

# IRISH INSIDER

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2011

THE  
OBSERVER

## FACING THE PRESENT

Junior linebacker  
Manti Te'o  
approaches life  
one day at a  
time and inspires  
those around him.



## COMMENTARY

# Irish move on from loss as Orlando awaits them

To the weathered and long-time Notre Dame fan, it may seem like the thundercloud that has seemingly hovered above the program for the past 18 years has reappeared. With the Irish primed to take a significant step toward reviving a program rich with tradition, Notre Dame lost a 31-17 debacle to archrival USC last Saturday.

Everything was set for the Irish to succeed and it appeared Notre Dame had the edge in the rivalry for the first time in a decade.

The Trojans simply outplayed Notre Dame as any Irish hopes for a BCS bid vanished as quickly as USC junior safety Jawanza Starling picked up a botched snap and scampered 80 yards into the end zone.

What does this mean for the state of the program, now more than halfway through Irish coach Brian Kelly's second season and with a mediocre 4-3 record?

It's not nearly as bad as you might think.

Changing the culture at a program that has struggled for quite a while is no easy task. Because of smoke-and-mirror starts by former Irish coaches Tyrone Willingham and Charlie Weis that produced 8-0 and 19-3 records, respectively, many are under the assumption not only that it is easy, but also that such early success should be expected.

In the current here-today-gone-tomorrow climate of college football and the pressure to win (and quickly) at an all-time high, no one wants to hear the W-word at a big-time college football program like Notre Dame, but I'm going to use it anyway: Wait.

Kelly is building a winner and stocking depth throughout the roster. While recruiting success is necessary but not sufficient to game success, the second-year Irish coach is taking the right steps as the program's CEO. He knows how to win and has proven it at three previous stops, albeit none with the day-to-day pressure that comes at Notre

Dame.

The way the team responds to the USC loss this weekend and down the stretch will show a lot about its character and motivation, especially now that "their gift bag won't be as big," as Kelly said.

With the goal of a BCS bowl berth now out of reach, the Irish have as strong an idea of where they will be over the holidays as they have had in a while. If they finish 7-5, 8-4 or 9-3, the result is almost assuredly the same — the Champs Sports Bowl in Orlando, Fla., on Dec. 29.

Kelly said the approach will remain the same even with the BCS bid off the table.

"So the moment for us, it never gets too big," he said after the loss Saturday. "In other words, we didn't think in big picture terms. I'll talk to [the media] in big picture terms."

While in no way should the team scrap the remainder of the 2011 season to improve its chances in 2012, the final five games will provide the Irish coach the opportunity to evaluate much of his young talent.

With senior defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore out for the season, freshmen Aaron Lynch, Stephon Tuitt and Chase Hounshell have to mature even quicker and will play a larger role on Saturdays.

Sophomore quarterback Andrew Hendrix should get an extended look in the last five games, experience that could prove invaluable in 2012. With next year's schedule about as daunting as it comes, Hendrix will need all the game repetitions he can get before being thrown into the fire, regardless of what his role proves to be.

It's time for the online message boards to settle down and trust the plan that Kelly and his staff have put in place. As former Irish coach Lou Holtz once said, "You're never as good as everyone tells you when you win, and you're never as bad as they say when you lose."

And, right now, Notre Dame is in between good and bad. Time will tell if the thundercloud is ready to move along.

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The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Observer.



Andrew Owens

Associate Sports Editor

## FOOTBALL RECRUITING

# Recruits leave ND impressed

By ALLAN JOSEPH  
Sports Editor

A week after hosting its largest group of visiting recruits in recent memory, Notre Dame will host no official visitors this weekend against Navy, Irish recruiting expert Mike Frank said. While a number of 2013 players will make unofficial visits to campus, the focus on the 2012 signing class is still largely on the aftermath of last week's bonanza of visitors — and Notre Dame seems to have done well.

"I think a lot of guys came out impressed," said Frank, who runs the ESPN affiliate Irish Sports Daily. "Notre Dame put their best foot forward as far as the game atmosphere goes."

"I think the player walk is a huge thing for these kids. They get how much Notre Dame football means to Notre Dame fans when they walk down the street and all the fans are screaming at them, trying to get them ready for the game. Those types of things have a huge impact on these players."

While the atmosphere impressed a number of recruits, Frank said the result of the game often plays a large role in a recruit's decision.

"I do think the game is important, more important than people realize," Frank said. "How you stack up against USC is important to the [California players]. They're leaving all the way from Southern California to come to South Bend, and I think they want to know that Notre Dame's going to be competitive with them."

"Most of these kids don't want to play on a losing team."

While the Irish may have lost to the Trojans, Frank said the loss

presents unique recruiting opportunities of its own.

"They can go up to these guys and say 'You're the missing piece that gets us over this hump,'" Frank said. "I'm sure that's the angle they took, and that's really the truth. They're just a few players away from being a very good team."

