

GAME-BY-GAME FOOTBALL REVIEWS

TYRONE WILLINGHAM IS COACH OF THE YEAR

SCHOLASTIC

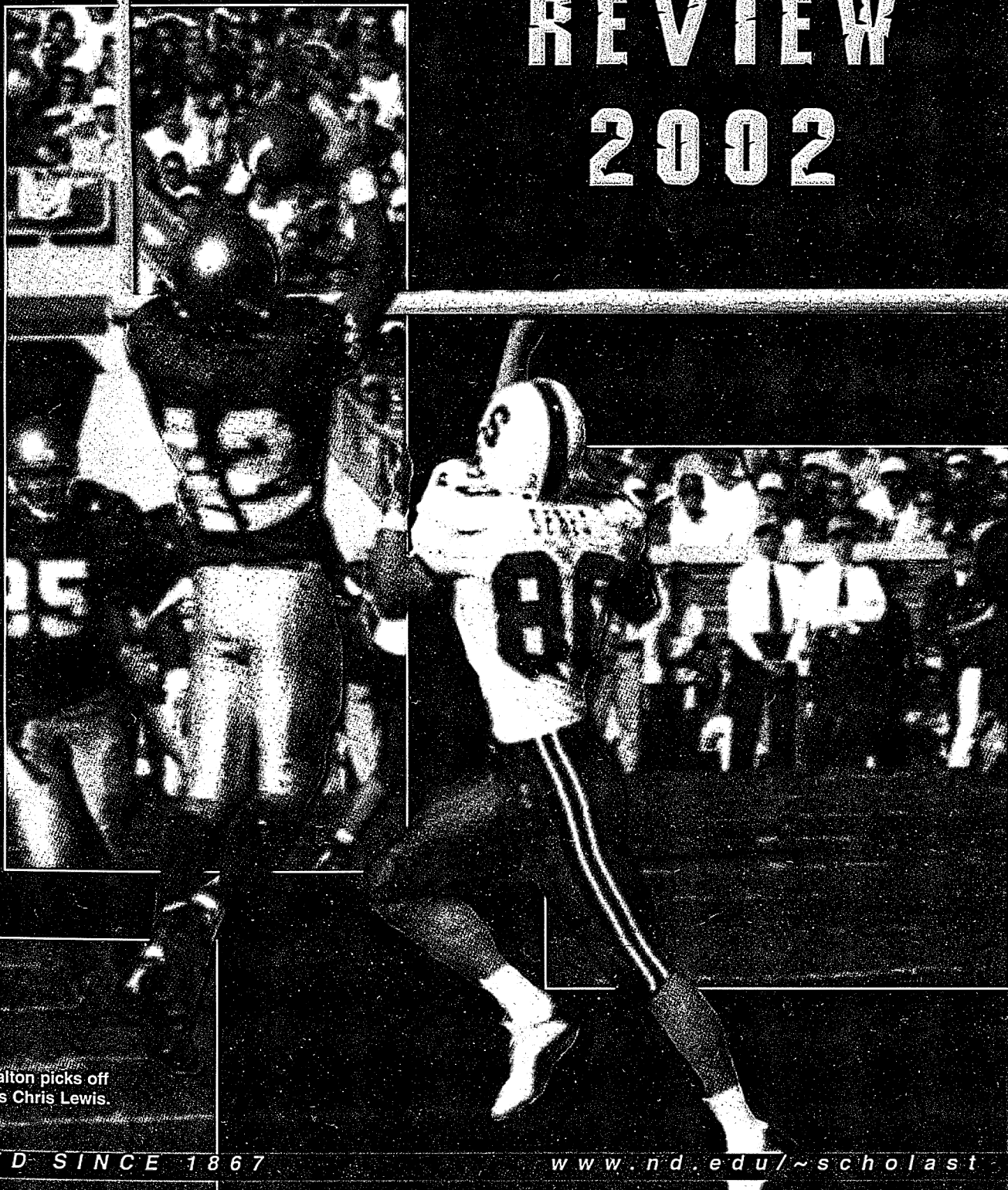
NOTRE DAME'S STUDENT MAGAZINE

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FOOTBALL REVIEW 2002



Shane Walton picks off
Stanford's Chris Lewis.

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Think Twice

Growing up in an Irish Catholic family, I have been exposed to Notre Dame in some form for most of my life. Whether it was my uncle, whose wardrobe consisted almost entirely of Irish apparel, or my grandmother, who would playfully sing her own version of the Notre Dame fight song whenever the Irish scored a touchdown, the school's spirit always has surrounded me.

But when it came time for college applications, Notre Dame wasn't at the top of my list. Although I grew up with family steeped in the Notre Dame spirit, it never affected me. I didn't even know that Notre Dame was in Indiana. But, my parents suggested that I apply, and so I did.

When acceptances began to arrive, Notre Dame was one of the first from which I heard. Though excited to be admitted to such a prestigious university, I soon put the letter aside to await news from other schools. Sure enough, news came, and I found myself leaning toward New York University, whose track-and-field coach was recruiting me for his 3,200-meter relay team.

As I examined my choices, I found myself torn between the two schools. But each time I brought up the dilemma with my high-school adviser, he would cut me off abruptly with, "Go to Notre Dame."

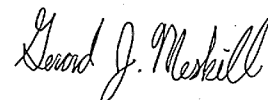
I had to find out why everyone except me seemed to think that passing over Notre Dame would be an incredible mistake, so I called the university's hotline for accepted students with questions regarding the school. I talked to other students in my high school who already had committed their next four years to Notre Dame. They all emphasized the same things:

Spirit. Community. Family. They stressed these with such passion that I began to realize just how special Notre Dame must be. Facing the decision deadline, I didn't have time to trek to South Bend for a school visit. So I took a leap of faith and blindly committed to Notre Dame. It was the best decision I've ever made.

Not all first impressions are correct, and sometimes a second option ends up better than the first. Athletic Director Kevin White passed over Tyrone Willingham initially, thinking he didn't have the zeal to lead Notre Dame's football program back to prosperity. Fortunately for White and Notre Dame, he got a second chance to make the correct choice.

While other prospective coaches saw only tangible shortcomings with the team, Willingham saw a lack of spirit. Notre Dame football wasn't dead — it was dormant. By showing respect for Notre Dame's tradition, its student body and, most importantly, the players themselves, Willingham brought back the swagger that once made this proud program college football's unmatched juggernaut. Without compromising the university's high academic standards, he inspired a team previously written off by critics to return to the nation's elite, and proved that the Irish still could win the Notre Dame way.

Three years have come and gone since the last time *Scholastic* produced a football review. We feel this is the perfect time to renew the tradition, just as Notre Dame football enjoys a rebirth. Our only hope is that we've represented our football team on these pages as well as it has represented all of us throughout the season.



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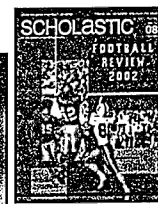
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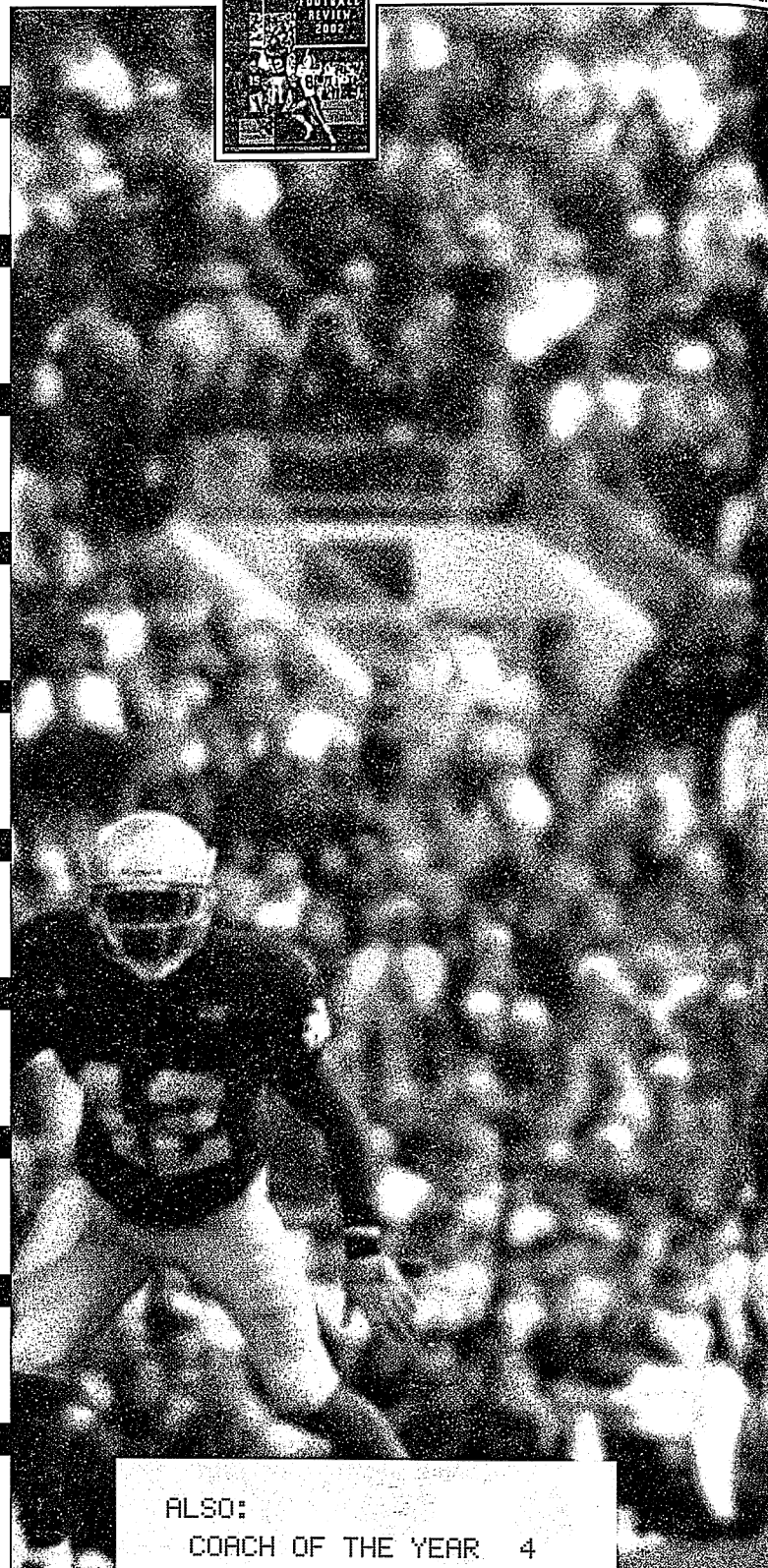
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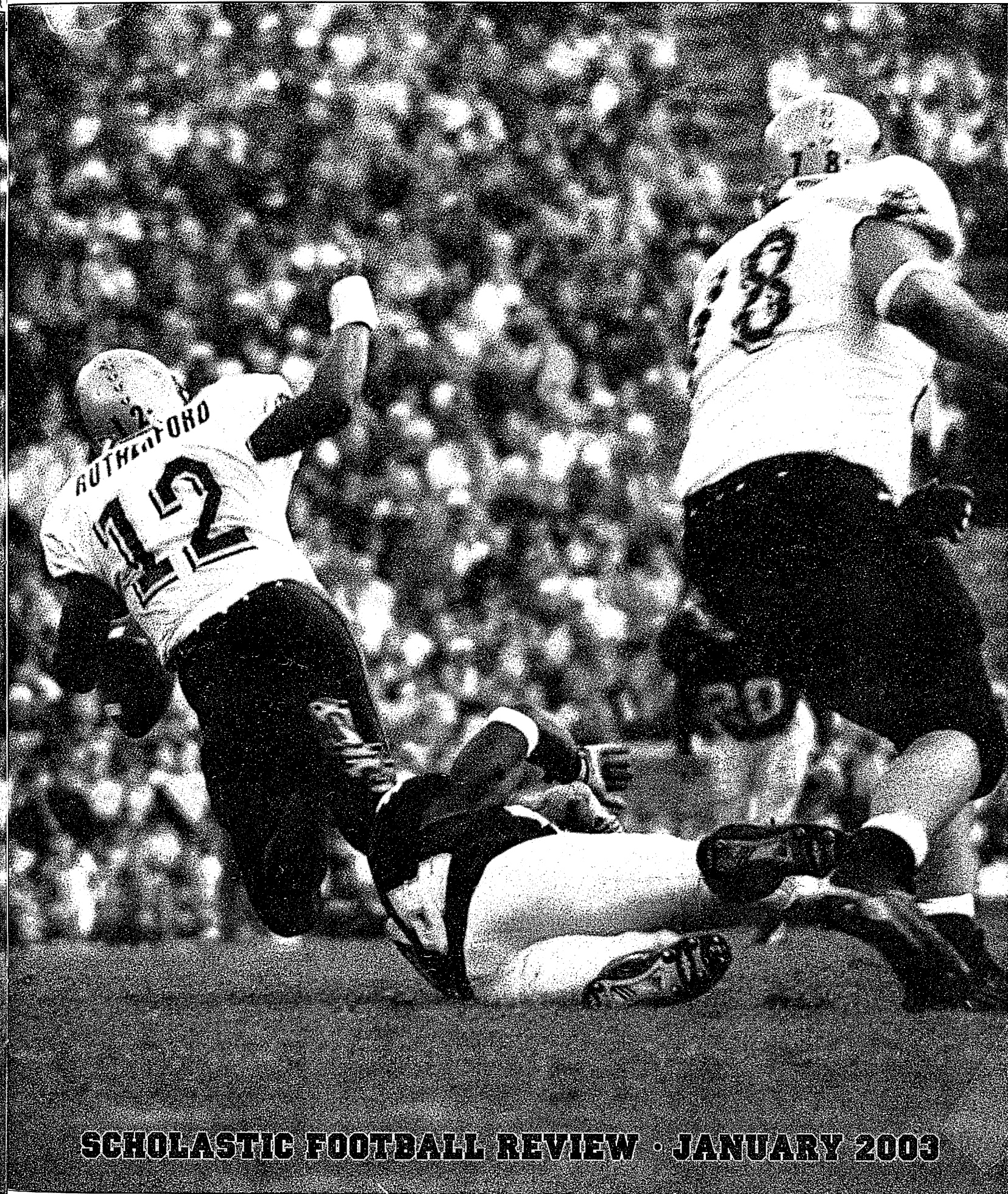


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SCHOLASTIC FOOTBALL REVIEW • JANUARY 2003

COACH

OF THE

YEAR



LEADER OF THE PACK Tyrone Willingham's leadership helped transform the team from an underachieving squad under former coach Bob Davie into a team that finished 10-2 in the regular season and earned a berth in the 2003 Gator Bowl. Here, Willingham leads the team out of the tunnel in Jacksonville.

