

IRISH INSIDER

NOTRE DAME 38, WAKE FOREST 0 | MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2012 | NDSMCOBSERVER.COM

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Irish dominate on Senior Day as KSU, Oregon losses vault Notre Dame to No. 1

By **PETER STEINER**
Sports Writer

From the moment they ran through the tunnel to the singing of the alma mater, the Irish seniors shined, leading Notre Dame to a near-perfect 38-0 victory over Wake Forest and its first undefeated home season since 1998.

The win, coupled with losses by No. 1 Kansas State and No. 2 Oregon, pushed Notre Dame to No. 1 in the BCS standings for the first time in program history.

The Irish dominated all facets of the game from start to finish, maintaining an explosive offensive attack and an unwavering defense for all four quarters, Irish coach Brian Kelly said.

"We have a paradigm for winning," Kelly said. "It's something we talk about actually in our locker room. It's called four quarters of winning."

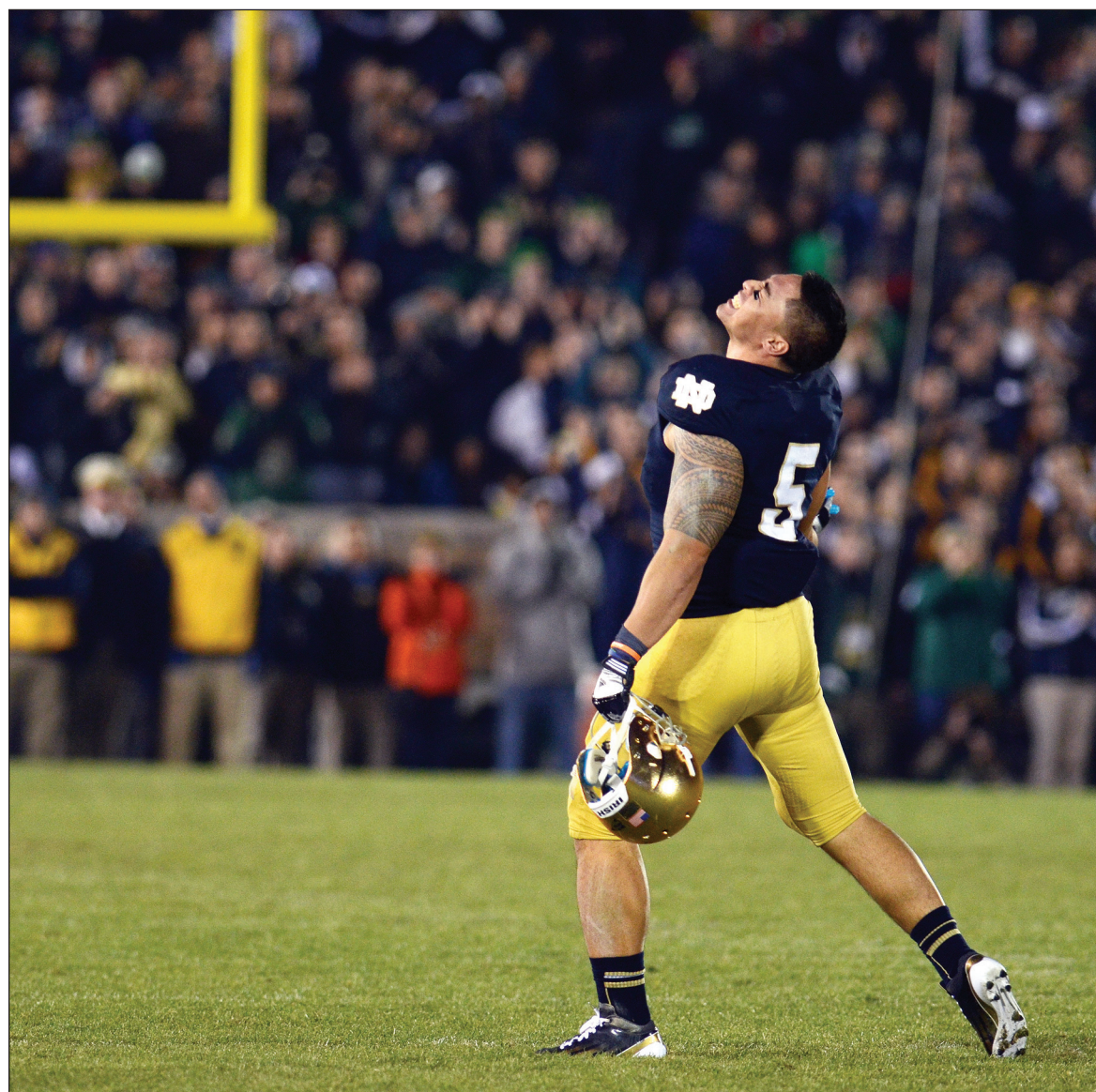
"I think that came together in this football game more than any game we've played this year."