"Some kids want to be a part of building a winning team, which Notre Dame certainly has that opportunity to sell."

While Notre Dame may have sold a number of undecided players last weekend, Frank said it was too early to tell which players they may have been.

"I don't think we'll really know for sure until a couple of weeks down the road," Frank said. "None of these players are probably going to decide right away and so when you're really going to know how Notre Dame did is a couple weeks down the road when these players are visiting other schools and checking out other schools."

"If Notre Dame's still high on their list after a couple more visits, then you have a pretty good idea of how well Notre Dame did. I don't anticipate anybody committing anytime soon."

Speculation swirled this week around California defensive back Tee Shepard, who has committed to Notre Dame and planned on enrolling early. There appears to have been a miscommunication between Shepard and the Notre Dame administration, but the issue appears to have been cleared up between the University and the high school senior. While some suggested Shepard would decommit if he could not enroll early, Frank said it was far too early for that speculation.

"I just think some things need to be clarified and I think that that's all being worked out," Frank said. "I don't know where the mix-up was or why it happened, whether there was a miscommunication or what the situation was, but I think right now that it is a situation that will be resolved one way or another. He's not decommitted at this point."

Shepard reaffirmed his commitment to Notre Dame via his Twitter account Tuesday evening.

After a whirlwind week of recruiting, Frank said the most important thing to remember is that with months before National Signing Day, much is still up in the air.

"Recruiting is always a roller-coaster ride," Frank said. "This time last year Notre Dame had dropped a couple games and it seemed like the wheels were falling off. Then they got back on the winning streak and then next thing you know, they close recruiting strong. So no matter what happens between now and the end of the season, all this stuff can change. We'll just have to see how Notre Dame closes their season."

"I think a lot of recruits, especially a lot of the leaning ones, are taking a wait-and-see approach to Notre Dame to see which direction they're heading. I think by the end of the year you'll see them finish the season strong."

For more on Notre Dame recruiting, check out Mike Frank's [irishsportsdaily.com](http://irishsportsdaily.com). Email Mike at [mikefrank18@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mikefrank18@sbcglobal.net) and tell him The Observer sent you.

Contact Allan Joseph at [ajoseph2@nd.edu](mailto:ajoseph2@nd.edu)



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# 'An incredible asset'

*By learning from others while inspiring others, Te'o serves as one of the nation's best*

By ANDREW OWENS  
Associate Sports Editor

Each Saturday in the Notre Dame locker room, a warrior applies eye black to his face and quietly envisions his role in the battle that is about to ensue. If Manti Te'o seems contemplative, it's because he is — in everything he does.

"When I'm preparing, I sometimes like to have my little quiet zone and just reflect and meditate and really focus in, but overall I'm just really cheerful, really friendly," the junior linebacker said. "I just try to relax. I feel whenever I try to focus too much and get too psyched for the game it hinders me a bit and doesn't allow me to just play, so I'm rather loose, but still very calm."

A calm before the storm, really. Te'o has recorded 69 tackles, eight-and-a-half for loss and four sacks in the first seven contests of the year, all team-highs. The No. 1 defensive prospect coming out of high school who chose Notre Dame over USC has done nothing to disappoint in his three seasons with the Irish.

If it seems like he's been around the ball even more this year than in his freshman and sophomore campaigns, well, it's because he has. Te'o attributed the improvement to his preparation while watching film during the week.

"It definitely has helped me to know and have a general idea of where the offense is going," Te'o said. "Before the offense steps on the field I

have a general idea of what plays they're going to run, where it's going to go, who's going to get it by just the way they line up, and that comes from my film study and really helps me.

"[Defensive coordinator Bob] Diaco and [safeties coach Chuck] Martin have especially helped me with that film study and cleaning up what I look at and focusing my attention on certain things so I can apply it."

Te'o's impact on the program is not limited to his on-field performance on Saturdays. He is the caliber of player who ignites a program, and Notre Dame was in desperate need of a defensive jewel to complete its 2009 recruiting class when Te'o committed to the Irish.

"So we could have lost Manti Te'o in terms of the football player," Irish coach Brian Kelly said.

"What we would have never overcome is the leader that he is. So when people talk about the complete package, it's that he carries that same pride with him in everything that he does. And that's what he brings to our football program. And that's why there's never a day that he's not looking to be better. And I think it's the pride that drives that."

Even after last Saturday's loss to USC dropped Notre Dame from BCS contention, Te'o said he continues to hit the field everyday with the same mentality to improve.

"My hopes are still the same," he said. "My hopes are to win every game, to play the best ball I can play and to help my team win ... Everybody's getting back to busi-

ness, everybody's doing small things and just focusing on that and all the bigger things are falling in place."

## NFL dreams on hold

Once the season is over, Te'o will have a difficult decision to make: Declare for the NFL Draft with a year of eligibility remaining, or pass up millions of dollars and return to school with unfinished business to accomplish.