A LEGEND IN THE MAKING

ANNIEROBINSON

The Savior of South Bend." It's not an easy title to live up to. But it only took one season for new head football coach Tyrone Willingham to resurrect Notre Dame football and make some history of his own. The first African-American head coach in any sport in Notre Dame history, and one of only three African-Americans currently coaching Division I-A football, Willingham is the first Irish football coach to win 10 games his inaugural year.

Willingham's winning season wasn't all about the numbers. Both on and off the field, he has exceeded expectations. He is nationally recognized as a coach who set new standards for humility and dignity in athletics. His speech is crisp and curt, and he doesn't yield to unending media pressure. He is a prominent volunteer in the

South Bend community and nothing short of a deity to Notre Dame students at pep rallies. He often refers to himself in the third person, as if trying to deflect attention from himself to where he believes it belongs: the football program. For students, alumni and fans, Willingham has renewed a lost sense of pride in Notre Dame football.

Willingham made his goals clear from the beginning: Do it the Notre Dame way, with a Willingham twist. The emphasis was on winning above all. "We'd like to win it in a style that's comfortable with the University of Notre Dame, which is to do it with class, to do it with dignity, and to do it with great competitive zeal and tremendous respect for the opposition, and with sportsmanship," he says.

But it was by no means a smooth start for Willingham. Stepping into one of the most revered and pressure-packed positions in college football after being whisked away from Stanford, Willingham first had the headline-stealing George O'Leary resume scandal to overcome. Faced with picking up the pieces that former coach Bob Davie left behind, his real challenges were just beginning. The summer of 2002 brought the abrupt announcement of quarterback Matt LoVecchio's decision to transfer, followed by running back Julius Jones's dismissal due to academic ineligibility. The ongoing trial of four former Notre Dame defensive backs accused of gang-raping a female Notre Dame student in the spring of 2002 was yet another serious blow.

Through it all, Willingham distinguished himself as a paragon of poise and poetics. With each unfolding mini-drama, Willingham shifted focus back on the team and its quick succession of wins. From the frenzy of traditional Friday-night pep rallies to low-key student dormitory visits, he embraced the Notre Dame tradition and inspired players, students and alumni alike. He transformed the same players who, a year ago, predictably lost close contests into a team that stood strong in tight games. Steadfast and quiet, he put a fractured and fragile team back together again.

And it all paid off. The Irish football team walked away at the end of the season with a winning record and an invitation to the Gator Bowl. "I think [ND] occupies a very special place in college football history, in terms of innovation, in terms of respect, in terms of sportsmanship," Willingham says. "But to have all those things be in place, you also need to win. This year we've done that." Despite disappointing losses to Boston College, Southern Cal and North Carolina State in which the Irish lost their poise and made costly mistakes, Willingham emerged from defeat in the same way he emerged from victory.

Willingham's tremendous progress this season did not go without national recognition. In early December, Willingham was named the Home Depot Coach of the Year, a Division I-A award selected by ESPN and ABC college football analysts. Past winners include Florida State's Bobby Bowden (1994), Bob Stoops of Oklahoma (2000) and Maryland coach Ralph Friedgen (2001). Mid-December, in a surprising move, *The Sporting News* bestowed its Sportsman of the Year title on Willingham, who is the first college football coach ever to win the honor. In its Jan. 13 issue, *TSN* ranked Willingham 39th in the Power 100, an annual listing of the most powerful people in sports. Willingham was the only coach at any level among the chosen 100 figures. "He restored a crucial institution to power while showing up college football's minority-hiring record. Expect the NFL to come calling soon," said *TSN*.

Willingham accepted the title of Coach of the Year with characteristic humility. "[The award] is really symbolic of the efforts of many, because without assistant coaches and

without players, you don't get awards," says Willingham. "And that's what National Coach of the Year should be labeled in our case — National Staff of the Year and National Team of the Year.

"To be named Home Depot Coach of the Year is an honor, but in choosing the word 'honor,' it falls short of the respect and emotions that I feel for this award and its presentation," Willingham says. "It would be a stretch to say that I thought this day could

happen in my life. However, because of the work, courage and character of the Notre Dame family, coaches and players, it is a reality."

The awards are a testament to Willingham's personality and performance, but Willingham says he never had his sights set on specific honors. "I never focus or think or concentrate on individual goals. The only goal that I focus on is to see if we can win this next ball game."

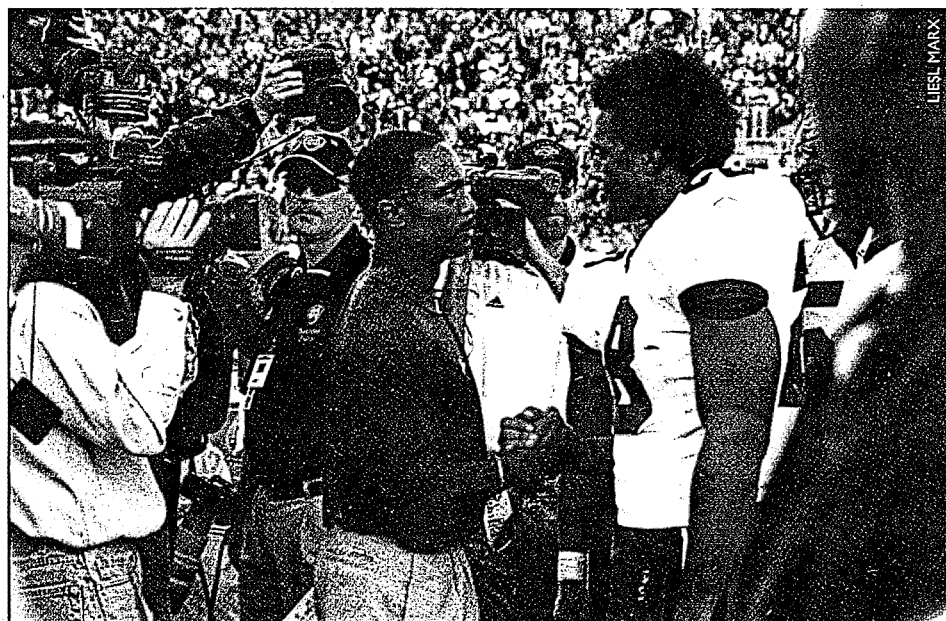
These sentiments are typical of Willingham, who early on in the season shrugged off assertions that his race was of more importance in his hiring than his prestigious coaching pedigree. But Willingham does not underestimate the awards' potential impact on future employment of minorities in college athletics. Many organizations need new leaders, and Willingham said there are plenty of minority coaches capable of stepping up. "[Then] we might be blind to all of the stereotypes and start to look truly for those individuals and allow them the opportunity [to coach]," he says.

Despite the honors, Willingham puts forth some cautionary advice: "Sometimes [individual awards] can work against the team because everybody wants to be accomplished, everybody wants to receive credit for their effort, and sometimes when it seems like one is getting all the attention and accolades about the job that is being done by a team, it really starts to break the team down."

To him, the spotlight should never shine on just one person alone. "The most important thing is the team. That's what I understand about our football program, that it's not Tyrone Willingham. It's a team." □

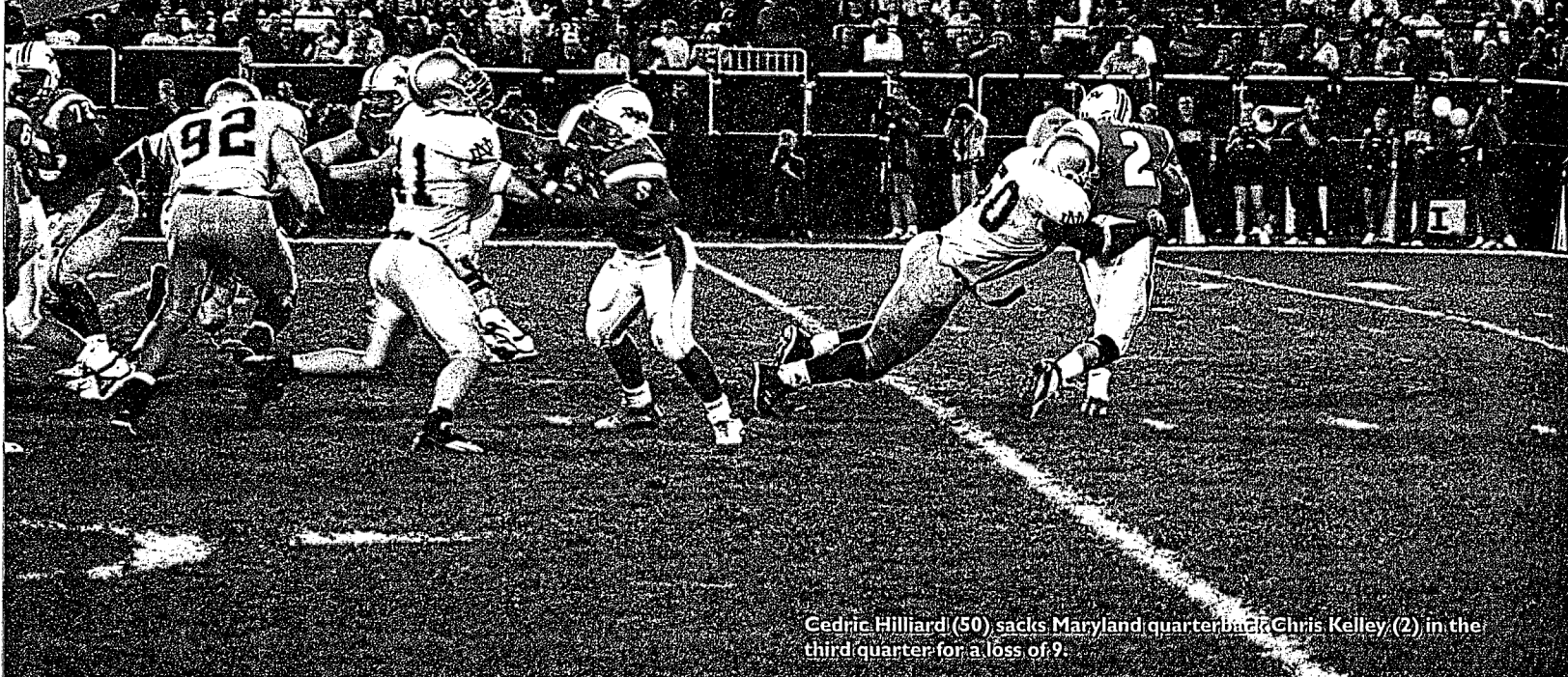


A GOOD START Willingham's record-setting Notre Dame career began with a win over Maryland at the final Kickoff Classic.



THE TY THAT BINDS After Notre Dame defeated Stanford, Willingham took time to visit with his former players, many of whom lined up to embrace the coach. Willingham left the Cardinal in January 2002.

MARYLAND



Cedric Hilliard (50) sacks Maryland quarterback Chris Kelley (2) in the third quarter for a loss of 9.

