

GAME-BY-GAME COVERAGE, STATS AND MORE

JULIUS JONES RETURNS TO ACTION

SCHOLASTIC

NOTRE DAME'S STUDENT MAGAZINE

VOL 145

08

29 JAN 2004

FOOTBALL REVIEW 2003



PUBLISHED SINCE 1867

scholastic.nd.edu



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From the Editor

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. This was the 2003 Notre Dame football season, featuring a team that best resembled Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The highs: a 27-24 overtime win over Washington State to kick off the season, a record-setting performance by Julius Jones against Pittsburgh, and a 50-point victory over head coach Tyrone Willingham's former team, Stanford. And then there were the lows: three defeats by 30-plus points, a close loss at Boston College, and a crushing defeat at Syracuse in the season finale.

Each time the Irish seemed poised to turn the season around, everything came crashing down. A dominating defensive and rushing performance against the Panthers one week only led to a crushing defeat at the hands of the Trojans the next. A three-game winning streak late in the year, during which the Irish outscored their opponents 117-45, only led to a bitter 38-12 defeat at Syracuse, which kept the Irish from finishing the season at .500.

After finishing the 2002 campaign at 10-3, a 5-7 finish in 2003 was unexpected, to say the least. It leaves many more questions than answers, answers that will not come until next season.

Still nine months away from Michigan's visit to Notre Dame Stadium to begin the 2004 season, Notre Dame football is facing a real identity crisis. Since the end of the 1993 season, Notre Dame has compiled a 66-40 record, no top-10 finishes, no Heisman Trophy winners, no bowl victories, and the George O'Leary debacle. Not exactly the Notre Dame tradition that most college football fans are used to. At the very best, the Irish football program has been "good" in the past 10 years, but not "great," as teams of long ago once were.

Is this the new Notre Dame football? What does the future hold? Can Notre Dame continue to survive as an independent in the constantly shifting landscape of intercollegiate athletics, where it looks like the super-conference may soon be king? One only has to look at the Big Eight's

expansion to the Big 12, the SEC's expansion into two divisions, and the most recent ACC and Big East realignments to see that the structure of college football is changing continuously. And with the BCS contract set to expire after the 2005-06 season, one thing or another will have to change for Notre Dame, and soon. "What has worked for the last 90 years may not necessarily work for the next 90," admits sports information director John Heisler.

One recent bit of good news has been the NBC contract extension, which will keep Notre Dame home games on the network through the 2010 season. Still, this does not guarantee success, as recent seasons have indicated. Nor will this rule out any possibility of Notre Dame joining a football conference. The new bowl system to be in place for the 2006-07 season may not allow Notre Dame the same privilege as an independent as the current system does.

Much remains uncertain about the future of the Irish football team. But one thing is sure: almost anything can happen — and quickly — in college football. Look at the 1964 Notre Dame football team, who recorded a 9-1 season after finishing 2-7 just the year before. In the universe that is college football, Notre Dame has always been a quasar. Recent seasons suggest, however, that Notre Dame is no longer the powerhouse it once was. After a 10-3 season to kick off the Willingham era in 2002, the 2003 season brought the Irish back down to earth. Only time will tell where the Irish will go from here. According to Willingham, the Irish need to go back to the well and keep pumping — water eventually will come.



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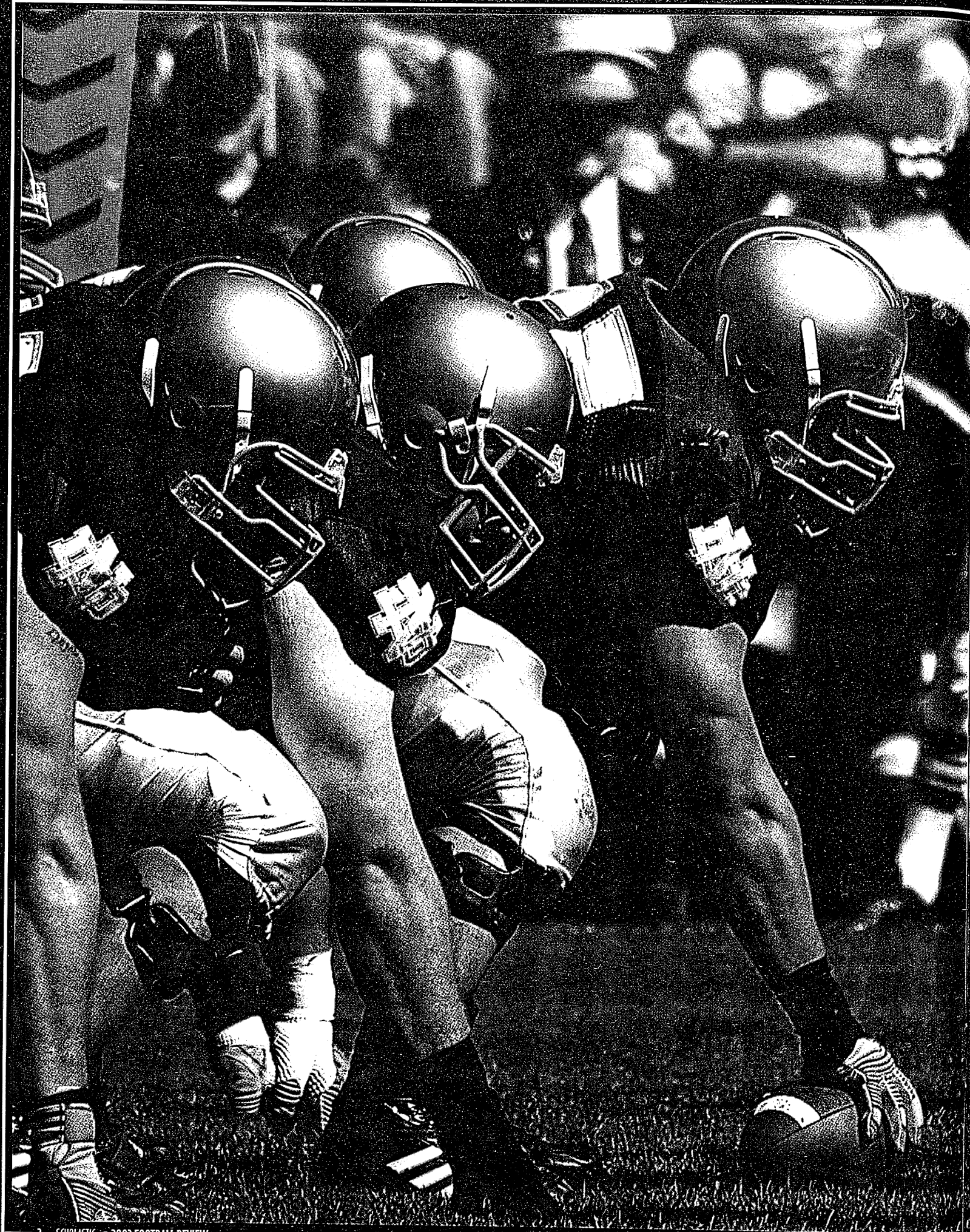
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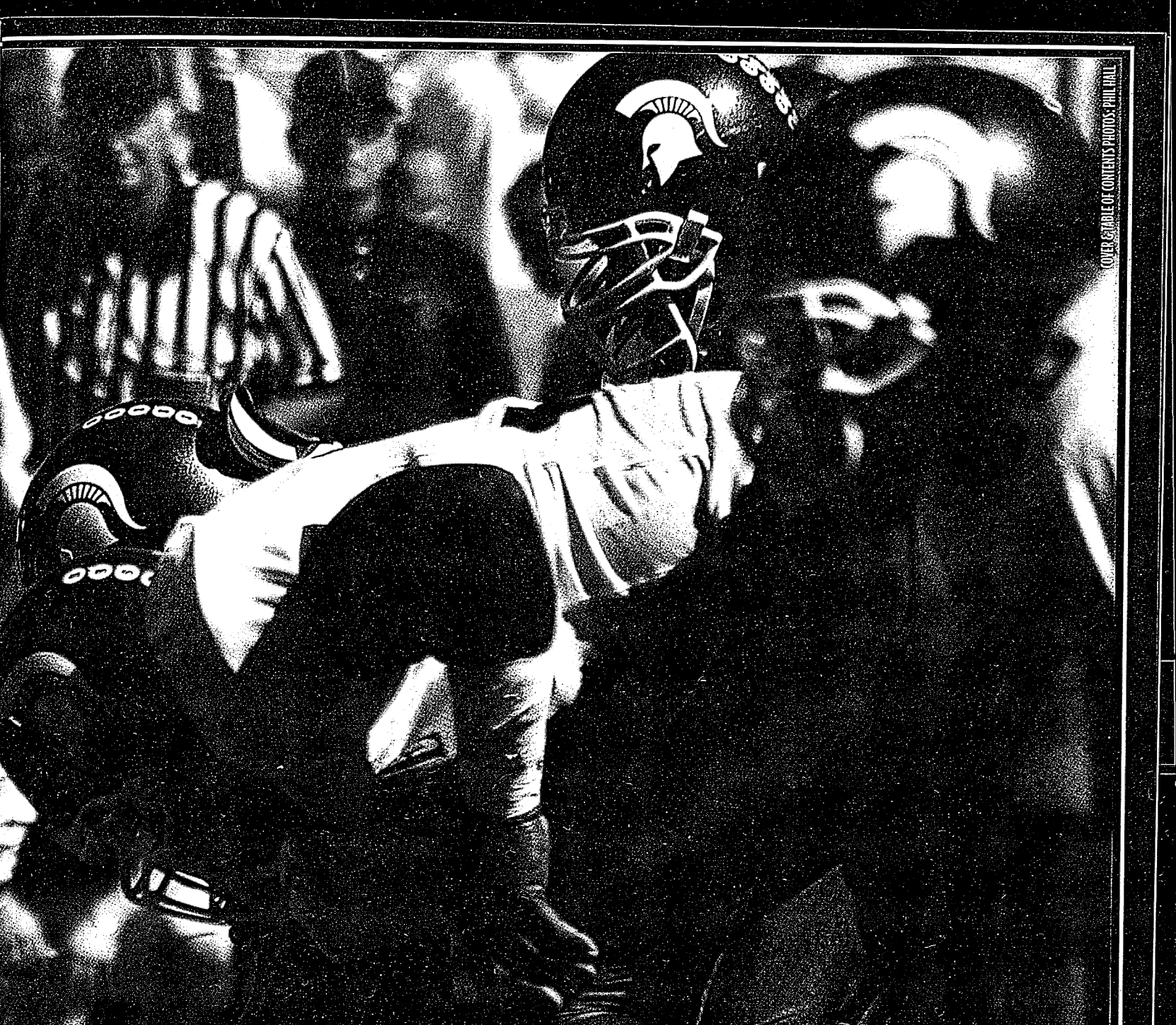
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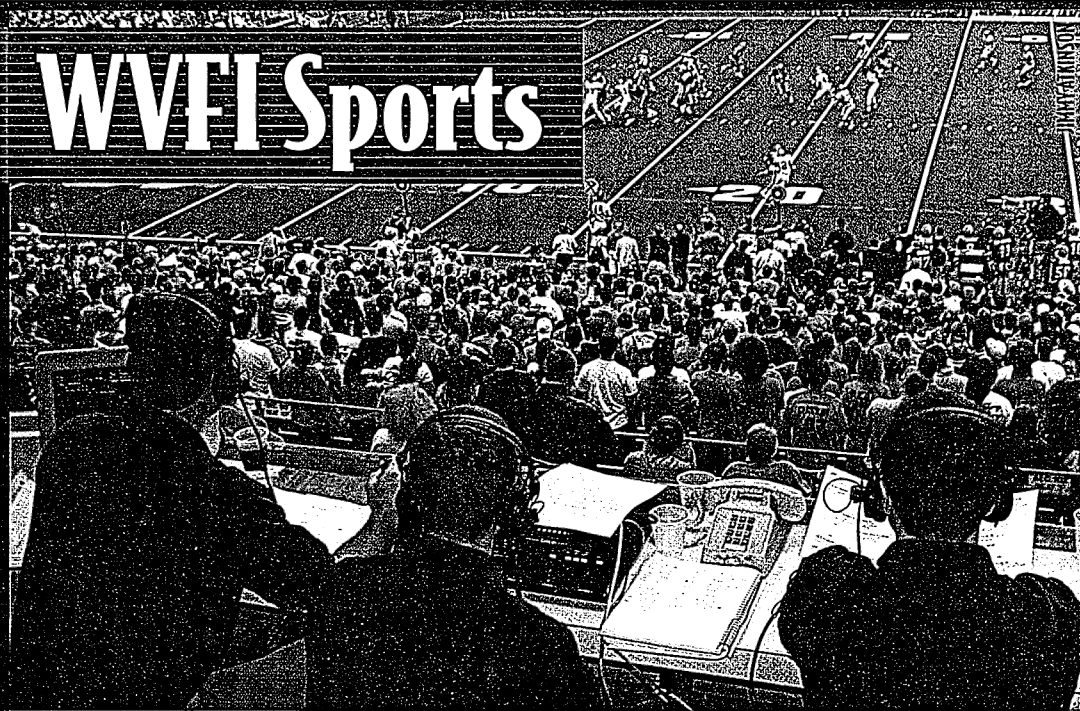
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WVFI Sports



GONE GLOBAL J.B. Long, Brendan Dwyer and Jay Veraldi call live action at the Syracuse game, broadcasted worldwide over the Internet.

The World Over

by Jimmy Atkinson

Good afternoon and welcome to a gorgeous Saturday here at historic Notre Dame Stadium. The first week of September always brings with it a sense of hope and high aspirations for campuses around the country, and the atmosphere here at Notre Dame is certainly buzzing as the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame get set to take on the Cougars of Washington State."

Those words, spoken by senior Jay Veraldi to hundreds of listeners worldwide via the web, officially kicked off the fourth season of WVFI's Internet broadcast of Notre Dame football games.

For over a decade, WVFI has had the exclusive rights to broadcast Notre Dame football games. But it wasn't until 2000 that WVFI football broadcasts went truly global by broadcasting over the Internet at UND.com, the official athletic Web site of the University of Notre Dame.

Before 2000, the campus radio station was broadcast from LaFortune Student Center on a weak AM station that could be heard only in a few buildings on campus. For the football games, WVFI sent ESPN a signal, which was then amplified to allow more people to tune in. But those days are long over, as WVFI is now the exclusive Internet broadcaster of Notre Dame football games, both home and away.

The Internet broadcast is accomplished by transmitting a signal from the receiver at the game site over a phone line to a server at the broadcast center. Anyone who wants to listen then can find the live broadcast of the game at UND.com and play it on RealAudio's RealOne Player.

Irish football fans in the United States have easy access to most games on TV or the nationwide radio network, which is broadcast by Westwood One. But for those diehard fans overseas, it used to be very difficult to follow the Irish football season

live.

Not anymore. Now a simple Internet hook-up will connect anyone on the planet to live play-by-play webcasts of all Notre Dame football games. Several games last season drew over 1,000 listeners, when the games were broadcast free of charge. Beginning this year, however, the Official College Sports Network (OCSN) became a subscription service, requiring all listeners to pay \$6.95 per month.

Still, the number of users worldwide has remained high, considering the change. The game this season with the most listeners was the Boston College game, when 988 people tuned in.

Notre Dame fans, alumni and students from all over the globe listen to WVFI each weekend. WVFI Sports Director junior J.B. Long, who does play-by-play for some of the games, says he has received e-mails from listeners as far away as Scotland, Ireland and Hong Kong. He also knows of Notre Dame students studying abroad who have listened to the games from Perth, Australia and Santiago, Chile.

"It's nice to be considered, at least in some small part, the voice of Notre Dame sports and especially Notre Dame football," Long says.

Long is one of eight announcers that broadcast the football games this season on a rotating schedule. The crew starts broadcasting before each game with a comprehensive preview, then moves into play-by-play commentary at kickoff. Although they are students with little radio experience, the announcers do thorough research prior to each game, and it pays off by providing the listener with professional-sounding and informative broadcasts.

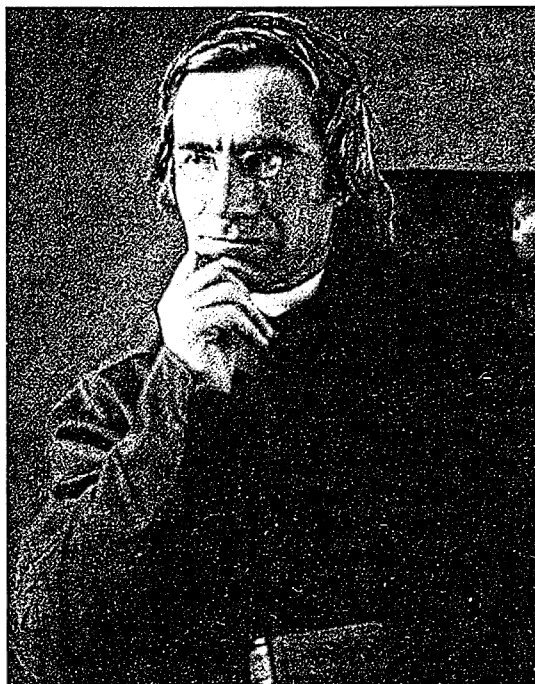
"We usually compare it to preparing for a test," Long says. "Play-by-play announcers have to learn the names and numbers and facts about players you don't follow on a weekly basis, while the color commentator usually prepares a whole array of materials, like player profiles."

While the crew has a permanent booth in the press box at Notre Dame Stadium, accommodations at some of the away game stadiums can be substandard. At Heinz Field for the game against Pittsburgh, for example, the acoustics in the WVFI booth were less than favorable and no crowd noise came over the broadcast. The Stanford game brought more worries for Long and his crew, as there was no room for them in the press box, but rather on its roof. Luckily, the heavy rains forecasted earlier in the day held off.

The off-season goal of Long and the rest of the WVFI staff is to increase awareness of the broadcasts among alumni and abroad students. Eventually, Long hopes that all the study abroad programs, especially London, the largest, will pay for the subscription service so that any student overseas will be able to conveniently listen to the student voice of Notre Dame football. □

Congregation of Holy Cross

Afraid you're not worthy?



Fr. Edward Sorin, C.S.C. founder of
the University of Notre Dame at age 29.

So was he.



www.nd.edu/~vocation

Be Not Afraid!

Washington State



EXTRA EFFORT Julius Jones lunges for a touchdown against Washington State in his first game back.

Off on the Right Foot

by Mikelselin

That was a hell of a ballgame." The first words out of Washington State's first-year head coach Bill Doba's mouth at the post-game press conference summed it up nicely. Irish fans around the country could breathe a sigh of relief for the first time in over three hours as they watched a 40-yard field goal by senior kicker Nick Setta sail over the crossbar and between the uprights in overtime. Setta's overtime field goal was his fifth on the day and gave Notre Dame a 29-26 win.

This game had its ups and downs for both teams coming into the contest, and they came out ready to play. Washington State started the scoring in the first quarter when quarterback Matt Kegel connected with wide receiver Sammy Moore on a slant over the middle for a 15-yard touchdown pass. Drew Dunning's missed extra point attempt would prove monumental later in the game.

Later, on a third down and nine for the Irish on their own 27-yard line, Virgil Williams came free from the defensive left side and blindsided senior quarterback Carlyle Holiday. The big hit popped the ball loose for defensive lineman D.D. Ancholonu to catch. Ancholonu then carried Notre Dame senior right guard Sean Milligan 10 yards on his back to the Notre

Dame 11-yard line.

From there the Irish defense held strong and put up a huge goal line stand after the turnover. However, the Cougars were able to put some more points on the board on a 20-yard Dunning field goal, putting them up 9-0. Dunning added another field goal late in the first quarter, leaving the score at the end of one at 12-0 in favor of the Cougars. "Our defense did a great job of doing just enough to hold us in it," head coach Tyrone Willingham said.

In the second quarter of this game Irish fans saw Cougar defensive lineman Isaac Brown recover a fumble and take it 12 yards for the score, putting the cougars up 19-0 with just over two minutes left until halftime.

The struggling Irish received a spark on the ensuing kickoff from number 34. Dunning bounced the kickoff down to senior cornerback Vontez Duff, who fielded the ball at the 12-yard line and burst through a hole on the right side of the return wedge. Duff dashed up field, avoiding potential tacklers until Alex Teems brought him down just inside Washington State territory at the 45-yard line.

Holiday led the Irish offense onto the field with 2:29 left in the half. They mounted an eleven-play scoring drive that totaled 26 yards and ended in a Nick Setta field goal from 37 yards away. The Irish trailed at halftime 19-3.

After receiving the kickoff to start the second half, Holiday

...Notre Dame came back from a 19-point deficit, the largest comeback in four years... This was the first

# Play By Numbers	COUGARS	IRISH
RUSHING YARDS	55	167
PASSING YARDS	274	149
FIRST DOWNS	15	19
TOTAL OFFENSE	329	316
TURNOVERS	3	4
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:47	29:13

led the Irish offense straight down the field. They mounted an impressive 15-play drive that took them from their own 28-yard line down to the Cougar 14. They successfully converted three third downs during the drive, including one on a 28-yard rush by Holiday down the left sideline. The drive ended in another Setta field goal, cutting the Cougar lead to 13 points.

The defense successfully held the Cougar offense to drives of three or fewer plays on four of the six Washington State possessions in the second half, and one more in overtime.

The third quarter ended with the score 19-6, but it wouldn't stay that way for long. The Irish ran off 20 straight points in the first 12 minutes of the fourth quarter, including touchdowns from both sophomore wide receiver Rhema McKnight and senior tailback Julius Jones, who was making his first appearance with the Irish since 2001.

With three minutes left in the game, the Irish were up 26-19, but Washington State did not want to let Notre Dame off the hook that easily.

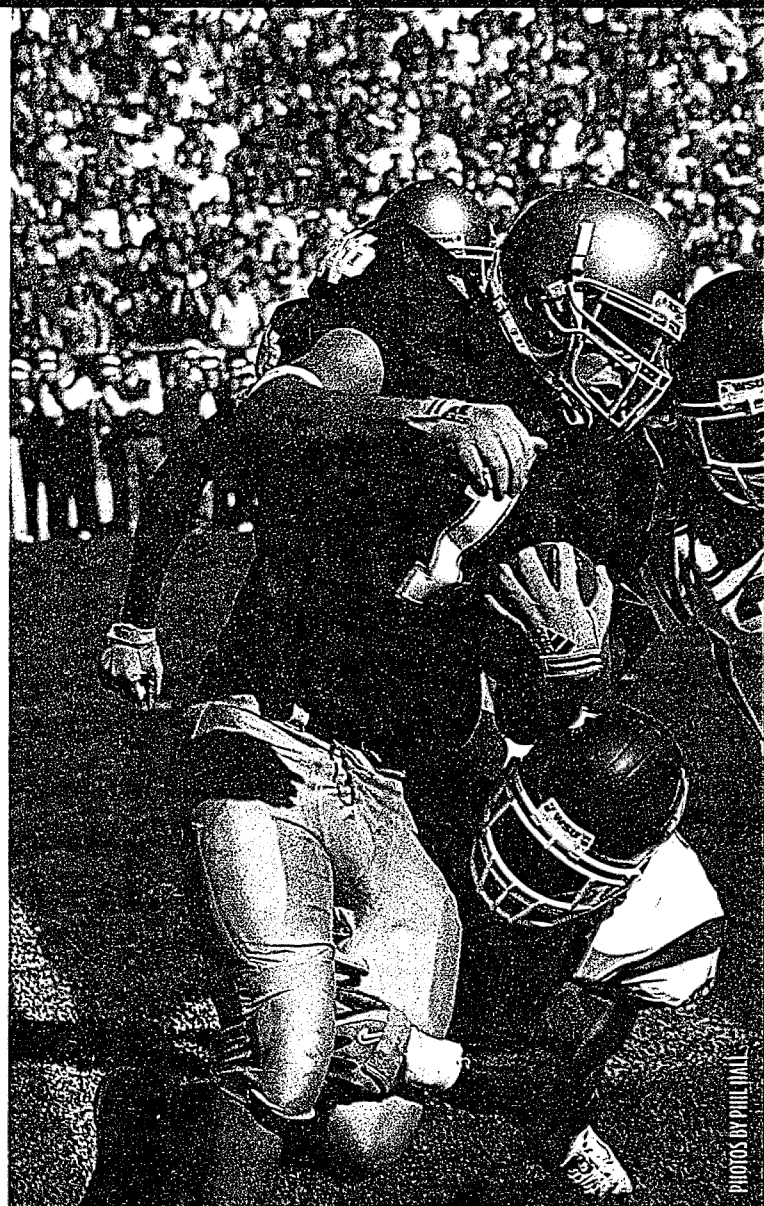
Starting from his own 20-yard line, Kegel led his team down the field for one last chance to tie the game. With 1:07 seconds left and the ball at the Notre Dame 34-yard line, Kegel called a post route down the left side of the field to wideout Sammy Moore. Kegel lofted the ball toward the end zone where Moore was covered by two Irish defenders. Moore turned back towards Kegel and made an amazing one-handed grab in the end zone. Dunning converted the extra-point attempt, tying the game at 26 and sending the two teams into overtime.

The Irish won the overtime coin toss and elected to play defense first. The Cougars chose to play at the South end of the field to stay as far away from the 8,000-plus screaming students in the northwest corner of the stadium. On third and two the Cougars came out throwing, but senior free safety Glenn Earl was there to break up the pass, forcing a 34-yard field goal attempt by Dunning after only three offensive plays for Washington State. Dunning was unable to put the ball through the uprights for a second time that afternoon, leaving Notre Dame in need of only a field goal for the victory.

The offense stepped on the field and ran two plays up the middle for a combined gain of two yards. On third down Willingham gave Setta the chance to win the game. Setta lined up from 40 yards out and booted it straight through the middle of the uprights.

Willingham would have liked a better performance out of his players in the first half, but a win is a win.