"The only thing that I've been working on is to help my team win and playing the best brand of football that I could possibly play and just enjoying every moment," he said when asked about the looming choice.

One thing he did say about it should come as no surprise — his family and faith will be heavily involved in the evaluation.

"I think [my counsel when deciding] is going to be very small," Te'o said. "Just the people who I know are in it for my best interests — of course my parents and family, the coaches — so when that time comes we'll make the proper decision."

## The bond between master and pupil

Te'o has developed a close bond with Diaco since the defensive coordinator arrived at Notre Dame in December 2009.

"Coach Diaco has really been that father figure away from home," Te'o said. "His door is always open to me and the rest of the LBs, so he's always been that guy that we can talk to, that guy I can call at 2 in the morning if something's troubling me. I didn't feel like I couldn't call him."

"He was always there, he's always there and you just have that level of trust and respect with him and the family."

While it should come as no surprise that a defensive



MACKENZIE SAIN/The Observer

**Irish junior linebacker Manti Te'o attempts to tackle an Air Force ball carrier Oct. 8 at Notre Dame Stadium. The Irish won, 59-33.**

standout 5,000 miles away from home has found a fatherly figure at college, it's the impact Te'o has had on Diaco that is remarkable.

"He's such a rare, special person and package," Diaco said. "He's an incredible asset to the student body and the classroom. He's an incredible asset obviously to our football team."

"He's incredible to any kind of friend circle, social circle that he's involved with. He's an incredible asset to his family and the people that really love him. He's been an incredible asset in my life, just as somebody I enjoy being around."

While proud of the inspiration he is to others including Diaco, Te'o attributed his character to his roots.

"It's definitely humbling and it definitely goes to show that my parents raised me the right way," he said. "And I just hope to pass that on to people I come in contact with and for them to realize that wherever you go, whoever you meet, you never know what kind of impact you might have on them."

## Learning from the best to be the best

Te'o was named a semi-finalist for the Dick Butkus Award, given annually to college football's top linebacker. While he is a standout at the position, he studies the best at the professional level to

pick up on characteristics he can add to his performance.

"As far as collegiate linebackers go, everyone's different," Te'o said. "I don't pay too much attention to that, my teammates tend to do that for me. For me I focus on who's the best overall and to me that's Ray Lewis, Patrick Willis, Dick Butkus, all of them."

"So I try to mimic my game after them and watch them all the time. If I'm watching any linebackers and keeping track of linebackers, it's them."

Te'o said he studies the behavior of those linebackers on game day, but also their approaches in other facets of life that help them succeed.

"[I like] their intensity, how they move, how they live their lives. With Ray Lewis, everything he does on film study to workouts, work ethic, faith, dedication, that kind of stuff. I try to learn from them and I want to be the best."

Naturally, the introspective junior linebacker has considered what he wants his lasting legacy to be when he takes off the blue and gold for the final time, whenever that may be.

"When I leave here I want everyone to remember No. 5 and in order to do that, I need to be the best and if I want to be the best, I have to do what the best do."

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COURTNEY ECKERLE/The Observer

**Irish junior linebacker Manti Te'o reaches for the football in Notre Dame's 15-12 win over Pittsburgh on Sept. 24. He recorded 10 tackles and one sack in the victory.**



**IRISH PASSING**

After an explosive effort against Air Force, junior quarterback Tommy Rees and the Notre Dame offense took a step backward under the lights last weekend against USC.

Rees struggled to find senior receiver Michael Floyd and only junior tight end Tyler Eifert was able to pick up the slack. The passing game showed signs of life but never found a clear rhythm.

On the other side of the ball, Navy has a mediocre pass defense, ranking 61st in the country and allowing its opponents an average of over 275 yards through the air per game. Even worse, the Midshipmen rank 111th in the country in defensive pass efficiency.

Notre Dame has also occasionally shown an ill-timed propensity for interceptions, as each of the three losses the Irish have suffered was marked by turnovers. Navy has demonstrated a capability to force turnovers when its opponent plays sloppy. This matchup comes down to whether Rees makes good decisions. If he does, he will find open receivers.

**IRISH RUSHING**

Notre Dame struggled mightily last weekend against USC, managing just 41 rushing yards in the entire game. Part of the low total was due to playcalling, but a large part of it was simply due to a strong performance by the Trojan defensive line, which smothered nearly every Notre Dame run that wasn't around the edge.

Navy is no USC. The Midshipmen rank 103rd in the country in rushing defense, allowing just under 200 rushing yards per game. While Navy junior defensive end Jabaree Tuani has recorded 15.5 tackles for loss this season, the rest of the Midshipmen front seven is not nearly as stalwart against the run.

Junior running back Cierre Wood and senior running back Jonas Gray should be able to find some running room against Navy. That will be crucial as Notre Dame looks to put together sustained drives in order to try and control the clock, as Navy's option attack leaves the Irish with little time to be inefficient, which hurt the Irish in last year's defeat.