KICK START

JIMMY ATKINSON

Standing back on his own 24-yard line, junior cornerback and punt returner Vontez Duff was ready to break the game open. With Notre Dame already holding a 9-0 lead over No. 21 Maryland in the Kickoff Classic, Duff took a punt after the Terrapins' first possession of the second half. He dodged two defenders and ran 76 yards for the first Notre Dame touchdown of the season and the longest punt return in the 20-year history of the Kickoff Classic. It was the only touchdown of the night for either team.

The "Return to Glory" had begun, and in stunning fashion. Just across the Hudson River from Manhattan, new head coach Tyrone Willingham led his team out onto the Giants Stadium field to prove to the 72,903 fans, mostly Irish supporters, and a national television audience that his team had greatly improved from last season. The 2002 season, the search for team identity, and the Willingham era all started there in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Willingham was billed as someone who would bring much-needed inspiration to a previously dull Irish offensive attack. Willingham was the name, West Coast offense was his game. And right off the bat, Irish fans knew that this offense had changed. On Notre Dame's very

NOTRE DAME	22
MARYLAND	0

first offensive play of the night, junior quarterback Carlyle Holiday attempted a pass, something rarely seen on any first down play, let alone the first play of the game, during Bob Davie's tenure.

"That was very refreshing," said senior wide receiver Arnaz Battle. "It just goes to show that we're keeping defenses off guard." The pass was completed to junior wide receiver Omar Jenkins for a 7-yard gain. All of a sudden, the Irish had the ball at Maryland's 41-yard line early in the game. The new offense looked promising.

Holiday had been dismissed as nothing more than a quick scrambler and an option quarterback, but he took command of the new West Coast offense with confident ability. He completed a career-high 17-of-27 for 226 yards and no interceptions. At halftime, he already had thrown for 150 yards, a number that eclipsed the game-high mark he set last season against Tennessee.

"This is a fun offense," said Holiday. "I knew I could throw the ball. We really wanted to be aggressive and take a defensive mentality on offense."

"I was very pleased with [Holiday's] play," said offensive coordinator Bill Diedrick. "From a first start with a very new offense, I thought he did a very good job."

The passing game worked so well, in fact, that Holiday was able to spread the ball to eight different receivers. Jenkins led the receiving corps with five receptions for 85 yards. Battle finished with four receptions and 68 yards, 28 more than he had had all of last season. His longest was a 29-yard reception in the first quarter on an inside bubblescreen. On that play, Battle was just one step away from escaping the last defender and racing to the end zone.

...Irish recorded first shutout since 30-0 win against Navy in 1998. Vontez Duff became first

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	TERRAPINS
RUSHING YARDS	130	16
PASSING YARDS	226	117
FIRST DOWNS	15	8
TOTAL YARDS	356	133
TURNOVERS	0	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	41:04	18:56

When asked how this season's West Coast offense differed from the Irish offense of a year ago, the head coach responded with Willinghamesque brevity: "Night. Day."

Despite the newfound success of the air attack and having an average start at the Maryland 38-yard line, the Notre Dame offense failed to find the end zone. At the end of six possessions, including four in the first half alone, the Irish called on senior place kicker Nick Setta to kick a field goal. He connected on five of them, including a career-high 51-yarder to open the scoring with 5:01 in the first quarter. The 55-yarder he attempted during Notre Dame's opening series fell just short of the crossbar. In the first half, Setta also hit from 32 and 18 yards to provide a 9-0 halftime lead. Following Duff's punt return for a touchdown, he added two more field goals from 46 and 24 yards in the third and fourth quarters. His five field goals set a Kickoff Classic record and earned him Most Valuable Player honors.

The ground game proved a challenge at times for the Notre Dame offense, as the Irish tallied 130 yards on 45 ground attempts. Sophomore tailbacks Ryan Grant and Rashon Powers-Neal combined for 99 yards on 31 carries. Penalties also were the source of many a setback for the Irish offense. To start its second possession of the night, the offensive line was flagged twice in a row for false start fouls. In all, five false starts were called on the Irish, adding to the 11-penalty total of 80 yards.

But when the Irish offense shot itself in the foot, the defense came through as the true hero and held the defending ACC Champion scoreless. The 22-0 win over Maryland was Notre Dame's first shutout over a ranked opponent since defeating No. 5 Alabama 7-0 in 1980.

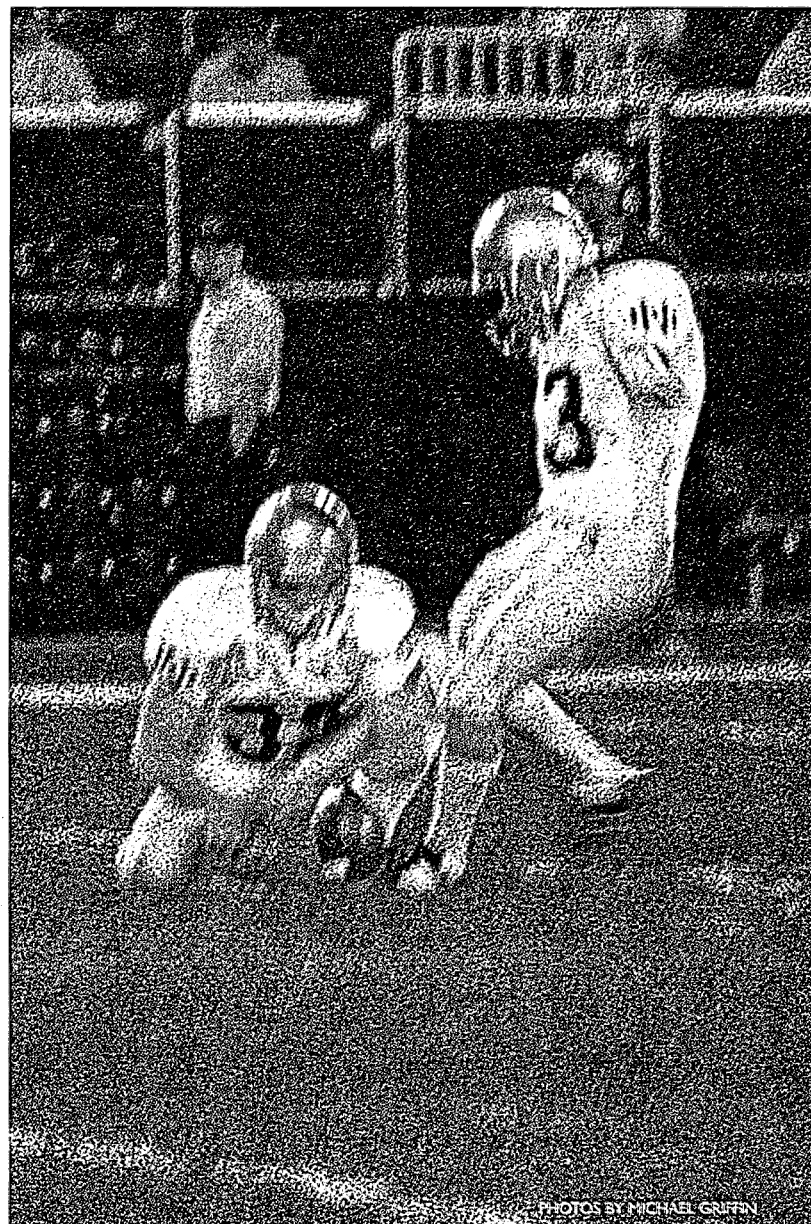
"Anytime you get a shutout on such a balanced team coming out of last year, it's almost unbelievable," Willingham said. "We were pumped up to play the game with a new team and a new coach."

The Irish defense, which had been overshadowed by all the hype about Notre Dame's revamped offense, was the difference in the game, despite being without last year's leading tackler, injured senior middle linebacker Courtney Watson. Senior cornerback Shane Walton tied a school record with three interceptions, the only turnovers in the game by either team. Red-shirt freshman linebacker Brandon Hoyte stepped up big in Watson's absence by finishing with eight tackles and one sack. Efforts like Walton's and Hoyte's limited the Terrapins to 156 yards of total offense and 18:56 in time of possession.

"I want people to look at our offense," Walton said. "That's fine. We'll be silent assassins on defense."

Maryland was hurting without all-American tailback Bruce Perry, who was out with an injury. Their running game was shut down entirely by the Irish defensive unit. On 21 carries, the Terrapins were able to muster only a meager 16-yard effort. The Maryland passing game was not much more spectacular. Quarterback Scott McBrien was replaced by Chris Kelley in the second half. The Terrapins' quarterback duo combined for a humble performance, completing 12-of-32 passes for 117 yards and three interceptions.

This Irish win was chalked up to a stifling defense and big special teams plays rather than a flashy offensive effort. Zero offensive touchdowns doesn't look good on paper. But the lackluster offensive performance didn't deter Willingham. "I'm only satisfied with one thing —



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL GRIFFIN

GOLDEN SHOE Nick Setta set a Kickoff Classic record, kicking five field goals in the contest.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	3	6	10	3	22
Maryland	0	0	0	0	0

1st Quarter

ND FG Setta 51, 5:01; 3-0 ND

2nd Quarter

ND FG Setta 32, 13:27; 6-0 ND

ND FG Setta 18, 0:26; 9-0 ND

3rd Quarter

ND Duff 76 punt return (Setta kick), 10:28; 16-0 ND

ND FG Setta 46, 3:52; 19-0 ND

4th Quarter

ND FG Setta 24, 14:50; 22-0 ND

winning," he said. "If we won by half a point, I'd be satisfied."

The Irish, who walked off a West Lafayette field 13 months ago shaken and disarrayed, left the glimmer of Manhattan from just across the river as confident, triumphant athletes ready to carve a niche in Notre Dame football history for themselves. □

in Kickoff Classic history to return a punt for a touchdown...Shane Walton had 3 picks...



Vontez Duff intercepts Kyle Orten's pass for the 33-yard game-winning touchdown.

WEST COAST WHAT?

JESSICA DAUES

The game ended with a victory, but it didn't leave a good taste in the mouth of many Notre Dame fans — including the players.

"Me and a couple guys felt embarrassed towards the end of the game," quarterback Carlyle Holiday admitted. "A win is a win, but we want to win in an ND fashion. And that is to dominate."

The Irish offense did anything but dominate in its 24-17 defeat of Purdue. Notre Dame won — for the second time this season — without scoring an offensive touchdown. With Holiday completing only 7-of-22 passes for 50 yards. With the offensive line allowing four sacks, with Holiday barely avoiding several others. With cornerback Vontez Duff as the team's leading scorer.

Notre Dame's three touchdowns by three defensive players (Duff and safeties Gerome Sapp and Lionel Bolen) were enough to outscore Purdue. And the defense was enough to hold a potentially dangerous Purdue offense — which scored 51 points against Illinois State — to only 17.

"In some games one part of the team will have to step up, and the defense did that today," Willingham said. "... This is a team sport, and in a team sport there are many pieces that make up the puzzle."

That day, it was the passing pieces that were missing. During the first play of Notre Dame's first possession, Holiday threw to tight end Gary Godsey up the middle for 9 yards. Fans cheered. Notre Dame football was headed in a new direction. But Holiday completed only

PURDUE	17
NOTRE DAME	24

one more pass that quarter, again to Godsey for 12 yards, and only seven passes total. Apparently the offense had gotten lost. Where's the West Coast again?

Part of the blame can be given to Holiday's inexperience, but Purdue's blitz defense was especially effective against the Irish offense. Holiday never seemed to have enough time to execute passing plays, which was all part of Purdue's big plan for the Irish.

"We knew Carlyle [Holiday] was a young quarterback with a new system, so we knew if we showed him a lot, he would check off at the line," said Purdue free safety Stuart Sweigert, who finished the game with 12 tackles. "We didn't want to just stand around like Maryland did and let [Notre Dame] dictate. We wanted to dictate what was going on out there."

Both teams' defenses were so effective that neither team got within the opponent's 30 until the beginning of the second quarter. Then, with the Boilermakers on Notre Dame's 46, Purdue fumbled the ball. Gerome Sapp scooped up the ball and ran 54 yards through heavy traffic to ink the first touchdown of the day with 13:48 on the clock. Nick Setta kicked the point after. Score 7-0, in favor of the Irish.

The home crowd cheers intensified as Setta kicked off the ball in a line-drive shot to Purdue's Deaunte Farrell on the 1-yard line. Farrell charged 3 more yards but dropped the ball after being hit by outside linebacker Justin Thomas. Irish safety Lionel Bolen grabbed the ball in midair and charged into the end zone for touchdown No. 2. Just like that, it was Irish 14, Purdue zero. And the offense hadn't done a thing.

With Holiday's passing shut down by the Purdue defense, Notre Dame's offensive focus shifted to the running game. Time and time

...Irish opened season 2-0 for first time since '96. Notre Dame offense still scoreless on season...

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	BOILERMAKERS
RUSHING YARDS	153	147
PASSING YARDS	50	171
FIRST DOWNS	11	15
TOTAL YARDS	203	318
TURNOVERS	1	4
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:43	28:17

again, Holiday looked to sophomore tailbacks Ryan Grant and Rashon Powers-Neal.

