irish All-America fullback)

Autry Denson, tailback

- Notre Dame National Monogram Club MVP Award (by vote of teammates)
- *Football News* All-America
- *Football News* All-Independents team
- Nominee for Doak Walker Award as top running back in the nation
- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Georgia Tech (24 for 71, 2 TDs; 2 catches for 58)
- ABC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Purdue (22 for 104, 1 TD; 7 catches for 54, 1 TD)
- ABC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Stanford (21 for 116; 2 catches for 15)
- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. USC (30 for season-high 133, TD)
- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Navy (19 for 125, 2 TDs)

Mike Doughty, offensive tackle

- Selected to play in Hula Bowl postseason all-star game

Bobbie Howard, inside linebacker

- Notre Dame Club of St. Joseph Valley Knute Rockne

Student-Athlete Award

(3.015 grade-point average in College of Business Administration)

Malcolm Johnson, split-end

- One of 31 preliminary candidates for the 1997 Biletnikoff Award presented to top receiver in the country

Kory Minor, outside linebacker

- *Football News* All-America
- *Football News* All-Independents
- One of 65 preliminary candidates for the 1997 Butkus Award presented to the top college linebacker in the country
- NBC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Michigan State (late first-half interception set up only Irish TD)

Ron Powlus, quarterback

- Selected to play in Hula Bowl postseason all-star game
- ABC Sports/Chevrolet Notre Dame MVP vs. Michigan (completed 20 of 27 for 205, 1 TD, 1 int)

Tim Ridder, tight end

- State Farm/Mutual Radio Student-Athlete of the Year

Mike Rosenthal, offensive guard

- *Football News* All-America
- *Football News* All-Independents
- Finalist for inaugural Mosi Tatupu Special Teams Award

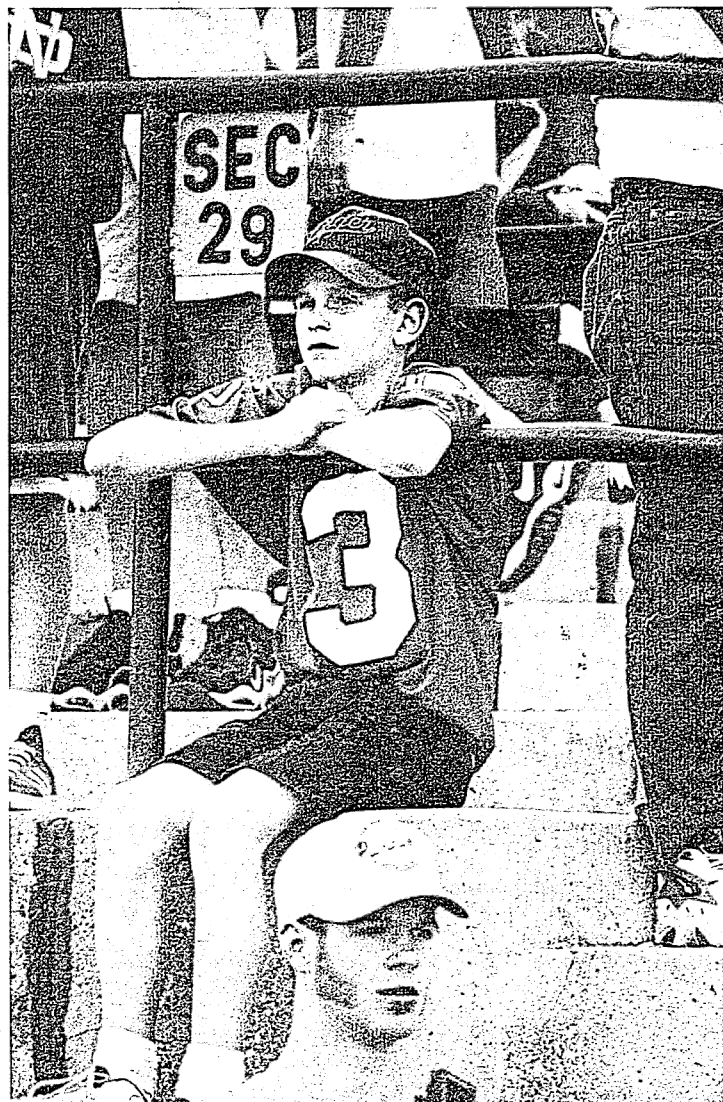
Allen Rossum, cornerback

- *Football News* All-Independents
- Selected to play in Senior Bowl postseason all-star game