**IRISH OFFENSIVE COACHING**

The coaches have a tall task in getting Notre Dame emotionally and mentally ready after last week's night game spectacle. If the Irish can put together a strong first quarter, though, they will be in good position.

Navy has struggled in the first quarter, going four games without a touchdown in the opening period. If Notre Dame can open up a lead, Navy is not a team that plays well from behind.

# Head-to

## Notre Dame Offense

<b>WR</b>	7	<b>TJ Jones</b>	<b>So.</b>
	16	DaVaris Daniels	Fr.
<b>WR</b>	6	<b>Theo Riddick</b>	<b>Jr.</b>
	9	Robby Toma	Jr.
<b>LT</b>	70	<b>Zack Martin</b>	<b>Jr.</b>
	72	Nick Martin	Fr.
<b>LG</b>	66	<b>Chris Watt</b>	<b>Jr.</b>
	76	Andrew Nuss	Sr.
<b>C</b>	52	<b>Braxton Cave</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
	57	Mike Golic Jr.	Sr.
<b>RG</b>	78	<b>Trevor Robinson</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
	65	Conor Hanratty	Fr.
<b>RT</b>	75	<b>Taylor Dever</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
	74	Christian Lombard	So.
<b>TE</b>	80	<b>Tyler Eifert</b>	<b>Jr.</b>
	18	Ben Koyack	Fr.
<b>WR</b>	3	<b>Michael Floyd</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
	81	John Goodman	Sr.

## Notre Dame Defense

<b>CB</b>	12	<b>Robert Blanton</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
	23	Lo Wood	So.
<b>OLB</b>	45	<b>Darius Fleming</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
	46	Steve Filer	Sr.
<b>DE</b>	90	<b>Ethan Johnson</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
	19	Aaron Lynch	Fr.
<b>NG</b>	9	<b>Louis Nix</b>	<b>So.</b>
	98	Sean Cwynar	Sr.
<b>DE</b>	7	<b>Stephon Tuitt</b>	<b>Fr.</b>
	50	Chase Hounshell	Fr.
<b>OLB</b>	55	<b>Prince Shembo</b>	<b>So.</b>
	56	Troy Niklas	Fr.
<b>CB</b>	4	<b>Gary Gray</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
	2	Bennett Jackson	So.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

**IRISH SCHEDULE**

Sept. 3	South Florida	(L, 23-20)
Sept. 10	@ Michigan	(L, 35-31)
Sept. 17	Michigan St.	(W, 31-13)
Sept. 24	@ Pittsburgh	(W, 15-12)
Oct. 1	@ Purdue	(W, 38-10)
Oct. 8	Air Force	(W, 59-33)
Oct. 22	USC	(L, 31-17)
Oct. 29	Navy	
Nov. 5	@ Wake Forest	
Nov. 12	Maryland	
Nov. 19	Boston College	
Nov. 26	@ Stanford	

**IRISH SPECIAL TEAMS**

Notre Dame's special teams have come a long way from the beginning of the year, when the Irish were making mistakes left and right. Ben Turk is finally punting consistently — though not quite as long as the coaches may want — and Kyle Brindza is a weapon on kickoffs.

Punt returns may be an area of weakness, but getting Michael Floyd involved in that facet of the game seems to have improved John Goodman's hands as well. By this point, every Irish fan knows about George Atkinson on kickoff returns. The electric freshman gives Notre Dame a threat to turn the tables on any opposing score, and when he doesn't take it all the way back, he gets good field position too.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

## Notre Dame Specialists

<b>PK</b>	97	<b>David Ruffer</b>	<b>Sr.</b>	<b>S</b>	22	<b>Harrison Smith</b>	<b>Sr.</b>	<b>OLB</b>	45	<b>Darius Fleming</b>	<b>Sr.</b>	
					15	Dan McCarthy	Sr.		46	Steve Filer	Sr.	
<b>P</b>	35	<b>Ben Turk</b>	<b>Jr.</b>		<b>ILB</b>	48	<b>Dan Fox</b>	<b>Jr.</b>	<b>DE</b>	90	<b>Ethan Johnson</b>	<b>Sr.</b>
						44	Carlo Calabrese	Jr.		19	Aaron Lynch	Fr.
<b>LS</b>	50	<b>Ryan Kavanagh</b>	<b>Sr.</b>		<b>ILB</b>	5	<b>Manti Te'o</b>	<b>Jr.</b>	<b>NG</b>	9	<b>Louis Nix</b>	<b>So.</b>
	60	Jordan Cowart	Jr.			54	Anthony McDonald	Sr.		98	Sean Cwynar	Sr.
<b>PR</b>	81	<b>John Goodman</b>	<b>Sr.</b>	<b>S</b>	26	<b>Jamoris Slaughter</b>	<b>Sr.</b>	<b>DE</b>	7	<b>Stephon Tuitt</b>	<b>Fr.</b>	
	6	Theo Riddick	Jr.		17	Zeke Motta	Jr.		50	Chase Hounshell	Fr.	
<b>KR</b>	34	<b>George Atkinson</b>	<b>Fr.</b>					<b>OLB</b>	55	<b>Prince Shembo</b>	<b>So.</b>	
	28	Austin Collinsworth	So.						56	Troy Niklas	Fr.	
<b>KO</b>	27	<b>Kyle Brindza</b>	<b>Fr.</b>					<b>CB</b>	4	<b>Gary Gray</b>	<b>Sr.</b>	
									2	Bennett Jackson	So.	