"It's always great to win and not lose but we definitely need to improve on a lot of things, especially special teams. It's good to get that first game out of the way and get that 'W' up on the board. Next week is a whole different fight and a whole different ballgame," Earl said. □



HANGING TOUGH Tight end Jared Clark and the Irish overcame a swarming defense and a 19-point deficit in their win over Washington State.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Final
Wash. State	12	7	0	7	0	26
Notre Dame	0	3	3	20	3	29

1st Quarter

WSU Moore 15 pass from Kegel (Dunning kick failed), 7:52; 6-0 WSU

WSU FG Dunning 20, 4:56; 9-0 WSU

WSU FG Dunning 29, 0:31; 12-0 WSU

2nd Quarter

WSU Brown 16 fumble recovery (Dunning kick), 2:37; 19-0 WSU

ND FG Setta 37, 0:10; 19-3 WSU

3rd Quarter

ND FG Setta 32, 10:10; 19-6 WSU

4th Quarter

ND FG Setta 39, 12:09; 19-9 WSU

ND McKnight 11 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 10:32; 19-16 WSU

ND Jones 19 run (Setta kick), 5:03; 23-19 ND

ND FG Setta 47, 3:03; 26-19 ND

WSU Moore 34 pass from Kegel (Dunning kick), 0:53; 26-26

OT

ND FG Setta; 29-26 ND

Michigan



RUNNING STRONG Michigan running back and Heisman Trophy finalist Chris Perry rushes past the Irish defense for a touchdown, one of his 18 touchdowns of the season.

Big Housed

by Mikelselin

A year ago it was the Irish who knocked off the then seventh ranked Wolverines. Senior cornerback Shane Walton intercepted quarterback John Navarre's pass with just over a minute to play. Eight thousand-plus elated students rushed the field congratulating their team. But that was last year.

On September 13, 2003 the largest crowd in college football history saw something that had not happened in 101 years. On that day the Irish traveled to Michigan Stadium, known as the Big House, and were shut out by the Wolverines. The last time that Michigan had shut out Notre Dame was when they beat the Irish 23-0 in 1902.

The Irish defense that put up a wall against Washington State was the same defense that the Wolverines systematically dismantled in The Big House. The Michigan offense racked up 188 yards on the ground and another 251 yards through the air on their way to a very impressive 38-0 rout of the Irish. Notre Dame dropped to 1-1 on the year, while

Michigan improved to 2-0.

It wasn't only the Irish defense that failed to show up in Ann Arbor. The whole team seemed to be two or three steps slower than Michigan. "The way we came out and played today, they would have stopped us before we even started playing," senior middle linebacker Courtney Watson said. "We played a horrible game. We weren't even trying to compete today."

On the third play of the game Watson, playing his first game of the season, hit Navarre, causing him to fumble. Junior middle linebacker Brandon Hoyte recovered the ball at the Michigan 38-yard line giving the Irish great field position. Four plays later the ball had only moved one yard to the Michigan 37-yard line, the deepest Notre Dame would get into Michigan territory all day. The Irish punted.

Nick Setta's second punt of the day was returned by wide receiver Steve Breaston for 55 yards down to the Notre Dame 2-yard line. From there, running back Chris Perry dove over the pile on the first play for a 2-yard touchdown run. That return sparked the Michigan sideline, and they never looked back after Perry's score. Perry had his way with the Irish defense all afternoon. When the final horn blew, he

...This was the first time the Irish have been shutout since 1993, and the first of two this season.

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	WOLVERINES
RUSHING YARDS	49	188
PASSING YARDS	91	251
FIRST DOWNS	7	19
TOTAL OFFENSE	140	438
TURNOVERS	2	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	22:13	37:47

had gained 133 yards on the ground and three touchdowns on 31 rushes.

Navarre also gave the Irish problems. He had open receivers to throw to all day who turned 4-yard catches into 10-yard gains. When the secondary did put some coverage on the receivers, Navarre simply put the ball where only his receiver could catch it. The first-string quarterback called it a day in the middle of the fourth quarter with his Wolverines up 31-0, after completing 14 of 21 attempts for 199 yards and one touchdown.

Navarre's replacement, Matt Gutierrez, found it just as easy to move the ball against the Irish, completing all 3 of his attempts for 51 yards. He took advantage of his playing time and led the Wolverines down the field for their final touchdown of the day.

It was a deficit the Irish offense could not put a dent in. Over the course of the first half Notre Dame's offense went three and out four times, one more than their number of total first downs in the half.

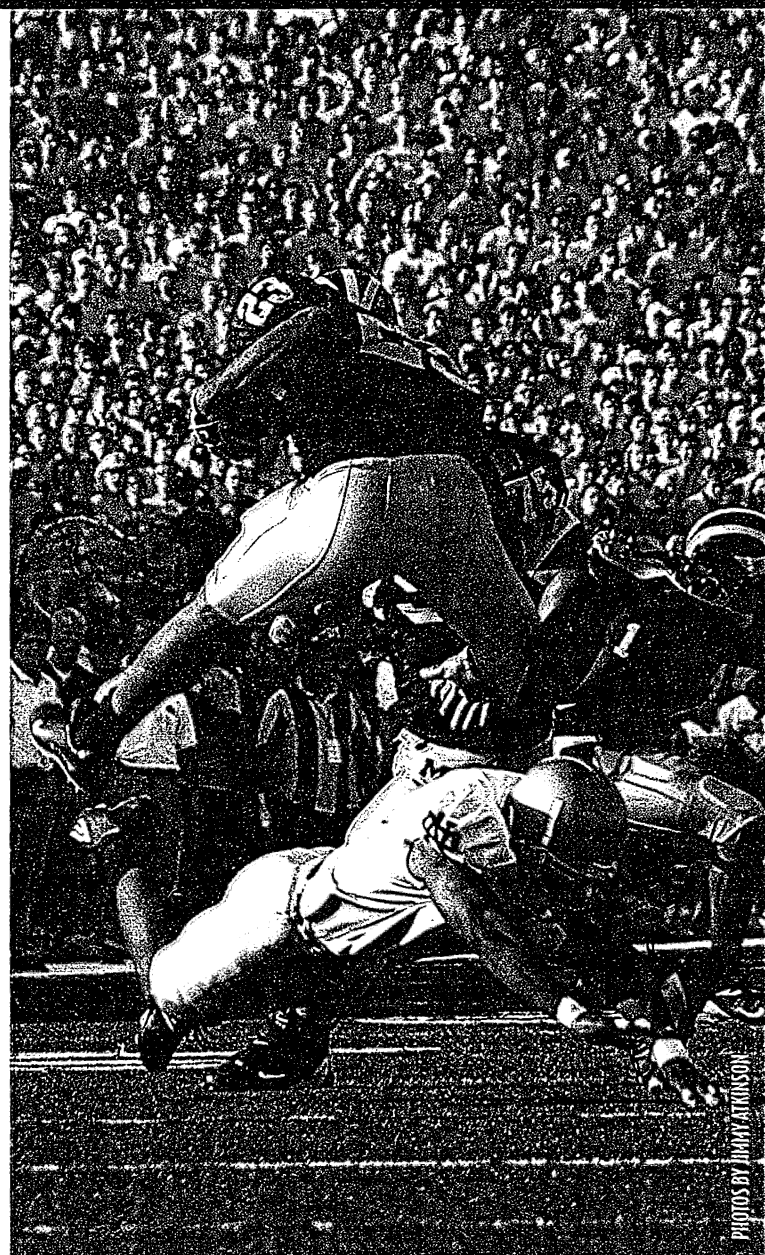
Michigan's defense gave up one passing yard on their first play of the game, the only one they gave up the whole first half. Holiday could not connect with his receivers. Holiday completed as many passes to men in white jerseys as he did to those in blue in the first half.

Unable to mount any kind of an attack through the air, Coach Willingham and the Irish tried to move the ball on the ground. Notre Dame hoped its backfield of junior running back Ryan Grant and senior running back Julius Jones, promising to be one of the best one-two combinations in the country, would be able to produce. Unfortunately, due to a struggling offensive line, Notre Dame rushers combined for a meager 49 total yards on the ground on 25 rushes for an average of less than two yards per carry.

Willingham turned to backup quarterback Brady Quinn in the fourth quarter to try to spark the team. Quinn, a true freshman, played one series against Washington State in the first week of the season, but he did not attempt a pass. This time the coaches let him open up and throw the ball, but the Wolverine defense stymied him just as much as they had Holiday in the first three quarters.

When it was all over Holiday completed 5 of 14 passes with one interception, and Quinn connected on 3 of 10 passes with one interception. Totaling only 140 yards of offense and 7 first downs in the game, the Irish were unable to put any points up on the board.

Coming into the game, Michigan carried a 2-0 record with an impressive 95-10 combined score. Critics all over the country took that accomplishment with a grain of salt, pointing to the fact that their opponents in those first two



HUMAN HURDLES Running back Chris Perry proves that quarterbacks are not the only players who get yards through the air.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	7	10	7	14	38
1st Quarter					
UM	Perry 2 run (Finley Kick), 6:25; 7-0 MICH				
2nd Quarter					
UM	FG Finley 24, 14:56; 10-0 MICH				
UM	Perry 5 pass from Navarre (Finley Kick), 9:00; 17-0 MICH				
3rd Quarter					
UM	Perry 9 run (Finley Kick), 12:35; 24-0 MICH				
4th Quarter					
UM	Perry 1 run (Finley Kick), 13:26; 31-0 MICH				
UM	Rembert 7 run (Rivas kick), 4:26; 38-0 MICH				

games — Central Michigan and the University of Houston — had a combined 9-17 record last year. The Wolverines silenced the critics with their performance against the boys from South Bend. □

Michigan State



LOSING THEIR GRIP Michigan State wide receiver Kyle Brown tries to elude an Irish defender after catching a pass from Spartan quarterback Jeff Smoker.

Dropping the Ball

by Jim Ryan

The week after an embarrassing 38-0 loss at Michigan, Notre Dame had something to prove at home against Michigan State. What they proved was that they were a team desperately in need of playmakers, as dropped passes and a failure to cash in on turnovers cost the Irish in a 22-16 loss to the Spartans.

Among the opportunities that the Irish squandered was a first-quarter fumble by Michigan State deep in Spartan territory. The Irish were down 3-0 after a 51-yard field goal from Michigan State's kicker Dave Rayner. On the Spartans' next possession, Irish senior defensive tackle Cedric Hilliard laid a vicious hit on Spartan running back Jaren Hayes, forcing him to lose the ball. Irish senior defensive end Kyle Budinscak quickly pounced on the fumble at the Michigan State 16. The offense stagnated, however, on the ensuing drive, losing 2 yards on three plays and incurring an illegal procedure penalty. They had to settle for a 35-yard field goal from Nick Setta, which tied the score at 3-3. The Irish failed to score at all off the other two Spartan turnovers, both interceptions from Michigan State quarterback Jeff Smoker.

The Irish had another scoring opportunity deep in Spartan

territory at the end of the first quarter but again failed to find the end zone. The Irish had the ball at the Michigan State 29 thanks to a 46-yard punt return from senior cornerback Vontez Duff. The Irish offense managed only one first down on the ensuing drive and again settled for a Setta field goal, this time from 29 yards, which put the Irish up 6-3.

The Irish offense failed to score for the rest of the half, and it was sluggish for almost the entire game. In total, Notre Dame ran the ball 37 times for 100 yards, a 2.7-yard average. Senior running back Julius Jones was the team's leading rusher with a mere 32 yards, and none of the Irish running backs found the end zone.

Senior quarterback Carlyle Holiday started the game, which would become his final start of the season. He struggled from the get-go, completing only two passes for 10 yards in four series in the first quarter — though he was not helped by a handful of dropped balls from his receivers. By the middle of the second quarter, the student section was booing Holiday's poor playing, and for the final two series of the half, Willingham benched Holiday in favor of true freshman Brady Quinn.

"I thought with the time that [Holiday] sat out, it would give him a fresh look at it and be able to do some things," said Willingham. "I thought, initially, that worked very well." With the game tied at 6-6 coming out of halftime, Holiday stepped up his passing and running, leading two long drives in the third

Spartan kicker Dave Rayner's 1st-quarter 51-yard FG was the longest FG made against the Irish since 1991.

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	SPARTANS
RUSHING YARDS	100	181
PASSING YARDS	202	119
FIRST DOWNS	20	15
TOTAL OFFENSE	302	300
TURNOVERS	3	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:52	28:08

quarter, one of which ended in a 30-yard field goal from Setta.

However, the best play of the third quarter belonged to Michigan State. After facing a stifling Irish defense for the first half, Michigan State's offense hit pay dirt near the end of the third quarter. On a run off the left tackle, Spartan tailback Jaren Hayes faked out Irish senior linebacker Derek Curry, ran through a gaping hole and outraced senior cornerback Preston Jackson to the end zone. The touchdown put the Spartans up 13-6, giving them a lead they would maintain for the rest of the game.

In the fourth quarter it was the Spartan defense that created a turnover and scored with it. After a Rayner field goal put the Spartans up 16-9 early in the fourth quarter, the Irish had the ball at their own 41 with seven minutes left in the game. On a second down, Holiday took a short drop, looked left, and threw the ball directly into the hands of stationary Spartan defensive end Greg Taplin. Taplin seemed to hesitate out of surprise before sprinting 40 yards down the right side for a Spartan touchdown. Taplin's touchdown, which put the Spartans up 22-9, turned out to be the game-winning score.

"I was hoping he wouldn't stumble and fall," Michigan State head coach John L. Smith said. "At that point in the game we needed a big play and we definitely got one. That play was a nail in the coffin."

Quinn quarterbacked the Irish for the rest of the game. After one unsuccessful series, Quinn orchestrated a masterful drive that started at the Irish 10. He completed five passes for 90 yards in a 2:30 drive that culminated with a 29-yard touchdown pass to sophomore wide receiver Rhema McKnight on a screen down the left sideline. The score cut the gap to 6 points, 22-16, with 1:41 remaining.

Notre Dame then attempted an onside kick, but Michigan State's Drew Stanton recovered it. The Spartans ran out the clock and secured their 22-16 victory.

After the game, Willingham tried to find a silver lining in the cloud. One bright spot for the Irish was the performance of Quinn, who finished 7-17 for 103 yards and one touchdown. Willingham said of his freshman quarterback, "Every day he continues to look better, seems to just get stronger. That gives us a reason to have great confidence in him."

Willingham also praised the Irish defense. "Our defense has been very good for us, and today was very good in a lot of situations," he said. "They put us in position to be able to win the football game."

Both the players and Willingham expressed a determination to improve during the remainder of the season. "It's frustrating since we really can't get that much going," Jones said. "But we have to hang in there and continue to work."

Willingham agreed: "Our team is determined. I think you



WRAPPED UP The Michigan State defense successfully slowed down Julius Jones' rushing attack, limiting him to 32 rushing yards.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Michigan State	3	3	7	9	22
Notre Dame	3	3	3	7	16

1st Quarter

MSU FG Rayner 51, 11:58; 3-0 MSU

ND FG Setta 35, 2:59; 3-3

2nd Quarter

ND FG Setta 29, 14:11; 6-3 ND

MSU FG Rayner 30, 7:43; 6-6

3rd Quarter

MSU Hayes 71 run (Rayner kick), 5:25; 13-6 MSU

ND FG Setta 30, 0:30; 13-9 MSU

4th Quarter

MSU FG Rayner 30, 9:10; 16-9 MSU

MSU Taplin 40 interception return (Fields pass failed), 6:55; 22-9 MSU

ND McKnight 29 pass from Quinn (Setta kick), 2:29; 22-16 MSU

saw that in the way they finished the football game. I think they fought down to the very last second to try to get the W. Losses hurt, but we'll be back." □

Brady Quinn



QUINN-TESSANTIAL Quarterback Brady Quinn runs for a first down against Brigham Young. Quinn was the first true freshman quarterback to start for the Irish since Matt LoVecchio in 2000.

A Rising Star

by Jimmy Atkinson

With 6:55 remaining in the fourth quarter against Michigan State, senior quarterback Carlyle Holiday dropped back and made his final pass as Notre Dame's starter. The ball was intercepted and returned 40 yards for a touchdown. The Spartans took an insurmountable 22-9 lead and ended up winning the game 22-16. Holiday did not take another snap under center until late in the Stanford game 10 weeks later.

Growing fan discontent and disappointing numbers — he was 10 of 25 for 99 yards and two interceptions against Michigan State — forced Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham to sit Holiday. True freshman Brady Quinn was now at the helm and led the Irish to a touchdown drive to pull within six, though too late.

During the ensuing week, Willingham officially was in the middle of a quarterback crisis. Would he give the incumbent quarterback one final chance to prove himself, or would he give the promising rookie his first collegiate start on the road against Purdue? Holiday was the more experienced and the better scrambler, able to make plays once things broke down. Quinn, on the other hand, had the more accurate arm and had led Notre Dame to two of their three touchdown drives thus

far this season. One thing was sure: Willingham held his cards close to the vest and did not make his decision public until game time.

Saturday arrived in West Lafayette, and tension mounted among the Notre Dame faithful sitting in the south end zone of Ross-Aid Stadium. When Quinn was the one who ran out onto the field with the offense for the first possession of the game, the crowd cheered Willingham's decision. Certainly, with a 1-2 record and 16 points in the last two games, now was a good time for change on the offensive side of the ball.

Quinn, a true freshman from Coffman High School in Dublin, Ohio, was a highly touted recruit from last season, ranked 20th overall nationally by ESPN. After being listed third on the depth chart just weeks earlier, behind Holiday and sophomore Chris Olsen, Quinn had risen to the top and was ready for his first start. Olsen's departure in late August, along with Holiday's disappointing play allowed Quinn to rise from bench warmer to team leader.

Quinn's first game was a true test of his arm, as he attempted 59 passes, the second-most in school history for a single game. Of those 59 attempts, 29 were completed for 297 yards. Despite being intercepted four times at Purdue, equaling the number he threw his entire senior year of high school, Quinn showed poise and confidence in the pocket and made many good throws. Considering this was his first collegiate start as a

true freshman, the young quarterback played well. His 85-yard touchdown pass to sophomore wide receiver Maurice Stovall at the end of the first half became the third-longest pass in Notre Dame history.

"I was pleased with what he showed me," Willingham said, later citing that it was the inability to run the football, not poor performance by Quinn, that caused the Irish to sputter offensively against Purdue.

Quinn, however, took the loss to heart and laid the blame on himself. "It's extremely disappointing," he said. "I'm just disappointed in myself because I felt like I let the team down and I personally could have been a lot better."

In any case, the Irish now seemed to have a quarterback who had solidified his position as starter. During the bye week that followed, Quinn would receive most of the reps at quarterback in practice.

The poor play of the passing game in Pittsburgh two weeks later, during which Quinn completed only five of 17 passes for 33 yards, was offset by senior tailback Julius Jones' record-breaking 262-yard performance and a 20-14 win to end a three-game losing streak.

The Southern Cal game that followed did not prove as successful for the Irish offense, which was shutout during the game's final three quarters. Despite starting five of seven with two touchdowns, Quinn's production was slowed after the first quarter by heavy pressure and good pass coverage by the Trojans. Quinn finished with only 15 completions in 34 attempts, but was not intercepted.

The following week would prove to be Quinn's best start to date. He completed 23 of 39 pass attempts for 350 yards and two touchdowns against Boston College. His two interceptions, however, proved costly. Still, Quinn had seemed to find his rhythm and was getting better each week. His final analysis of the Boston College game was simply that the Irish had run out of time. "If we have 10 more seconds, I think we have our field goal team out there," he said.

According to Willingham, Quinn's best overall performance of the entire season came against Stanford over Thanksgiving weekend. Quinn completed eight of 13 passes for 177 yards and two touchdowns. His execution was near flawless. Asked afterwards if the game at Stanford Stadium had been Quinn's best, Willingham said: "Without looking at [the film], I'd say yes."

This year has been a learning experience for the young freshman from Dublin, Ohio. But Willingham has stuck by his side through thick and thin. "I've always been a fan of Brady from the time he arrived on campus," Willingham said following the Stanford game. "Tonight I thought was another good night, another night for him to glow, another night that he'll learn a great deal more about playing the game. I'm in his corner [and] I like what he's doing."

Quinn also was pleased with not only his performance, but

"I've always been a fan of Brady from the time he arrived on campus ... I'm in his corner; I like what he's doing."

—Tyrone Willingham

that of the entire offensive unit against Stanford. "We were making plays," he said. "Everyone was doing their jobs and executing. That's a glimpse of what we can do when we play like that."

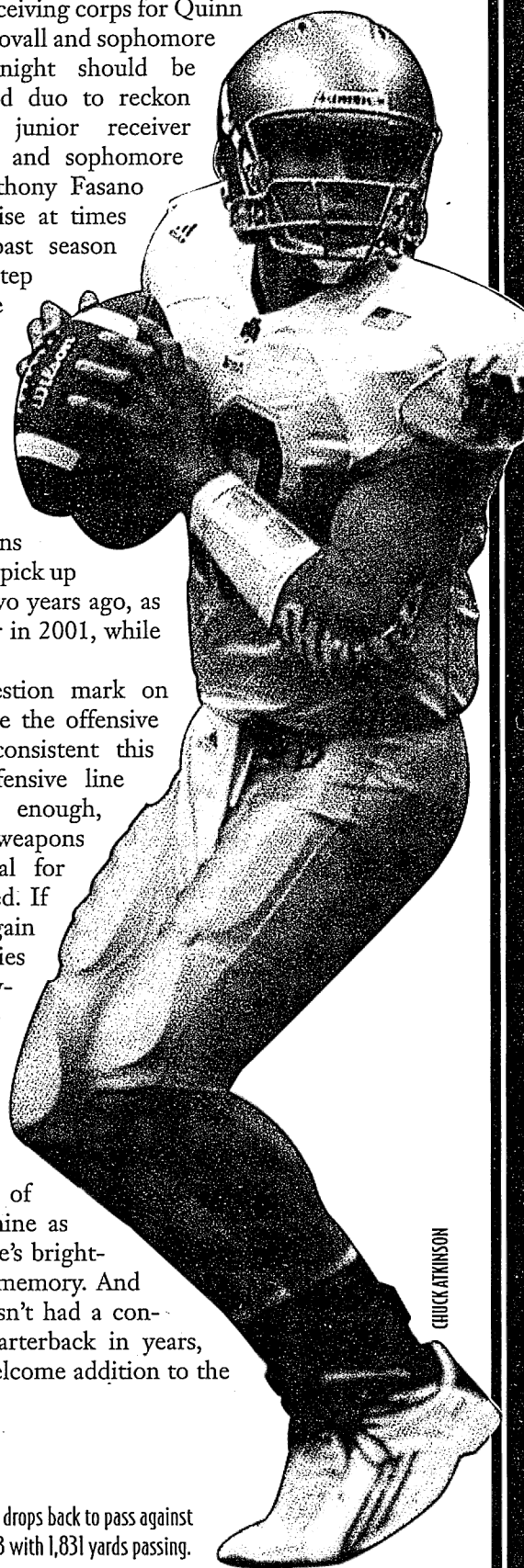
More glimpses may come next season, as the Irish offense returns eight starters and a talented young wide receiving corps for Quinn to throw at. Stovall and sophomore Rhema McKnight should be an experienced duo to reckon with, while junior receiver Matt Shelton and sophomore tight end Anthony Fasano showed promise at times during this past season and should step up to make

more contributions during the 2004 campaign.

While senior tailback Julius Jones departs for the NFL, junior Ryan Grant returns as a senior to try to pick up where he left off two years ago, as a 1,000-yard rusher in 2001, while Jones was out.

The major question mark on offense seems to be the offensive line, that was inconsistent this season. If the offensive line can perform well enough, there are enough weapons at Quinn's disposal for this team to succeed. If the line is once again plagued by injuries and poor play, however, it could be another long season for Quinn and the Irish offense.

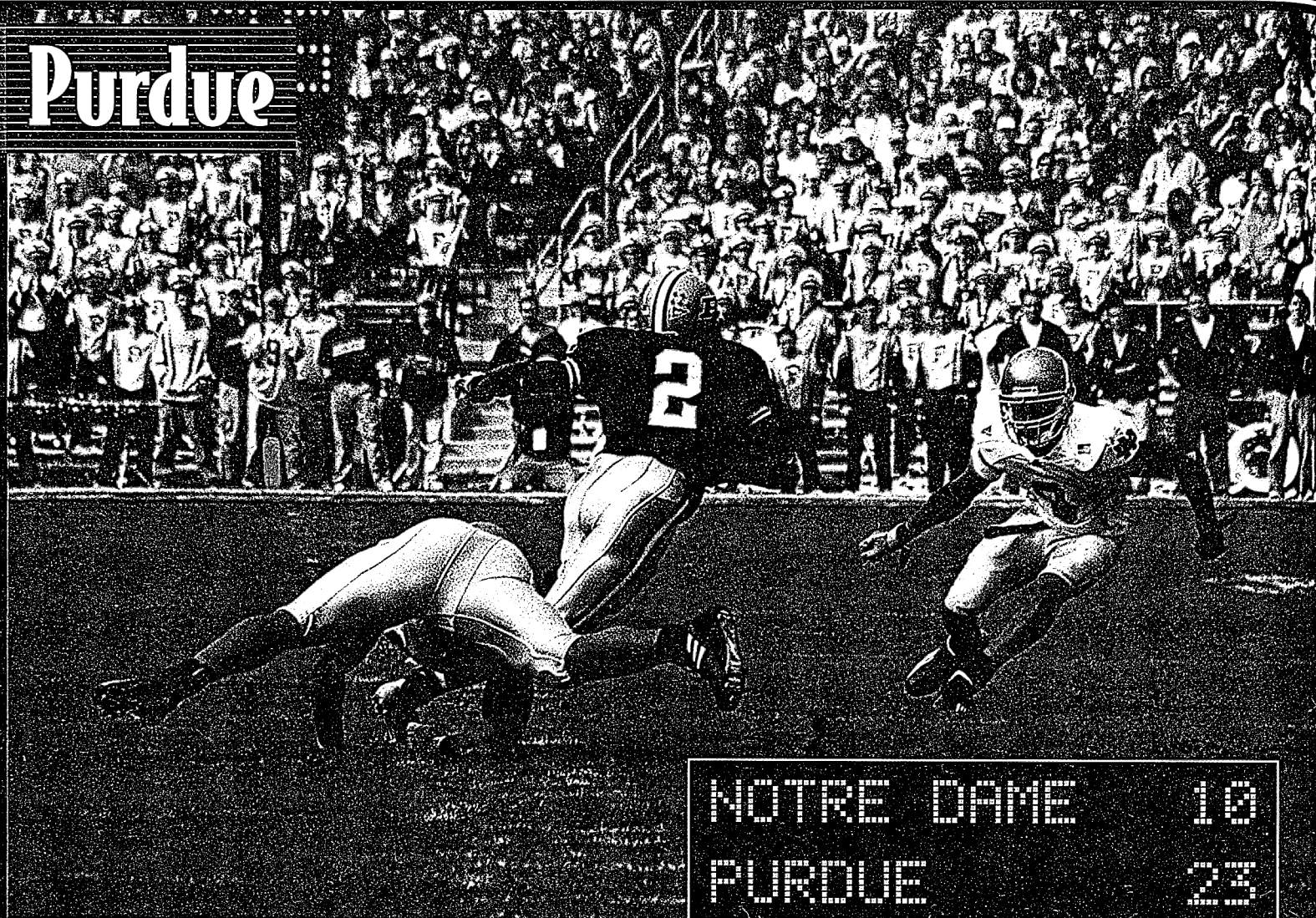
But with three full years left, Quinn has plenty of opportunities to shine as one of Notre Dame's brightest stars in recent memory. And for a team that hasn't had a consistent starting quarterback in years, Quinn is a most welcome addition to the Irish offense. □



CHUCK ATKINSON

THROUGH THE AIR Quinn drops back to pass against Syracuse. Quinn ended 2003 with 1,831 yards passing.