Grant's longest carry produced the Irish offense's best chance to score. With about 11 minutes left in the second quarter and Notre Dame on its own 36, Grant broke a tackle in the backfield, another at the line of scrimmage and reversed fields with a hand on the ground to gain 36 yards, putting Notre Dame on Purdue's 28. After a 5-yard pass to Godsey, Grant and Powers-Neal muscled the ball to the 17, where a center screen from Holiday to wide receiver Carlos Campbell got the first down on the Purdue 6.

But Grant was smothered at the 6-yard line, for a loss of 1. After another incomplete pass to Grant again, Holiday ran the ball himself but only was able to get as far as the 2-yard line on a quarterback draw on third down. The Irish had to settle for a 19-yard field goal with 6:25 left in the second quarter, making the score 17-0 in favor of the Irish.

By halftime the score was a little less lopsided. With about two minutes to go in the second quarter, Purdue's speedy wide receiver Anthony Chambers returned a punt for a 76-yard touchdown.

Notre Dame's reliance on the rush continued into the third quarter, with Grant receiving the majority of the carries. Then, about four minutes into the quarter on the second Irish possession, Holiday was sacked on Purdue's 21, fumbling the ball. It was recovered by Purdue's defensive end Vedran Dzolovic. The Boilermakers needed only three first downs, including a 38-yard pass by Kyle Orton to receiver John Standeford, to take it to the Notre Dame 4. There, Purdue freshman running back Jerod Void seemed to run in the ball effortlessly in two plays for 4 yards, making the score Notre Dame 17, Purdue 14 with 2:50 left in the third quarter. After a Notre Dame possession that included no forward progress and a sack on Holiday for a loss of 5 yards, Purdue regained the ball and kept it through the end of the third quarter.

The Boilermakers started the fourth quarter on Notre Dame's 18, where they kicked a field goal with 14:53 left on the clock, leveling the score. The Irish responded by driving to the Purdue 20, but failed to make the final 2 yards for a first down. Setta attempted a 38-yard field goal and was wide right with 11:50 to go.

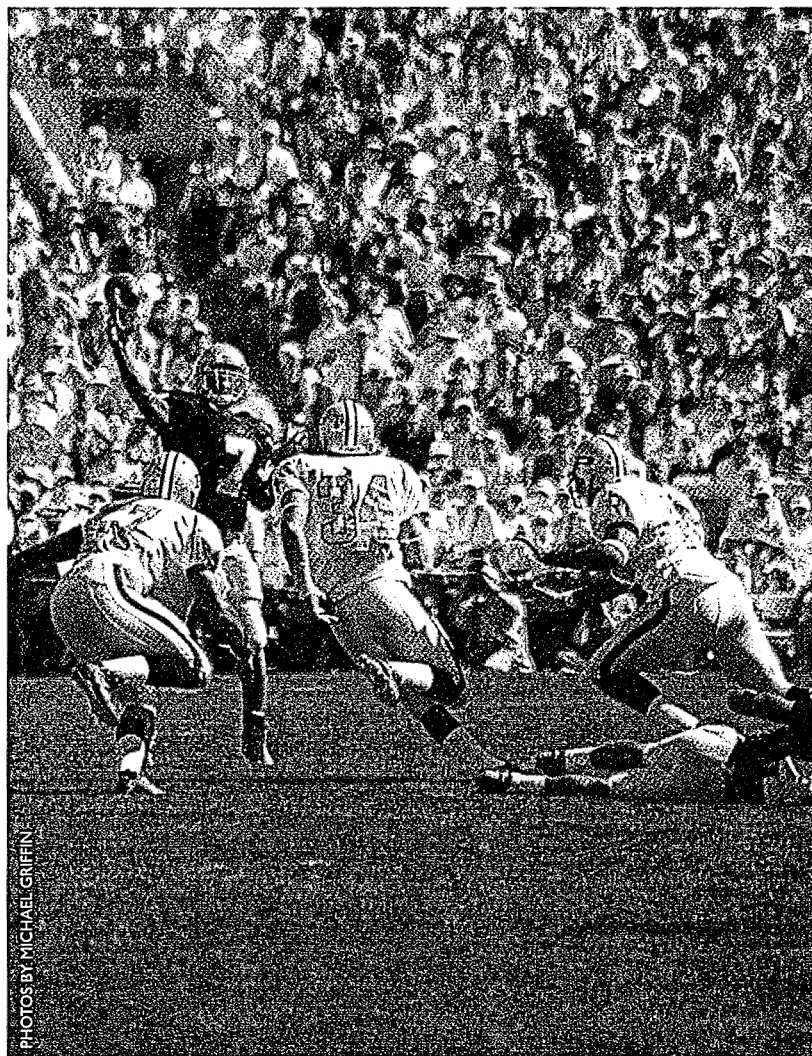
About five minutes later, it happened again. With the Irish on the Purdue 25, Setta set up for a 42-yard field goal and missed again, this time to the left.

Purdue regained the ball and Joey Harris rushed twice for a gain of 1. Then Orton tried to pass the ball to receiver Seth Morales, but Duff grabbed it in the air and took it back 33 yards to Purdue's end zone with five minutes left in the game. Setta made the extra point, and the Irish led 24-17.

"When you get close to [the end zone], all you want to know is touchdown," Duff said proudly after the game. "Especially on defense, because you don't get to see a touchdown too much."

Purdue wasn't done fighting yet. Setta kicked the ball off for a touch-back, and Orton rushed for 20 yards to the 40. He then threw to receiver Kevin Noel for 16 yards to the Notre Dame 44. After three incomplete passes, the Boilermakers sat on 4-11 with 3:14 to go. Orton called a timeout and returned to throw to receiver Anthony Chambers for 12 yards to the Notre Dame 33.

But Purdue couldn't capitalize. Harris managed to rush for 3 yards,



FEELING THE HEAT Purdue brought multiple blitz packages at Holiday all day, keeping the Notre Dame offense from finding any rhythm.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Purdue	0	7	7	3	17
Notre Dame	0	17	0	7	24

1st Quarter—None—

2nd Quarter

ND Sapp 54 fumble return (Setta kick), 13:48; 7-0 ND

ND Bolen 4 fumble return (Setta kick), 13:37; 14-0 ND

ND FG Setta 19, 6:25; 17-0 ND

PUR Chambers 76 punt return (Lacevic kick), 2:03; 17-7 ND

3rd Quarter

PUR Void 3 run (Lacevic kick), 2:50; 17-14 ND

4th Quarter

PUR FG Lacevic 35, 14:53; 17-17

ND Duff 33 interception return (Setta kick), 5:09; 24-17 ND

but Purdue then lost 6 yards on a rush by freshman Ray Williams. Orton failed to complete his next two passes. Notre Dame got the ball with 1:44 seconds left and ran out the clock.

The defense carried the day, not only holding Orton, who had thrown for 250 yards and three touchdowns against Illinois State, to 171 yards and zero touchdowns and limiting Harris, who had averaged 6.0 yards per carry against Illinois State, to 4.4 yards per carry, but also scoring all three of Notre Dame's touchdowns. But according to players, no one seemed concerned with the offense's ineffectiveness. "Our offense is ready to break through. We're not worried," Duff said. □

...Purdue winless at Notre Dame since 1974 (0-13)...Montez Duff returned punt 76 yards for TD...



Irish fans storm the field after Notre Dame upsets rival Michigan.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL GRIFFIN

WHAT A RUSH!

GERARD MESKILL

It was so ugly and, yet, so beautiful. Notre Dame's first win against a top-10 foe in four years — against rival Michigan no less — saw the two teams lose a combined six fumbles and two interceptions. In the end, the scoreboard showed that the Irish were two-point victors over the Wolverines, and that was all that mattered to head coach Tyrone Willingham.

"We did not win pretty today, but we did win, and I can be happy with that," he said after the game.

So, too, can the Irish faithful. The victory made the No. 20 Irish 3-0 for the first time since 1996. It also was the first time Notre Dame defeated Michigan since the Wolverines entered South Bend as the defending National Champions in 1998. In fact, it only was the second time that the two traditional rivals met since that game, as the long-time series took a two-year hiatus following the 1999 season.

"Nobody [on this team] has really played Michigan before," said Irish quarterback Carlyle Holiday. "To beat a team like Michigan, ranked No. 6 in the country, was a big win for us, the whole football program and the community around here. We just got to build on it. There will be so much more enthusiasm and energy running through

the players for the next couple of weeks."

Notre Dame entered the contest with many doubts, not the least of which revolved around its offense. In the team's opening wins against Maryland and Purdue, the offense had failed to score a single offensive touchdown.

The team put those doubts to rest early in the contest. The Irish opened the game with the football at their own 20-yard line. After overthrowing receiver Arnaz Battle, Holiday found wide receiver Maurice Stovall wide open at midfield, and the true freshman ran for another 11 yards to the Michigan 39. Three plays later, on third and two, Holiday scrambled for a 10-yard gain, and the Wolverines committed a holding penalty, which added 10 more yards to the Irish drive. Five plays later, halfback Ryan Grant trotted into the end zone for Notre Dame's first offensive touchdown of the season.

"It is critical to score on the first drive. We went down and executed when we needed to and put it in the end zone," Willingham said. "I believe that it was a tremendous boost to our offense's confidence."

Despite the offense's newfound confidence, it would not be long

MICHIGAN	23
NOTRE DAME	25

...Notre Dame defeated a top-10 opponent for first time since 1996... Irish offense scored

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	WOLVERINES
RUSHING YARDS	157	91
PASSING YARDS	154	230
FIRST DOWNS	16	15
TOTAL OFFENSE	311	321
TURNOVERS	4	4
TIME OF POSSESSION	34:01	25:59

before it sputtered once more. Burning the next three possessions, the Wolverines lost a fumble and blocked an Irish field-goal attempt. Notre Dame then regained the ball at its own 25. A holding call on first down moved the Irish 10 yards farther back. On second and 20, the Irish made their first major mistake in this comedy of errors, as Holiday delivered a strike to Wolverines cornerback Marlin Jackson, who returned the gift untouched for a 15-yard score.

Three possessions later, in the second quarter, Michigan again found itself in position to score, as it stormed to a fourth and nine at the Irish 14. However, Irish nose guard Cedric Hilliard broke through to block Troy Neinberg's attempt, avenging the Wolverines' block on kicker Nick Setta in the first quarter.

The Irish gained only 15 yards on the ensuing possession before they were forced to punt the ball back to the Wolverines. Michigan strong safety Julius Curry returned the punt 9 yards to the Michigan 25, but an illegal block at the start of the return pushed the Wolverines back to their own six-yard line, where they were whistled for illegal procedure on first down. Three plays later, facing third and seven, Wolverines quarterback John Navarre dropped back into his own end zone and motioned to throw the ball downfield when Irish right end Justin Tuck broke through the Michigan line to tip the pass. However, Courtney Morgan was caught holding Tuck in the end zone, resulting in a safety on the Wolverines and a two-point Irish lead.

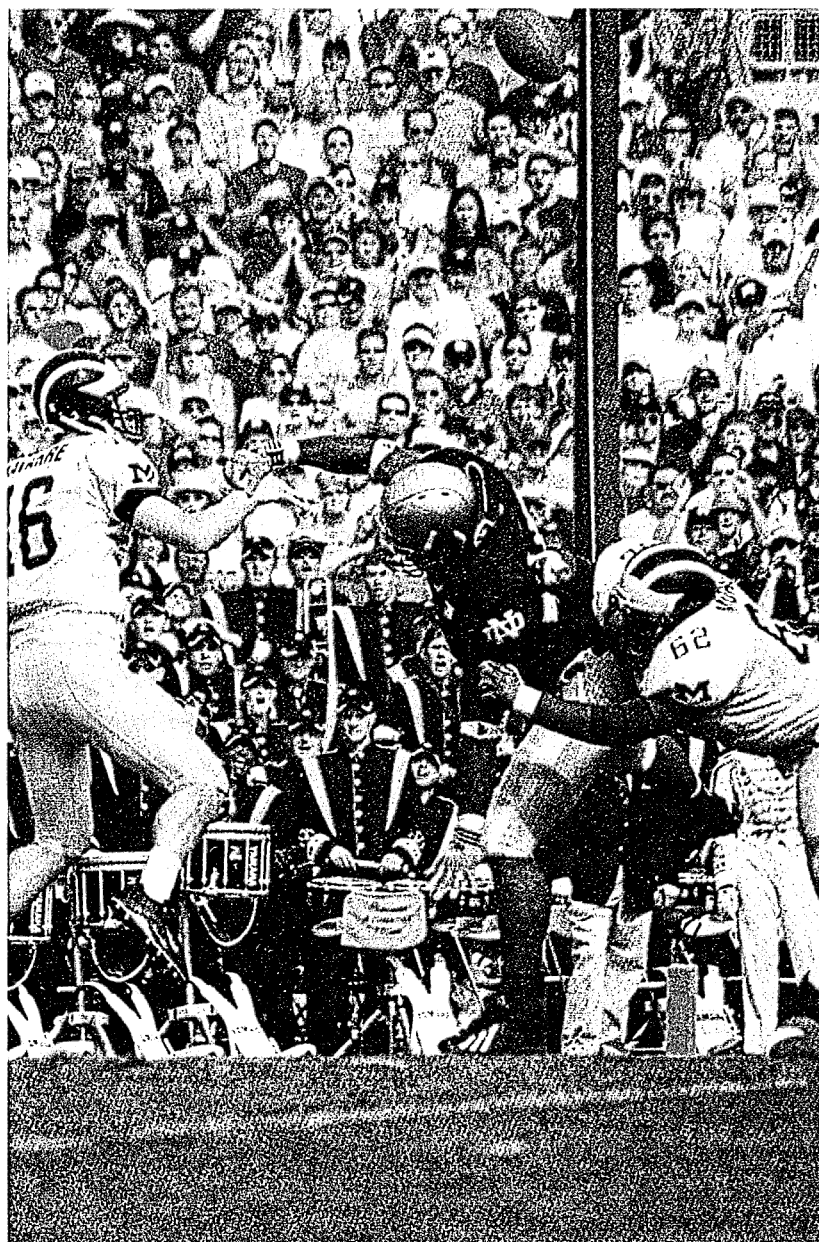
Notre Dame did little with its safety-induced possession, but it recovered the ball at Michigan's 27-yard line after receiver Tyrece Butler fumbled on the first play following the Irish punt. Four plays later, Holiday completed the scoring drive with his feet, as he took it himself for the 3-yard score, giving Notre Dame a 16-7 halftime advantage. It appeared as though Holiday fumbled the ball at the 1-yard line, but officials nonetheless ruled the play a touchdown.