Saturday's complete-game victory was particularly special for the Irish seniors as the 38-0 shutout victory over Wake Forest bookends the senior's home careers that began with a 35-0 shutout win over Nevada in 2009.

"It's just a relief for us to win in the fashion that we did, you know, just clicking on all cylinders and everybody is playing with a lot of enthusiasm and energy just on all sides of the ball and just getting after it," senior linebacker Manti Te'o said. "That's a great way to end my career playing here in Notre Dame."

Unlike many of their previous home games this season, the Irish controlled the game from the very beginning. After shaking its pre-game jitters, Notre Dame converted a third-and-11 from its own eight-yard line with a 24-yard strike from Irish sophomore quarterback Everett Golson to Irish senior running back Theo Riddick. On the very next play, Golson ran the quarterback option and pitched to senior running back Cierre Wood, who took it all the way to the end zone for a 68-yard score.

Then, just 74 seconds later, a big hit from Irish senior linebacker Carlo Calabrese knocked the ball loose from



DE KENESEY | The Observer

Senior linebacker and captain Manti Te'o celebrates as he leaves the field for the last time at Notre Dame Stadium. Te'o and other senior defensive leaders were substituted individually late in the game.

Deacons junior running back Josh Harris. After the recovery by another Irish senior — safety Zeke Motta — Notre Dame drove to the two-yard line before Irish senior tight end Tyler Eifert took over. While Golson's first attempt to Eifert was off the mark, Eifert rose above his lone defender on third down to pull down his fourth touchdown of the year and put Notre Dame up 14-0 just six minutes into the game.

"That's our number one goal before every game and that's to start fast," Eifert said. "Coach [Kelly] talks about it and I think that was huge to get points on the board early."

Notre Dame continued this high-energy play through the entire first quarter. After the Irish defense forced Wake Forest to punt on its next possession, Notre Dame needed just six plays to find the end zone again. On first down from the 50-yard line, Golson rolled out to his right, threw the ball deep down the right sideline and connected with graduate student receiver John

Goodman.

For Goodman, the play represented a further step in the young quarterback's development.

"Everett through it out there and trusted in his receivers and the offensive line gave him good blocking," Goodman said. "It was just another one of those plays that you just have to go up and get the ball, because that's what we are taught."

With another touchdown pass to Irish junior receiver T.J. Jones in the second quarter, Golson had a career game against Wake Forest. Despite being pulled midway through the third quarter, the sophomore signal-caller finished the day with 346 yards passing, three touchdowns and only one interception.

Compared to the start of the season, his performance Saturday reflects the incredible progress Golson has made, Irish senior offensive lineman Zack Martin said.

"Everett has grown as much as anyone on the team," Martin said. "He came into camp very

determined and has grown every game. He's been dominant player when he's out there. He can run, he can throw and he's communicating so he's doing a great job."

On the other side of the ball, the Notre Dame defense overwhelmed the Wake Forest offense all game, holding the Deacons to just nine first downs and 209 total yards. Heading into Saturday, the Deacons realized they would face a challenge with the Irish defense, Deacons coach Jim Grobe said.

"We knew coming in we were going to have issues with their defense," Grobe said. "Everybody has. They might be the best defensive football team in the country."

"This was just a day where Notre Dame was too much for us to handle."

In the third quarter, Eifert caught a 15-yard pass for an Irish first down. The reception pushed Eifert's career reception total to 129 and the senior tight end past former Notre Dame tight end Ken MacAfee in the program record books.