Purdue



NOTRE DAME	10
PURDUE	23

SLIPPING AWAY Purdue wide receiver Ray Williams breaks a tackle in Purdue's 23-10 victory over the Irish, which dropped the Irish to 1-3 on the season.

Boiling Over

by Chris Kelly

Sometimes, a team will find a silver lining in an otherwise bleak situation. So was the case for Notre Dame after their 23-10 loss to a beatable Purdue team on Sept. 27. The defeat left the Irish with a 1-3 record, but also left them with hope for the future as freshman Brady Quinn made his first career start and displayed an arm that could make him the next Irish legend.

Instead of relying on star senior tailback Julius Jones and its veteran defense, the coaching staff tried to beat Purdue through the air. They let Quinn attempt 59 passes, and the team's total of 62 pass attempts was the second highest in team history, behind a 63-attempt game at Purdue in 1967. Quinn connected on 29 of his attempts and threw four interceptions. But after the game, he refused to make excuses for the interceptions, taking full blame for the turnovers that were at least in part caused by mistakes made by his offensive line and receiving corps.

Early in the game, the Irish lined up with a single man backfield and up to four wideouts — matching the Purdue offense, which often came at the Irish with five wide receivers. However, early in the game the offense was simply not clicking. In the first quarter, the only Irish possession that broke into Purdue

territory was a drive fueled by a pass interference penalty that helped the Irish reach the Purdue 49-yard line.

But the performance of the Irish's defensive unit was mediocre. They got off to a bad start when a blown coverage assignment on the first Purdue drive left sophomore receiver Ray Williams wide open for a 36-yard touchdown pass from Boilermaker quarterback Kyle Orton. But the defense saved the team from falling into a deep hole after Quinn's first interception, which occurred when he was hit during his release. The ball popped up and landed in the hands of senior linebacker Niko Koutouvides, who ran 8 yards to the Notre Dame 20. But the Irish defense stopped the Boilermakers' run attack and, with the help of a holding penalty, held them to a 46-yard field goal.

The Irish got their first big play of the game in the second quarter when sophomore receiver Maurice Stovall broke free towards the sideline to pull in a 27-yard pass to the Purdue 36. The Irish continued to drive, but were forced to settle for a 19-yard field goal from Nick Setta that finally put them on the board, trailing 10-3.

Purdue hit a 31-yard field goal after converting a fourth-and-one where sophomore running back Jerod Void appeared to be taken down behind the line of scrimmage. But a questionable spot afforded Purdue the first down.

With time winding down in the first half, Quinn and Stovall hooked up again, connecting on an 85-yard touchdown pass

...Notre Dame's 62 pass attempts were the second most in school history; first was also against Purdue.

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	BOILERMAKERS
RUSHING YARDS	49	96
PASSING YARDS	297	127
FIRST DOWNS	18	13
TOTAL OFFENSE	346	223
TURNOVERS	4	0
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:22	31:38

that brought the Irish within a field goal of Purdue. Stovall ran over 75 yards to the end zone after catching the pass.

The third quarter seemed to turn the game into a punting match that Purdue was winning. After a 35-yard Ben Jones field goal on Purdue's first drive, the Boilermakers and Irish exchanged punts for the rest of the quarter. The only drive by either team that didn't end in a punt occurred when Quinn was picked off for the second time with around five minutes left in the quarter.

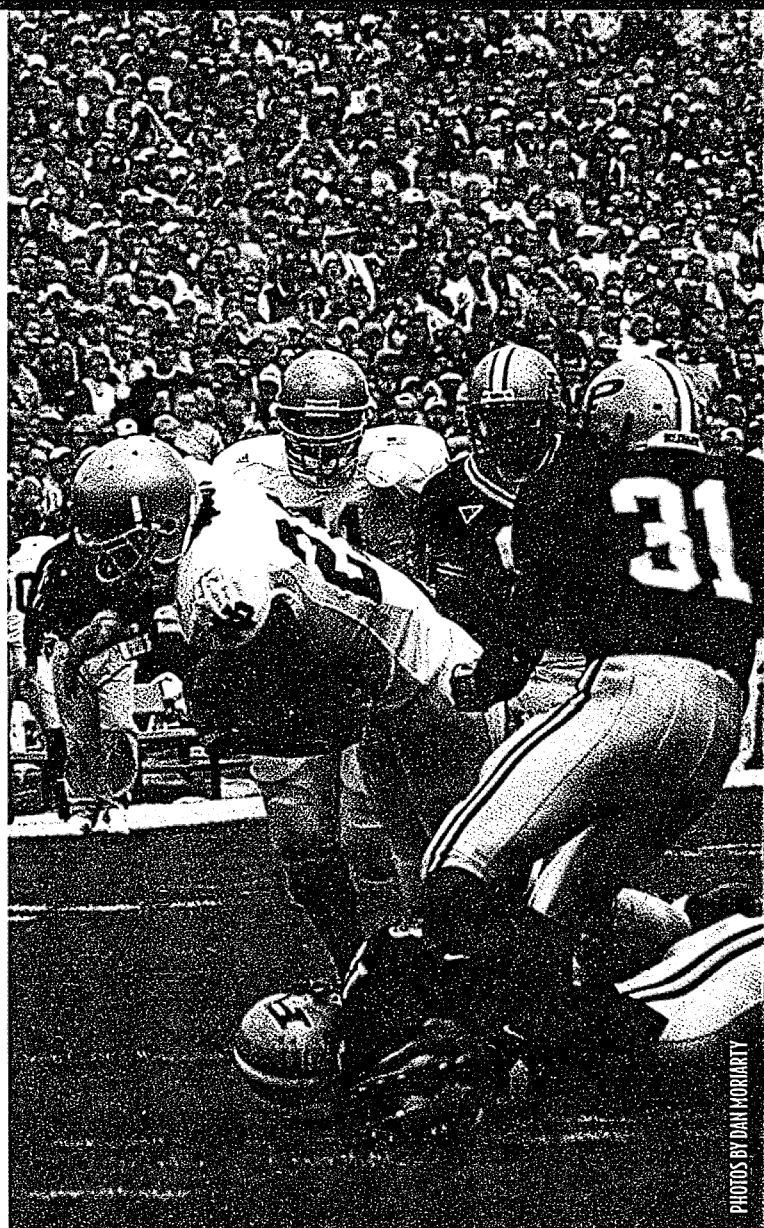
The Boilermakers were nursing their 16-10 lead until they picked off Quinn for the third time. Deep in Notre Dame territory, Quinn forced a pass to senior tight end Jared Clark that was intercepted by strong side linebacker Gilbert Gardner. This turnover resulted in a touchdown when Orton found an uncovered Shaun Phillips for a 2-yard score.

Quinn was intercepted again on the next drive, but the Irish defense kept the team in the game. A sack by junior defensive end Justin Tuck forced the Boilermakers to punt out of their own end zone, giving the Irish great field position as they started their next drive on the Purdue 41. The Irish picked up two first downs but failed to convert on the subsequent fourth down. They wouldn't be able to put up any more points the rest of the game, letting Purdue walk away with a 23-10 victory. The visiting Irish suffered their third straight loss.

"That was a major disappointment for us," said coach Willingham after the game. "We made some big mistakes; we had some lane coverage problems." Many of the Irish offensive woes were caused by a struggling and injury-riddled offensive line. The line had numerous penalties and often left Quinn vulnerable throughout the game. On the key fourth quarter drive when the Irish started inside Purdue territory and needed a score to stay in the game, the offensive line was whistled for three false starts and one holding penalty. But Willingham and Quinn insisted that the line was not solely to blame, and Quinn said he didn't think injuries had any effect on the line's performance, or their frustrating penalties. "That's just part of the game," he said, speaking of the drive-killing false start penalties in the fourth quarter.

While Quinn had seen limited action earlier in the season, he started as the Irish signal-caller for the first time in his career this game. The pressure and the heavy workload didn't seem to bother the freshman. Asked if he had ever thrown 59 times before, Quinn simply and stoically answered, "Yes."

After the game, senior cornerback Vontez Duff said the Irish players needed to maintain a positive attitude. "We still feel that we have a good team — we just have to make plays," he

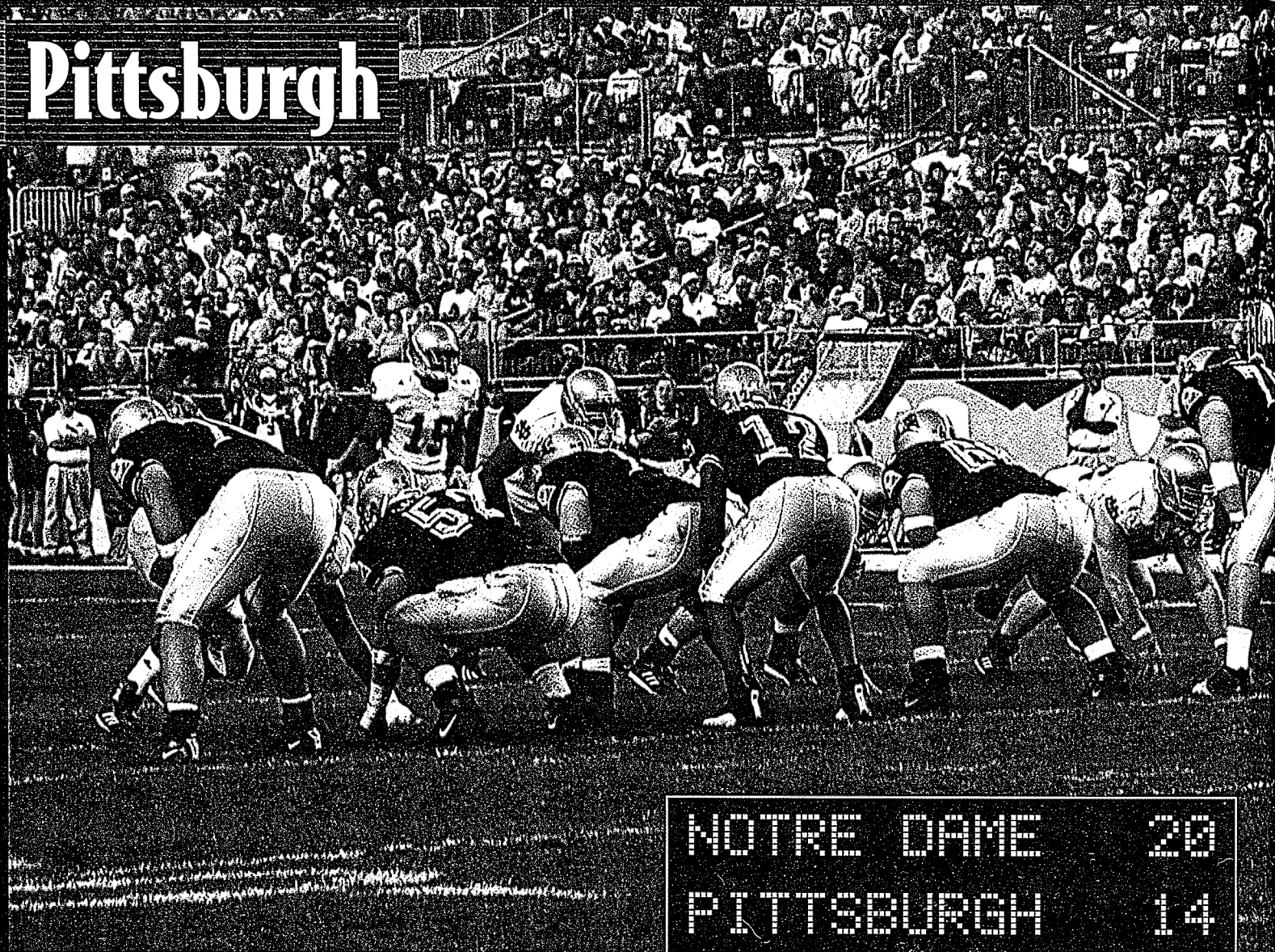


GOING DOWN Purdue's defense limited Julius Jones' productivity, holding him to only seven carries and 6 yards in the game.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	0	10	0	0	10
Purdue	10	3	3	7	23
1st Quarter					
PUR Williams 36 pass from Orton (Jones kick), 11:48; 7-0 PUR					
PUR FG Jones 46, 4:04; 10-0 PUR					
2nd Quarter					
ND FG Setta 19, 7:57; 10-3 PUR					
PUR FG Jones 31, 2:16; 13-3 PUR					
ND Stovall 85 pass from Quinn (Setta kick), 1:11; 13-10 PUR					
3rd Quarter					
PUR FG Jones 35, 10:24; 16-10 PUR					
4th Quarter					
PUR Phillips 2 pass from Orton (Jones kick), 12:38; 23-10 PUR					

said. "You lose a few, you win a few; you still have to have the same goals and aspirations." At least Quinn, the young gunslinger for the Irish put some game experience under his belt at Purdue. □

Pittsburgh



NOTRE DAME	20
PITTSBURGH	14

BATTLE IN THE TRENCHES The Irish defeated Pittsburgh with the combination of a powerful rushing attack and hard-nosed defense.

Gold Rush

by Jimmy Atkinson

From an offense that had been unsuccessful controlling the football all season, this was a whale of a possession, an epic drive. The Irish offensive line had opened holes all night, but on this possession, they dominated the Panther defense for the final 9:14 of the game to clinch the 20-14 victory. Pittsburgh's offense never saw the field again. A 16-play, 68-yard drive consisting of 15 runs was a fitting end to an historic offensive performance for Notre Dame.

"There's nothing better than having nine minutes left and just keep pounding it down the field until the game is over," senior offensive lineman Jim Molinaro said.

Senior running back Julius Jones broke Notre Dame's single-game rushing record by racing to 262 yards on 24 carries. Jones also scored Notre Dame's only two touchdowns. For an offense that had passed the ball 62 times for 297 yards in a 23-10 loss to Purdue just two weeks prior, the switch to the running game certainly caught Pittsburgh's defense off guard. The Irish had been ranked 110th nationally in rushing prior

to their performance at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh.

"Things opened up for us as a whole team," Jones said. "The offensive line, I give them all the credit. They stepped up and did a great job."

The Irish avoided losing their fourth consecutive game, and improved to 2-3 on the season. Pittsburgh moved to 3-2.

Head coach Tyrone Willingham offered an explanation for the switch from a pass-heavy to a rush-heavy offense. "We knew that one of the areas we had been weakest at was running the football," he said. "So it was a focus of ours to improve that. [It] is exciting for everyone in our program that our offensive line and our backs can take control of the football game and step up and make those plays when necessary."

Even senior safety Glen Earl had something to say about Notre Dame's dominating offensive performance. "That was unreal," he said. "I haven't seen that in a long time — the offense run the ball at will. That was domination. It was masterful."

All the rotation along the offensive line finally seemed to have paid off, as this combination contained the chemistry required to push the ball downfield at will. The most significant

... The Irish have won 11 of the last 12 games that it has played against the Pittsburgh Panthers.

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	PANTHERS
RUSHING YARDS	352	8
PASSING YARDS	33	167
FIRST DOWNS	14	9
TOTAL OFFENSE	385	175
TURNOVERS	1	2
TIME OF POSSESSION	36:46	23:14

change on the line was freshman Ryan Harris, who made his first collegiate start at right tackle. Junior offensive lineman Dan Stevenson subsequently was moved to right guard. Harris was able to gain much-needed practice time during the bye week and figured he would get some playing time. It wasn't until late in the week, however, that he was told that he would start the game. "I actually didn't find out until yesterday [that I would start.]" Harris said. "Coach said, 'Did you talk to your parents?' and I was like, 'Yeah, I told them I might play a little bit.' He goes, 'Well call them, because you're going to start.'"

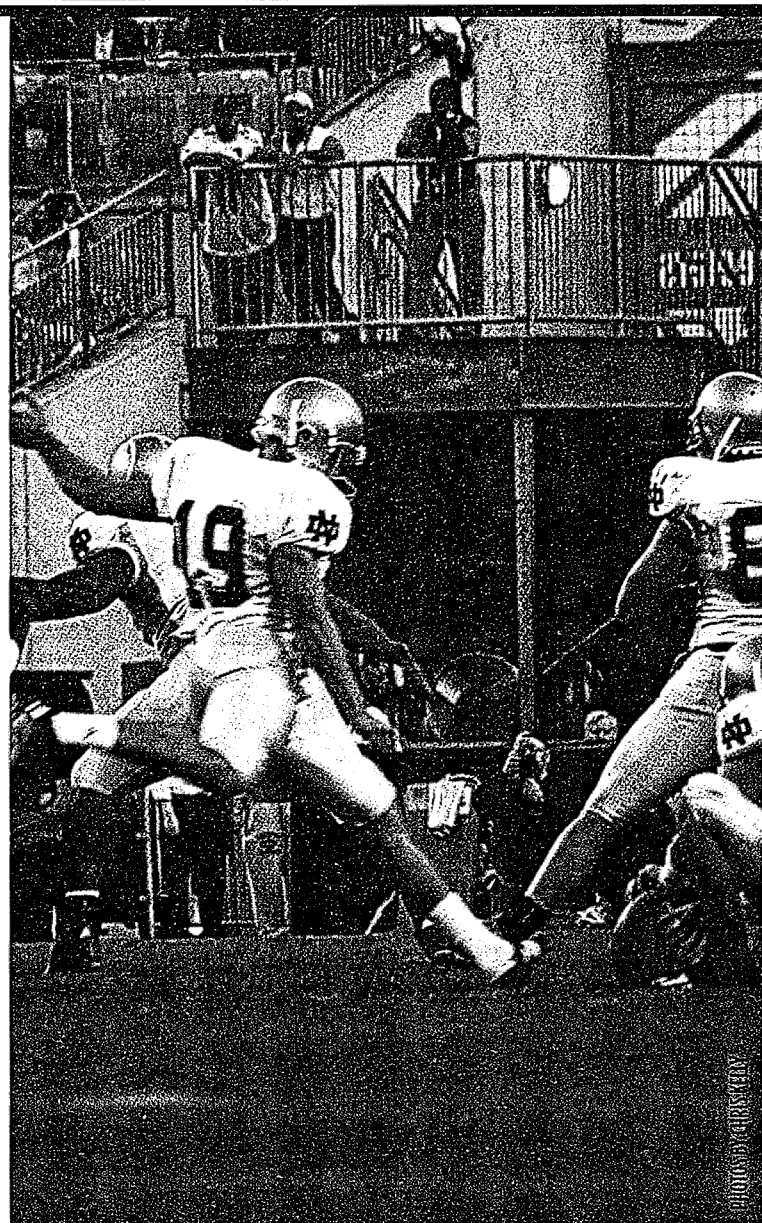
It was a surprisingly dominant performance for the offensive line in Pittsburgh. The defense also stepped up to contribute to Notre Dame's win. After catching his second touchdown pass early in the second quarter to give Pittsburgh a 14-7 lead, the Panthers' standout wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald was held in check by Irish senior cornerback Vontez Duff for the second half. "[Duff] did a great job in the second half [covering Fitzgerald]," defensive coordinator Kent Baer said. "I was proud of what he did. I'm proud of the whole team."

Fitzgerald finished with only 79 yards on five receptions and failed to catch a single pass after halftime. Pittsburgh quarterback Rod Rutherford, the nation's leading passer at the time, completed only 12 of 30 passes for 167 yards and was sacked eight times. The Irish defense did not allow another score after falling down 14-7 early in the second quarter. "It helps a lot when they're getting that pass rush," Duff said. "It's all a team effort."

Jones answered Fitzgerald's touchdown with one of his own, a 49-yard run to tie the game at 14-14 with 8:54 in the second quarter. Junior kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick, who had missed his first field goal from 52 yards, came off the bench in relief of injured senior kicker Nick Setta to hit from 19 yards out to give the Irish a 17-14 halftime lead. Fitzpatrick struck again in the third quarter, this time from 32 yards, to give the Irish a 20-14 advantage that eventually became the final score.

Defensive coordinator Kent Baer admitted that this was the best offense that the Irish had faced so far this season, but simply good technique and a ferocious pass rush led to Notre Dame's ability to stifle any Pittsburgh scoring attempt after halftime. Junior defensive end Justin Tuck recorded 10 tackles, including 3.5 sacks.

With good reason, the entire Irish coaching staff was proud. Already staring a three-game losing streak in the face, a trip to meet the 15th-ranked team in the nation on the road could have proved ultimately disastrous for Notre Dame's season. But the win promised to perhaps turn the team around just in time for its annual battle with Southern Cal. Notre Dame left Pittsburgh with a 2-3 record, but also with a renewed sense of self-confidence and purpose as they headed back home to



SURE-FOOTED D.J. Fitzpatrick, who replaced starting kicker Nicholas Setta in the first quarter, kicks one of his two field goals for the game.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	7	10	3	0	20
Pittsburgh	7	7	0	0	14

1st Quarter

ND Jones 25 run (Setta Kick), 12:08; 7-0 ND

PITT Fitzgerald 23 pass from Rutherford (Abdul kick), 0:00; 7-7

2nd Quarter

PITT Fitzgerald 4 pass from Rutherford (Abdul kick), 13:05; 14-7 PITT

ND Jones 49 run (Fitzpatrick kick), 8:54; 14-14

ND FG Fitzpatrick 19, 0:33; 17-14 ND

3rd Quarter

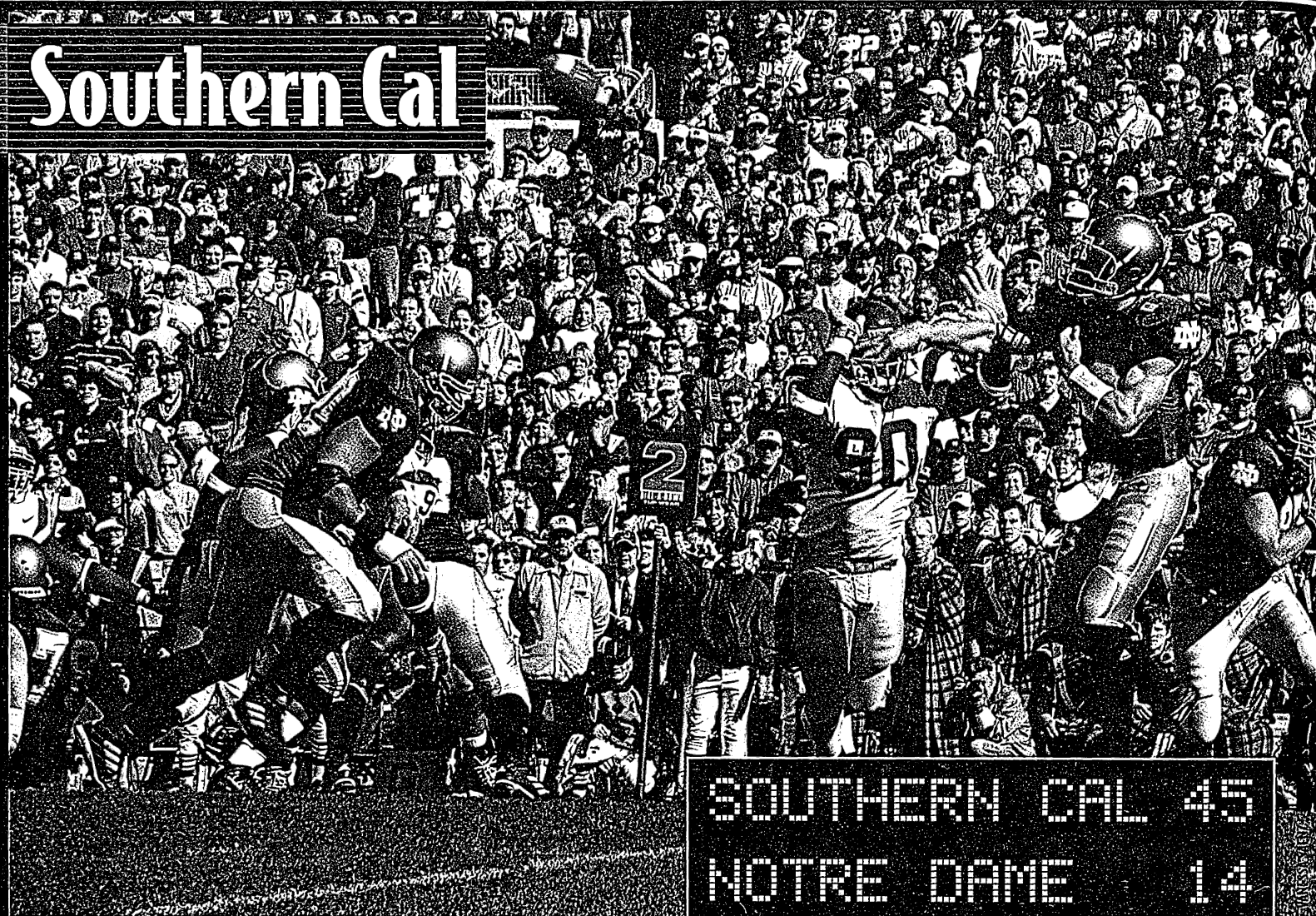
ND FG Fitzpatrick 34, 7:10; 20-14 ND

4th Quarter—None—

clash with the Trojans.