"Holiday adds a very, very different dimension to offenses most people are going to see because of his ability to run," said Michigan head coach Lloyd Carr. "That loosens, somewhat, your inside defense."

The frenetic pace of the football game slowed considerably in the third quarter, with both teams taking turns punting until Michigan gained possession at its own 26 with six minutes left in the quarter. Navarre, who had been largely inconsistent throughout the first half, found some rhythm as he pushed the offense to the Irish 2-yard line on the strength of three consecutive long completions. However, the Irish defense held the goal line, forcing the Wolverines to settle for a 19-yard field goal, cutting their deficit to 16-10.

Battle then fumbled Philip Brabbs' kick off at the Irish 32-yard line; it was recovered by Brabbs himself. Halfback Chris Perry led the scoring charge this time for Michigan, carrying five times, including a 2-yard run into the end zone with four seconds left in the third quarter, giving the Wolverines a one-point advantage.

The Irish, trailing for the first time in the season, answered right back to start the fourth quarter. Holiday completed two long passes to wide receiver Omar Jenkins, including a backbreaking 47-yard bomb from the Michigan 49-yard line that set up first and goal at



NOT SO FAST, MY FRIEND Courtney Morgan (62) prevents Justin Tuck from sacking Navarre (16), but officials whistle Morgan for holding and call a safety.

the 2.

"We fought back in the third quarter, and I thought the most disappointing play of the game was the long pass to start the fourth quarter," said Carr. "We had just taken the lead, 17-16, begun to run the football relatively well, and felt good at that stage, but Notre Dame did a good job."

Grant finished the drive with a 3-yard touchdown run after fullback Tom Lopienski ran for a loss on the previous play. Holiday was sacked on Notre Dame's two-point attempt, keeping the Irish lead at 22-17.

Michigan's Perry fumbled on the next possession, and safety Glenn Earl recovered the loose ball at the Wolverines' 43. Grant rushed three times for 17 yards before Holiday was sacked for a loss of 3 yards, setting up third and five at Michigan's 26. However, the Irish were whistled for holding on the play. Carr opted to decline the call, which would have set Setta's field-goal attempt as far back as 56 yards. Instead, he hit the 46-yard attempt, giving the Irish an eight-point advantage at 25-17.

"I thought about that penalty, and yet Setta's going to make that kick," said Carr. "I saw him before the game. I don't think 10 yards



ONE UGLY GAME Ryan Grant fumbles, leading to one of the eight turnovers in the game.

would have made a difference.”

The Wolverines and Irish exchanged possessions before Michigan began its final scoring drive with 7:03 to play. Five consecutive completions by Navarre and a quarterback scramble pushed Michigan to Notre Dame’s 3-yard line. After a false start and two incomplete passes, the Wolverines faced third and goal at the 8. Irish cornerback Vontez Duff was shaken up on the previous play and removed himself from the field. However, the Irish coaching staff did not see him leave, and they lined up with only 10 men. Navarre found tight end Bennie Joppru wide open in the end zone, connecting with him for an 8-yard touchdown with 2:53 remaining.

“We made a mistake,” acknowledged Willingham.

Predictably, the Wolverines lined up to attempt the two-point conversion after the touchdown. The Irish still only had 10 men on the field, but cornerback Shane Walton recognized the error and wisely called timeout. With the Irish back at full strength, Navarre rolled out of the pocket and fired a pass to the corner, but a sprawling Walton batted the ball down, preventing a certain game-tying completion.

“[Willingham] pointed to me and said somebody needed to make a play,” said Walton. “That’s what I was trying to do.”

The Irish got the ball back with less than three minutes to play, but they were unable to run out the clock. Joey Hildbold punted out-of-bounds for 42 yards to the Wolverines’ 30. With 1:28 left to play, Navarre again took the field to try to rally Michigan once more. He managed to complete one pass and run for a first down before Walton intercepted his third-and-15 desperation hurl. The pick fittingly concluded a game mired by turnovers, as the Irish harmlessly knelt out the clock for a 25-23 victory.

“It’s indescribable to say what it means [to beat Michigan],” said Jenkins. “I think it may have been the biggest game of the season. I

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Michigan	7	0	10	6	23
Notre Dame	7	9	0	9	25

1st Quarter

ND Grant 1 run (Setta kick), 10:08; 7-0 ND

UM Jackson 19 interception return (Nienberg kick), 2:52; 7-7

2nd Quarter

ND Safety, UM holding in end zone, 3:35; 9-7 ND

ND Holiday 3 run (Setta kick), 0:23; 16-7 ND

3rd Quarter

UM FG Brabbs 19, 2:49; 16-10 ND

UM Perry 2 run (Brabbs kick), 0:04; 17-16 UM

4th Quarter

ND Grant 3 run (Holiday rush failed), 13:01; 22-17 ND

ND FG Setta 46, 10:41; 25-17 ND

UM Joppru 8 pass from Navarre (Navarre pass failed) 2:53; 25-23 ND

felt it had to be the biggest game this weekend in college football.”

Despite the fact that ESPN College Game Day’s crew did not agree with Jenkins (it chose the Ohio State-Washington State contest in Columbus as the weekend’s marquee game), the absence of Chris Fowler, Kirk Herbstreit and Lee Corso did not detract from the team’s experience.

“To date, I’ve never been a part of anything like this, so I am very excited after this win,” said Hilliard. “Hopefully we can go out and get another win against Michigan State next week.” □

interception of the season...Irish beat Michigan Wolverines for first time since 1998...

MICHIGAN ST.

A BACKUP PLAN

JIMMY ATKINSON

Nauseated" was the feeling on the Notre Dame sidelines and among Irish fans who had made the two-hour trip to East Lansing. Michigan State quarterback Jeff Smoker had just thrown a 18-yard touchdown pass to Charles Rogers on fourth down to take the lead, 17-14, seemingly putting an end to Notre Dame's undefeated campaign. With Carlyle Holiday out due to a shoulder injury since the third quarter, the situation looked bleak. The Spartans were on the verge of their sixth consecutive victory over the Irish.

The video board in the Spartan Stadium end zone repeatedly played highlights from each of the past five Spartan victories over the Irish, creating a painful reminder of the rivals' history. Never before had any team beaten Notre Dame in six straight seasons.

Suddenly, the Irish shook down the thunder, and lightning struck.

At 17-14 with only 1:15 remaining in the game, Notre Dame stood at its own 40-yard line. With their starting quarterback sidelined and their hearts in their throats, the Irish needed something special to happen. It did.

An unlikely hero, sophomore walk-on quarterback Pat Dillingham, connected with fifth-year senior wide receiver Arnaz Battle for a short pass over the middle. One tackler missed, red-shirt junior tight end Gary Godsey made a block on two Spartan defenders, and Battle sprung free, dashing down the field as his teammates on the sidelines leaped from the bench to run with him 60 yards for the game-winning touchdown.

"I just got it to him, and it was all him after that," Dillingham said.

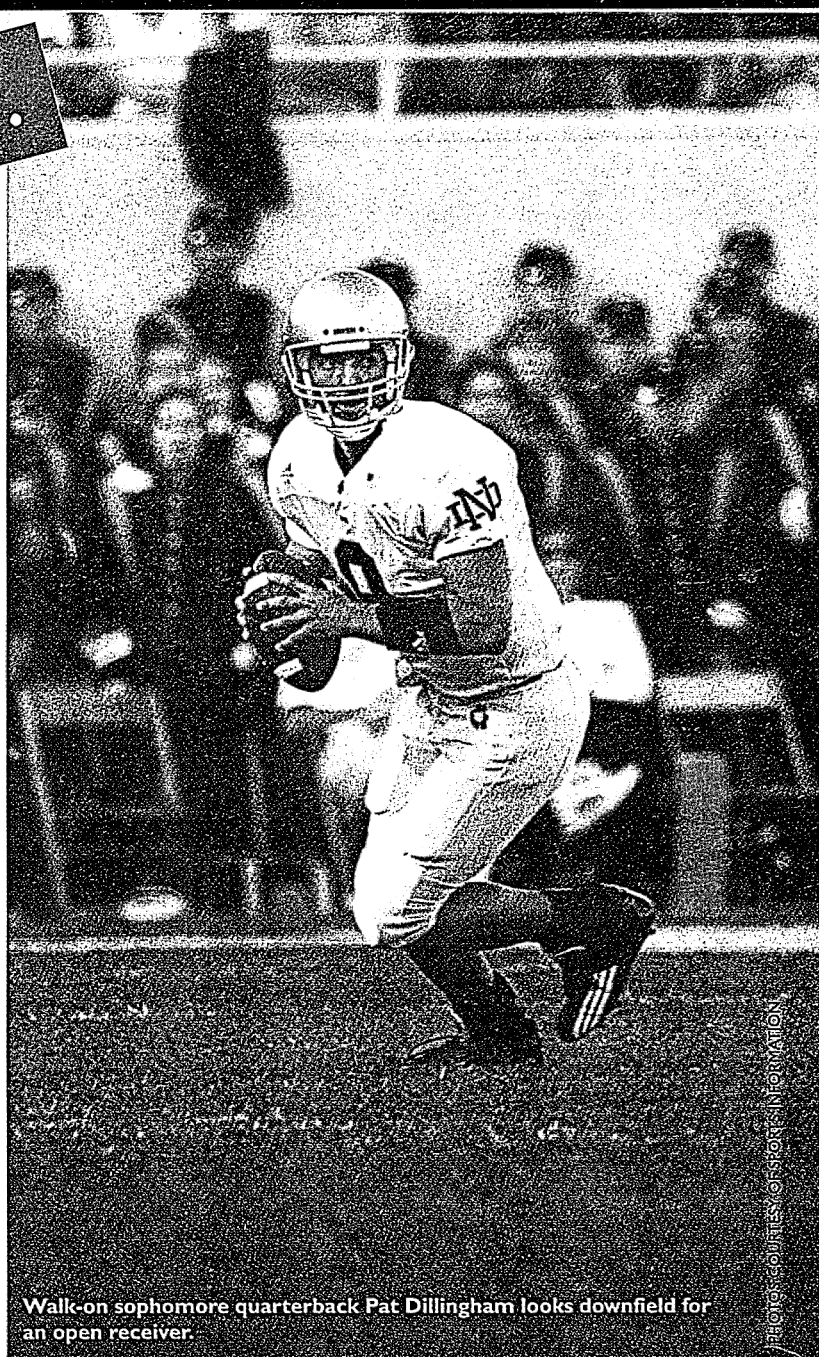
Dillingham finished with less-than-impressive numbers, 3-for-6 with 84 yards, one interception and one touchdown. But head coach Tyrone Willingham commended his quarterback.

"To say I'm not surprised by his performance, I'd be lying," Willingham said. "It's very difficult to perform under those circumstances. I think he was amazingly poised and in control of his game."

Perhaps Dillingham was more in control of the game than his post-game press conference. At the podium, Dillingham tried to keep from laughing as he listened to fans chanting his name outside. "If you had told me a year ago I'd be standing here, I wouldn't have believed you," he said. "I'm still in shock right now. ... It just goes to show you that when your opportunity comes, you have to be ready."

Some of Dillingham's readiness can be attributed to Holiday. "We talked after every series," Holiday said. "He came out and told me what he was seeing and I just told him to calm down a bit, and I think he did a great job today."