- NBC Sports/Chevrolet MVP vs. Boston College (80-yard kickoff for TD that tied NCAA mark for career returns for TDs)

Hunter Smith, punter

- *Football News* All-Independents

**All-Scholastic Honors**

Offensive Player of the Year: Autry Denson

Defensive Player of the Year: Bobbie Howard

Special Teams Player of the Year: Allen Rossum

Offensive Most-Improved: Bobby Brown

Defensive Most-Improved: Bobbie Howard

Best Potential Offense: Jabari Holloway

Best Potential Defense: Grant Irons

Offensive Play of the Year: Raki Nelson's 47-yard reception from Powlus vs. Hawaii

Defensive Play of the Year: Allen Rossum knocking Navy's Pat McGrew out of bounds at the 2-yard line as time ran out

Best Post-Game Celebration: West Virginia

Worst Post-Game Celebration: Navy

Best Play-Call of the Year: Fourth-and-one against LSU

Worst Play-Call of the Year: Fourth-and-two against Michigan

Remembering the Legends

by Rick
Kaczenski

It seems like yesterday that I received a call from Ronnie Powlus, introducing himself as the quarterback from Berwick who would be going to Notre Dame with me. A little later, Marc Edwards called to say, "Hey dude, let's get together." Little did I know at the time that these guys would become more than teammates. They became my brothers, along with Mike Doughty, Jeff Kilburg, Tom Krug, Autry Denson and Rosie (Mike Rosenthal).

This is what Notre Dame football means. Not the wins. Not the crowds. Not the fame. Not the glamour.

*P*laying football at Notre Dame makes you no more special than a cheerleader, a band member or a student. People on the outside don't realize this.

When it's all over, you have a fantastic future and a larger family than you left home with.

I was offered scholarships from all 106 Division 1-A teams. Notre Dame probably pressured me the least out of all of them. And the weather is terrible.

Whatever made me choose Notre Dame? The answer is the legends. On my first face-to-face visit with Coach Holtz, I was overcome by what he stood for. Here's a man who will rank with Rockne, Parseghian and Leahy when all is said and done.

Next was Joe Moore, the legendary line coach at Notre Dame. I have never been more terrified of anyone than I was of Holtz and Moore, and I may never thank them enough for what they have done for my teammates and me. I appreciate these men more and more each day.

They are what Notre Dame is all about. After games, they always gave us credit for the wins and they always took blame for the losses — sometimes too much blame for our defeats. Coach Holtz and Moore would always get something positive out of our losses and build on them. That is what Notre Dame is all about.

There is no place more difficult to play or to coach football than Notre Dame. It is hard for players from other schools to realize that we are students first at Notre Dame and athletes second. Playing football at Notre Dame makes you no more special than a cheerleader, a band member or a student. People on the outside don't realize this.

I will miss Notre Dame, and I will never forget it. I will have my friendships forever — there is no closer football team than Notre Dame. For a while, a lot of us watched the movie *Tombstone* over and over. We identified with Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp. We always watched each other's backs and would do anything for each other. Every ball game was the OK Corral.

There are a lot of things I am grateful for. How exciting it was to see my former roommate Derrick Mayes win a Super Bowl ring — a good guy who didn't forget his roommate or Notre Dame. I look back at what Tom Krug went through, and remember how he always kept a smile. He never quit being a teammate or a good friend to all of us.