"You would like to hope [that this game will be a turning point]," senior linebacker Courtney Watson said. "[We want] to go out [next week] and just play as great as we did [tonight] and be able to build off of that, to not slip for next week." □

Southern Cal



WHAT AN ARM Irish quarterback Brady Quinn launches a pass down field towards his receivers. Quinn passed for 168 yards on the game and threw for a touchdown.

Repeat Offenders

by Gerard Meskill

Notre Dame had waited a year for this day to arrive. After high hopes for a BCS bowl bid and a 10-1 record were smashed in a defeat at the hands of the Trojans last year, the Irish awaited another shot against hated Southern Cal, this time within a friendlier environment.

But even with the home field, a passing quarterback in true freshman Brady Quinn, and another spring to refine coach Tyrone Willingham's West-Coast style of attack, Notre Dame failed to improve upon its 31-point margin of defeat from a year ago, as they were embarrassed 45-14.

"We're not anywhere near where I hoped or expected us to be," said Willingham.

From the opening play, fifth-ranked Southern Cal reminded the Irish that the West-Coast offense could be effective if executed by the proper personnel. The Trojans marched 80 yards in eight plays in just over two minutes, reaching the end zone without needing a third down. Quarterback Matt Leinart completed all five of his passes on the drive, throwing for 59 yards and a touchdown.

Notre Dame answered immediately, giving observers the short-lived impression that the Irish might survive a shootout

with their archrivals. Senior tailback Julius Jones carried the drive, rushing for 56 yards on four carries, including the 22-yard touchdown run that knotted the affair at 7-7.

The score placed the pressure back on the Trojans and offensive coordinator Norm Chow's complex offensive scheme. This time Southern Cal looked to the ground. After two Hershel Dennis rushes and another Leinart completion, put the Trojans into Irish territory, tailback Reggie Bush got his first touchdown, rushing 58 yards into the end zone. Once again, the Trojan offense did not require a single third down, this time needing under a minute and a half to regain the lead.

Overcome by the lightning efficiency of the Trojan juggernaut, Notre Dame turned once more to its only truly dynamic offensive threat, Julius Jones. Taking the kickoff at the Irish six, Jones maneuvered through the red sea, reaching the Trojan 43-yard line before finally being stopped. From there, Quinn picked up the slack, notching completions of 11 and 17 yards before connecting with tight end sophomore Anthony Fasano for a 2-yard touchdown pass.

With the score deadlocked once more and the Irish matching the high-powered Trojan offense drive-for-drive, it would have been hard even for Southern Cal head coach Pete Carroll to anticipate that the Southern Cal defense would shut out the Irish for the remainder of the contest.

And while the Trojan defensive front did just that, their Irish

...Southern Cal's 45 points was the most points scored by any Southern Cal team in Notre Dame stadium...

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	TROJANS
RUSHING YARDS	111	195
PASSING YARDS	163	356
FIRST DOWNS	16	29
TOTAL OFFENSE	279	551
TURNOVERS	1	1
TIME OF POSSESSION	26:30	33:30

counterparts could not. The Trojans' third possession of the game saw two third downs before Leinart hooked up with Mike Williams for a 7-yard score, giving Southern Cal a 21-14 first-quarter lead that they would never relinquish.

And Southern Cal wasn't close to done. After the Irish offense sputtered twice, first on a fourth-down attempt at the Trojan 35 and then at midfield after recovering a Leinart fumble, Southern Cal found the end zone for the fourth time in five drives, taking a 28-14 halftime lead.

The Irish took possession at the start of the third. A pass interference call got the Irish an initial first down, but they were forced to punt on the next series, as running back junior Ryan Grant failed to convert on third and two.

When the Trojans regained the football at their own 39, Leinart took the field seemingly intent to put Notre Dame away. Opening with a 21-yard completion to Williams, he led Southern Cal into the end zone in just four plays, all of which were first downs. Tight end Gregg Guenther Jr. made the 7-yard touchdown reception that effectively ended Notre Dame's hopes of a comeback.

"Things didn't flow well in the second half," said Irish sophomore center Bob Morton. "We have to get better."

Shell-shocked, the Irish failed to gain field position on the next drive, committing a substitution infraction before punting the ball 33 yards to the Southern Cal 47. The Trojans, who had scored all game regardless of field position, took advantage of their best starting position of the night. An illegal shift on second and goal from the 6 likely prevented the Trojans from reaching the end zone for the sixth time, but they managed to tack on a field goal, extending their lead to 38-14.

"In the second half, we weren't able to drive the football or stop them," said Willingham. "When you don't do those things, the game does get away from you."

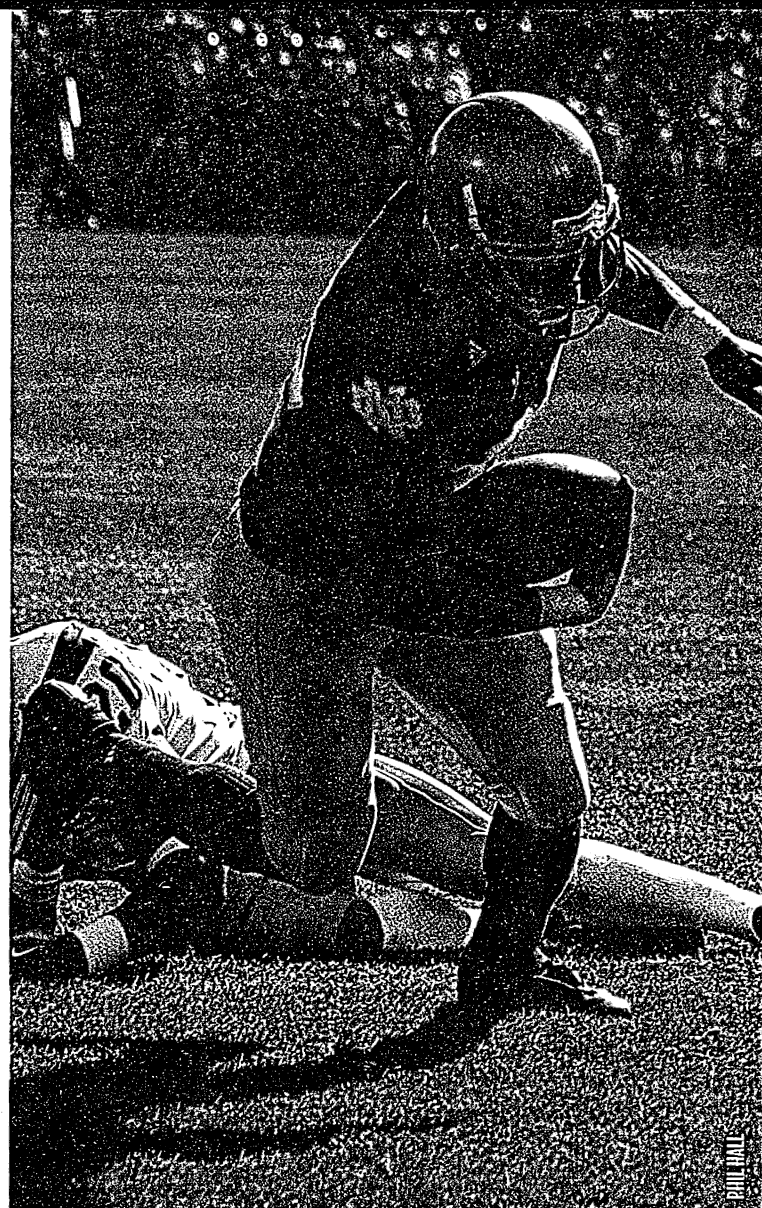
Mercifully, the Irish made it through the rest of the third quarter without further damage. In fact, they almost mounted a scoring drive of their own, as they reached the Trojan 16-yard line before Jones failed to convert on fourth and one.

Facing a long field, Southern Cal's offense capped its masterful performance with a crushing 13-play, 6:46 touchdown drive that finalized a 45-14 massacre. In that final drive, Leinart threw for another 52 yards, giving him a total of 351 passing yards and four touchdowns for the game.

"It was fun out there today," said Leinart. "I thought we came out firing and got the job done. Everyone was out there doing their job and that made everything easy."

But the contest was a bitter pill for Notre Dame.

"They definitely came out and played harder today. The better team won today," said Jones. "It's definitely hard to take a loss like this."



POWER FOOTBALL Playing more like a fullback than a tailback, Julius Jones pushes past the Trojan defense for a 22-yard touchdown run.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Southern Cal	21	7	10	7	45
Notre Dame	14	0	0	0	14

1st Quarter

USC Colbert 18 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 12:25; 7-0 USC

ND Jones 22 run (Fitzpatrick kick), 8:34; 7-7

USC Bush 58 run (Killeen kick), 7:07; 14-7 USC

ND Fasano 2 pass from Quinn (Fitzpatrick kick), 4:02; 14-14

USC Williams 7 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 0:37; 21-14 USC

2nd Quarter

USC Dennis 3 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 5:32; 28-14 USC

3rd Quarter

USC Guenther 7 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 11:09; 35-14 USC

USC FG Killeen 29, 6:58; 38-14 USC

4th Quarter

USC Dennis 2 run (Killeen kick), 5:38; 45-14 USC

As the fourth lopsided defeat since Willingham's blistering 8-0 start last year, such losses are becoming easier for Irish fans to anticipate, though they are no more easily accepted. □

Boston College



NOTRE DAME	25
BOSTON COL.	27

1-2-3, STILL ON HIS FEET Tight end Anthony Fasano withstands the tackles of Boston College's entire secondary after catching a pass by Brady Quinn.

Foiled Again

by Jimmy Atkinson

It cut through the Boston evening air like a knife going straight through Notre Dame's heart. The ball sailed off Eagle kicker Sandro Sciortino's foot and through the up-rights 26 yards away with only 38 seconds left. That kick ended the Irish's 19-point comeback and gave Boston College a 27-25 victory, their third consecutive over the Irish.

At the same time last year, Boston College had ended Notre Dame's undefeated season and all but ruined any hopes of an Irish run at the national championship. This year's game at Alumni Stadium put an end to almost any hope the Irish had left of making a bowl game. The Irish were then winless in eight of their last 12 games, the first of which came a year ago in South Bend against the Eagles.

With the loss to Boston College, the Irish dropped to 2-5. The Eagles improved their overall record to 5-3, while still 1-2 in Big East play.

Despite getting off to a late start and trailing 24-6 late in the third quarter, head coach Tyrone Willingham said that his team did not come out as tentatively as they had against Southern Cal a week earlier. "I thought today we played a lot better in a lot of cases," he said. "There were some things we

didn't execute as well as we would have liked to early. But I think we got our feet under us and started playing a lot better."

The Eagles, however, looked like the far superior team through much of the first three quarters, outscoring the Irish 24-3 after Notre Dame's field goal on the opening possession. Boston College quarterback Quinton Porter completed 13 of 25 passes for 199 yards and one touchdown.

Late in the third quarter, the Irish were down 24-6 until freshman quarterback Brady Quinn led his team downfield by completing six consecutive passes, including a 21-yarder to sophomore wide receiver Maurice Stovall on fourth and six. On the following play, Quinn hit senior wide receiver Omar Jenkins for a 10-yard touchdown pass to pull the Irish within 12. Willingham decided to go for two, so the Irish would need only a touchdown and a field goal to tie. The attempt, however, failed and proved to be critical.

On Boston College's ensuing possession, a poor snap on a punt attempt went awry. Eagle punter Jeff Gomulinski attempted to run but was taken down at his own 23-yard line by Irish junior linebacker Corey Mays. On the very next play, the Irish further closed the gap as Quinn hit Stovall at the goal line for a 23-yard touchdown pass. A successful extra point brought the Irish within five points, 24-19 with 12:50 left.

Much later in the fourth quarter, still down by five, Irish

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	EAGLES
RUSHING YARDS	47	147
PASSING YARDS	350	199
FIRST DOWNS	20	18
TOTAL OFFENSE	397	346
TURNOVERS	2	1
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:23	31:37

sophomore fullback Nate Schiccatano ran through the Eagles' punt formation virtually untouched and laid his forearm into the ball as it left Gomulinski's foot. "I just went in and I saw both defenders that were supposed to block me each go out and I just hit the seam and went for the block," Schiccatano said. "They put a hand on me, but I got by."

The ball rolled back to the Eagles' 25-yard line and there was picked up by junior cornerback Carlos Campbell, who ran in for the go-ahead touchdown. Another two-point conversion attempt was no good, but with 3:34 remaining, the Irish led 25-24.

As it turns out, Willingham's decision to go for two points on the first touchdown came back to haunt the Irish, as it left open a window for Boston College to kick a field goal to win the game, instead of just sending it to overtime. "I thought that was a natural process to go for [two], just the way the score would work out," Willingham said. Unfortunately for the Irish, both attempts were unsuccessful and ended up costing them dearly.

The Notre Dame defense, which had held Boston College scoreless in the fourth quarter thus far, allowed the Eagles to march 43 yards down the field in nine plays to set up the game-winning field goal. The key play, however, came during the kickoff after Notre Dame's go-ahead touchdown by Campbell. Cornerback Will Blackmon took the kickoff at his own seven-yard line and returned it 42 yards to his own 49-yard line, giving the Eagles the good field position they needed to get into field goal range.

The Notre Dame defense was dejected after giving up play after play to allow Boston College to work its way down to the Irish 8-yard line.

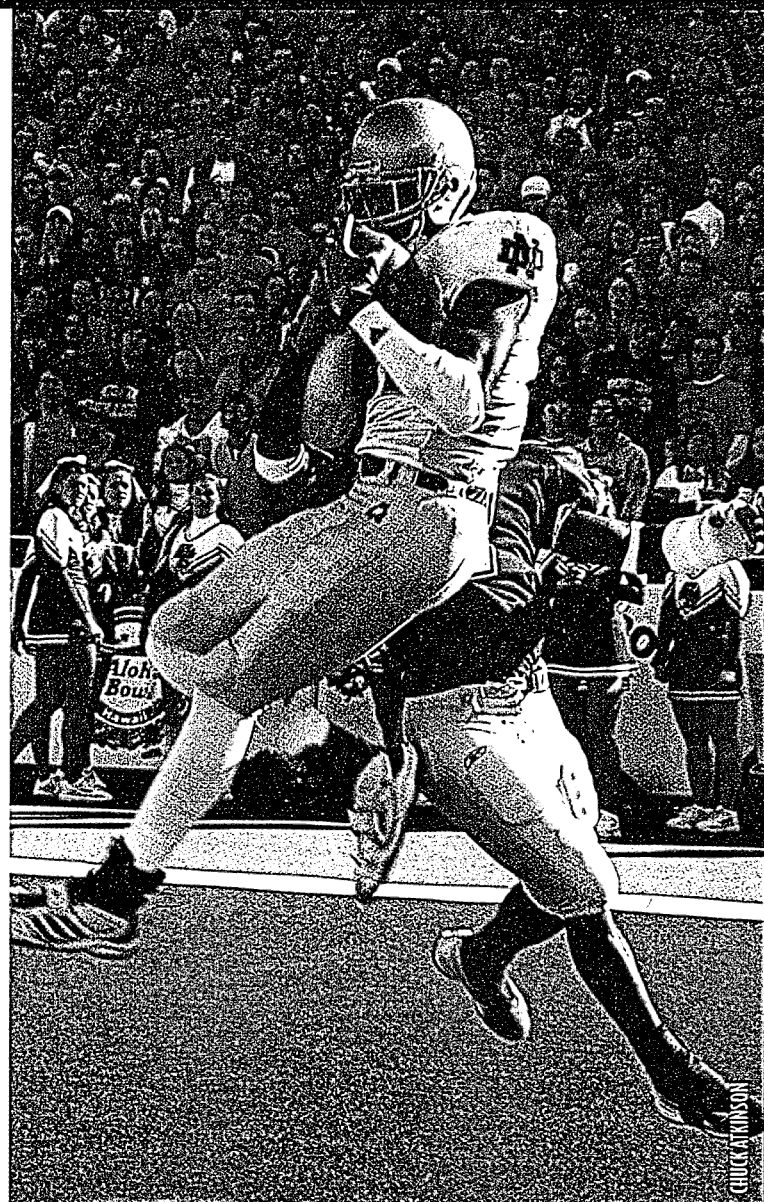
"It's disheartening to go out there and get a chance to win the ballgame for your team and not able to make enough plays," senior linebacker Courtney Watson said. "It's very disheartening especially for a defense that prides itself in trying to win games for this team."

The game-winning field goal for the Eagles left the Irish with only 38 seconds on the clock. Quinn was able to complete a pass on fourth and ten to McKnight at Boston College's 32 yard-line. But time expired.

"Really, I just felt like we ran out of time," Quinn said. "If we have ten more seconds, I think we have our field goal team out there after Rhema caught that."

"Too little, too late," Willingham said. "We did some great things but we put ourselves behind the 8-ball and we can't do that and expect to win every time out. Once you have the lead, then you have to find a way to hold onto it. And we didn't make enough plays on their final drive to stop them."

Stop they did not. For the third consecutive year, a



HIGH-FLYING TOUCHDOWN Brady Quinn hits 67" wide receiver Maurice Stovall from 23 yards out for a fourth-quarter touchdown.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	3	3	6	13	25
Boston College	7	7	10	3	27

1st Quarter

ND FG Fitzpatrick 38, 12:29; 3-0 ND

BC Kashetta 26 pass from Porter (Sciortino kick), 0:21; 7-3 BC

2nd Quarter

BC Dodd 4 run (Sciortino kick), 11:21, 14-3 BC

ND FG Fitzpatrick 27, 6:34, 14-6 BC

3rd Quarter

BC FG Sciortino 30, 9:12; 17-6 BC

BC Porter 1 run (Sciortino kick) 24-6 BC

ND Jenkins 10 pass from Quinn (Quinn pass failed), 0:03; 24-12 BC

4th Quarter

ND Stovall 23 pass from Quinn (Fitzpatrick kick), 12:42; 24-19 BC

ND Campbell 25 blocked punt return (Jones rush failed), 3:34; 25-24 ND

BC FG Sciortino 26, 0:38; 27-25 BC

Boston College team sent the Irish back to the locker room shaking their heads, only to wait for next year. □

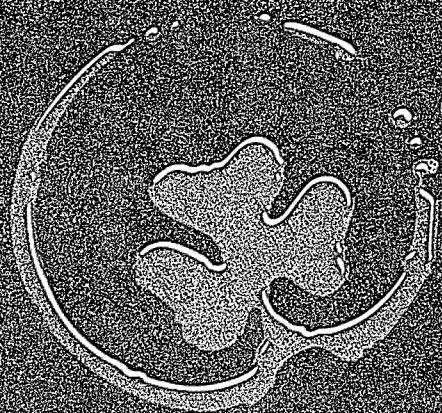
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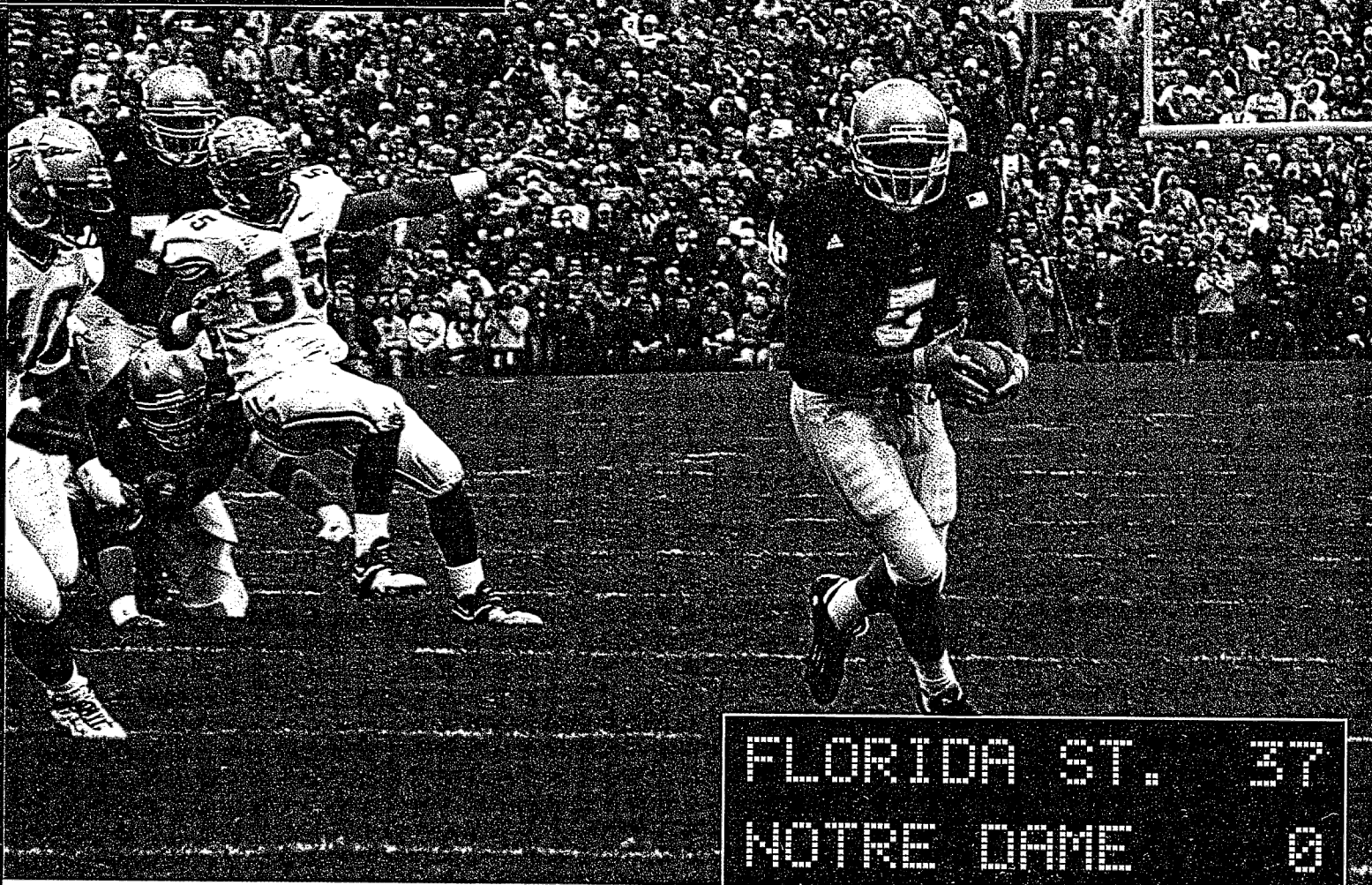
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Florida State



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FALSE HOPE After catching Brady Quinn's pass, Rhema McKnight sees some running room on the left side. The Irish were shut down offensively for the second time this season.

Rix's Revenge

by Christopher Meskill

Last year, Notre Dame's "road warriors" marched into Doak Campbell Stadium in Tallahassee, Fla., and embarrassed the No. 11 Florida State Seminoles, 34-24. Not only did the Irish beat the Seminoles, they completely decimated their five-star recruit quarterback, Chris Rix. Notre Dame picked Rix off, forced him to fumble, and knocked him out of the game in the fourth quarter. Florida State head coach Bobby Bowden called the Irish "serial killers" for their ability to force turnovers. This year, Florida State came into South Bend as the No. 5 team in the country at 7-1, and Rix came in with something to prove. And he did, connecting for 17 of 31 pass attempts for 327 yards and three touchdowns, beating the Irish 37-0.

"The play of their quarterback, I thought, was excellent," Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham said. "I thought there were times we had him sacked and let him out and he made big plays and threw it up and allowed their guys to make the play."

Rix was not the only player on top of his game. Florida State wide receiver Craphonso Thorpe had seven catches for 217

yards and two touchdowns.

The Seminole victory over the Irish was the second-worst Irish defeat at Notre Dame Stadium. It was also the first time since 1978 that the Irish were shut out at home. The loss brought the Irish to 2-6 on the season, their worst record since 1963; FSU improved to 8-1.

On the opening drive, Rix completed passes to Thorpe and fullback B.J. Dean to move the ball to the 30-yard line. Then Rix and running back Greg Jones rushed for a total of 7 yards and left the ball on the 23-yard line. Kicker Xavier Beitia hit the field goal attempt from 40 yards out to give Florida State a lead it would hold all game long.

The ensuing Notre Dame drive lasted a little over a minute. Freshman quarterback Brady Quinn came out throwing, but was unable to get a first down, and the Irish were forced to punt.

The Florida State offense came back onto the field, ready to strike again. Rix came up throwing on the first three downs. The first two passes were incomplete, but his third pass hit Thorpe for 51 yards. Rix then decided to run the ball, getting 4 yards before being taken down by senior middle linebacker Courtney Watson. Seminole running back Leon Washington rushed for 12 yards before Rix threw a six-yard touchdown pass to wide

...THIS WAS FSU'S FIRST VICTORY AT ND IN 23 YEARS...C. WATSON RECORDED DOUBLE-DIGIT TACKLES IN 6 OF 7 GAMES

Play By Numbers

	IRISH	SEMINOLES
RUSHING YARDS	146	98
PASSING YARDS	175	327
FIRST DOWNS	15	18
TOTAL OFFENSE	321	425
TURNOVERS	3	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:18	28:42

receiver P.K. Sam. Florida State increased the lead to 10-0.