After going the first two weeks without finding the end zone, the Notre Dame offense scored on its opening possession for the second



Walk-on sophomore quarterback Pat Dillingham looks downfield for an open receiver.

NOTRE DAME	21
MICHIGAN ST.	17

consecutive game. This time, the Irish marched 80 yards in 10 plays. Sophomore tailback Ryan Grant scored on a 6-yard run to cap the drive. The score was set up by a bit of trickery on first and 10 from the Spartan 48-yard line. Battle took a handoff on a reverse and threw a pass to Holiday, who made a remarkable diving catch for a 30-yard gain. In the locker room afterwards, Holiday joked with his teammates: "It was the best catch this year."

Michigan State struck back later in the first quarter with a field goal, set up by a circus catch by Rogers. With the Spartans on their own 21-yard line, Smoker threw a pass deep down the right sideline. Junior cornerback Vontez Duff was in position to make an interception — and probably would have against any other receiver in the country. But Rogers, behind Duff, out-jumped the Irish cornerback and reached over



PHOTO COUTESY OF SPORTS INFORMATION

MIRACLE MAKER With less than two minutes to go in the game, wide receiver Arnaz Battle catches Pat Dillingham's pass and takes the ball downfield for the game-winning touchdown. The Spartans were unable to answer on the ensuing drive.

his back to grab the ball, giving the Spartans a 40-yard gain on Rogers' second of seven receptions during the afternoon.

"[Duff] was doing a great job," Willingham said. "He was all up into him and [Rogers] just reached over his back and took it like he wasn't even there. That's a great athlete. He played a great game, and you knew at some point he was going to make some plays."

In the second quarter, neither team was able to sustain a drive of considerable yardage, and the defenses kept the offenses out of scoring range. As the half wound down, the Irish defense forced Michigan State into making the first mistake of the game. Smoker threw an interception to senior safety Gerome Sapp, who returned the ball 13 yards to the Spartan's 28-yard line with just two minutes left before halftime.

The Irish, using a pass interference penalty on third down to their benefit, were able to capitalize on the turnover. Holiday threw his first touchdown pass of the season, a 15-yard over-the-shoulder lob to freshman wide receiver Maurice Stovall just 11 seconds before halftime.

While the first half belonged to Notre Dame, Michigan State controlled the momentum for almost the entire second half. The Spartan offense woke from its first-half slumber, during which it had gained only four first downs, to rack up 15 first downs after halftime. After a scoreless third quarter, the Spartans, trailing 14-3, finally found their flow in the fourth. Following a Notre Dame punt, the Spartans quickly went 56 yards in four plays. Rogers' 38-yard touchdown reception finished the drive with 13:22 remaining, letting the Irish know that their lead, now cut to 14-10, was in jeopardy.

The Irish offense continued to sputter with Dillingham at quarterback in place of Holiday. The one drive that looked promising for the Irish ended bitterly, courtesy of a mistake made by a young quarterback seeing his first action in a college game. Dillingham had driven the Irish 39 yards in four plays to the Spartans' 33-yard line and was looking to put the game out of reach for Michigan State. With just under six minutes remaining, Dillingham threw deep to the end zone,

ROGERS TIED AN NCAA RECORD BY CATCHING A TOUCHDOWN PASS IN HIS 12TH CONSECUTIVE GAME...

but the pass was underthrown and into double coverage, allowing Spartan safety Thomas Wright to intercept it at the Spartan 3-yard line. "I was disappointed with my decision to throw the ball up like that," Dillingham said. "Coach Willingham said it was like a punt, pinning them like that."

Pinned deep or not, with time running low and backed up 97 yards away from taking the lead, the Spartans knew that this was their golden moment to take advantage of Notre Dame's only turnover of the afternoon. And in methodical fashion, fit for such a rivalry as Notre Dame-Michigan State, Smoker engineered an almost perfectly executed 10-play, 97-yard scoring drive in four minutes, nine seconds. Smoker completed four of five passes for 83 yards, and left Dillingham and company with less than two minutes to work with — a tall order for an offense that had been stymied for the whole of the second half.

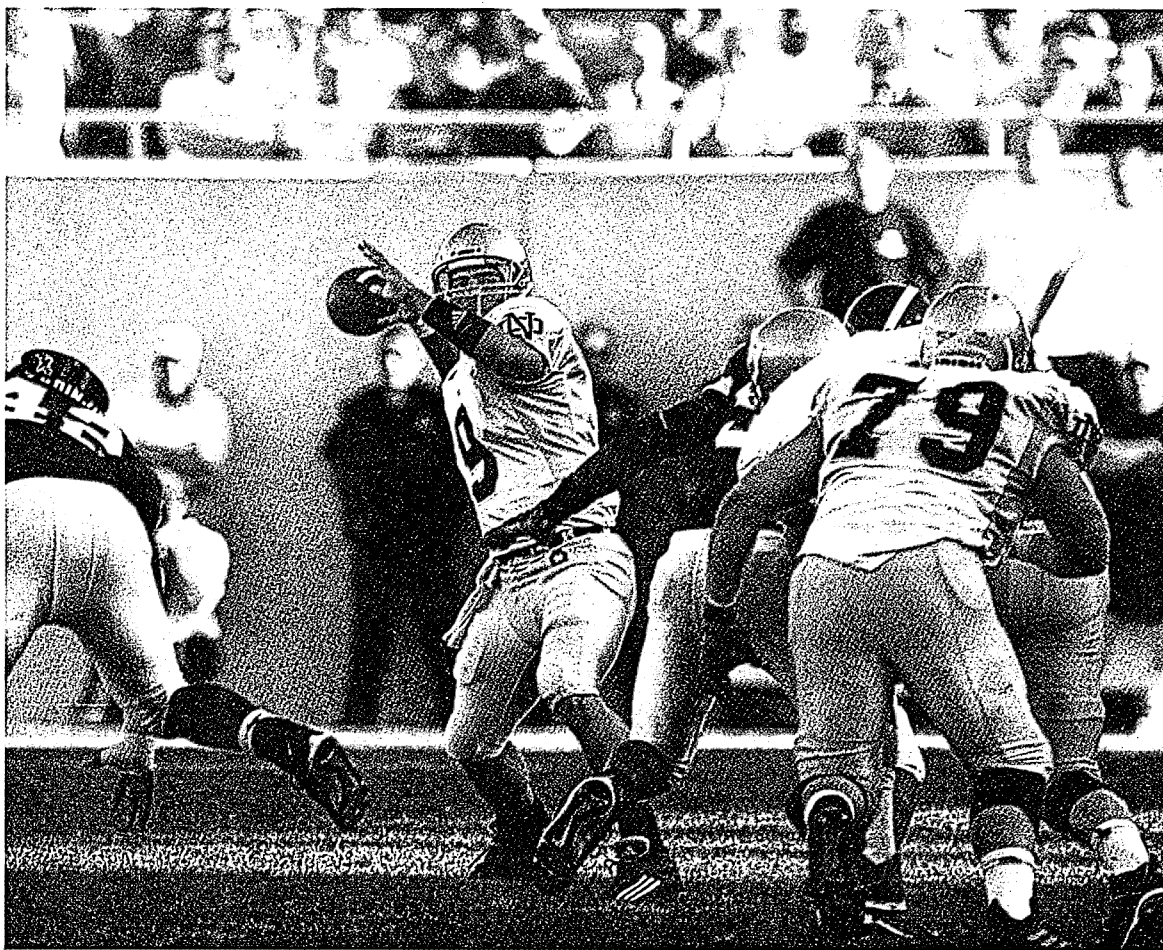
The go-ahead score for the Spartans came on an 18-yard touchdown pass on fourth and 11. Smoker threw a bullet to the back of the endzone where only Rogers could leap up to make the grab. He put down a foot in bounds with 1:45 left to give the Spartans a snug 17-14 lead.

It appeared as though Michigan State would continue its winning streak for yet another season when Rogers scored. But Spartan hopes were dashed after the Dillingham-to-Battle hook-up. "Those are the kind of plays that build momentum for the rest of the season," Holiday said.

The Irish defense limited Michigan State to a measly 53 yards rushing, and also were able to sack Smoker six times, compiling 33 yards in losses. "Being able to stop the run early and make them get into a passing mode made it easier on us," said red-shirt junior middle linebacker Courtney Watson. Watson led the team in tackles with 10, including three for a loss and two sacks.

Watson also helped to limit the playmaking ability of Rogers. "Going into the game, we thought that he was a really good receiver," said Watson. "But he didn't like to get hit. My responsibility wasn't necessarily to cover him, but when he caught it, to try to take his head off."

Notre Dame might have limited Rogers, but he still finished with seven receptions for 175 yards and two touchdowns. Certainly, though, he could have done more damage, as he dropped a couple of passes



HIS NAME IN LIGHTS Dillingham (9) was thrust into the spotlight against Michigan State after starting quarterback Carlyle Holiday injured his shoulder during the third quarter.

over the middle.

The victory gave Willingham his second over his alma mater. Not that it mattered to him. "I don't put much stock into coming back to Michigan State," said Willingham. "There is no nostalgia. There is no emotional tie. What is really special about this is we go 4-0 into our bye, and that's a great place to be positioned."

The bye could not have come at a better time for the Irish. An extra week's rest would give Holiday an extra week to heal. But for the moment, Notre Dame had completed one of its goals — to be the unofficial Big Ten Champion after completing a 3-0 season sweep against Big Ten foes Purdue, Michigan and Michigan State. □

PLAY BY NUMBERS		
	IRISH	SPARTANS
RUSHING YARDS	127	53
PASSING YARDS	198	281
FIRST DOWNS	15	19
TOTAL YARDS	325	334
TURNOVERS	1	2
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:02	29:58

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	7	7	0	7	21
Michigan St.	3	0	0	14	17

1st Quarter

ND Grant 6 run (Setta kick), 10:48; 7-0 ND

MSU FG Rayner 35, 0:55; 7-3 ND

2nd Quarter

ND Stovall 15 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 0:11; 14-3 ND

3rd Quarter —None—

4th Quarter

MSU Rogers 38 pass from Smoker (Rayner kick), 13:22; 14-10 ND

MSU Rogers 21 pass from Smoker (Rayner kick), 1:45; 17-14 MSU

ND Battle 60 pass from Dillingham (Setta kick), 1:15; 21-17 ND

...CARLYLE HOLIDAY THREW HIS FIRST TOUCHDOWN PASS OF THE SEASON IN THE SECOND QUARTER...

THE SHIRT



THE WEARING OF THE GREEN

SEANDUDLEY

Last year's Irish football team managed only five wins in its second losing season under Bob Davie. The athletic department suffered an embarrassing fiasco surrounding the hiring and firing of George O'Leary, who lied on his resume for the head coaching position. Four football players were expelled on rape charges. Things could only get better because they couldn't get any worse.

But a "Return to Glory"?

The Shirt Project 2002 believed it could happen, making the slogan the focus of its T-shirt selling campaign. Notre Dame's new head coach Tyrone Willingham, a hard-working team and some Irish luck made the slogan come to life, spurring the Irish on to a 10-win season and a bowl appearance. And while the team continued marching onward to victory, more and more people bought the kelly green shirts that boasted a triumphant comeback.

Student leaders and even Willingham encouraged fans to wear The Shirt to create a "sea of green" in the stands, and "Return to Glory" became the team slogan for the season. Benefiting from media coverage of a growing resurrection of Irish football, The Shirt Project — Notre Dame's largest student fundraiser — enjoyed its most successful campaign in its 13-year history. It raised over \$235,000 during the season for campus organizations and a student medical charity. At the same time, it gave the Irish faithful a way of showing their unity and support for the team.

The Shirt's color alternates annually between blue and green. Junior Courtney Schuster, current president of The Shirt Project, chose kelly

green this year because, "it's very visible, like on TV. I wanted that specific green, not an ugly green," Schuster says.

"It is clearly visible in the stands," head coach Tyrone Willingham says. "I mean, that green leaps out at you. It does become that sea that you can see, and any time you can get our fans to unify behind one goal or one purpose or one look, it speaks to the tremendous spirit of this place, and that does not go unnoticed from the players."

Junior cornerback Vontez Duff says he definitely could see the fans better because of their green shirts. "You know the fans are backing you, win or lose," he says. "You just look at [the sea of green] and you just say, 'Wow!'"

Willingham chose the Boston College game as the perfect time to mirror the support of the student body. The Irish donned the famous green jerseys, which are rarely worn and possess a mystique unlike any other college football uniform. Although the Irish lost the game, students, players and the team staff were visibly united. "Students on this campus have done a great job of demonstrating their support of

the team by wearing green," Willingham says. "I thought it was time to really show that we also embrace that spirit and that love of Notre Dame that our fans, particularly our students, had embraced."

Willingham himself wore green coaching shirts for most games this year. "If you ask others to do something, you should be willing to set the lead and the example," he says. "And even though the time was not right early, I thought, to put our football team in green, I thought it was right to put coach Willingham in green."