"Today we tried to get him the football, and he made incredible plays, as you know, down the field," Kelly said. "I think he epitomizes in terms of what we look for as a Notre Dame football player."

Then with 13:27 left in the third quarter, Kelly took a timeout to honor three other players that truly represent Notre Dame football. One by one, Irish senior defensive lineman Kapron Lewis-Moore, Motta and Te'o left the field for the last time and received an emotional ovation from 80,000 strong.

"Just magic," Te'o said, describing the moment. "Like everything's come full circle, [I'm] just very grateful."

While Irish were pleased to finish off their home season undefeated, the entire team recognized the need to focus on the upcoming matchup with USC.

"Going undefeated at home is always a big deal, but we now have to get ready for USC and right now that's the most important thing," Lewis-Moore said.

The Irish will travel to Los Angeles to face off against the Trojans in the Coliseum next Saturday at 8 p.m.

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PLAYER OF THE GAME

EVERETT GOLSON
NOTRE DAME QUARTERBACK

On Senior Day, it was the sophomore Golson who shined the brightest. Golson threw three touchdown passes — two to seniors — and accumulated 346 yards through the air. He underthrew an interception in the endzone but that was the only bad mark on a strong performance for the young signal-caller.

REPORT CARD

A-

QUARTERBACKS

Everett Golson may have had his best performance in an Irish uniform, throwing for 346 yards and three touchdowns on 20-for-30 passing in just two-and-a-half quarters of play. The only negative was an interception in the end zone.

A

RUNNING BACKS

Notre Dame got off to a quick start, mostly due to an effective running game. On the opening drive of the game, Cierre Wood ran for a career-high 68-yard touchdown and 150 rushing yards by day's end. Notre Dame combined for 221 rushing yards total.

A-

RECEIVERS

Eight different Irish receivers came away with a reception, with T.J. Jones leading the way with 97 yards on six receptions and a touchdown. Tyler Eifert also had six receptions and a touchdown along with 85 yards.

A

OFFENSIVE LINE

Notre Dame didn't give up a sack in the entire game and Golson had plenty of time to throw the ball downfield effectively. The running game was on point from the get-go.

A-

DEFENSIVE LINE

The defensive front only sacked Wake Forest quarterback Tanner Price once, but it put constant pressure on the southpaw and forced some hurried throws.

A

LINEBACKERS

The Notre Dame defense only gave up 55 rushing yards in the entire game, mostly due to its solid linebacking play. The defense also didn't allow the Deacons to cross the Notre Dame 37-yard line.

A

DEFENSIVE BACKS

The secondary held the Wake Forest aerial attack to only 154 passing yards and seven first downs. The Irish also shut down receiver Michael Campanaro (47 yards, six receptions), who came into the game with 21 receptions in the last two games.

B+

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kyle Brindza missed a 40-yard field goal attempt in the third quarter and only had one touchback. But the kickoff coverage unit held Wake Forest to 17.7 yards per kickoff return.

B

COACHING

Irish coach Brian Kelly had his team completely focused in the week before a rivalry game in Los Angeles and got off to a fast start.

OVERALL GPA: 3.82

Notre Dame made sure this one was never close, dominating from start to finish and racking up 584 yards of offense compared to Wake Forest's 209. Notre Dame rid of its home woes and went undefeated at home for the first time since 1998, sending the seniors off with a victory.

PLAY OF THE GAME

WOOD KICKS OFF THE GAME WITH A 68-YARD TOUCHDOWN RUN

Immediately following a big third-down conversion on third-and-11, Wood rocketed through the Deacons' defense off an option pitch with the longest Irish run of the season and the longest of his career to give the Irish the early 7-0 lead.



KARLA MORENO | The Observer

Senior tight end Tyler Eifert catches a pass in the open field. Eifert caught six passes for 85 yards against Wake Forest as the Irish improved to 11-0 and a No. 1 BCS ranking.

No. 1 ranking leaves no doubt as Irish head west



Andrew Gastelum
Associate Sports Editor

No. 1.

With that number, there is no need for an explanation. With that number, there is no need for a "What if?" With that number, Notre Dame is the best team in the country for the first time since 1993.