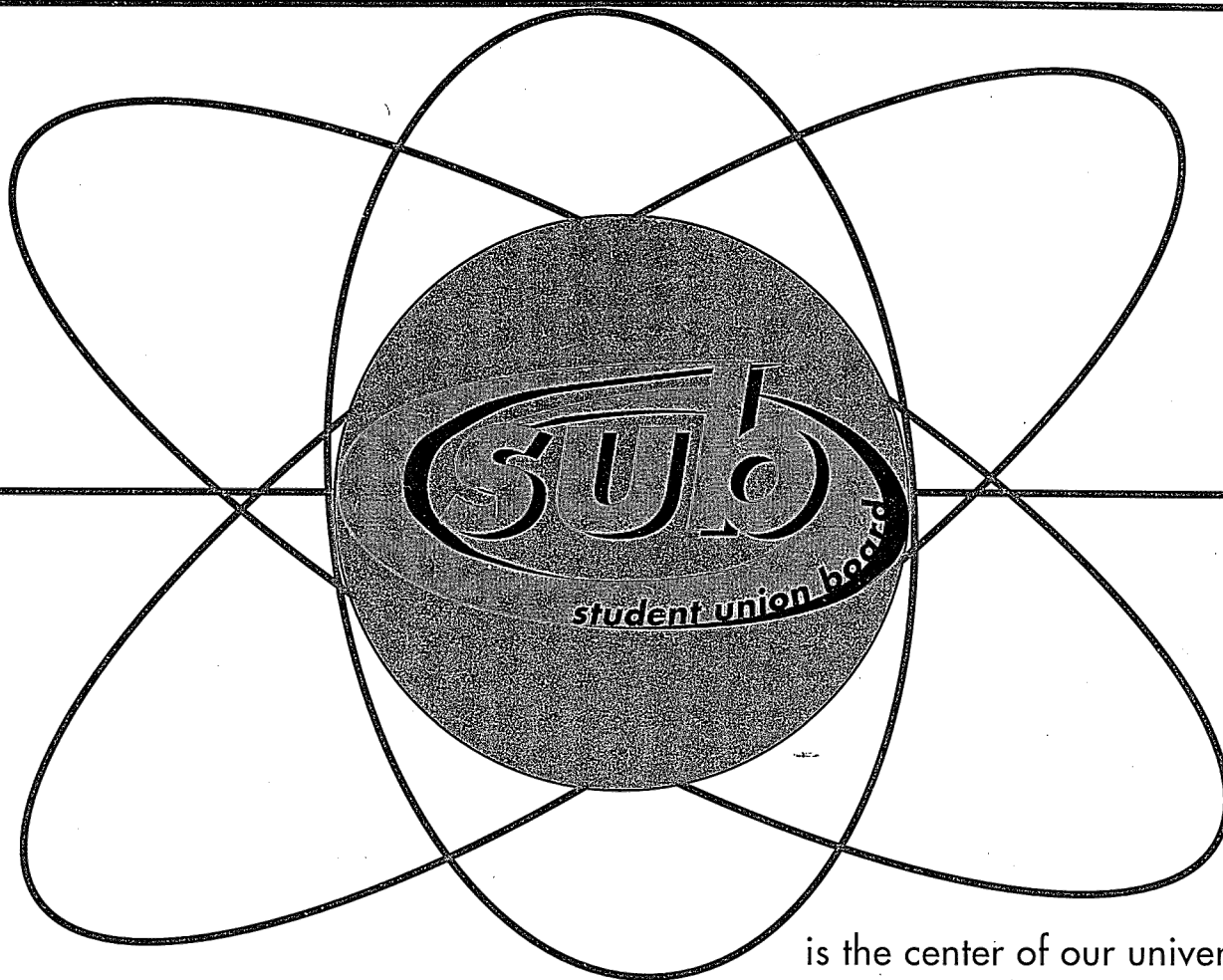
Marc Edwards calls us and tells us he's homesick for Notre Dame — I still can't believe Eddie is now a pro but still our pal. And who can forget the class Ron showed throughout his career? He is one of the best ever, and he is one of my best friends. I will remember my roommates Jeff Kilburg and Mike Doughty, who never quit and stuck by me when I needed them. And I am going to miss the young guys like Rosie and Autry — two great guys with great futures ahead of them. These people made the tough years on the football team at Notre Dame worthwhile.

I will miss coaches who cared, like Coaches Meyer, Chmiel and Strong. They understood what we go through, and will hold a special place in our hearts. These people are blue collar, and they are Notre Dame.