The first batch of 44,000 "Return to Glory" T-shirts already had sold out by the end of the Michigan game weekend, only the third game of the season. Because of variations in the dying process, shirts in the next shipment were more lime-colored than kelly green. Yet demand for "Return to Glory" paraphernalia remained high throughout the season. It remained so high, in fact, that for the first time, The Shirt Project ordered product-line extensions, including mugs, sweatshirts and hats.

Will The Shirt be kelly green again next year to keep the sea of green alive? Sophomore Dave Brenner, the president of next year's Shirt Project, says nothing has been decided yet. "We're doing some marketing analysis," he says. "We're going to keep it a traditional ND color, but that's all I can say for sure right now."

The Shirt Project started in 1989 when Zheng De Wang, a graduate student, was hit by a car. Students, together with Sr. Jean Lenz, designed a shirt and used the profits to help the injured student pay his medical bills. The Shirt, which featured the slogan "Catholics vs. Convicts," was sold for the football game against the University of Miami, whose players at the time were notorious for their run-ins with the law.

The Shirt Project now is an official committee in student government, led by students and advised by Mary Edgington, the assistant director of facilities in the Office of Student Activities. Part of the profits from The Shirt Project go into funds and charities that benefit Notre Dame students, while some goes to the Hammes Notre Dame bookstore. Half the proceeds from T-shirt and related sales fund student organizations through the Financial Management Board and Student Senate. "If The Shirt is not successful," Schuster says, "then there is less money available [for clubs]."

The other half of the proceeds are donated to two student charities: The Rector Fund and The Shirt Charity Fund. The Rector Fund, which assists students who don't have the money to participate in dances, service trips and other campus activities, receives \$35,000 a year from The Shirt Project. The Shirt Charity Fund, in the spirit of the original reason for the fundraiser, makes money available for medical costs beyond a student's insurance coverage. Schuster says that not many people are aware of these charities because applying and receiving monetary assistance from either is a strictly confidential process.

Schuster praises the fundraiser for helping students in numerous ways. "It's not like we're just trying to sell T-shirts," she says. "It's actually doing something. The media should be attracted to it because it's for a good cause. The project shows how ND students come together to support their peers."

"The Shirt gave students and alumni something they could be a part of," says Schuster. It also gave students and fans a way to support their team. "Carl [Elkins] and I worked on [The Shirt 2002] together," Schuster says, "to create a shirt that tied together Notre Dame's past with Notre Dame's present and its future." Elkins, a sophomore, won \$200 in The Shirt's design contest. The final version featured pictures



SEE THE SEA? The team's success created a ripple effect of kelly green throughout the stadium.

of the Four Horsemen, Knute Rockne, and a gold helmet raised into the air. It also included excerpts from one of Rockne's famous pep talks, and the three words that made The Shirt 2002 famous: "Return to Glory," which the university has since trademarked.

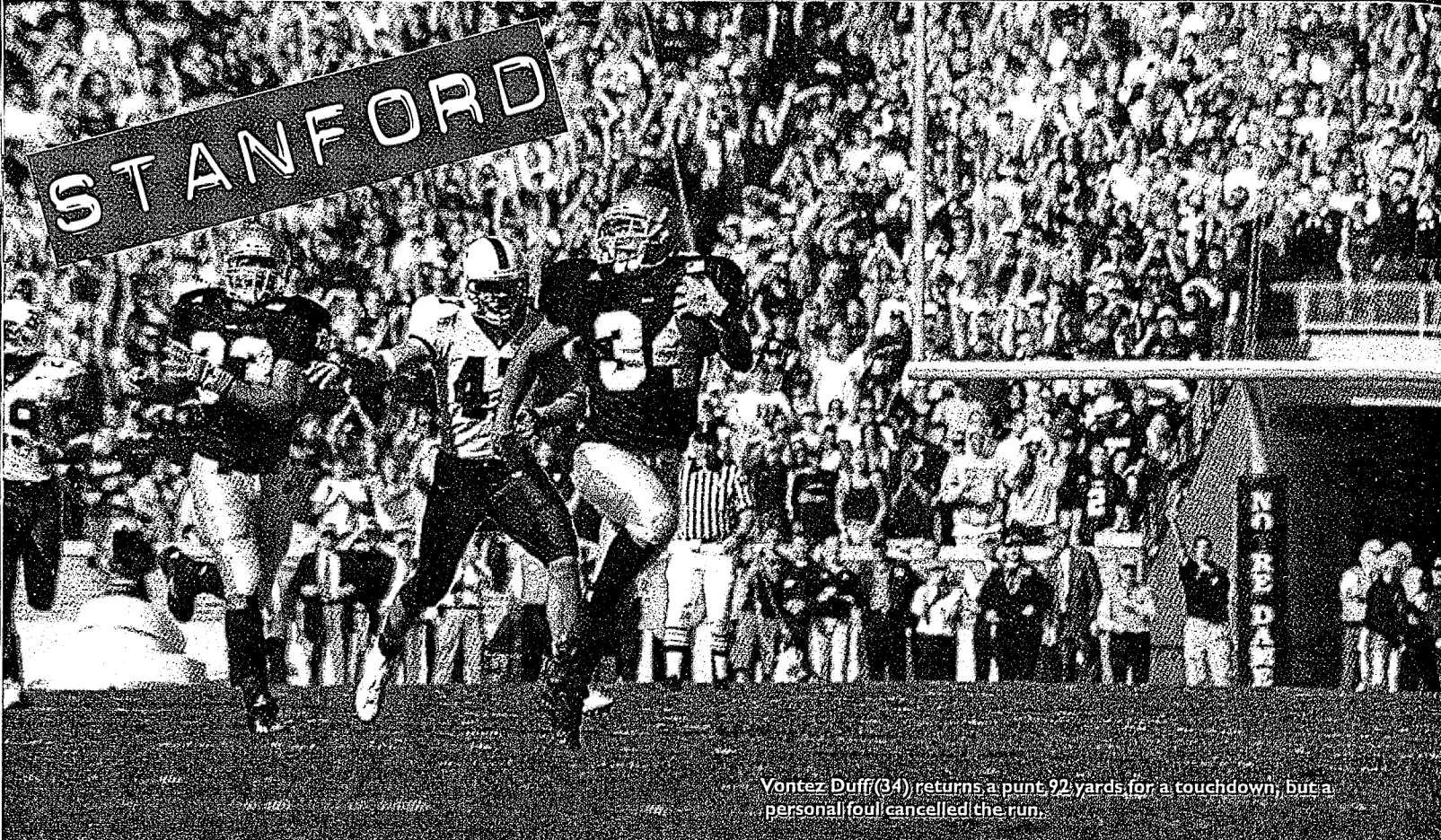
The football team made good on the catchy new slogan, winning its first eight games and raising hopes of a possible national championship. "Return to Glory" tied in perfectly with the season," says Schuster. Audra Hagan, a member of last year's Shirt Project, came up with the idea.

Not that the football program ever completely fell from glory. "This program has never fallen to drastic depths," Willingham says, "even though some would consider a 5-6 season, 'Gosh, that we went to the ends of the Earth.'"

"But the truth of the matter is," Willingham says, "the year before, we had some success. And what we want to do is just build and make it exciting for our fans, for the Irish family, exciting for the young men in the program, do it with great competitive zeal and respect for those that wore the uniform before us, and with great respect for the competitors on the opposition."

Willingham says that all the "Return to Glory" talk didn't faze him or the team. "It didn't add additional pressure, which is what I think most people would think of when you put that kind of a label on what you're doing ... Our goals for this football team have always [come down to] one: to win the next game you play." □

STANFORD



Vontez Duff (34) returns a punt 92 yards for a touchdown, but a personal foul cancelled the run.

THIRD AND WON

DAVIDMURRAY

The Irish players entered their fifth game of the season against the Stanford Cardinal with reasons to be confident. The team was 4-0 for the first time since 1993 and was coming off an impressive road victory against the Michigan State Spartans. But beneath the surface, doubts still plagued the team's weak offense, which suffered a major blow when quarterback Carlyle Holiday injured his shoulder against the Spartans.

Walk-on quarterback Pat Dillingham had performed well at Michigan State after Holiday's exit, tossing the unforgettable winning touchdown pass to receiver Arnaz Battle with just over one minute remaining. Still, critics questioned whether Dillingham would be able to lead the Irish to victory as the starter, especially against a Stanford team that many predicted would be at its best against its former coach, Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham.

The contest began with the Irish having two golden opportunities to score early. Stanford received the ball to begin the game and quickly was forced to punt by the stingy Notre Dame defense. Following the punt, the Irish advanced the ball as far as the Cardinal 34, aided primarily by a 14-yard run by tailback Ryan Grant on third down. The drive stalled quickly thereafter, and a 51-yard field-goal attempt by Nick Setta fell short. The Irish offense fell upon good fortune minutes later as a bad snap on a Cardinal punt attempt gave Notre Dame the ball at the Stanford 33. However, a personal foul penalty on first down and a 5-yard loss on a second

STANFORD	7
NOTRE DAME	31

down run eventually forced the Irish to punt.

After two poor series to begin the game, the Cardinal offense began to click. Quarterback Chris Lewis completed 6 of 8 passes on a drive which moved the ball as far as the Notre Dame 14-yard line. The Irish defense stiffened there, tackling fullback Casey Moore for a loss of 5 on third down and blocking kicker Michael Sgroi's 37-yard field-goal attempt. On the following Stanford possession, which began at the Irish 41-yard line, the defense held again. Cornerback Vontez Duff then returned a punt 92 yards for a touchdown, but the play was called back due to a personal foul against the Irish for roughing the center, a call Willingham would later describe as "unusual." The penalty gave the Cardinal offense another chance, and it responded with the first score of the game. A 14-yard touchdown pass from Lewis to star wide receiver Teyo Johnson gave Stanford a 7-0 lead at the end of the first quarter.

After allowing the touchdown, Notre Dame's defense toughened once again. The Cardinal offense was unable to advance the ball past midfield again until the fourth quarter. Meanwhile, the Irish offense began to show signs of life halfway through the second quarter. Sparked by two receptions by Arnaz Battle and long runs by Grant and fellow tailback Rashon Powers-Neal, the Irish were able to move the ball from their own 20-yard line down to the Stanford 6 before finally getting on the scoreboard with a field goal by Nick Setta. Notre Dame headed to the locker room at half-time trailing by four points, despite having possessed the ball in Stanford territory in six of its seven possessions.

The perseverance of the Irish offense finally began to pay off in

Irish score 21 points in 3:13 span in third quarter. Willingham defeats old team in first

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	CARDINAL
RUSHING YARDS	249	61
PASSING YARDS	129	201
FIRST DOWNS	17	16
TOTAL YARDS	378	262
TURNOVERS	1	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:32	29:28

the second half. Starting the third quarter with the ball, Notre Dame picked up two first downs before an interception thrown by Dillingham ended the drive. Shortly thereafter, the Irish offense got the ball back and moved down the field once again. The drive stalled at the Stanford 21-yard line and a 38-yard field goal attempt by Setta sailed wide right. With some help from the defense, including a key sack by defensive tackle Darrell Campbell, the Irish were able to keep the Cardinal pinned deep in their own end, leading to great field position for the next offensive drive. This time, Notre Dame traveled 57 yards, capped by a powerful 3-yard touchdown run by Powers-Neal, to gain a 10-7 advantage.