Predictions

**Allan Joseph**

Sports Editor



Halloween is here, and I'm terrified. The Irish are trying to regroup after an emotionally draining game. Even worse, Notre Dame will try to defend the triple option without one senior defensive end and with another hurt.

The Midshipmen feel like a better team than their record shows, and a win would be the statement they are looking for. And, of course, they have

been the Boogeyman in this rivalry for the past four years. This game sets up like an absolute nightmare.

It won't be. When everything favors the Irish (see: last week), they often lose. Now everything favors Navy. That should mean Notre Dame will win, thanks to a receiving corps Navy simply cannot cover. Yet Notre Dame Stadium could easily turn into a house of horrors by the time night falls Saturday.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 31, Navy 24

**Douglas Farmer**

Editor-in-Chief



It's a bittersweet symphony, this season, trying to make ends meet.

And right there is the problem — ends. Senior defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore is now out for the season, and his classmate and counterpart Ethan Johnson is not yet enjoying a fully-healthy ankle.

Of all the positions to suffer these losses, this was the spot the Irish could least afford them this week. Navy's option has plagued Notre Dame in recent years, and Lewis-Moore's and Johnson's experience against it were Notre Dame's best bets at stopping it.

Well, so much for that. So, for the fourth time in the last 48 years, prepare for the worst.

Make that the third time in the last three years.

FINAL SCORE: Navy 31, Notre Dame 24

**Eric Prister**

Senior Sports Writer



Notre Dame's defense was out-matched and out-manned against USC. Now both starting defensive ends, one of the most crucial positions in stopping the option, are hampered by injuries. The Irish had significant problems stopping the option against the Midshipmen last year, and did not fair particularly well against Air Force's similar attack.

But Navy is not a team that can come from behind. And if Notre Dame's offensive weapons — namely Michael Floyd and Cierre Wood — who are severe mismatches for all of Navy's defense, can get the Irish an early lead, then they should be able to hold on to it.

Expect a high-scoring game, but the Irish will bounce back and come out on top.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 38, Navy 27



# o-Head

## Navy Defense

<b>CB</b>	5	<b>David Sperry</b>	Jr.
	11	Kwesi Mitchell	Sr.
<b>OLB</b>	9	<b>Tra'ves Bush</b>	Jr.
	10	Jarred Shannon	Sr.
<b>DE</b>	98	<b>Jabaree Tuani</b>	Sr.
	90	Jamel Dobbs	So.
<b>NG</b>	91	<b>Jared Marks</b>	Sr.
	99	Wes Henderson	Jr.
<b>DE</b>	59	<b>Josh Dowling-Fitzpatrick</b>	Jr.
	99	Wes Henderson	Jr.
<b>OLB</b>	50	<b>Brye French</b>	Jr.
	42	Mason Graham	Sr.
<b>CB</b>	24	<b>Parrish Gaines</b>	Fr.
	25	Jonathan Wey	So.

### NAVY OFFENSIVE COACHING

The Midshipmen are one of the smartest teams in the country, committing very few penalties and turnovers. In addition, Navy boasts a squad skilled at executing its complex schemes.

In last year's meeting between these two teams, Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo outcoached Irish defensive coordinator Bob Diaco. Don't think either coach has forgotten.

EDGE: NAVY

### NAVY RUSHING

It's pretty simple: Navy is a nightmare on the ground. The Midshipmen triple-option attack is very effective, and it allows Navy to compete against teams far bigger and faster. Fullback Alexander Teich had a field day last year against the Irish and has only gotten more dangerous this year. As a whole, the Midshipmen rushing attack ranks third in the country and averages 325 yards on the ground per game.

Defending the triple option requires discipline, especially at the defensive end and outside linebacker positions. Senior defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore will be sorely missed, as the Irish will rotate a number of inexperienced freshmen in his place. Notre Dame struggled to defend Air Force's triple option on the ground earlier in the year, and without Lewis-Moore, life will be even harder for the Irish.

Irish coach Brian Kelly has said that "yards don't matter" when defending the option, and he's right. Navy will roll up a lot of yards — and is completely capable of scoring quite a few points on the ground, too.