Because the Irish pass attack was failing, the Irish tried the running game behind their tailbacks, senior Julius Jones and junior Ryan Grant. Once again, the Florida State defense limited the attack, allowing only one first down. The Irish were again forced to punt.

On first down, Rix went to the air, intending to pass to Thorpe. Rix, however, completed his pass to Irish senior cornerback Vontez Duff, who ran the interception 55 yards to the Florida State 9-yard line. Quinn attempted to put the ball in the end zone a number of occasions, but various penalties pushed the Irish back each time they advanced. On fourth and goal, junior kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick attempted a 24-yard field goal, only to be blocked by safety B.J. Ward.

With the ball on their own 13-yard line, Seminole tailback Lorenzo Booker rushed for a few yards. Rix then completed two enormous passes, one 48 yards to Sam and the other 35 yards to Thorpe for the touchdown. Florida State mounted a 17-0 lead in the first quarter.

The onslaught slowed up in the second quarter as the Irish kept the Seminoles out of the end zone. However, Florida State got within field goal range twice during the quarter, and Beitia hit both.

On the first drive, Rix completed a pass to Thorpe, putting the Seminoles on the Notre Dame 46-yard line. A Notre Dame pass interference penalty moved the ball fifteen more yards, to the 31-yard line. The Seminoles gained a few more yards before reaching fourth down and giving Beitia the green light on a 44-yard field goal attempt. Beitia hit the kick, making the score 20-0.

The second drive was sparked by a number of passing and rushing plays by Rix, giving Beitia an easy 22-yard field goal. Florida State increased the score to 23-0 going into halftime.

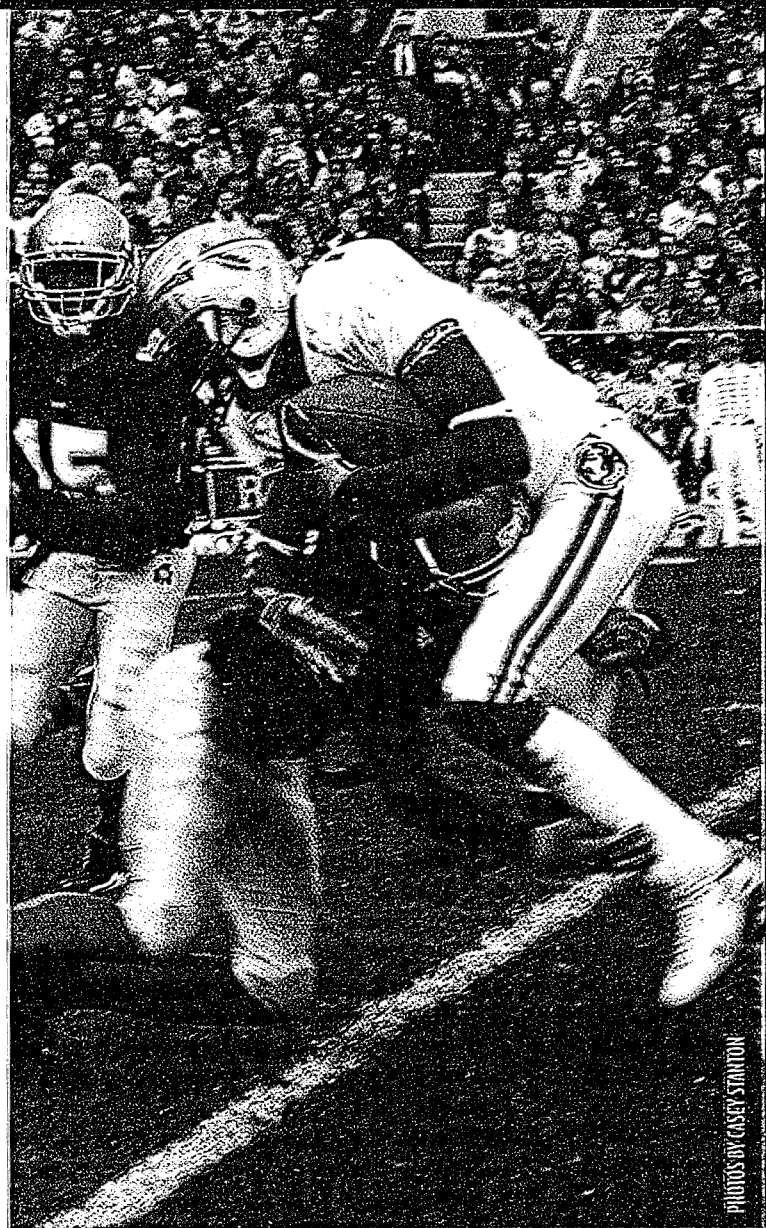
In the third quarter, Florida State only added seven more points to their lead. After Florida State's nose guard Jeff Womble intercepted a pass by Quinn, Rix released a 38-yard touchdown pass to Thorpe, burying the Irish, 30-0.

The score remained the same into the middle of the fourth quarter. On a Notre Dame drive, Seminole Leroy Smith intercepted Quinn's pass at the Florida State 10-yard line and returned it for a 90-yard touchdown run. The interception was the exclamation point at the end of the Seminole statement, Florida State had crushed the Irish, 37-0.

Although the game was an overwhelming defeat, Bowden noted that Notre Dame is a school that means tradition.

"It's been 10 years since we've been here. Our 1993 team was here and they learned what tradition is. I sure tried to tell them what this university means to college football."

Bowden also noted that Quinn is similar to how Rix was

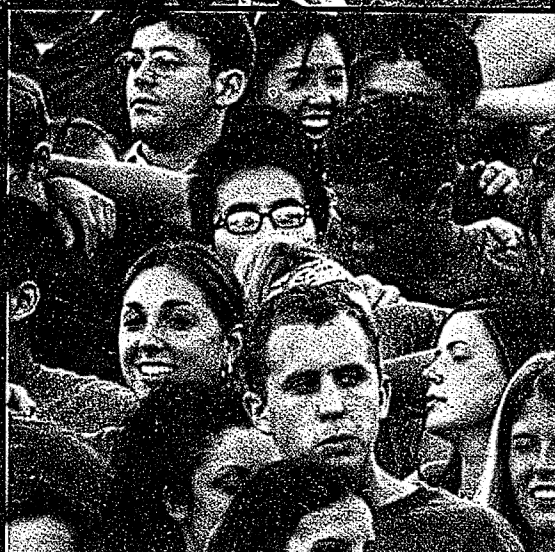


SLAMMED Florida State's Grapnonso Thorpe gets hit hard after a completion from quarterback Chris Rix.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Florida State	17	6	7	7	37
Notre Dame	0	0	0	0	0
1st Quarter					
FSU	FG Beitia 40, 10:42; 3-0 FSU				
FSU	Sam 6 pass from Rix (Beitia kick), 8:01; 10-0 FSU				
FSU	Thorpe 35 pass from Rix (Beitia kick), 0:39; 17-0 FSU				
2nd Quarter					
FSU	FG Beitia 44, 9:49; 20-0 FSU				
FSU	FG Beitia 22, 0:55; 23-0 FSU				
3rd Quarter					
FSU	Thorpe 38 pass from Rix (Beitia kick), 11:34; 30-0 FSU				
4th Quarter					
FSU	Smith 90 interception return (Beitia kick), 8:59; 37-0 FSU				

when he was learning the game. They both threw a lot of interceptions because of some poor decisions. If Quinn matures and performs like Rix did in this game, the Irish will be fortunate indeed. □

The Fans

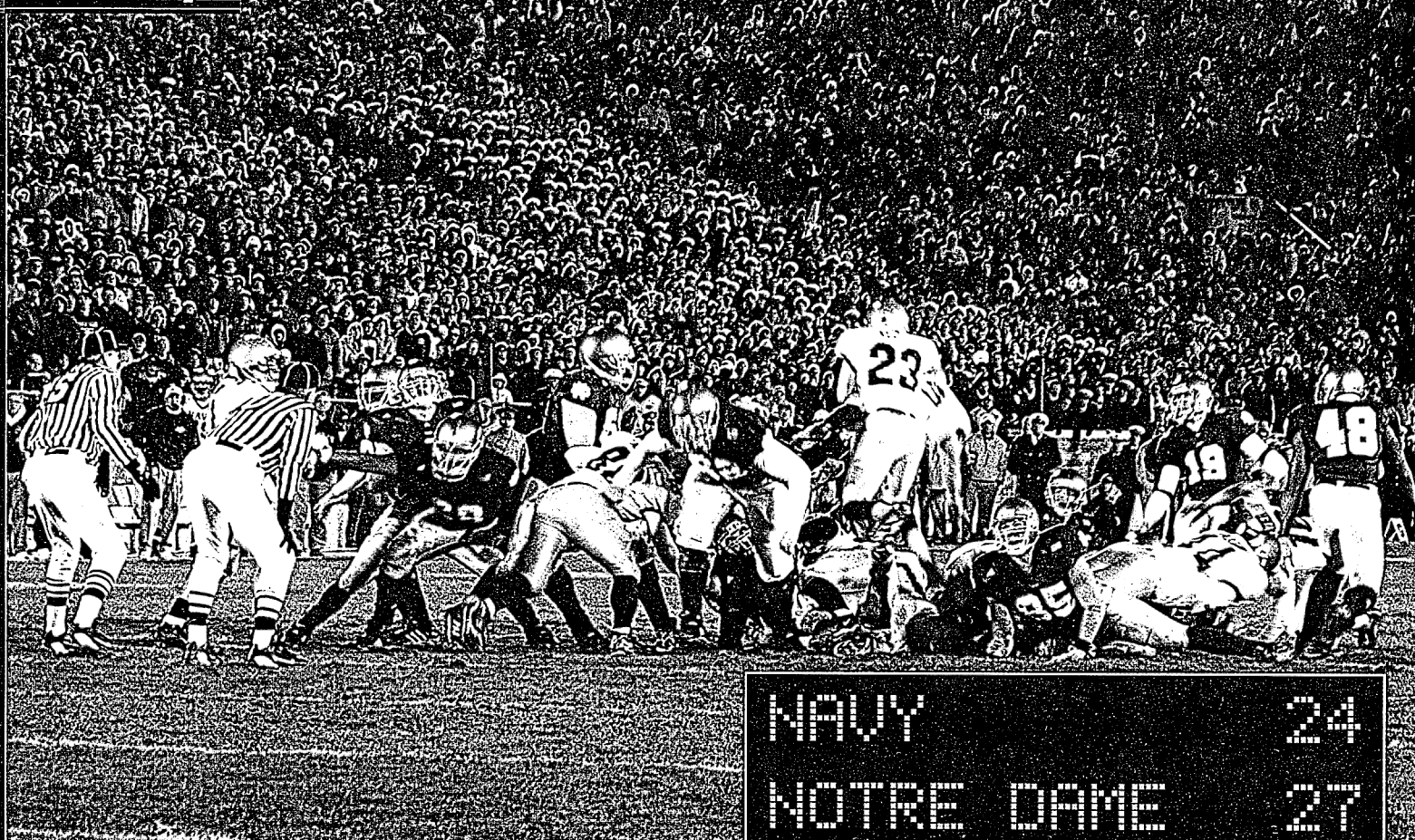


IRISH





Navy



NAVY	24
NOTRE DAME	27

ALMOST BOOTED AWAY Kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick (19) watches his time-expiring, game-winning field goal soar through the uprights — and Navy safety Josh Smith's (23) fingers.

Barely Staying Afloat

by Christopher Meskill

Forty — a number that embodied the very last moments of the game. A 40-year winning streak was in the balance, depending on a 40-yard field goal attempt by junior place-kicker, D.J. Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick lined up for the kick once; Navy called a timeout. Fitzpatrick lined up for a second time; Navy called another timeout. Fitzpatrick lined up for a third time — and the third time was the charm. After three appearances, two timeouts and safety Josh Smith's nearly blocking the kick, Fitzpatrick split the uprights and broke the tie, giving the Irish a last-second victory, 27-24. But it wasn't easy.

Head coach Tyrone Willingham gave Fitzpatrick an opportunity to redeem himself after missing two attempts earlier in the game. "We felt confident in his abilities and that he could make the kick," Willingham said. "I did not tell him anything really before the kick. I just told him to not be anxious and stay patient."

The game, however, was not won on one play. Senior tailback Julius Jones carried the ball 33 times in the game for 221 yards and two touchdowns, becoming only the fourth running back in Notre Dame history to run for 200 or more yards in

two games in one season.

"They are so much bigger and more physical than we are," Navy head coach Paul Johnson said. "We had a lot of guys up there, but at times we still couldn't get them stopped."

While the Irish have become accustomed to beating the Naval Academy year after year, they also have become used to trailing their perennial underdog as of late. In four of the last six matches between the two, the victor has been decided by points scored in the last six minutes of play.

On the first drive of the game, the Irish pulled within the 32-yard line. On fourth and seven, however, Fitzpatrick attempted a 50-yard field goal, wide right. The missed kick was not costly, though. Senior safety Garron Bible and junior safety Quentin Burrell forced Navy running back Eric Roberts to fumble the ball. Despite recovering the fumble, Navy was forced to punt it away. After gaining some short yardage, the Irish caught a break, as Jones broke a 48-yard run into the end zone to take the early lead, 7-0.

Navy responded quickly. Fitzpatrick's kickoff went out-of-bounds, putting the ball on the 35-yard line. Tony Lane rushed for 65 yards into the end zone on the first play, to even the score at 7-7. The scoring drive lasted 12 seconds.

Navy began the second quarter with the ball. With running backs Lane, Trey Hines and Kyle Eckel, and quarterback Craig Candeto all contributing to the ground game, Navy pulled

...Notre Dame has beaten the Navy Midshipmen for the last 40 consecutive meetings, an NCAA record.

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	MIDSHIPMEN
RUSHING YARDS	280	238
PASSING YARDS	137	46
FIRST DOWNS	24	14
TOTAL OFFENSE	417	284
TURNOVERS	0	1
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:51	29:09

within field goal range. Kicker Eric Rolfs easily hit the 35-yard attempt to put his Middies ahead, 10-7.

After the Navy scoring drive, both defenses stepped up, and possession of the ball swung back and forth between the two teams. In nine minutes of play, Fitzpatrick missed a field goal, Eckel turned over the ball, and both offenses were stopped. With only three minutes left in the half, the Irish had the ball and looked to take a lead into the locker room.

Since Jones had been stopped on the previous drive, Quinn took matters into his own hands. With passes complete to sophomore wide receiver Rhema McKnight and senior tight end Jared Clark, the Irish planted the ball on the 2-yard line. Quinn's first attempt at the end zone was incomplete to sophomore wide receiver Maurice Stovall. Then, Quinn passed to the other side, hitting McKnight for a touchdown pass with 14 seconds left in the half. The Irish went into halftime leading 14-10.

The score stayed the same until the middle of the third quarter. On another strong rushing drive, the Midshipmen moved the ball to the 5-yard line before fullback Eckel punched it in for a touchdown. Navy took the lead, 17-14.

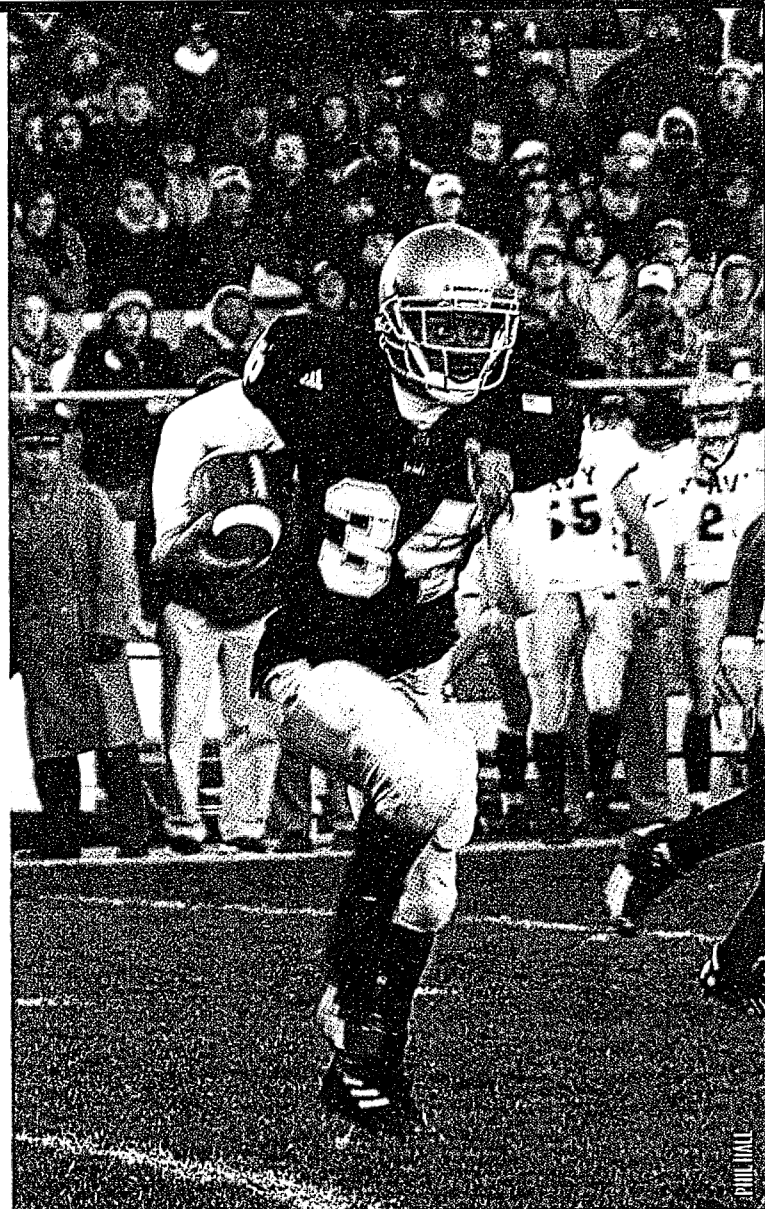
Notre Dame responded swiftly, letting Quinn and Jones carry the offense. Quinn completed passes to Clark and sophomore fullback Josh Schmidt, and Jones carried the ball three times to put the ball on the 12-yard line. Willingham opted to let Jones carry the ball once more, and it paid off as he rushed for his second touchdown of the game. The Irish took the lead back and carried it into the fourth quarter, 21-17.

While the game was wild all along, the fourth quarter was when it really became a great football game. Navy quickly got possession of the football and ran it down the field. Stopped at the 1-yard line, Coach Johnson decided to let Eckel take the ball once again. With the power of a bull, Eckel crashed through the Irish defense and gave his boys the lead yet again, 24-21.

Down by three with less than six minutes left in the game, Fitzpatrick started to shine. The Irish drove the ball down field, but were stopped at the 13-yard line. Despite missing his first two field goal attempts, Fitzpatrick would get another shot from 30 yards out, this one to tie it. Fitzpatrick nailed it, tying the score at 24 all.

Navy got the football back and attempted to rush past the Irish line. Standing their ground, the Irish held them, and so Navy decided to punt on fourth and five — a questionable move with only a few minutes left in the game.

"I felt like if we punted them down there deep, we had held them a couple times down there," said Johnson. "If you hold them back, we got the win. We might get the ball on our side of the field, and you only have to make a first down or two to be kicking a field goal. If you go for it there and don't make it, they only need a couple of first downs."

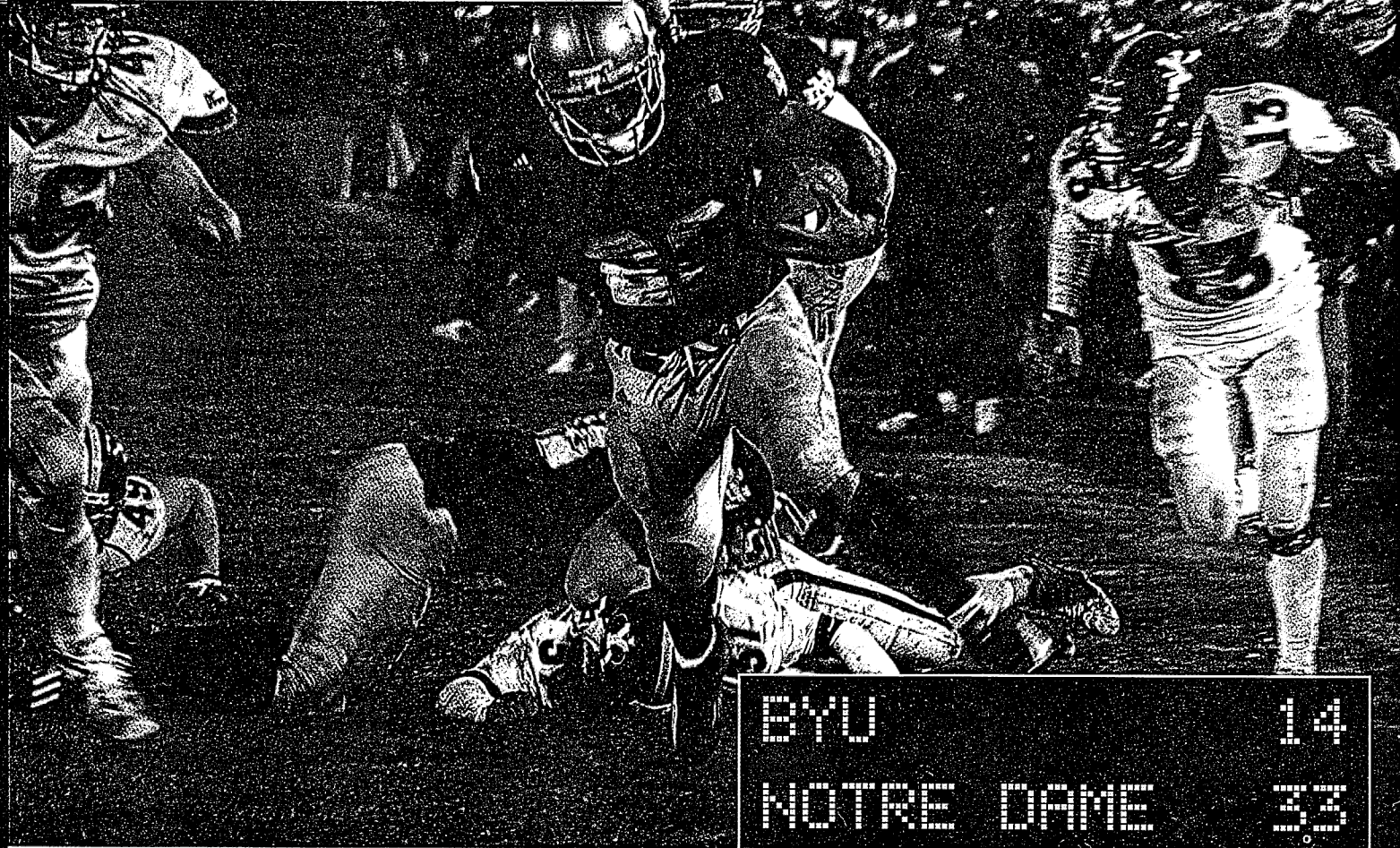


NO FAIR CATCH Vontez Duff returns a punt. Duff returned four punts in the game against Navy for a total of 19 yards.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Navy	7	3	7	7	24
Notre Dame	7	7	7	6	27
1st Quarter					
ND Jones 48 run (Fitzpatrick kick), 5:06; 7-0 ND					
NAVY Lane 65 run (Rolfs kick), 4:54; 7-7					
2nd Quarter					
NAVY FG Rolfs 35, 11:45; 10-7 NAVY					
ND McKnight 2 pass from Quinn (Fitzpatrick kick), 0:14; 14-10 ND					
3rd Quarter					
NAVY Eckel 5 run (Rolfs kick), 5:50; 17-14 NAVY					
ND Jones 12 (Fitzgerald kick), 2:35; 21-17 ND					
4th Quarter					
NAVY Eckel 1 run (Rolfs kick), 9:53; 24-21 NAVY					
ND FG Fitzgerald 30, 5:10; 24-24					
ND FG Fitzgerald 40, 0:00; 27-24 ND					

The Irish, however, successfully drove down field, and with Fitzpatrick's game-winning field goal, the rest is now history ... a part of 40 years of history. □

Brigham Young



CAN'T BE STOPPED Julius Jones runs past several Brigham Young defenders en route to his third and final touchdown of the night. Jones finished with 161 yards rushing on 35 carries.

Bring 'Em On

by Chris Kelly

Heading into their last game in Notre Dame Stadium, this year's senior class didn't seem to have much on the line. With national championship hopes smashed three games into the season and the chances to make a respectable bowl game eliminated by midseason, the media had pegged the Irish into the "playing for pride" category. But head coach Tyrone Willingham didn't agree. "I still believe there's something out there for us," he said after his team's 33-14 victory over Brigham Young, referring to the possibility of the Irish's winning out to finish at 6-6 and thus being bowl-eligible.

The 19-point spread was the season's first double-digit margin of victory for the Irish. "It's nice to look up at the scoreboard going into the fourth quarter and see that we are up by a good amount — not to be in a 'mayday' situation," said senior offensive tackle Jim Molinaro. The comfortable lead was especially nice in the face of the previous week's squeaker against Navy.

The Cougars took the field with a highly touted passing offense that was expected to give the Irish secondary trouble. But the Notre Dame defense came out to a fast start, forcing turnovers on the first two Cougar possessions. The second was con-

verted into a 27-yard field goal by junior kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick. Brigham Young answered with an 18-yard touchdown run by running back Reynaldo Brathwaite. Brathwaite started running the right side of his line, and after the linebackers committed, he cut to the middle of the field. After seeing senior linebacker Courtney Watson a few feet away, Brathwaite froze and then cut to his left, beating all remaining defenders to reach the end zone. The drive was fueled by a 46-yard pass from quarterback Matt Berry to wide receiver Justin Jory. Fortunately for the Irish, those two big plays seemed to be the exception and not the rule, as throughout the first quarter the Irish front four were out-muscling the Brigham Young offensive line and Watson was making his way into the backfield easily and often.