To put that in perspective, much of Notre Dame's current freshman class wasn't even born yet, Irish coach Brian Kelly was in his third season as a head coach at Grand Valley State and Grace Hall was still a men's dorm.

But on Sunday night, a No. 1 shone brightly from the top of Grace Hall, signaling to the world of college football that Notre Dame was irrelevant no more.

For the first time ever, Notre Dame is No. 1 in the BCS standings.

For the first time in 23 years, Notre Dame is 11-0.

For the first time in 14 years, Notre Dame has gone undefeated at home, thanks to a 38-0 win over Wake Forest on Senior Day.

And it truly was a day for the seniors, by the seniors.

Senior running back Cierre Wood rushed for a season-high 150 yards, including a career-high 68-yard touchdown run on Notre Dame's opening drive. Senior tight end Tyler Eifert had his best output since Notre Dame's home opener with a 85 yards and a touchdown on

six receptions. Senior wide receiver John Goodman caught his third touchdown of the year and second in as many weeks with another spectacular grab. And senior linebacker Carlo Calabrese led the Irish in tackles with seven.

Meanwhile, senior captains Manti Te'o and Kapron Lewis-Moore walked off the field to a standing ovation from 80,000-plus spectators, ending their careers at Notre Dame Stadium on the highest of high notes.

And now they head west, with it all on the line. One chance to complete an undefeated season and pack for the national championship in Miami. One chance to see it all slip away right at the finish line.

But to this team, there is no such thing as pressure. There is only a challenge, an opportunity to push past the improbable, and do the impossible.

"We started thinking about it as soon as the game was over," Eifert said. "We know what's at stake and how badly we want it, so we're just going to go out there and lay it on the line like we have all year and make it happen."

The challenge awaits against the two most talented receivers in college football in Marqise Lee and Robert Woods. In the Los Angeles Coliseum on Thanksgiving weekend, the Irish do not have to worry about who is ahead of them in the

standings, style points or the computers. It's as simple as win and end the regular season as the best team in the country with a chance at the crystal ball. But maybe in this case, it's not simple at all.

"We have one game left on our schedule," Kelly said. "Our guys know what's at stake now. This is about an undefeated season. They cannot do anything else but beat USC."

Notre Dame was supposed to head into Los Angeles with a chance to ruin the national title hopes of one of its fiercest rivals. And now, in a bizarre set of circumstances, the field is flipped. And USC would enjoy nothing more than to do just that.

"There is no next week. It's USC. There is no game after that," Te'o said. "The USC-Notre Dame game is always a battle. So we understand that, and we're going to prepare the way we know how."

This was supposed to be the down year, following the departure of Aaron Lynch, starting a first-year quarterback and facing the toughest schedule in college football.

And now, the Irish find themselves at the top of it all.

One game awaits. One game, with a shot to prolong the dream.

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

Notre Dame displays big-play ability on offense



KARLA MORENO | The Observer

Irish sophomore quarterback Everett Golson fakes a handoff to senior running back Cierre Wood. Golson led Notre Dame's potent offensive attack against Wake Forest with three touchdown passes.

By **MIKE MONACO**
Sports Writer

On a night when style points became a moot point, the No. 3 Irish rode an explosive offense that racked up yards and points in style in a 38-0 demolition of Wake Forest on Saturday.

Notre Dame (11-0) accumulated 221 yards of total offense in the first quarter and jumped out to a 21-0 lead by way of the big play. Senior running back Cierre Wood ripped off the longest Irish rush of the season — a 68-yard touchdown scamper — and graduate student receiver John Goodman hauled in a 50-yard touchdown reception from sophomore quarterback Everett Golson.

"We're very explosive," Irish coach Brian Kelly said of the offense. "We had nine explosive plays in the first half. I think if you can match with what we've done defensively, we're playing pretty good football."

In roughly two-and-a-half quarters of work, Golson went 20-for-30 through the air for 346 yards and three touchdowns. The 6-foot, 185-pound signal-caller completed passes of 34, 38, 24, 50 and 27 yards and drove a potent offense down the field in style.