EDGE: NAVY

### NAVY PASSING

The Midshipmen rarely, if ever, throw the ball. The vast majority of their offense relies on the triple option, and the quarterbacks are far more adept at reading defensive ends on option plays than reading coverages on standard pass plays. Navy ranks 117th out of 120 teams in passing yards, earning just 109 yards through the air per game.

Senior quarterback Kriss Proctor is out with an injury this week, and sophomore Trey Miller will take his place. Miller has seen some minor game action this year, but the Midshipmen will miss their starting quarterback.

Outside of senior cornerback Robert Blanton, Notre Dame's secondary has struggled with inconsistency throughout the season. The safeties, especially senior captain Harrison Smith, will be largely focused on stopping the run, leaving the cornerbacks alone. The only danger zone is if the defensive backs decide to play the run instead of covering the receiver they are assigned to cover. Either way, the Navy aerial attack will not be the focus of the game.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

<b>FS</b>	23	<b>Chris Ferguson</b>	Fr.
	6	Shawn Lynch	So.
<b>ILB</b>	57	<b>Caleb King</b>	Sr.
	38	Matt Brewer	Jr.
<b>ILB</b>	51	<b>Matt Warrick</b>	Jr.
	44	Max Blue	Sr.
<b>ROV</b>	11	<b>Kwesi Mitchell</b>	Sr.
	9	Tra'ves Bush	Jr.

### NAVY SPECIAL TEAMS

Special teams miscues have cost the Midshipmen three games, including last week's loss to East Carolina in which Navy missed a late field goal to tie the game. The Midshipmen have missed four field goals on the year as well as four extra points, one of which was the difference in Navy's 35-34 loss to Air Force on Oct. 1.

While the Midshipmen did have a kick return for a touchdown last week, their return game is mediocre overall. The Irish should be able to win the field-position battle against Navy and may even steal some points if they can force field goal attempts.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

### NAVY SCHEDULE

- Sept. 3 Delaware (W, 40-17)
- Sept. 10 @ Western Kentucky (W, 40-14)
- Sept. 17 @ South Carolina (L, 24-21)
- Oct. 1 Air Force (L, 35-34, OT)
- Oct. 8 Southern Miss (L, 63-35)
- Oct. 15 @ Rutgers (L, 21-20)
- Oct. 22 East Carolina (L, 38-35)
- Oct. 29 @ Notre Dame
- Nov. 5 Troy
- Nov. 12 @ SMU
- Nov. 19 @ San Jose State
- Dec. 10 Army

## Navy Offense

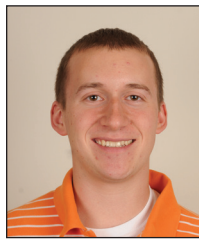
<b>WR</b>	82	<b>Doug Furman</b>	Sr.
	88	Casey Bolena	So.
<b>SB</b>	33	<b>John Howell</b>	Jr.
	4	Bo Snelson	Jr.
<b>RT</b>	64	<b>Ryan Basford</b>	Sr.
	76	David Sumrall	Sr.
<b>RG</b>	68	<b>John Dowd</b>	Jr.
	71	Eric Douglass	Sr.
<b>C</b>	75	<b>Brady DeMell</b>	Sr.
	71	Eric Douglass	Sr.
<b>LG</b>	65	<b>Josh Cabral</b>	Jr.
	71	Eric Douglass	Sr.
<b>LT</b>	78	<b>Andrew Barker</b>	Jr.
	76	David Sumrall	Sr.
<b>SB</b>	21	<b>Gee Gee Greene</b>	Sr.
	17	Mike Stukel	Sr.
<b>WR</b>	85	<b>Matt Aiken</b>	So.
	86	Brandon Turner	Jr.

## Navy Specialists

<b>PK</b>	45	<b>Jon Teague</b>	Sr.
<b>P</b>	81	<b>Pablo Beltran</b>	Fr.
<b>LS</b>	93	<b>Joe Cardona</b>	Fr.
	96	Brian Ackerman	Sr.
<b>PR</b>	85	<b>Matt Aiken</b>	So.
<b>KR</b>	34	<b>Marcus Thomas</b>	So.
<b>KO</b>	45	<b>Erik Soderberg</b>	Sr.

### Andrew Owens

Associate Sports Editor



After dominating Navy without suffering a single defeat for nearly a half-century, Notre Dame has lost three of its last four against the Midshipmen, including two in Notre Dame Stadium.

Last year, Navy flummoxed Irish defensive coordinator Bob Diaco with its triple-option. Even without quarterback Kriss Proctor, the Midshipmen still have a solid chance of winning their third consecutive road matchup against the Irish.

Notre Dame needs to jump ahead early and take advantage of opportunities on offense, as it did against Air Force.