The Irish then added two more Fitzpatrick field goals that were separated by the two teams' exchanging punts for four series. The Cougars avoided a catastrophe on one of those punts when the ball hit the helmet of a Brigham Young blocker and squirted to the right of punt returner Toby Christiansen, who pounced on the ball to save possession. But unfortunately for the Cougars, the two field goals gave the Irish a lead they would not surrender the rest of the game.

The Irish were finally able to break out of their field goal trend right before halftime. They started a drive with just over two minutes left on their own 48-yard line, and with the help of

...The Cougars failed to gain a first down from the beginning of the 2nd qtr until the early 4th qtr.

Play By Numbers

	COUGARS	IRISH
RUSHING YARDS	53	204
PASSING YARDS	250	156
FIRST DOWNS	13	19
TOTAL OFFENSE	303	219
TURNOVERS	4	1
TIME OF POSSESSION	23:04	36:56

two 15-yard penalties against the Cougars, they mounted a drive that resulted in senior running back Julius Jones' plunging in from the 1-yard line with 25 seconds left in the half.

Jones would strike again on the second Irish possession after halftime. With the help of three key blocks from his fullback, left tackle and wideout-in-motion, Jones burst through a seam in the Cougar defense for a 23-yard score. This extended the Irish lead to 23-7 and put the game out of Brigham Young's reach.

The Irish that came out of this scoring drive with freshman quarterback Brady Quinn's 33-yard toss to sophomore wide receiver Rhema McKnight. The longest pass of Quinn's day, the play seemed to rouse the freshman signal caller from a slump.

Quinn threw his only interception of the day at the end of the third quarter, but the Irish defense continued their stellar performance by stopping the Cougars from getting a first down after the turnover and forcing them to punt. Both Irish punter Fitzpatrick and Cougar punter Matt Payne would finish with six attempts on the day. Fitzpatrick averaged 34.3 yards per punt with a long of 41 yards. After the game, he admitted that the weather had an adverse effect on his performance. "It was just a bad day at the office for punting," he said.

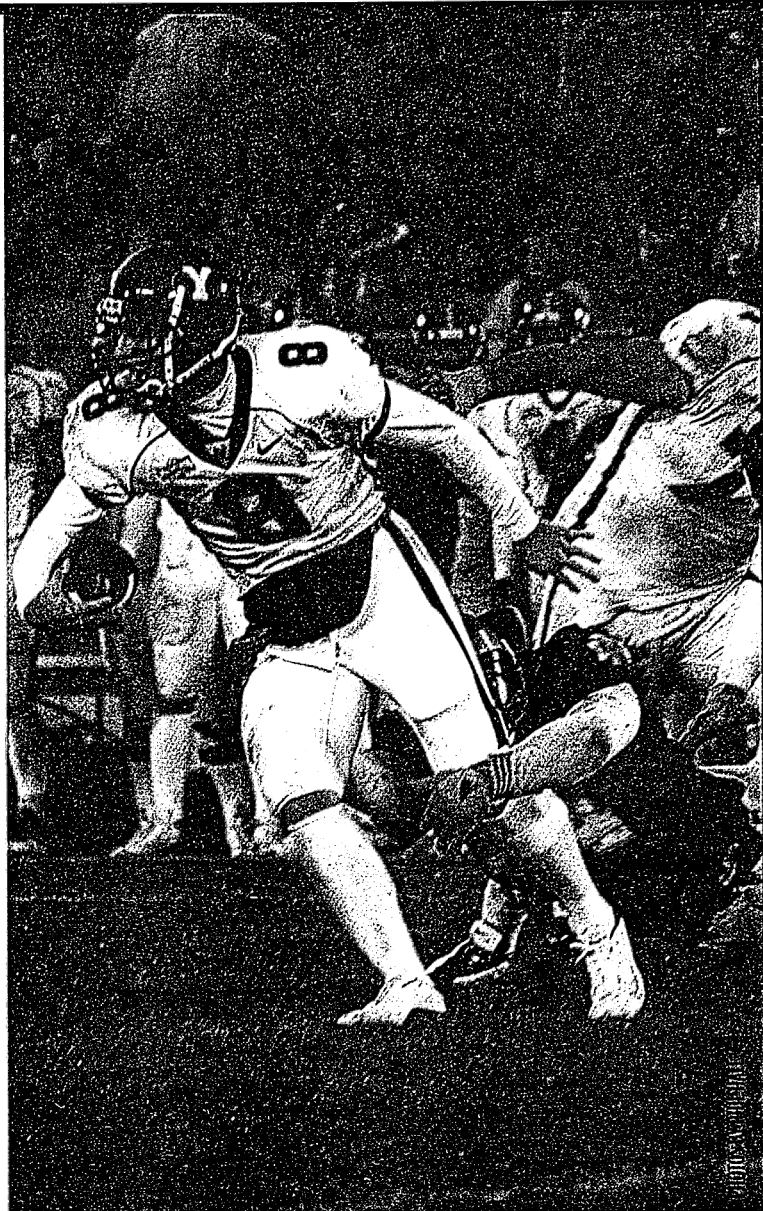
Both Jones and the Irish defense continued to play well in the fourth quarter. Jones added the final touchdown of the game and played a key role in another drive that ended in Fitzpatrick's fourth field goal of the day.

The Irish run defense continued to shut down the Cougar backfield. Jones' total of 161 rushing yards easily surpassed the entire Brigham Young running corps, which tallied 53 yards. Jones proved to be too physical for the Cougar defense; he was constantly bouncing off tacklers and thus gained a significant portion of his yards after contact.

As expected, Brigham Young outperformed the Irish through the air: Berry completed 17 passes for 231 yards, compared to Quinn's connecting 15 times for 156 yards.

The defense forced four turnovers in a game for the first time since their October 2002 tilt with Florida State. Senior linebacker Derek Curry credited Willingham's staff with the defense's solid play. "Our coaches put us in great positions to make plays. We knew pretty much everything they were going to do. It was our job to go out and execute," he said. But Willingham believed the offense still had much room for improvement, saying that the four Irish field goals should have been touchdowns.

The Notre Dame seniors were very glad to leave their home stadium on such a positive note but were still focused on the remainder of the season. "You kind of get to look back and stare at the stadium for the last time. It's kind of emotional, but the season is not over yet," Molinaro said after the game. With the

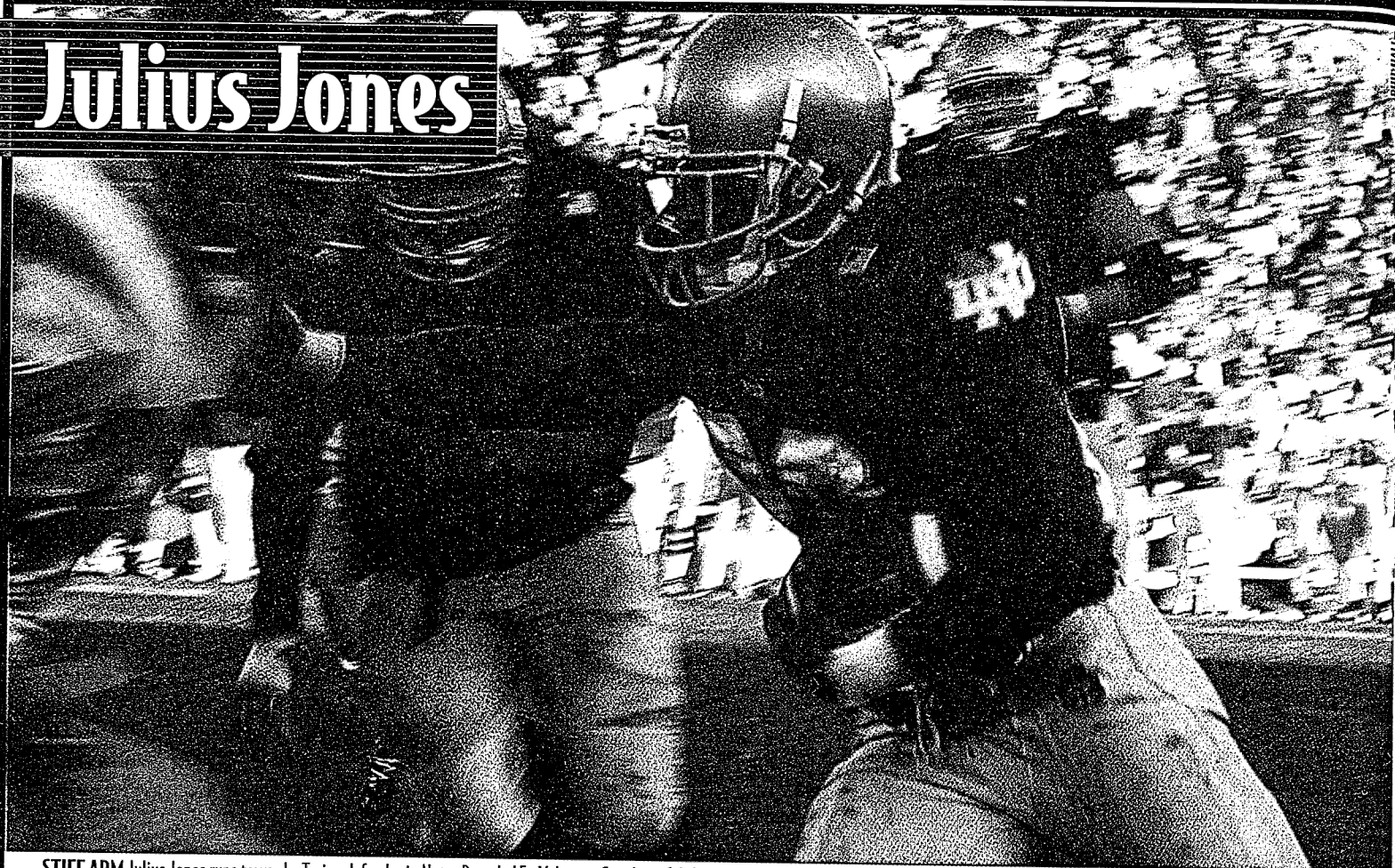


SACK MASTER Justin Tuck pulls down Brigham Young quarterback Matt Berry in the third quarter. Tuck finished the season sixth in the nation in sacks with 1.13 per game.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
BYU	7	0	0	7	14
Notre Dame	6	10	7	10	33
1st Quarter					
ND	FG Fitzpatrick 27, 7:38; 3-0 ND				
BYU	Brathwaite 18 run (Payne kick), 6:17; 7-3 BYU				
ND	FG Fitzpatrick 31, 0:56; 7-6 BYU				
2nd Quarter					
ND	FG Fitzpatrick 34, 3:38; 9-7 ND				
ND	Jones 1 run (Fitzpatrick kick), 0:25; 16-7 ND				
3rd Quarter					
ND	Jones 23 run (Fitzpatrick kick), 11:31; 23-7 ND				
4th Quarter					
ND	FG Fitzpatrick 38, 12:23; 26-7 ND				
BYU	Berry 1 run, (Payne kick), 7:27; 26-14 ND				
ND	Jones 13 run (Fitzpatrick kick), 0:47; 33-14 ND				

slight chances of a bowl game still lingering around, Notre Dame was not about to be content with this victory; they were ready to move on and try to finish the season with two more wins. □

Julius Jones



STIFF ARM Julius Jones runs toward a Trojan defender in Notre Dame's 45-14 loss to Southern Cal. Jones amassed 1,268 yards on the season and was named team MVP at the postseason banquet.

Catch - 22

by Chris Kelly

Imagine what could have been. Imagine if star senior running back Julius Jones had been in an Irish uniform when the undefeated Notre Dame squad took on Boston College last fall, a game the Irish lost in large part due to four fumbles by running backs Ryan Grant and Marcus Wilson. Perhaps Jones would have kept the Irish undefeated going into last year's finale against Southern Cal, virtually guaranteeing them a lucrative BCS payoff.

But Jones doesn't get caught up in "what-ifs". When talking about his well-documented missed season, he doesn't complain, he doesn't speculate and he doesn't pity himself. Jones came into this football season with the sole goal of giving a performance befitting his accomplished career at Notre Dame.

And what a bang that career started with. Getting more playing time than any of his freshman teammates, Jones spent most of his rookie season returning kickoffs and punts. In fact, he set the Irish single-season record for kick returns with 26. He was named the game MVP for his team twice, and gained 146 yards on the ground against Navy — the highest single-game total by a Notre Dame freshman in almost 25 years.

Jones entered his sophomore season with a plethora of pre-season honors, and he lived up to the hype. He led the Irish in both rushing yards and all-purpose yards, including 227 all-purpose yards against top-ranked Nebraska. Jones was also the main reason the Irish ranked third nationally in average kick

returns his sophomore season.

Although Jones continued to be the top Irish tailback and kick returner his junior season, his success was overshadowed by the poor showing by his team that year. Most of the headlines coming out of South Bend focused on the coaching staff, not on Jones or his teammates. After finishing the 2000 regular season at 9-2 and earning a Fiesta Bowl berth, the Irish stumbled out of the gates in 2001. They lost their first three games and finished at 5-6, causing head coach Bob Davie to receive his pink slip.

The misfortune of the Irish football team seemed to rub off on Jones. In the summer before his senior year, he was given very bad news: For academic reasons, he would not be able to return to Notre Dame that fall. Jones, a Film, Television and Theatre major, had fallen behind in enough classes that Notre Dame met with his parents in June of 2002, explaining to them that their son wasn't meeting Notre Dame's academic standards. Jones described his academic ineligibility in one word: "disappointment."

Notre Dame had to do without Jones, but new Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham didn't seem to be overly concerned about the loss. Asked in a pre-season press conference if he thought Jones was a team leader, Willingham answered, "No."

This is the point in the story where Jones' heart took over. Other players might simply have transferred out of a university that named them ineligible. But Jones didn't give up on Notre Dame. "I wanted to graduate and I wanted to finish here. I didn't really feel comfortable going somewhere else and leaving something that I had started. I just felt like I needed to come

back here and finish up," he said. "I didn't want to go play with any other people that I didn't really know."

He continued to attend some of the home games, but kept a low profile on his return trips to campus. "I watched every game. I was in town for some of them, but I could never come over here. I just wanted to stay low," he said. Jones admitted it was difficult to watch his former teammates get so much national attention for their unexpected success. "They were winning, and everyone looked happy. And that was the hard part — not being able to be a part of that," he said. But Jones always had faith in his return. "I knew if I took care of things I was supposed to do, then next year I could be out there playing with the team," he said.

Even though he wasn't eligible to play a down in a college game, Jones wasn't just spending his time watching the games on television. While the Irish returned to glory and the national spotlight, Jones quietly put himself through grueling workouts in Arizona with his brother Thomas Jones, an NFL player. Jones' brother was an inspirational figure for him. "I learned from him by just watching what he did," Jones said of his older brother. "My brother was a big inspiration to me, just for him being there and letting me stay out there with him." Jones also enrolled in college courses in Arizona to get back on track academically. "I wanted to come back here, and I knew I had things to take care of in order to come back," he said.

It was announced in the summer of 2003 that Jones was returning to Notre Dame. And it was clear immediately that his off-season workouts paid off. "I feel like I'm in the best shape I've ever been in," he said early in the season. Jones said that in addition to his physical workouts, he went on a strict diet, cutting fat and packing on muscles.

Those extra muscles became very evident during his first game back in a gold helmet, even though he entered the game as a backup to junior tailback Ryan Grant. After falling 19 points behind Washington State, the Irish offense fought back, thanks in large part to Jones' averaging over 6.5 yards per carry. He also tallied an impressive 19-yard touchdown run that gave the Irish their first lead of the game. On that TD run, Jones displayed everything that makes him a great back. He showed patience as he moved slowly to his right side, waiting for blockers to open up a seam; he showed physical strength by breaking tackles and bouncing off defenders; and he showed heart by stretching out his body to dive for the score, showing the world how badly he wanted to win. "I wanted to redeem myself, and I thought the only way I could do that was score," he said about the go-ahead touchdown dive.

As that run demonstrated, Jones was now a different type of running back. In previous years he relied on his speed and wasn't spectacular at breaking tackles. This season, he let defenders hit him; they just weren't going to bring him down. "He would run people over and fly through tackles and that's the type of player he is. And I think he's going to show a lot of that this year," senior quarterback Carlyle Holiday said after the Washington State game.

Jones didn't shine, however, in his next few games. As the Irish fell to three consecutive Big Ten opponents, Jones only gained 42 yards against Michigan and 33 against Michigan State. He managed only 10 yards on seven carries against Purdue, a game in which the Irish coaches let freshman quarter-

back Brady Quinn heave 59 passes in his first college start.

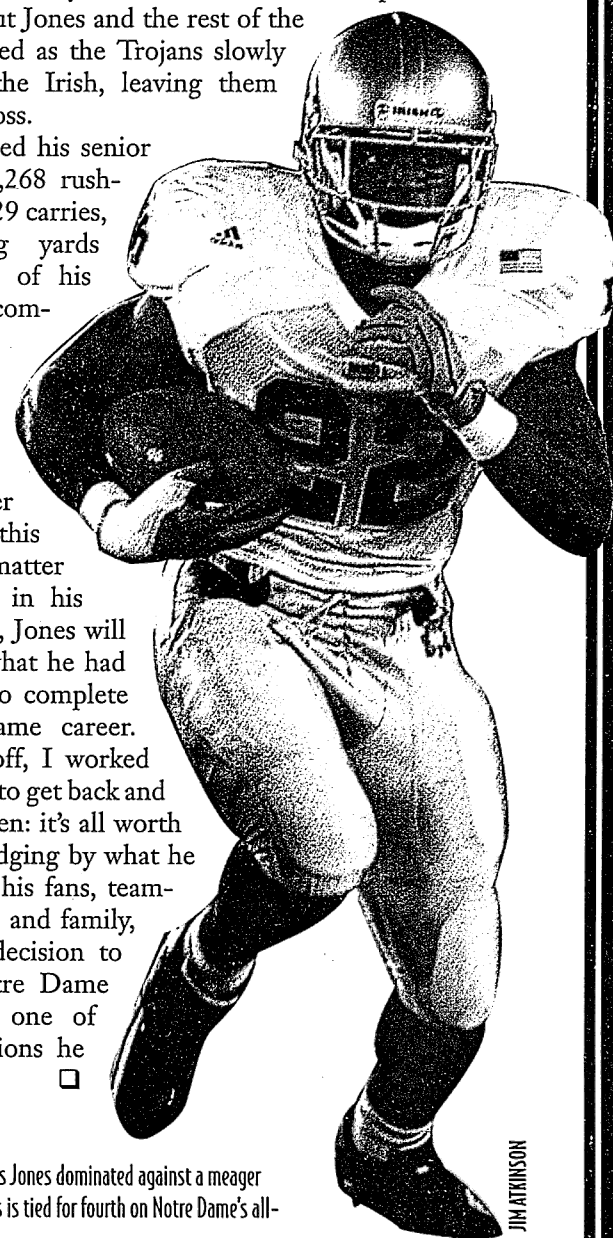
Following a bye week, both the Irish offense and Jones seemed to get a boost of energy from the extra rest. Jones tallied 262 rushing yards on only 24 carries against a highly-touted Pittsburgh team, breaking the all-time Notre Dame single-game rushing record. This was quite an accomplishment, considering the litany of All-Americans and NFL players who have lined up in the Irish backfield. Jones had secured his legend in Irish gridiron history.

Jones would set a single-season Notre Dame record for the most games with over 200 rushing yards by breaking the 200-yard barrier twice more this season: He totaled 221 yards against Navy and 218 against Stanford. During the Stanford game, he broke the 1,000-yard mark and moved into fifth place in the all-time Notre Dame rushing record book. But after the game, he humbly gave all the credit to his offensive linemen and fullback.

Jones also got off to a hot start against the eventual AP National Champions, Southern Cal, with a 22-yard touchdown run and a 59-yard kick return that set up another touchdown. But Jones and the rest of the Irish team faded as the Trojans slowly broke down the Irish, leaving them with a 45-14 loss.

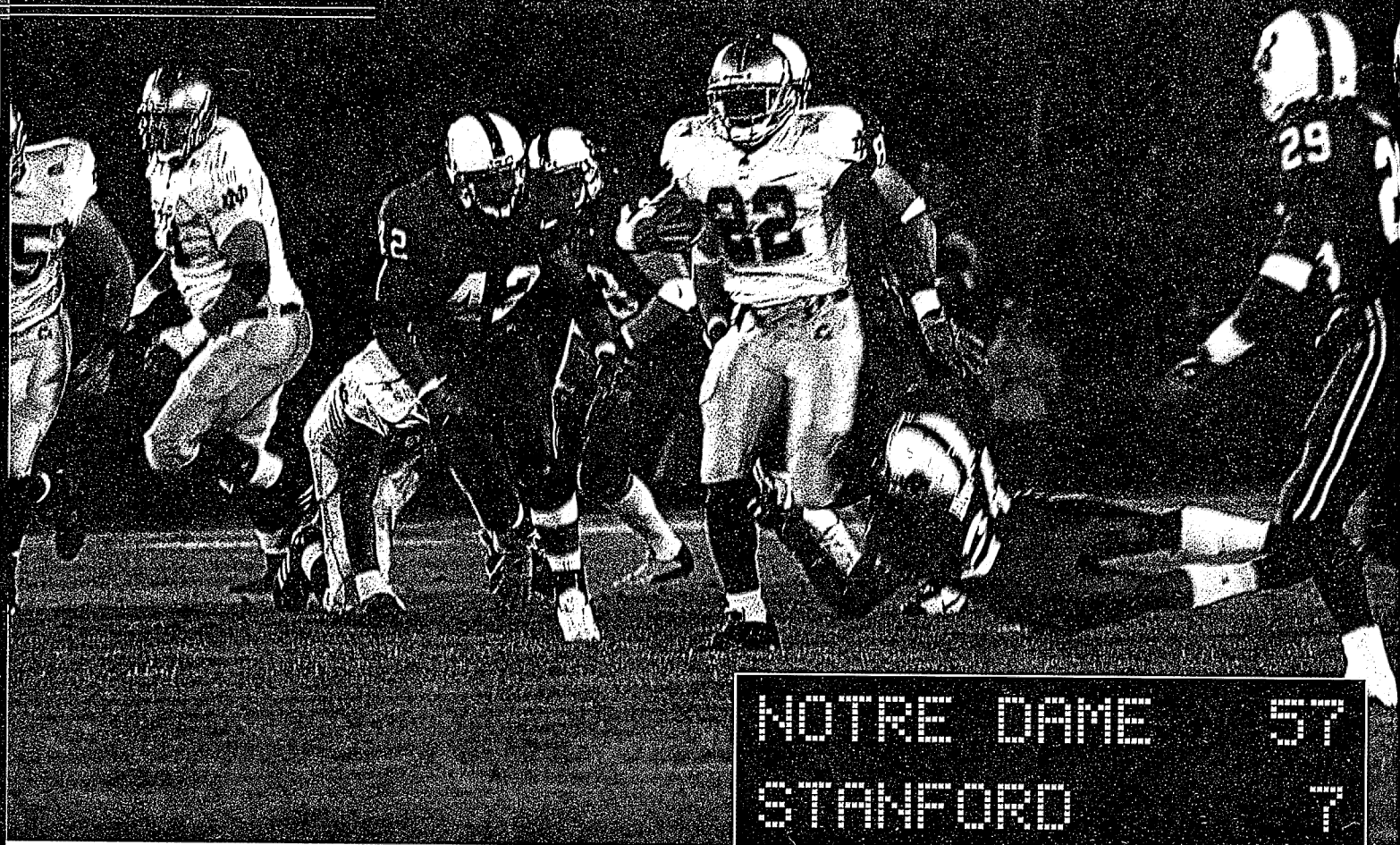
Jones finished his senior season with 1,268 rushing yards on 229 carries, more rushing yards than the rest of his teammates combined.

The ending to this story is not yet written, as Jones will enter the NFL draft this April. No matter what happens in his future, though, Jones will never forget what he had to overcome to complete his Notre Dame career. "In my year off, I worked my tail off and to get back and have this happen: it's all worth it," he said. Judging by what he has proven to his fans, teammates, coaches and family, Julius Jones' decision to return to Notre Dame was probably one of the best decisions he will ever make. □



UNSTOPPABLE Julius Jones dominated against a meager Stanford defense. Jones is tied for fourth on Notre Dame's all-time rushing list.

Stanford



DEFORESTATION Julius Jones breaks through the meager Cardinal defense on his way to another impressive day. Jones passed the 1,000-yard mark on the game's first play.

Irish Scoring Barrage

by Jimmy Atkinson

Tyrone Willingham's first game back in Stanford Stadium as Notre Dame's head coach was a remarkable success. The Irish offense erupted for 41 unanswered points and never looked back, as Notre Dame defeated Stanford 57-7, giving the Cardinal their worst loss ever at Stanford Stadium.

Running back senior Julius Jones set the tone on the game's very first play with a 25-yard carry that put him over the 1,000-yard mark for the season. His first carry was only a sign of things to come. Jones, who had battled back from academic ineligibility a year ago to regain his position on the team, finished the game with 218 yards rushing on 23 carries and became the first player in Notre Dame history to record three 200-yard games in a single season.

"It's incredible," Jones said. "I never would have thought that it would be me to have three 200-yard games, let alone 1,000 yards. I didn't know what the season would be like this year. But I give all the credit to my offensive line and my fullbacks. They played a hell of a game."

The Irish win over Stanford was their third in a row and improved their record to 5-6 going into their final game at Syracuse. Stanford, already finished at 2-6 in Pac-10 play, dropped to 4-7

overall to end their season on a three-game losing streak.

The Irish opened the scoring on their first possession, a 10-play, 90-yard drive, the longest of the season. Jones capped the drive with a 10-yard run during which he ran over two Cardinal defenders en route to the end zone. Notre Dame's next seven points came courtesy of a 65-yard touchdown strike from freshman quarterback Brady Quinn to the up-and-coming junior wide receiver Matt Shelton to give the Irish a quick 14-0 lead. Shelton ran a post route against man coverage, as the safety came up to defend the tight end on the play. Shelton beat the cornerback to the inside and Quinn threw a perfect pass that hit Shelton in stride.