As I began, I spoke about legends. No school is like Notre Dame. It is the people, like the ones I mentioned, who make Notre Dame a special place. They are the reason I came here, and they are the reason I'm proud to call myself one of the "Fighting Irish." □

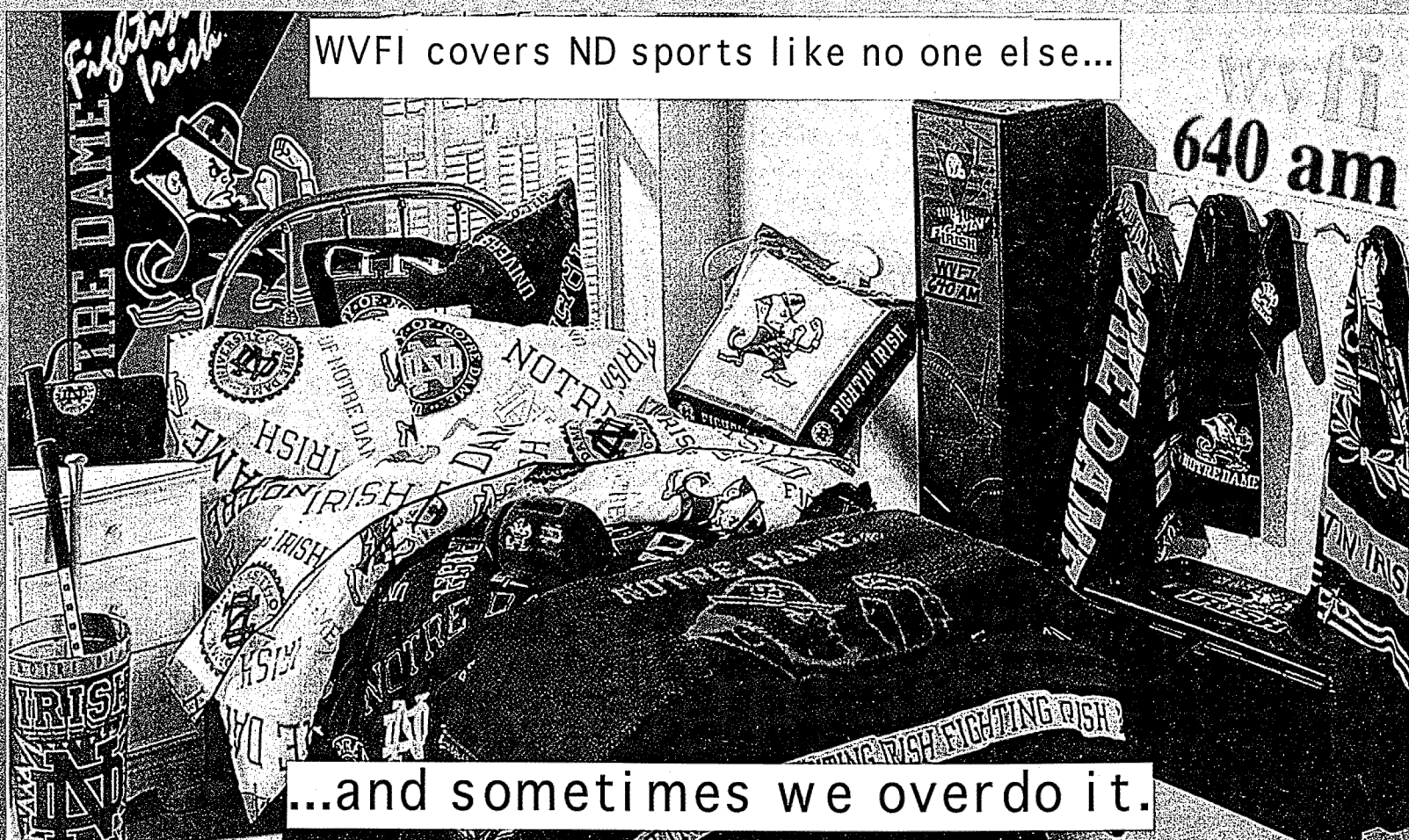
Rick Kaczenski is a fifth-year center from Erie, Pa. He started for three seasons, including the last 35 games.





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