"Obviously, he's a guy that

makes explosive plays," Kelly said. "He has the ability to throw it. He can run the football. He is elusive. I think we're seeing a guy that's growing each and every week."

Goodman said Golson's growth has been a gradual progression that culminated with Saturday's stellar performance.

"He played the best game of his life," Goodman said. "It just shows how much he has grown as a person and a player."

And as Golson has grown, so has the offense. After posting just 21 points against Boston College a week ago, the Irish offense stormed out of the gates and exploded for 584 yards.

"I think just starting off last week the big thing we pressed was starting fast as an offense," junior receiver T.J. Jones said. "And we were able to do that this week and I guess it just kind of all clicked. It clicked more. We're learning as an offense. We're growing together and every week we're getting better."

Notre Dame averaged 16.5 yards per completion and 7.4 yards per rush, including Wood's 13.6 yards per carry average out of the backfield. The senior running back piled up 156 yards on just 11 rushes.

"Cierre continues to do the job we ask him to do," Kelly said. "He ran north and south, which that is the one thing that he has continued to work on as a football player. He's getting better."

And with improvement across the board on offense, the Irish transformed from a team that had not won a game at Notre Dame Stadium by more than a touchdown to one that trounced its opponent convincingly.

"We showed our explosiveness and what we could do on the field," Goodman said. "We had a lot of spurts of that throughout the season, but I think really tonight that showed a lot throughout the whole game."

Though the Irish ended up not needing style points after losses by Kansas State and Oregon, the Irish won with flair.

"I guess tonight really just showed what we could do overall," Goodman said. "We worked the whole season to do that. Every single play we expect it to be a big play or a touchdown. ... We really put it together tonight and it looked good. Hopefully we can continue that in the next two games."

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Irish finish 6-0 at home

By **MIKE MONACO**
Sports Writer

With Saturday's victory, Notre Dame finished the season with an undefeated home record for the first time since 1998. The Irish went 6-0 at Notre Dame Stadium and have won eight straight home games dating back to last season.

"We played very well today," Irish coach Brian Kelly said after Saturday's victory. "We saved our best for the last home game. The goal for all of us was to be undefeated this year at home. We were able to achieve that goal, so our guys are pretty excited about

that. We feel really good about the accomplishment."

Eifert breaks record

With a third-quarter reception, senior tight end Tyler Eifert passed Ken MacAfee for the most career receptions by a Notre Dame tight end with his 129th grab.

"I was really happy to have it, and just happy I don't have to think about it anymore," Eifert said. "Coach Kelly said to me, 'If you drop this, we're not throwing it to you for the rest of the game,' so I made sure I caught it."

The 6-foot-6, 251-pound John Mackey Award semifinalist, who

decided to forgo entering last year's NFL Draft and returned to Notre Dame, had one more reception and finished with six catches for 85 yards and a touchdown.

"Coming back to get his degree says so much about the Notre Dame football player and how important it is to have their degree, but to also play at the level that he has played, to break the kind of records with the great tight ends that have been here at Notre Dame is an amazing feat," Kelly said.

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SCORING SUMMARY

	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	TOTAL
WF	0	0	0	0	0
ND	21	10	7	0	38

1

NOTRE DAME 7, WAKE FOREST 0

Cierre Wood 68-yard run (Brindza kick)

⌚ 13:15 remaining

Drive: Four plays, 91 yards, 1:45 elapsed

NOTRE DAME 14, WAKE FOREST 0

Tyler Eifert two-yard pass from Golson (Brindza kick)

⌚ 9:10 remaining

Drive: Eight plays, 52 yards, 2:51 elapsed

NOTRE DAME 21, WAKE FOREST 0

John Goodman 50-yard pass from Golson (Brindza kick)

⌚ 4:28 remaining

Drive: Six plays, 78 yards, 2:24 elapsed

2

NOTRE DAME 28, WAKE FOREST 0

TJ Jones 34-yard pass from Golson (Brindza kick)