The Irish had been running the play all week in practice, but the pass usually was thrown to the tight end, Quinn's first-look receiver. "I was surprised as anyone else when he threw it to me," Shelton said. "I was thinking, 'The ball's coming. Oh God, what do I do?' It was a surreal feeling."

Quinn recognized the importance of Shelton's catch. "It was a big play," Quinn said. "I was looking forward to getting back in the next drive and doing the same thing." And the Irish offense did just that for most of the night, scoring at will against a battered Stanford defense.

After coming into the second half with a 34-0 lead, the Irish offense struck on its first possession, courtesy of a 45-yard touchdown pass from Quinn to sophomore wide receiver Maurice Stovall.

"That was more what I anticipate out of our football team,"

...This was the Irish's first win at Stanford in 10 years...Fifty-seven was the most points scored by Notre...

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	CARDINAL
RUSHING YARDS	320	20
PASSING YARDS	192	231
FIRST DOWNS	20	17
TOTAL OFFENSE	512	251
TURNOVERS	1	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	32:24	27:36

Willingham said. "We're still not where we'd like to be, but it was an outstanding performance by our young men."

The Irish defense was equally impressive in the blowout, holding Stanford to only seven points and 20 yards rushing, thanks mostly to a stifling pass rush that recorded seven sacks. Junior defensive end Justin Tuck was unstoppable throughout the night and registered 3.5 sacks, equaling the performance he had against Pittsburgh earlier this season.

"No matter what protection they got it, they couldn't block him," Defensive coordinator Kent Baer said. "So they had to get in max protect and run two-man routes. That really helped us. He really set the tone of how we played today. It was good to see."

Notre Dame's defense also scored its first touchdown of the season, after scoring repeatedly only a year ago. At the end of the first half, Stanford wide receiver Mark Bradford made a reception, turned upfield, and was stripped of the ball by Irish junior cornerback Dwight Ellick. Junior safety Quentin Burrell picked up the loose ball near the sideline and ran 65 yards down the field for the Irish touchdown, giving Notre Dame a 34-0 halftime lead.

The Irish defense struck again in the third quarter when junior linebacker Brandon Hoyte forced Stanford quarterback Chris Lewis to fumble. Senior safety Garron Bible picked up the loose ball and raced 48 yards to the end zone, improving the Irish lead to 41-7.

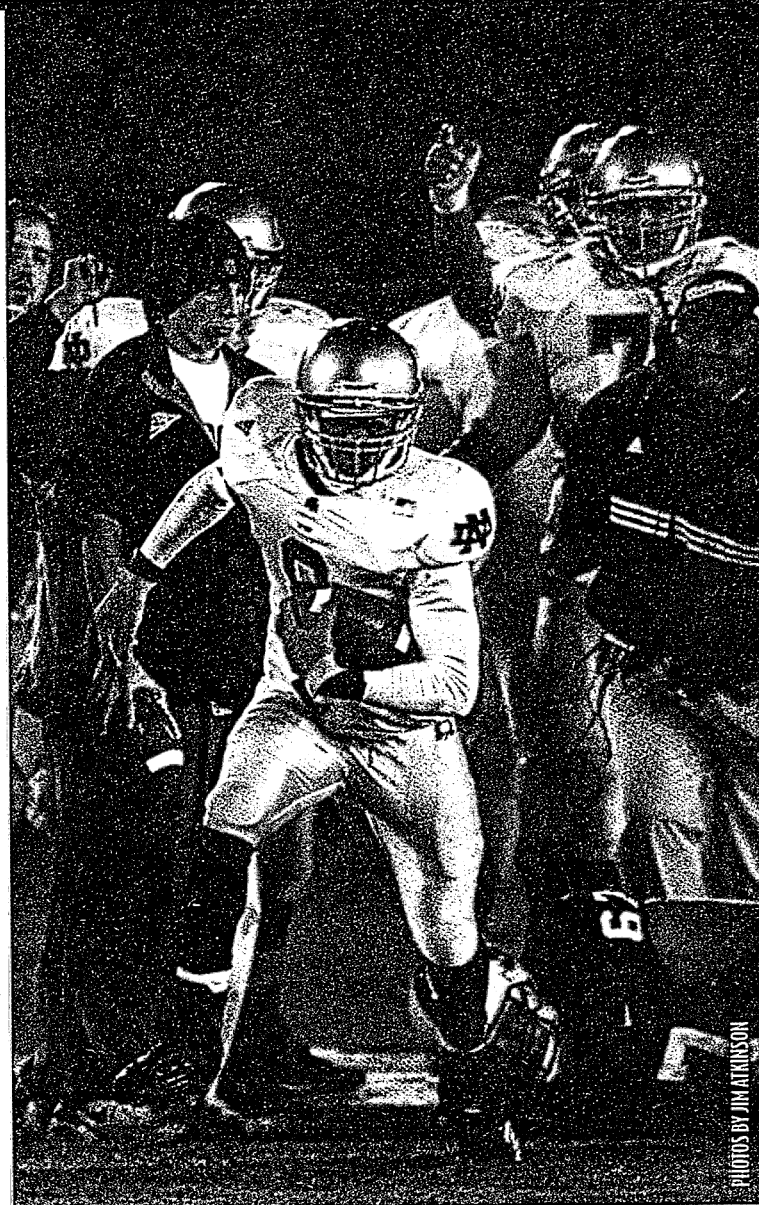
After being one of the nation's leaders last season in defensive scoring, the Irish had failed to score a defensive touchdown in their previous 12 games. "It's about time," Baer said. "It's good to see those kids play and have some fun."

After Notre Dame jumped out to a 21-0 lead by the end of the first quarter, the hopes of the Stanford Cardinal had faded into the Thanksgiving weekend Bay Area night. The sparse crowd of only 46,500 was about 40 percent Notre Dame supporters, and they were the ones making all the noise throughout the evening. By the time the fourth quarter rolled around, with the Irish up 57-7 and everyone simply waiting for the final 15 minutes to mercifully tick off the scoreboard clock, all but a few Cardinal supporters had headed home.

"We were making plays," Quinn said. "Everyone was doing their jobs and executing. That's a glimpse of what we can do when we play like that."

Willingham agreed with Quinn. "If you compare [this game] to the rest of the season, there is no comparison," he said. "We've been trying to get to that point. This was a good performance. ... Tonight was a good win for us."

Although much of the Irish coaching staff had previously recruited and coached many of the Stanford players, there were no apologies for the lopsided score. Offensive coordina-



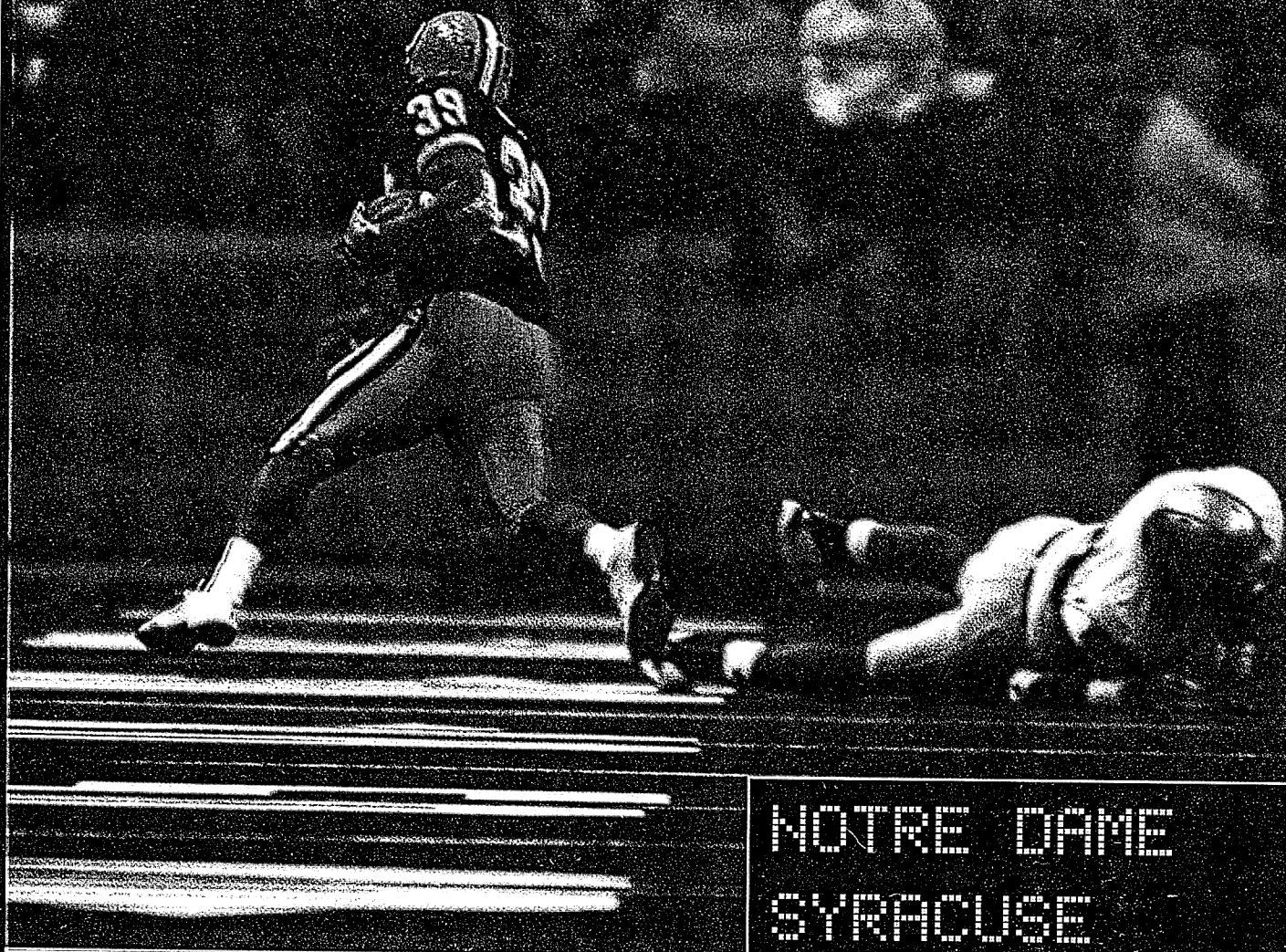
PHOTOS BY JIM ATKINSON

GETTING ALL DEFENSIVE Quentin Burrell returns a fumble for a touchdown. It was Notre Dame's first defensive touchdown in 12 games.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	21	13	23	0	57
Stanford	0	0	7	0	7
1st Quarter					
ND	Jones 10 run (Fitzpatrick kick), 10:17; 7-0				
ND	Shelton 65 pass from Quinn (Fitzpatrick kick), 2:27; 14-0 ND				
ND	Grant 4 run (Fitzpatrick kick), :00; 21-0 ND				
2nd Quarter					
ND	Grant 2 run (kick failed); 3:34; 27-0 ND				
ND	Burrell 65 fumble return (Fitzpatrick kick); 0:36; 34-0 ND				
3rd Quarter					
ND	Stoveall 45 pass from Quinn (Fitzpatrick kick), 12:20; 41-0 ND				
STAN	Bradford 65 pass from Lewis (Sgroi kick), 12:10; 41-7 ND				
ND	Bible 44 fumble return (Fitzpatrick kick), 7:23; 48-7 ND				
ND	Safety, Stanford punter Johnson runs out of end zone, 5:05; 50-7 ND				
ND	Grant 46 run (Fitzpatrick kick), 2:13; 57-7 ND				
4th Quarter -none-					

tor Bill Diedrick summed it up best. "Tonight I'm in blue and gold," he said. □

Syracuse



NOTRE DAME	12
SYRACUSE	38

REYES OF SUNSHINE Tailback Walter Reyes scored five touchdowns against an Irish defense that could not stop the run.

Orange Crush

by Mikelselin

The Irish, fresh off three consecutive wins, headed into Syracuse, New York, looking to finish the season with a 6-6 record for the year. The offense was coming off their best all-around performance of the season at Stanford in which they compiled 512 total yards and 57 points. But it would be a different day in Syracuse.

The Orangemen of Syracuse University were more than the Irish could handle on this December afternoon, out-gaining the Irish 456 to 261 total yards. Those numbers coincided with the final 38-12 score in what was the seventh loss on the season for head coach Willingham and the Irish. "A lot of guys came in here thinking we were on a different level right now, especially these past three weeks. To have this happen is a big disappointment," former starting quarterback senior Carlyle Holiday said.

The Irish came out aggressively, and on the first play of the

game, freshman quarterback Brady Quinn tried to connect with Holiday on a deep pass, but the ball fell incomplete. Two plays after the incompletion to Holiday, things started to get pretty bad for the Irish when a pass from Quinn was intercepted by Orangemen free safety Anthony Smith. Smith returned the ball to the Notre Dame 24-yard line, giving the Syracuse offense great field position for its first drive of the game.

Turnovers proved to be a huge factor in this game. There were eight combined turnovers, each team accounting for four. However, the Syracuse offense was able to do a much better job of taking advantage of its opponent's mistakes, coming away with 21 points off turnovers compared to just 7 for the Irish.

Syracuse took advantage of turnovers and field position from the beginning of the game. With ease, the Orangemen moved the ball across the goal line on a five-play drive that was capped by a 2-yard touchdown run by running back Walter Reyes.

This would become an all too familiar sight for the Irish on this day as Reyes found the end zone four more times. Reyes also had 189 yards rushing and 24 yards receiving, proving to

# Play By Numbers	IRISH	ORANGEMEN
RUSHING YARDS	62	247
PASSING YARDS	199	209
FIRST DOWNS	14	21
TOTAL OFFENSE	261	456
TURNOVERS	4	4
TIME OF POSSESSION	28:46	31:14

be the difference in the game. Willingham said of the running back, "He is a good back, and they had a lot of success running the ball. He had a great day."

Everyone in the Carrier Dome realized what a great day Reyes had. "It was real frustrating watching him and seeing his success," said senior running back Julius Jones.

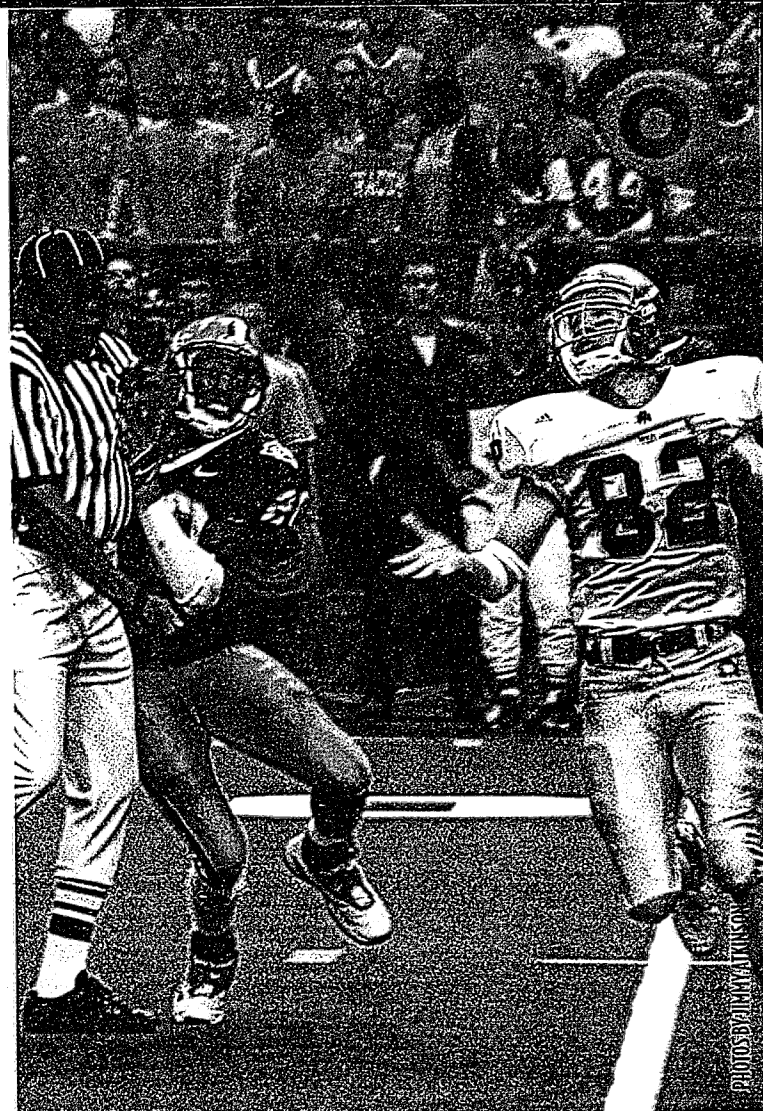
It was not until their third drive of the game that the Irish were able to come away with any points. It was an eight-play, 42-yard drive that ended with junior kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick's kicking a career long 50-yard field goal that would have been good from 55 or 60 yards out. Fitzpatrick took over all kicking duties from senior Nick Setta in the middle of the season and had some problems throughout the year, but he was two for two on field goals against the Orangemen.

At halftime, the Irish found themselves down by only one touchdown with the score 10-3. This wasn't terrible considering that the best starting field position for the Irish in the first half was their own 25-yard line. Even when the Irish forced turnovers they were deep in their own end and always left the offense with a long field.

Their starting field position, and their luck, changed briefly in the beginning of the second half when Irish junior linebacker Corey Mays blocked Brendan Carney's punt. For the first time, Notre Dame started with the ball on the Syracuse side of the field. Quinn and the offense ran three plays that picked up a total of eight yards before Fitzpatrick trotted onto the field to put his second field goal of the day through the uprights from 40 yards away. This brought the score to 10-6, the closest the Irish would get for the rest of the game.

This final game of the 2003 campaign for the Irish was also the final game that the seniors would play in an Irish uniform. One of those seniors is Julius Jones. Against the Orangemen, unfortunately, he was held to only 65 yards on 20 carries. "When you lose a weapon like Julius, you hope to replace him. It gives Travis Thomas an opportunity to step up. We'll see if Ryan Grant can step up, and whoever the new young man who will come in as a true freshman," defensive coordinator Bill Deidrick said. Jones himself said, "It was just a rough day for us, and it's not a really good way to go out."

After this defeat the Irish enter the off-season with many things to work on, but also several things of which to be proud. Offensive coordinator Mike Denbrock said, "We have a young football team that is learning. We'd all like instant gratification and have them learn every lesson they need to learn immediately. Unfortunately, that didn't happen for us. I think we have to continue to work. There are a lot of positive things here toward the end of the season that we can take away. We've got to build on those, do a better job of cleaning up the details. There are a lot of bright spots with a lot of young kids on this team that



A LITTLE HELP Matt Shelton catches a tipped pass thanks to some inadvertent blocking by the official.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	3	0	9	0	12
Syracuse	10	0	21	7	38
1st Quarter					
SYRA Reyes 2 run (Collin kick), 11:55; 7-0 SYRA					
SYRA FG Collin 43, 4:28; 10-0 SYRA					
ND FG Fitzpatrick 50, 1:09; 10-3 SYRA					
2nd Quarter -None-					
3rd Quarter					
ND FG Fitzpatrick 40, 12:44; 10-6 SYRA					
SYRA Reyes 3 run (Barber kick), 8:09; 17-6 SYRA					
SYRA Reyes 15 run (Barber kick), 6:34; 24-6 SYRA					
ND Fasano, 5 pass from Quinn (Quinn pass failed), 0:28; 24-12 SYRA					
SYRA Reyes 71 run (Barber kick), 0:11; 31-12 SYRA					
4th Quarter					
SYRA Reyes 3 run (Barber kick), 0:27; 38-12 SYRA					

got some experience this year, and that puts us in the position to have a very bright future."

After a difficult end to a difficult season, the Irish will look to improve on all aspects of their game over the next eight months and come back in August ready to prove that they deserve to be one of the top teams in the nation. □

Season Statistics

	NOTRE DAME	OPPONENT
SCORING	243	315
Points Per Game	20	26
FIRST DOWNS	206	201
Rushing	92	88
Passing	97	102
Penalty	17	11
RUSHING YARDAGE	1887	1526
Yards gained rushing	2236	2022
Yards lost rushing	349	496
Rushing Attempts	472	486
Average Per Rush	4	3
Average Per Game	157	127
TDs Rushing	13	19
PASSING YARDAGE	2149	2556
Att-Comp-Int	411-195-19	337-194-13
Average Per Pass	5	7
Average Per Catch	11	13
Average Per Game	179	213
TDs Passing	10	16
TOTAL OFFENSE	4036	4082
Total Plays	883	823
Average Per Play	4	5
Average Per Game	336	340
KICK RETURNS: # Yards	46-893	40-780
PUNT RETURNS: # Yards	31-381	32-346
INT RETURNS: # Yards	13-132	19-235
KICK RETURN AVERAGE	19	19
PUNT RETURN AVERAGE	12	10
INT RETURN AVERAGE	10	12
FUMBLES-LOST	18-7	26-15
PENALTIES-YARDS	75-612	77-563
Average Per Game	51	46
PUNTS-YARDS	71-2689	66-2616
Average Per Punt	37	39
Net punt average	33	33
TIME OF POSSESSION/GAME	30:09	29:51
3RD-DOWN CONVERSIONS	65/207	55/175
3rd-Down Pct	31%	31%
4TH-DOWN CONVERSIONS	12/30	12/23
4th-Down Pct	40%	52%
SACKS BY-YARDS	39-261	24-148
MISC YARDS	122	39
TOUCHDOWNS SCORED	26	38
FIELD GOALS-ATTEMPTS	21-27	17-20
PAT-ATTEMPTS	22-23	36-37
ATTENDANCE	484,770	381,931
Games/Avg Per Game	6/80,795	6/63,655

RUSHING	Att	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
Jones, Julius	229	1268	5.5	10	61	105.7
Grant, Ryan	143	510	3.6	3	46	42.5
Wilson, Marcus	14	29	2.1	0	8	2.6
Holiday, C	28	29	1.0	0	28	2.6
Quinn, Brady	48	25	0.5	0	15	2.1
Powers-Neal, R	4	15	3.8	0	7	1.2
Clark, Jared	1	12	12.0	0	0	1.0
Schiccatano, N	1	2	2.0	0	2	0.3
Total	472	1887	4.0	13	61	157.2
Opponents	486	1526	3.1	19	71	127.2

PASSING	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng
Quinn, Brady	93.53	332	157	15	47.3	1831	9	85
Holiday, C	77.11	75	37	4	49.3	304	1	29
Fitzpatrick, DJ	217.60	1	1	0	100	14	0	14
Total	90.15	411	195	19	47.4	2149	10	85
Opponents	129.23	337	194	13	57.6	2556	16	65

RECEIVING	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
McKnight, Rhema	47	600	12.8	3	38
Jenkins, Omar	36	344	9.6	1	42
Stovall, Maurice	22	421	19.1	3	85
Fasano, Anthony	18	169	9.4	2	19
Clark, Jared	15	142	9.5	0	23
Schmidt, Josh	13	125	9.6	0	15
Jones, Julius	10	53	5.3	0	15
Grant, Ryan	9	64	7.1	0	16
Samardzija, J	7	53	7.6	0	19
Powers-Neal, R	7	50	7.1	0	15
Shelton, Matt	3	80	26.7	1	65
Ndukwe, C	3	14	4.7	0	14
Holiday, C	2	13	6.5	0	10
Palmer, Billy	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jenkins, Jeff	1	7	7.0	0	7
Stevenson, Dan	1	1	1.0	0	1
Total	195	2149	11.0	10	85
Opponents	194	2556	13.2	16	65

FIELD GOALS	FGM	FGA	Pct	Lg	Blk
Setta, Nicholas	9	10	90.0	47	0
Fitzpatrick, DJ	12	17	70.6	50	1

SCORE BY QRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Notre Dame	64	59	61	56	3	243
Opponents	108	53	79	75	0	315

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Burrell, Q.	4	18	4.5	0	18
Curry, Derek	2	11	5.5	0	11
Duff, Vontez	2	55	27.5	0	55
Watson, C.	2	48	24.0	0	48
Earl, Glenn	1	0	0.0	0	0
Beckstrom, J.	1	0	0.0	0	0
Jackson, P.	1	0	0.0	0	0
Total	13	132	10.2	0	55
Opponents	19	235	12.4	2	90

PUNTING	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	In-20	Blkd
Fitzpatrick, DJ	44	1621	36.8	50	7	1
Setta, Nicholas	26	1064	40.9	54	3	0
Total	71	2689	37.9	54	10	1
Opponents	66	2616	39.6	79	22	3

PUNT RETURNS	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Duff, Vontez	24	260	10.8	0	47
McKnight, Rhema	5	71	14.2	0	22
Schiccatano, N.	1	21	21.0	0	0
Jones, Julius	1	4	4.0	0	4
Campbell, C.	0	25	0.0	1	25
Total	31	381	12.3	1	47
Opponents	32	346	10.8	0	71

KICK RETURNS	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Duff, Vontez	16	346	21.6	0	43
Jones, Julius	13	243	18.7	0	51
Shelton, Matt	11	174	15.8	0	23
Ellick, Dwight	6	130	21.7	0	29
Total	46	893	19.4	0	51
Opponents	40	780	19.5	0	50