After being irrelevant in the 31-17 loss to USC, Michael Floyd will torch the Navy secondary on the way to a win.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 35, Navy 24

### Chris Masoud

Assistant Managing Editor



It's only fitting that Halloween weekend features the scariest team Notre Dame will face all season. While Stanford is downright dominant, at least you can identify and attribute its success to a Heisman-caliber quarterback and experience at every position. But Navy is a mystery because I simply can't explain its ability to walk into Notre Dame Stadium and win. Twice. In a row.

How hard could it be to limit an option attack you know is coming? Four of Navy's five losses have come from a total of only eight points. This team is dangerous, particularly against an Irish front seven that lacks Kapron Lewis-Moore and a healthy Ethan Johnson. If Aaron Lynch and Stephen Tuitt aren't in the backfield early and often, not even "Crazy Train" will help.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 21, Navy 20

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# Irish face unique task against triple option



SARAH O'CONNOR/The Observer

Navy fullback Alexander Teich runs away from former Irish cornerback Darrin Walls in last year's 35-17 win over Notre Dame.

By CHRIS MASOUD  
Assistant Managing Editor

High school coaches across the nation have modeled their offenses on it. Division I defenses have been blindsided by it. Yet this season, five teams have discovered how to limit it. Through thick and thin, Navy employs the option offense with the unwavering discipline the Academy embodies.

"[Navy has] seen every single thing that can possibly be done to defend the offense," Irish defensive coordinator Bob Diaco said. "There's only a few things that can be done — effort, fundamentally sound football, a better understanding of the plan."

Notre Dame will be handed the unenviable task of containing the Navy triple-option offense this Saturday, an assignment the Irish have failed to accomplish in two previous contests against the Midshipmen. Navy averages a whopping 325 rushing yards and 32 points per game this season.

"The biggest thing is just to be disciplined," senior outside linebacker Darius Fleming said. "You have to trust your teammates that they're going to get their job done, and that allows you to get your job done. If you're not disciplined, it doesn't matter about the speed of the game — you just won't be a good player out there."

The task of stopping the explosive Navy offense will be even harder following Kapron Lewis-Moore's season-ending knee injury sustained in the loss to the Trojans last Saturday.

"It's very tough as it related to [Kapron]," Diaco said. "He's a leader out there. He's got a ton of fundamental work in his base that will be lost, but we'll just work on the other guys. Coach Kelly's philosophy for the program is, 'The next man in,' and that's what we're going to be here."

In addition to the loss of Lewis-Moore, senior defensive end Ethan Johnson could see limited action as he recovers from an ankle injury sustained against Purdue. That means the next men in happen to be freshmen.

Rookie defensive linemen Aaron Lynch, Stephon Tuitt and Chase Hounshell will shoulder the burden of maintaining edge containment against the Midshipmen, a handful for seasoned veterans, let alone freshmen.

"It's very hard. The young guys are playing roles they really shouldn't have to be playing right now," Diaco said. "They're really not ready to play the amount of reps they're having to play each week. The discipline and the mental focus necessary to play four quarters against a team like this and be assignment correct on every play — it becomes a challenge."

Lynch was flagged for a costly penalty against the Trojans on Saturday, a misstep that kept the Trojan drive alive and eventually led to a score. Irish defensive line coach Mike Elston said Lynch, a player that thrives on emotion, has moved past the incident.

"Aaron's got to move his life forward, and he is. He's doing a nice job of taking accountability," Elston said Tuesday. "After the game, he took accountability for his play. It was very poor. His actions were very poor that led to the personal foul, and it affected him all weekend. He came back, and he's had a great 48 hours."

Perhaps the biggest boost for the Irish will come in the form of defensive end Sean Cwynar's return to full health. The junior has been limited in practice and games due to a forearm cast, which was recently removed.

Elston said he is confident in Cwynar's ability to hit the ground running despite limited action Saturday and no defensive snaps during Notre Dame's Oct. 8 victory over Air Force, a team that also utilizes a triple option offense.

"Sean feels great with the club off," he said. "He's still a little rusty with using the hands. Sean doesn't have the size, he doesn't have the strength, he doesn't have the speed, he doesn't have the athleticism that all those other guys have. What he has is his technique and his instinctiveness and his ability to read blocks."

Diaco echoed Elston's confidence in the ability of the front line to read its keys and play disciplined football.

"They're locked in," he said. "They're preparing hard. The coaches are working on being as creative as we possibly can to maximize every permissible second of the allotted time we're with them, and they'll be ready."