⌚ 6:17 remaining

Drive: Six plays, 75 yards, 2:52 elapsed

NOTRE DAME 31, WAKE FOREST 0

Kyle Brindza 25-yard field goal

⌚ 1:34 remaining

Drive: Six plays, 51 yards, 1:13 elapsed

3

NOTRE DAME 38, WAKE FOREST 0

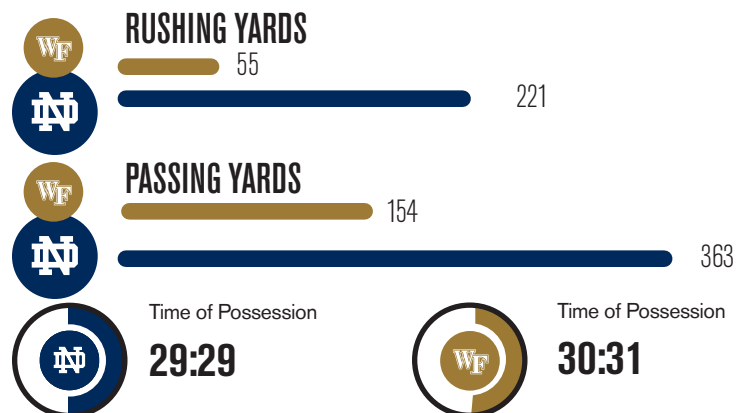
George Atkinson nine-yard run (Brindza kick)

⌚ 3:30 remaining

Drive: Seven plays, 80 yards, 3:44 elapsed

4

STATISTICS



PASSING

Player	Att-Comp-Pass Yds	Player	Att-Comp-Pass Yds
Golson	20-30-346	Price	22-33-153
Rees	2-5-17	Thompson	1-1-1

RUSHING

Player	Att-Yds-TD	Player	Att-Yds-TD
Wood	11-150	Martin	16-41
Atkinson	7-34	Jackson	6-24
Riddick	6-20	Harris	1-1
Golson	1-0	Thompson	1--2

RECEIVING

Player	Att-Yds-TD	Player	Att-Yds-TD
Jones	6-97	Campanaro	6-47
Eifert	6-85	Martin	6-34
Riddick	3-58	Ragland	3-21
Goodman	2-59	Davis	2-17
Toma	2-37	Bohanon	2-11
Koyack	1-11	Jackson	2-10
Smith	1-10	Harris	1-13
Brown	1-6	Jackson	1-1

TACKLES

Player	Tackles	Player	Tackles
Calabrese	7	Marshall	8
Nix	7	Olson	6
Te'o	6	Okoro	6
Day	5	Noel	5
Councill	4	Ward	5
Farley	4	Jackson	5
Motta	4	Betros	4

KICKOFF RETURNS

Player	Att-Yds	Player	Att-Yds
McDaniel	1-17	Martin	4-73

SACKS

Player	Sacks
Tuitt	1



JODI LO | The Observer

Sophomore running back George Atkinson carries the ball during Notre Dame's 38-0 victory over Wake Forest on Saturday. Atkinson rushed for 34 yards and a touchdown in the victory. The win, which propelled the Irish to No. 1 in the BCS standings, was the first Notre Dame home shutout since a 35-0 victory over Nevada in 2009.

SENIOR DAY SHUTOUT

Notre Dame honored a class of 29 seniors with a pregame ceremony, and the festivities carried over into a 38-0 romp over Wake Forest. The Irish clicked on all cylinders, as sophomore quarterback Everett Golson threw for 346 yards and three touchdowns while the defense kept the Deacons off the scoreboard. Many senior walk-ons saw playing time in the waning minutes.



JODI LO | The Observer

Sophomore kicker Kyle Brindza lines up a field goal. Brindza made one of his two attempted field goals.



JODI LO | The Observer

Freshman wide receiver Chris Brown goes up for a deep pass. The long pass attempt fell incomplete.



JODI LO | The Observer

Senior running back Cierre Wood rushes the ball through the Wake Forest defense. Wood had 150 yards rushing.



OE KENESEY | The Observer

Senior wide receiver Robby Toma breaks a tackle downfield as the Notre Dame coaches look on from the sidelines. Toma caught two passes for 37 yards on his Senior Day.



OE KENESEY | The Observer

Graduate student Braxton Cave prepares to snap the ball during Notre Dame's win over Wake Forest. Cave is one of four starting offensive linemen who celebrated Senior Day on Saturday.