DEFENSIVE LEADERS	GP	Solo	Tackles		TFL/Yds	Sacks No-Yds	Pass Defense		Fumbles		
			Ast	Total			Int-Yds	PBU	Rcv-Yds	FF	Saf
Watson, C.	11	69	48	117	15-70	4-25	2-48	3	0-0	1	0
Hoyte, Brandon	12	48	26	74	7-17	2-6	0-0	2	1-0	1	0
Tuck, Justin	12	43	30	73	19-117	14-106	0-0	2	0-0	3	0
Curry, Derek	12	42	24	66	6-35	4-33	2-11	1	1-0	2	0
Burrell, Q.	12	39	19	58	2-1	1-1	4-18	2	2-65	0	0
Earl, Glenn	6	23	12	35	2-13	1-10	1-0	2	1-0	1	0
Bible, Garron	12	20	13	33	2-5	1-2	0-0	0	2-48	1	0
Duff, Vontez	12	26	7	33	2-8	0-0	2-55	4	1-0	1	0
Hilliard, C.	11	13	14	27	2-2	0-0	0-0	1	1-4	2	0
Mays, Corey	12	19	7	26	4-16	1-5	0-0	0	1-0	1	0
Campbell, D.	12	15	10	25	7-32	3-15	0-0	1	0-0	0	0
Jackson, P.	12	18	6	24	1-1	0-0	1-0	0	0-0	0	0
Abiamiri, V.	12	16	6	22	4-17	1-9	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Beckstrom, J.	10	16	6	22	1-3	0-0	1-0	1	0-0	0	0
Ellick, Dwight	10	16	5	21	0-0	0-0	0-0	2	0-0	1	0
Pauly, Greg	11	8	12	20	2-9	2-8	0-0	0	1-5	0	0
Budinscak, Kyle	8	10	7	17	4-18	3-16	0-0	0	1-0	0	0
Richardson, M.	12	10	6	16	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Landri, Derek	10	7	6	13	4-8	0-0	0-0	1	1-0	0	0
Leitko, Travis	10	5	7	12	2-9	1-8	0-0	0	0-0	1	0
Campbell, C.	11	4	8	12	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Bolen, Lionel	8	6	6	12	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Stovall, M.	12	7	3	10	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Salvador, A.	5	3	6	9	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Collins, Jerome	10	7	2	9	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Jenkins, Omar	12	6	2	8	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Clark, Jared	12	4	3	7	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1-0	0	0
Parish, Freddie	10	4	2	6	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Fitzpatrick, D.	11	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Beidatsch, B.	9	2	3	5	1-2	1-2	0-0	0	1-0	0	0
Palmer, Billy	12	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Wilson, Marcus	11	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Dunn, Casey	12	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Setta, Nicholas	5	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Schmidt, Josh	12	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Holiday, C.	11	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Harris, Ryan	8	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Frome, Chris	5	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
McKnight, R.	12	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Freeman, M.	11	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Powers-Neal, R.	12	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Quinn, Brady	12	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Sapp, Jason	3	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Molinaro, Jim	12	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Ryan, Jamie	9	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Milligan, Sean	3	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Shelton, Matt	11	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Schiccatano, N.	6	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	1
Total	12	526	318	844	87-385	39-261	13-132	22	15-122	15	1
Opponents	12	478	431	909	89-319	24-148	19-235	35	7-39	9	0

ALL PURPOSE	G	Rush	Rec	PR	KOR	IR	Tot	Avg/G
Jones, Julius	12	1268	53	4	243	0	1568	130.7
McKnight, R.	12	0	600	71	0	0	671	55.9
Duff, Vontez	12	0	0	260	346	55	661	55.1
Grant, Ryan	12	510	64	0	0	0	574	47.8
Stovall, M.	12	0	421	0	0	0	421	35.1
Jenkins, Omar	12	0	344	0	0	0	344	28.7
Shelton, Matt	11	0	80	0	174	0	254	23.1
Fasano, Anthony	11	0	169	0	0	0	169	15.4
Clark, Jared	12	12	142	0	0	0	154	12.8
Ellick, Dwight	10	0	0	0	130	0	130	13.0
Schmidt, Josh	12	0	125	0	0	0	125	10.4
Powers-Neal, R.	12	15	50	0	0	0	65	5.4
Samardzija, J.	12	0	53	0	0	0	53	4.4
Watson, C.	11	0	0	0	0	48	48	4.4
Holiday, C.	11	29	13	0	0	0	42	3.8
Wilson, Marcus	11	29	0	0	0	0	29	2.6
Quinn, Brady	12	25	0	0	0	0	25	2.1
Campbell, C.	11	0	0	25	0	0	25	2.3
Schiccatano, N.	6	2	0	21	0	0	23	3.8
Burrell, Q.	12	0	0	0	0	18	18	1.5
Ndukwe, C.	12	0	14	0	0	0	14	1.2
Palmer, Billy	12	0	13	0	0	0	13	1.1
Curry, Derek	12	0	0	0	0	11	11	0.9
Jenkins, Jeff	4	0	7	0	0	0	7	1.8
Stevenson, Dan	10	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.1
TEAM	6	-3	0	0	0	0	-3	-0.5
Total	12	1887	2149	381	893	132	5442	453.5
Opponents	12	1526	2556	346	780	235	5443	453.6

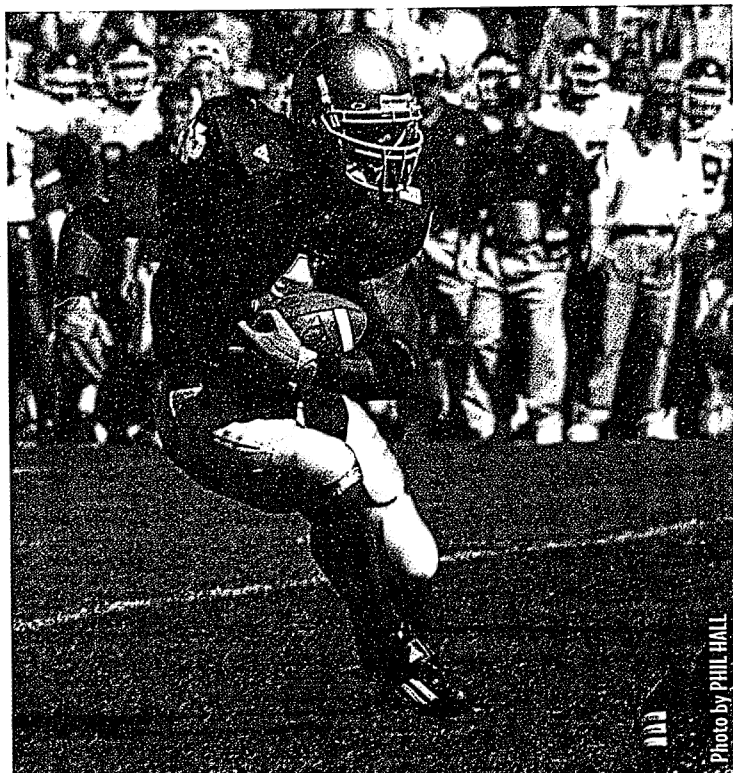


Photo by PHIL HALL

RACKING UP THE STATS. Ryan Grant looks for open field against Michigan State.

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	Plays	Rush	Pass	Total	Avg/G
Quinn, Brady	12	380	25	1831	1856	154.7
Jones, Julius	12	229	1268	0	1268	105.7
Grant, Ryan	12	143	510	0	510	42.5
Holiday, C.	11	103	29	304	333	30.3
Wilson, Marcus	11	14	29	0	29	2.6
Powers-Neal, R.	12	4	15	0	15	1.2
Fitzpatrick, D.	11	1	0	14	14	1.3
Clark, Jared	12	1	12	0	12	1.0
Schiccatano, N.	6	1	2	0	2	0.3
TEAM	6	7	-3	0	-3	-0.5
Total	12	883	1887	2149	4036	336.3
Opponents	12	823	1526	2556	4082	340.2

2003 Schedule and Results

September 6	WASHINGTON STATE	W	29-26 (OT)
September 13	at Michigan	L	38-0
September 20	MICHIGAN STATE	L	22-16
September 27	at Purdue	L	23-10
October 11	at Pittsburgh	W	20-14
October 18	SOUTHERN CAL	L	45-14
October 25	at Boston College	L	27-25
November 1	FLORIDA STATE	L	37-0
November 8	NAVY	W	27-24
November 15	BYU	W	33-14
November 29	at Stanford	W	57-7
December 6	at Syracuse	L	38-12

2004 Schedule

September 11	MICHIGAN
September 18	at Michigan State
September 25	WASHINGTON
October 2	PURDUE
October 9	STANFORD
October 16	vs. Navy (East Rutherford, NJ)
October 23	BOSTON COLLEGE
October 30	at BYU
November 6	at Tennessee
November 13	PITTSBURGH
November 27	at USC

All-Opponent Team

Scholastic's sports staff has selected the all-opponent team based on the single-game performances of the individuals who played or coached against the Irish in the 2003 season.

OFFENSE

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Norm Chow (USC): For the second consecutive season, Southern Cal's offense sliced through Notre Dame's defense with precision and ease. The Trojans gained 551 yards of total offense and scored 45 points, both being the most given up by the Irish all season.

WIDE RECEIVERS

83 Keary Colbert (USC): 8 receptions, 120 yards, 1 TD.
1 Graphonso Thorpe (FSU): 7 receptions, 217 yards, 2 TDs.

OFFENSIVE LINE

M Michigan: Allowed 0 sacks.

TIGHT ENDS

41 Justin Jory (BYU): 3 receptions, 81 yards.

QUARTERBACK

11 Matt Leinart (USC): 26-34, 351 yards, 4 TDs, 0 INTs.

RUNNING BACKS

23 Chris Perry (UM): 31 carries, 133 yards, 3 TDs.
39 Walter Reyes (SU): 19 carries, 189 yards, 5 TDs.

HEAD COACH

Lloyd Carr (Michigan): The stage was set for an epic showdown between Michigan and Notre Dame. ESPN's *College GameDay* was on site and Michigan Stadium drew the largest crowd in football history. But Carr had his Wolverines ready to dismantle the Irish and they dominated their way to a 38-0 victory. The two teams continued on different tracks for the remainder of the season, as the Wolverines won the Big Ten championship, while the Irish finished 5-7.

DEFENSE

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Jim Herrmann (Michigan). The Wolverine defense frustrated Notre Dame all afternoon, allowing the Irish to gain only 140 yards total offense. Notre Dame never even got into field goal range.

DEFENSIVE ENDS

55 Thomas Smith (PLTF) 7 tackles, 1 sack
94 Greg Taplin (MSU) 2 tackles, 1 INT, returned for GW touchdown

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

99 Louis Gachelin (SU) 9 tackles, 2 TFL, 1 sack, 1 FR
93 Christian Ferrara (SU) 6 tackles, 5 TFL, 1 sack, 1 FF

LINEBACKERS

51 Will Derting (WSU) 12 tackles, 3 sacks, 1 FF
42 Mike Labinjo (MSU) 9 tackles, 1 INT
51 Melvin Simmons (USC) 13 tackles, 2 TFL

DEFENSIVE BACKS

9 Stuart Schweigert (PUR) 4 tackles, 2 INT, 1 PBU
20 Anthony Smith (SU) 3 tackles, 2 INT, 1 PBU
36 Eric Smith (MSU) 12 tackles, 3 TFL, 2 sacks
33 Aaron Francisco (BYU) 13 tackles, 0.5 TFL, 1 PBU

SPECIAL TEAMS

PUNTER

8 Brandon Fields (MSU)

KICKER

16 Dave Rayner (MSU) 5 punts, 269 yards, 79 long, 3 inside 20-yard line

RETURNERS

1 Will Blackmon (BC) 3 of 3 FGs: 51, 30, 30

22 Jerome Brooks (PUR)

3 kick returns, 95 yards, 42 long (set-up GW FG)
3 punt returns, 108 yards, 50 long

Recruiting Class

Compiled by Christopher Meskill, Photos courtesy of Rivals.com

February 6 is signing day, and Notre Dame is expecting a lot of action in the time between now and then. Notre Dame's recruiting class of 2008 is currently unranked by Tom Lemming, the editor of *Prep Football Report*, but only eight players have committed to the Irish thus far. However, many top players still are interested in wearing the blue and gold next year.

While the Irish's state is still in doubt, their ranking would certainly rise with the signing of top quarterback Brian Brohm, who is torn between Notre Dame, Tennessee and Louisville. Many other top recruits are interested in the Irish, including running backs Darius Walker and Samson Taylor, wide receivers Chancellor Young and Chris Vaughn, offensive linemen Allen Smith and Jaimie Thomas, defensive linemen Ryan Baker, Justin Brown and Darryl Richard, linebackers Maurice Crum and Ron Palmer, and defensive backs Terrail Lambert, Nate Lyles and Junior Jabbie.

Right now, the players listed above have not officially committed to the Irish, so Irish fans can only count on the ones who already have given their verbal commitments. Here is a look at Notre Dame's current recruiting class of 2008.

Offense

Anthony Vernaglia

Tight End – Anthony Vernaglia
Orange Lutheran High School (Orange, Calif.)



Vernaglia, rated the second-best tight end in the nation by Lemming, plays on both sides of the ball. Despite being a top-rated tight end, Vernaglia is being scouted as either a wide receiver or an outside linebacker. As a receiver, Vernaglia has great speed (4.5 seconds in the 40-yard dash), good balance and great hands. Meanwhile, Vernaglia (6-foot-3-inches, 220 pounds) put up some tremendous numbers on defense. As a linebacker, Vernaglia racked up almost 100 tackles and five sacks in 10 games.

Justin Hoskins

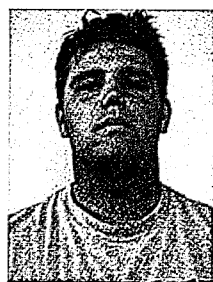
Running Back – Justin Hoskins
Creston High School (Grand Rapids, Mich.)



Hoskins, the Michigan High School Player of the Year, has excellent numbers, grades and speed (recording a 4.3 second 40-yard dash). Hoskins has run for over 1,800 yards and 23 touchdowns in his junior season and 1,600 yards and 19 touchdowns in his senior season at Creston, a historical hotbed for Division I-A football recruits. Coveted by many of the teams in the Big Ten, Hoskins committed to the Irish, despite being a lifetime Michigan fan. Lemming ranked Hoskins as the 13th-best running back recruit in the nation.

John Kadous

Offensive Lineman – John Kadous
Salpointe Catholic High School (Tucson, Ariz.)



Kadous is one of two offensive linemen committed to Notre Dame. The offensive tackle stands at 6-feet-6-inches, 310 pounds with a 5.3 second 40-yard time. *The Tucson Citizen* describes Kadous as a "high school behemoth turning his frame into a human bulldozer." A two-time Student Sports Underclass All-American, Kadous is considered the best lineman in Arizona. Kadous is also ranked the 86th-best lineman in the country by Lemming.

Chauncey Incarnato

Offensive Lineman – Chauncey Incarnato
Dover High School (Dover, Ohio)



Incarnato, who has committed to Notre Dame as an offensive lineman, is accustomed to playing on both sides of the line. The 6-foot-6-inch, 275-pound Dover native is both quick, breaking five seconds in the 40-yard dash, and strong, bench-pressing 390 pounds and squatting 525 pounds. Lemming ranks Incarnato the 55th-best lineman in the country, and Ohio Prep Scene names Incarnato one of the top 100 players in Ohio.

Defense

Abdel Banda

Linebacker – Abdel Banda
Delbarton School (Morristown, N.J.)



Banda possesses great speed for his 6-foot-2-inch, 215-pound frame. The Morristown native ran the 100-meter dash in 10.5 seconds in high school, as well as the 40-yard dash in under 4.5 seconds. Banda's speed allows him to be a great pass-rush linebacker. Banda's football career is quite a success story. Banda moved to America from Ghana four years ago, never having played football before. He is now one of the top recruits in New Jersey.

Ronald Talley

Defensive Lineman – Ronald Talley
Renaissance High School (Detroit, Mich.)



Talley is straightforward with what he wants and what he wants to do. The Detroit native knew that he wanted to attend Notre Dame and knows that he wants to start his freshman year. The 6-foot-4-inch, 235-pound lineman bench presses 275 pounds, squats 405 pounds and runs a 4.8 second 40-yard dash. Talley recorded 60 tackles and five sacks his senior year as well as 122 tackles and 30 for loss of yardage his junior season. Talley also sparked a few turnovers, causing three fumbles and recovering four, as well. Talley is considered the 66th-best player in the Midwest by Lemming's rankings.

Tregg Duerson

Cornerback – Tregg Duerson
Loyola Academy (Wilmette, Ill.)

Duerson, son of Notre Dame great Dave Duerson, continued his father's legacy by committing to Notre Dame. His father played under Dan Devine and was a captain and All-American for the Irish. Duerson, recruited to play as a cornerback and punt returner for the Irish, actually played running back at Loyola Academy. As a running back, Duerson played nine games, had 184 carries, and ran for 1,200 yards. However, the 5-foot-10-inch, 165-pounder will probably not see time as a running back because of his smaller size.

Brandon Nicolas

Defensive Lineman – Brandon Nicolas
Mater Dei High School (Santa Ana, Calif.)



Nicolas, ranked the 34th-best defensive lineman in the country by Lemming, recorded 60 tackles, 17 for a loss of yardage, and 5 sacks during his senior season. Nicolas' strength and speed make him a valuable asset to the Irish line. The 6-foot-4-inch, 250-pound Santa Ana-native bench presses 355 pounds, squats 500 pounds and runs a sub-five-second 40-yard dash. Nicolas was named a first team All-State Underclass All-American and a Student Sports Junior All-American.

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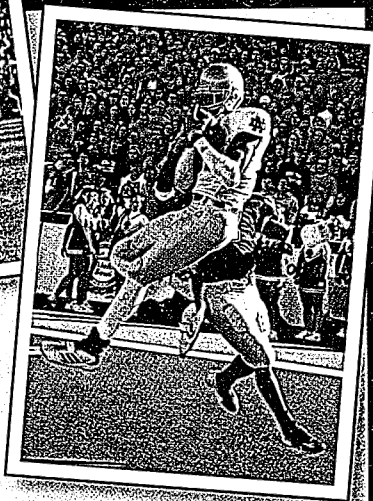
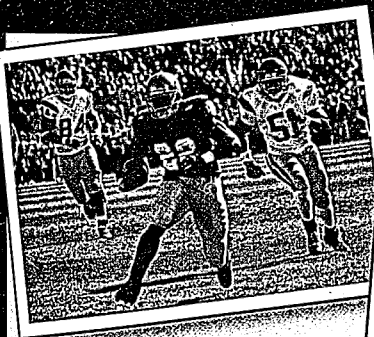


Photo Reprints Available

Even in a losing season, the right photo can make your wall look like a winner. New this year, you can order reprints of any of the student-photographed pictures from *Scholastic's* annual football review. Full-color prints are available in 5x7, 8x10, or 11x14 sizes.

5x7 – \$5 8x10 – \$10 11x14 – \$20

For ordering information, contact *Scholastic*
at 574-631-7569 or scholast@nd.edu.



University Resources for Gay, Lesbian, & Bisexual Students

The Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs

(Confidential information, education, and resources)
Contact: Sr. M.L. Gude, CSC, 1-5550, or student members (see web site for student contact info.)

Office of Campus Ministry

(Annual retreat for gay/lesbian/questioning students and their friends; pertinent library resources in 304 Co-Mo; confidential discussion and support)
Contact: Fr. J. Steele, CSC, at Steele.31@nd.edu

University Counseling Center

(Individual counseling)
Contact: Dr. Maureen Lafferty at Lafferty.3@nd.edu

For more information, check out our web site: <http://www.nd.edu/~scglsn/>

Looking Back

by Gerry Faust

It is a privilege to be asked to write a column on Notre Dame football. Even though, during the years that I was coach, we didn't produce any National Championship or top-ten teams, our players always have played hard and always have represented the university well. Even to this day, many have achieved greatness in their respective endeavors.

I would love to see Notre Dame in the top five in football every year, but that's not going to happen. The parity that exists, especially the limited scholarships and the university requirements for entrance, makes it difficult, but not impossible, to win consistently. People say the schedule is too tough, but the schedule has been like that for years. Look back on my first year as coach in '81 and check that schedule out. Notre Dame football is committed to a national schedule, playing quality teams.

But Notre Dame football goes beyond winning and losing. It's about the student athlete, the Golden Dome, the Holy Cross priests and brothers. It's about the Grotto, the professors, the people that work at Notre Dame and love being there, gameday on campus, the stadium, Touchdown Jesus, the

Notre Dame Band, and the young and old that thrive on the Gipper, the Four Horsemen, the Moose Krauses, the Dick Rosenthals and the Terry Brennans that played and worked at Notre Dame. The Corregans, the Kevin Whites, the Fr. Riehles, the Valerieres, the Jake Klines and the Mike DeLicos, the Fr. Malloys and the John Heislars. Rockne, Leahy, Parseghian, Holtz, Devine, and all the coaches, assistants and head coaches that recruited and represented Notre Dame properly.

You see, there is more than what I stated that makes up the greatness of Notre Dame football. It's a game, but it is also a passion. Ever since I was young, my dad, a great high school football coach, told me about knowing Rockne himself and how impressed he was with Coach Rockne.

Therefore, University of Notre Dame football was my first love even at a young age.

I wanted to play football for Notre Dame, but I wasn't good enough, and some say I wasn't good enough to be Notre Dame's football coach, either. But I lived my dream, I loved the five years I was the coach at this great university, and I thank Fr. Hesburgh and Fr. Joyce for the opportunity. Even though it didn't work out the way I wanted it to, I would do it all over again, knowing the result would be the same. I miss going to the Grotto, looking up while walking the campus and seeing the sun glaring off Our Lady on top of the Golden Dome, feeling the anticipation of gameday, running out onto the field with the Notre Dame players in front of the packed stadium of loyal Notre Dame followers.

As time passes, I look back and thank the Good Lord and Our Lady for the opportunity to represent the University of Notre Dame Fighting Irish. I marvel that Our Lady answered my prayer at the Grotto during the Saturday Spring Game in 1980, and I became the 24th head football coach at the University of Notre Dame.

The only regret I have is that we didn't win more football games: for the players on our teams, for the people that support Notre Dame, for the alumni and subway alumni, and for the people who gave me this great opportunity.

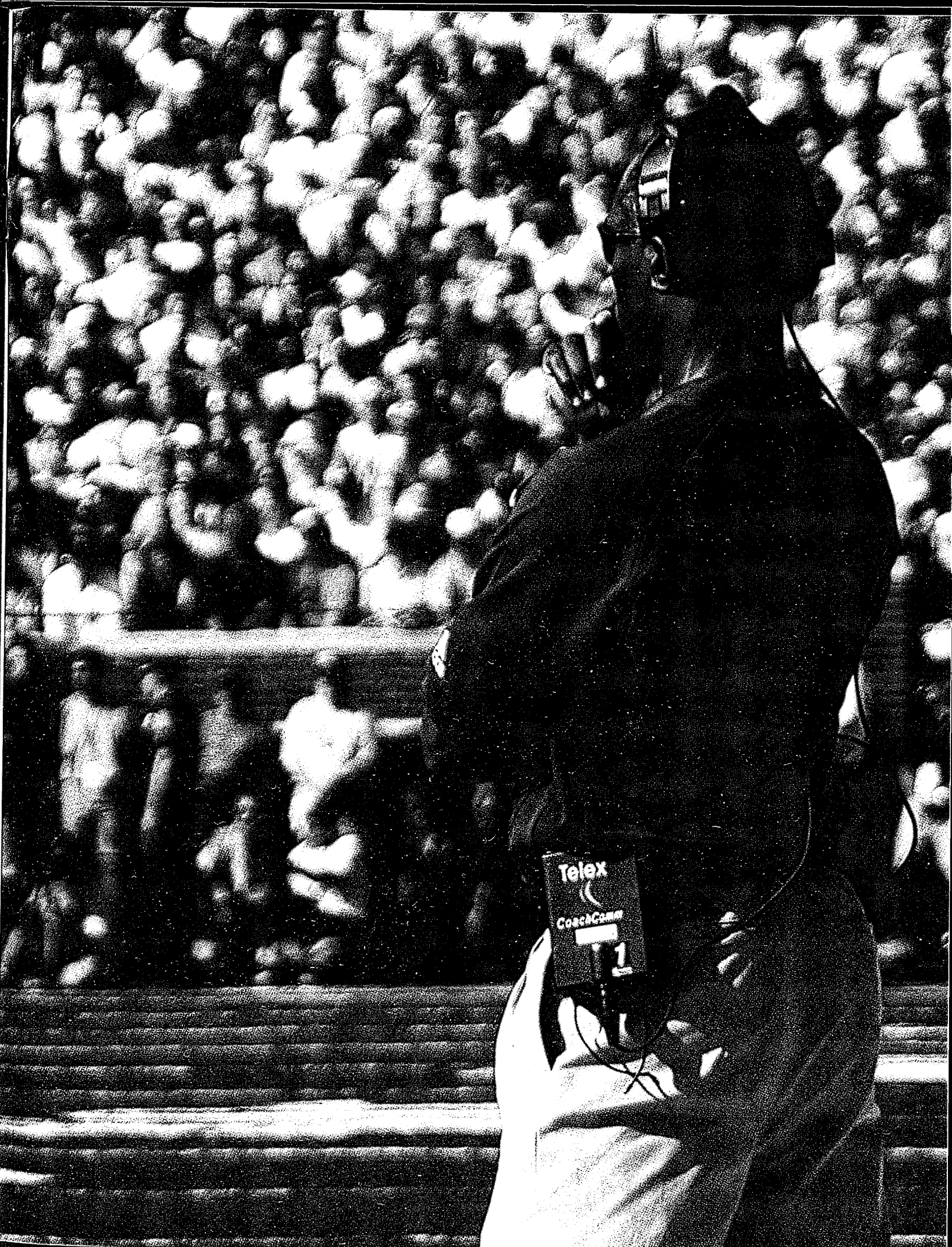
Notre Dame will always be America's football team because it represents what college athletics is about — integrity, competitiveness and commitment to education. It is a special place and will always be number one in doing everything the right way.

Ty Willingham is carrying on this great tradition. He's had great victories and tough losses, but he carries on the tradition. He is a man of conviction.

I was blessed to have had the opportunity to coach at Notre Dame and am blessed every day when I talk to or meet a Notre Dame person, because we are all proud of our great university and its football program. I will always cherish my five years at Our Lady's University and I will always cherish the great friendships I made while I was at Notre Dame. God has blessed me in my life. □

As time passes, I look back and thank the Good Lord and Our Lady for the opportunity to represent the University of Notre Dame Fighting Irish.

Gerry Faust coached the Irish to a 30-26-1 record during his tenure as head coach from 1981-85. Despite never achieving great success in the victory column, Faust won over the hearts of many players and fans and continues to inspire Notre Dame faithful. He is the author of The Golden Dream.



Oval Opus



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