Contact Chris Masoud at [cmasoud@nd.edu](mailto:cmasoud@nd.edu)

# ND's Opponents Last Week and This Week

Team	Last week	This week
(4-3) South Florida	(L, 37-34) Cincinnati	@ Rutgers
(6-1) Michigan	Off	Purdue
(6-1) Michigan State	(W, 37-31) Wisconsin	@ Nebraska
(3-4) Pittsburgh	Off	Connecticut
(4-3) Purdue	(W, 21-14) Illinois	@ Michigan
(3-4) Air Force	(L, 37-26) @ Boise State	@ New Mexico
(5-1) USC	(W, 31-17) @ Notre Dame	Stanford
(2-5) Navy	(L, 38-35) East Carolina	@ Notre Dame
(5-2) Wake Forest	(W, 24-23) @ Duke	@ North Carolina
(2-5) Maryland	(L, 41-16) @ Florida State	Boston College
(1-6) Boston College	(L, 30-14) @ Virginia Tech	@ Maryland
(7-0) Stanford	(W, 65-21) Washington	@ USC

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# Walk-on Tansey balances football with NROTC

By ERIC PRISTER  
Senior Sports Writer

After time expires on Notre Dame's annual contest against Navy, the players from both teams will join together, united, listening to their alma maters. But for one Irish player, the post-game tradition will not be the only time he stands beside his Brothers in Arms.

Junior offensive lineman Matt Tansey, as he is known on the football field, is known by another name off it — Midshipman Second-Class Tansey. Tansey is a member of Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC), which means after his football days are done, he will don another uniform — that of a Naval officer.

"I was always interested in joining the military as a kid," Tansey said. "My grandfather was in the Navy during World War II and the Korean War. So when it came down to choosing a branch, it was the logical choice for me.

It was a family thing; it was the branch that I saw the best opportunities in. I went the ROTC route because I saw an opportunity to get a scholarship to go to college and come to a place like Notre Dame."

But when the opportunity to play football at Notre Dame arose as well, Tansey could not turn it down.

"Notre Dame football was next to the military as one of

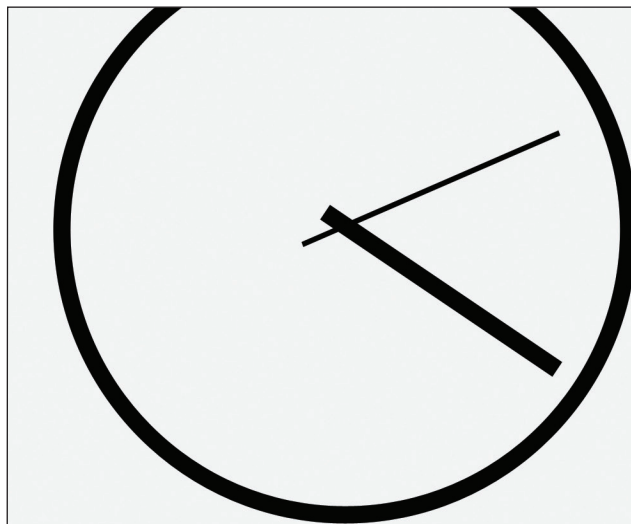
the things I wanted to do with my life if I got a chance," he said. "And I got a chance to walk on, so I've been here — this is my second full season."

But balancing football responsibilities with NROTC responsibilities is no easy task, Tansey said. NROTC allows him to work out with the football team when times conflict, but he is still expected to maintain a high endurance level, which at times goes against the type of training he does as an offensive lineman.

"It's tough, but it just comes down to working as hard as I can," he said. "I try as many days, as much as my workload will allow me, to try to work out after practice as well, more Navy-oriented. I try to run as much as I can outside of practice. Past that, it just comes down to trying to be as athletic as I can make my body be while still being an offensive lineman."

Help in learning how to balance football and NROTC came from former Irish safety Tom Smith, a fellow walk-on and NROTC member.

"I've been lucky enough to have [Smith], who graduated last year ... and was in ROTC even a season before I walked on, so he was a mentor for me, kind of showing me what to do, what came first where, how to stay in shape Navy-wise and football-wise. It's hard to be lifting for power and running for endurance,



A day in the life of **Matt Tansey**

7:15 a.m. — Wake up

8:00–9:00 a.m. — Football workouts

9:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m. — Science lab

12:30–1:45 p.m. — Naval science

2:00–7:00 p.m. — Football

7:00–8:00 p.m. — Extra Navy-based workout

8:00 p.m. — Homework

which the Navy wants to see. He really helped me balance that."

But NROTC has helped Tansey as a football player as well.

"Discipline," Tansey said. "Hands down, discipline. Through ROTC summer programs I've spent time with the Marines, spent time on ships, spent time with actual Navy units. And even through the training we do here, learning how we operate as the naval

service as a force.

"Just discipline and what we have to do day-to-day and conduct our business has helped me manage that schedule and just kind of balancing everything out as best as I can."

While Tansey said he wants to beat Navy to gain bragging rights over his future shipmates, the post-game tradition and all it represents means even more.

"Especially with Navy but

with all three academies, I love the support that Notre Dame has with them," he said.

"It makes me feel that once I do get into the service, even though I won't be an academy guy, coming from Notre Dame is almost next to that, in that we see the work that they do and try to mirror that discipline, that passion as best as we can."

Contact Eric Prister at [epriester@nd.edu](mailto:epriester@nd.edu)

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