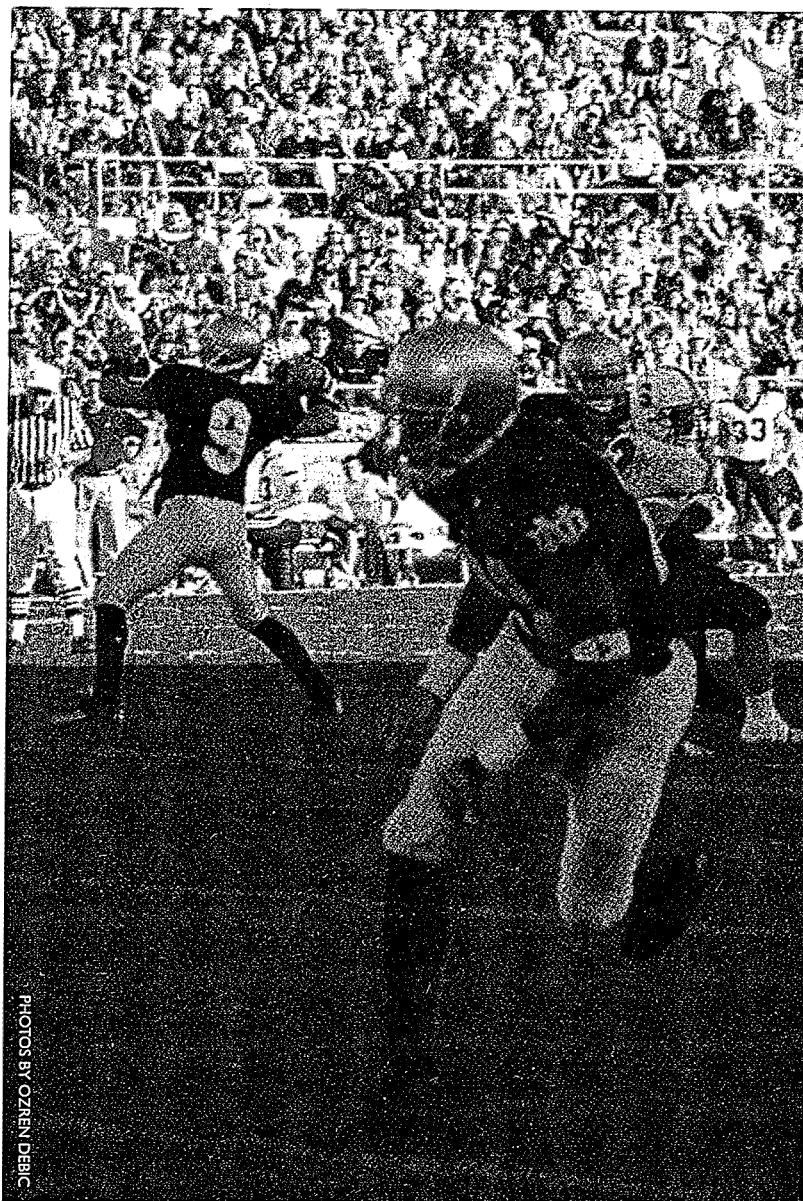
After the touchdown, the dominating Irish defense took the game over completely. Two plays after the ensuing kickoff, an errant Lewis pass was intercepted by Irish cornerback Shane Walton, who scampered 18 yards to the end zone. During the next Stanford drive, less than three minutes later, linebacker Courtney Watson wrestled the football away from Stanford tight end Alex Smith immediately following an apparent pass reception from Lewis, and ran it back 34 yards for the third Irish touchdown of the quarter. Then, on the first play of the fourth quarter, Lewis was intercepted for a third time by safety Gerome Sapp at the Stanford 45-yard line. With a punishing ground attack and a key third-down completion from Dillingham to Jenkins, the Notre Dame offense marched down the field again. A 1-yard touchdown run by Ryan Grant capped the drive and put the game out of reach for good. The contest ended with the Irish victorious by the final score of 31-7.

Despite his unimpressive numbers on the final stats sheet, Dillingham performed reasonably well in his first collegiate start. While he completed 14 of 27 passes for a paltry 129 yards, he only turned the ball over once. Stanford coach Buddy Teevens gave Dillingham a lot of credit after the game. "I thought he was very consistent back there," Teevens said. "I didn't think he got rattled. I think what they asked him to do was play within his strengths. They didn't ask him to make big plays. They wanted to mix it up and run the ball. I thought he operated well, and I think the guys around him were very confident in his ability to execute as well."

Willingham also spoke highly of his young quarterback's play. "Knowing Pat coming into the ballgame, I felt that if we could get him through his first series and get him through his first couple of plays, he would be very relaxed and very poised and really execute our offense," Willingham said. "I thought he did a wonderful job of that throughout the course of the ballgame."

The Notre Dame head coach was even more pleased with the 249 rushing yards his offense accumulated during the afternoon. "I think any time you have a run game in the manner that we were able to generate today, you have to go directly to our offensive line," Willingham said. "I thought they did a marvelous job of being physical and being in the right positions and communicating well to get a hat on the right people. I was very pleased with what they gave today."

After the victory kept the Irish undefeated, plenty of excitement and speculation surrounded the team. It would have been easy to make bold predictions about the future while reveling in the



PHOTOS BY OZHEN DEBIC

GOING DEEP Backup quarterback Pat Dillingham looks downfield in his first collegiate start.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Stanford	7	0	0	0	7
Notre Dame	0	3	21	7	31

1st Quarter

STAN Johnson 14 pass from Lewis (Sgroi kick), 0:46; 7-0 STAN

2nd Quarter

ND FG Setta 30, 2:03; 7-3 STAN

3rd Quarter

ND Powers-Neal 3 run (Setta kick), 4:22; 10-7 ND

ND Walton 18 interception return (Setta kick), 3:58; 17-7 ND

ND Watson 34 interception return (Setta kick), 1:09; 24-7 ND

4th Quarter

ND Grant 1 run (Setta kick), 12:28; 31-7 ND

amazing potential that the season still possessed. Willingham, however, refused to deviate from business as usual. "We'll just kindly take 5-0 and just keep going," he said. "All I want to be is a team that plays the best the next Saturday afternoon. That's all I want."

□

PITTSBURGH

JUST BARELY

CHRISTOPHER KELLY

Coming into its Oct. 12 match-up with Pittsburgh, it seemed that undefeated Notre Dame's biggest challenge was giving its opponent adequate respect. Although unrecognized by the national media, Pittsburgh had a stifling defense worthy of scaring any opposing offensive coordinator.

But the Fighting Irish won a moral victory before the game when Carlyle Holiday, out for the previous three weeks with a shoulder injury, was announced as their starting quarterback.

Despite Holiday's return, however, the offense never hit its stride, and it was Notre Dame's defense that enabled it to squeeze out a 14-6 victory. The game was close throughout, and the Irish didn't seal the win until the final minutes, when cornerback Preston Jackson halted Pittsburgh's final offensive threat with an interception.

For Pittsburgh's final drive, punter Joey Hildbold placed the ball just in front of the Panthers' goal line, but Notre Dame missed the chance to pin Pittsburgh on its own 1-yard line when Dwight Ellick let the ball bounce through his legs. Pittsburgh quarterback Rod Rutherford then marched down the field, helping his offense pick apart the six-man Irish defensive backfield. The Panthers eased into Irish territory, and seemed poised to tie the game before Jackson's interception put an end to their hopes.

With just over a minute left in the game, Rutherford was chased to his left out of the pocket 20 yards behind the line of scrimmage. His pass, which he later said was intended to fly safely out of bounds, landed in the hands of the diving Jackson at the Irish 21-yard line, allowing the sluggish Irish offense to run out the clock.

"We had our chance to win the ballgame," said sixth-year Pittsburgh head coach Walt Harris, in reference to the final drive. "Offensively, we moved the ball, but we had trouble being consistent."

Having watched his offense out-gained 402 to 185 yards, Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham dismissed any suggested significance of the poor statistics. "We just want to win," he said. "We're still working [on our offense]; we did some good things today."

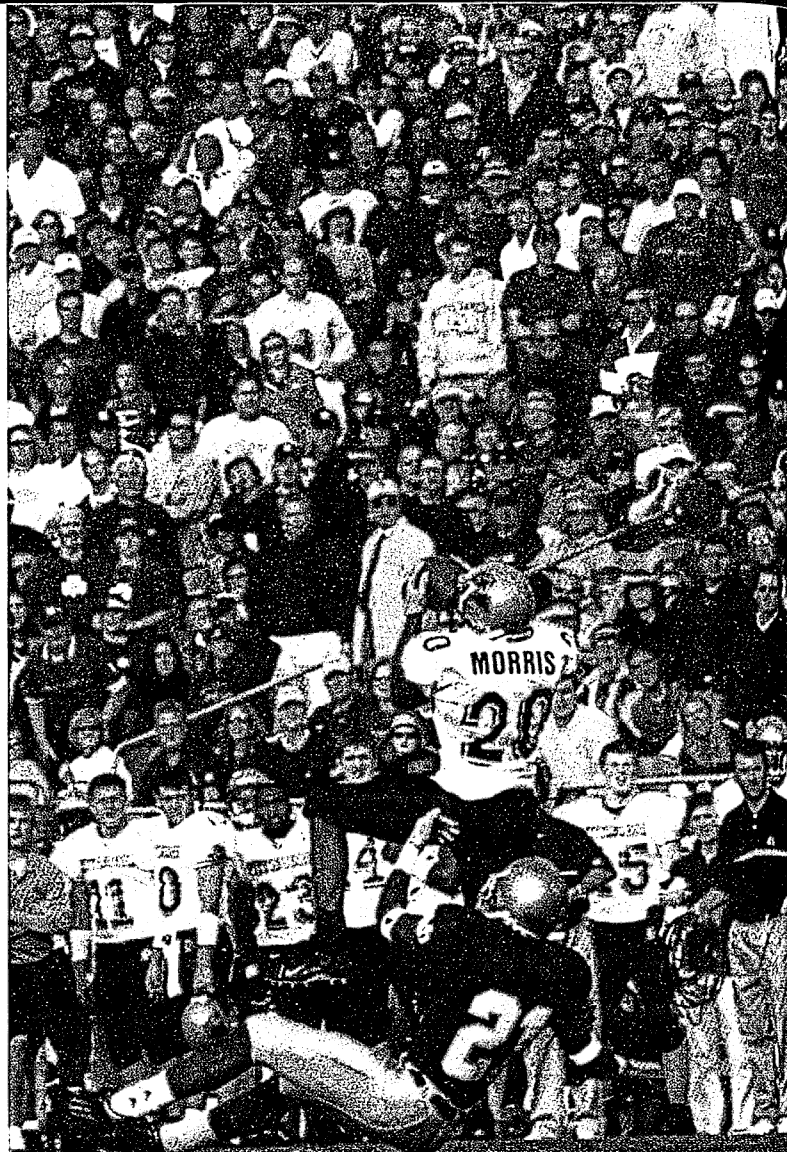
Willingham believed that his low offensive production was a result of the Pittsburgh defense, not his own team's inadequacies.

"All credit has to be given to Pittsburgh," Willingham said after the game. "I thought that was one heck of a defense before the game started, and they did not disappoint anyone. They played great defense."

Harris agreed: "Our defense played tremendous, but we don't have moral victories — we lost." He refused to take any comfort in his team outperforming the Irish on paper.

The Irish run attack produced only a dismal 40 yards on 32 carries, and quarterback Carlyle Holiday put on a mediocre performance, throwing for 145 yards. Still, "Holiday made some smart decisions during the course of the game," Willingham said.

And when your defense keeps the opponent out of the end zone



Tez Morris (20) intercepts a pass by Carlyle Holiday late in the third quarter.

PITTSBURGH	6
NOTRE DAME	14

during the entire game, your offense doesn't need to be very prolific. Harris also found praise for Holiday: "Coming back from injuries, I think he did a nice job."

On the game's opening drive, Pittsburgh found holes in Notre Dame's run defense, forcing the Irish to switch quickly from their preferred 4-3 to a 5-2 block formation. Pittsburgh capitalized on this adjustment when Panthers receiver Kris Wilson sneaked by cornerback Shane Walton for a 52-yard catch that was the longest play against the Irish defense at that point of the season. However, Notre Dame's defense recovered enough to hold Pittsburgh to a field goal on the drive.

Notre Dame's offense was stagnant for the remainder of the first quarter, with only one completed pass and 16 total offensive yards. Even Willingham's attempt at a trick play failed when a wideout pass play from senior wide receiver Arnaz Battle to junior wide

...Notre Dame defeated Pittsburgh despite being outgained by 217 yards, 402 to 185...The

receiver Omar Jenkins was intercepted. But Pittsburgh could not take advantage of the struggling Irish, and the teams began exchanging punts. One of those punts, a 53-yarder by Notre Dame's Joey Hildbold, pinned Pittsburgh at its own 15-yard line after a clipping penalty was called on the Panthers during the return.

As the crowd finally got into the game, Notre Dame seemed to gain a momentum. But a 35-yard pass from Rutherford to freshman receiver Larry Fitzgerald on the next play from scrimmage quickly dampened that energy.

On Notre Dame's first possession of the second quarter, Holiday ignited his offensive unit. He escaped from a collapsing pocket and scampered 12 yards for the first Irish first down.

Three plays later, a leaping grab by Battle earned the Irish 23 yards. Then, on second and eight from Pittsburgh's 11-yard line, Holiday found Battle on a fade pattern for the game's first touchdown. The pass basically was a jump ball, and Battle managed to take the ball out of defensive back Torrie Cox's hands and land with his knee inches from the sideline.

On the ensuing drive, Pittsburgh again found gaps in the Notre Dame secondary, with Rutherford hitting his senior receiver Lamar Slade often. Notre Dame had been sneaking eight men into the box to fill holes in its front line, but the Irish were forced to drop to a seven-man box to reinforce its pass defense. This attempt proved unsuccessful at first, as Pittsburgh continued to complete long-yardage pass plays on its next two possessions.

The Panthers still could not find their way into the end zone, but added another field goal in the final minute of the second quarter. The Irish entered the locker room with a 7-6 halftime lead.

The Irish special teams kicked off the second half with Hildbold angling a punt out of bounds on the 8-yard line. The Irish momentum continued to build when linebacker Derek Curry landed a blindside sack on Rutherford. The sellout crowd erupted. Though Rutherford continued to exploit holes in the Irish secondary and, aided by a solid running game, led his team downfield, he could not break the Irish goal line.

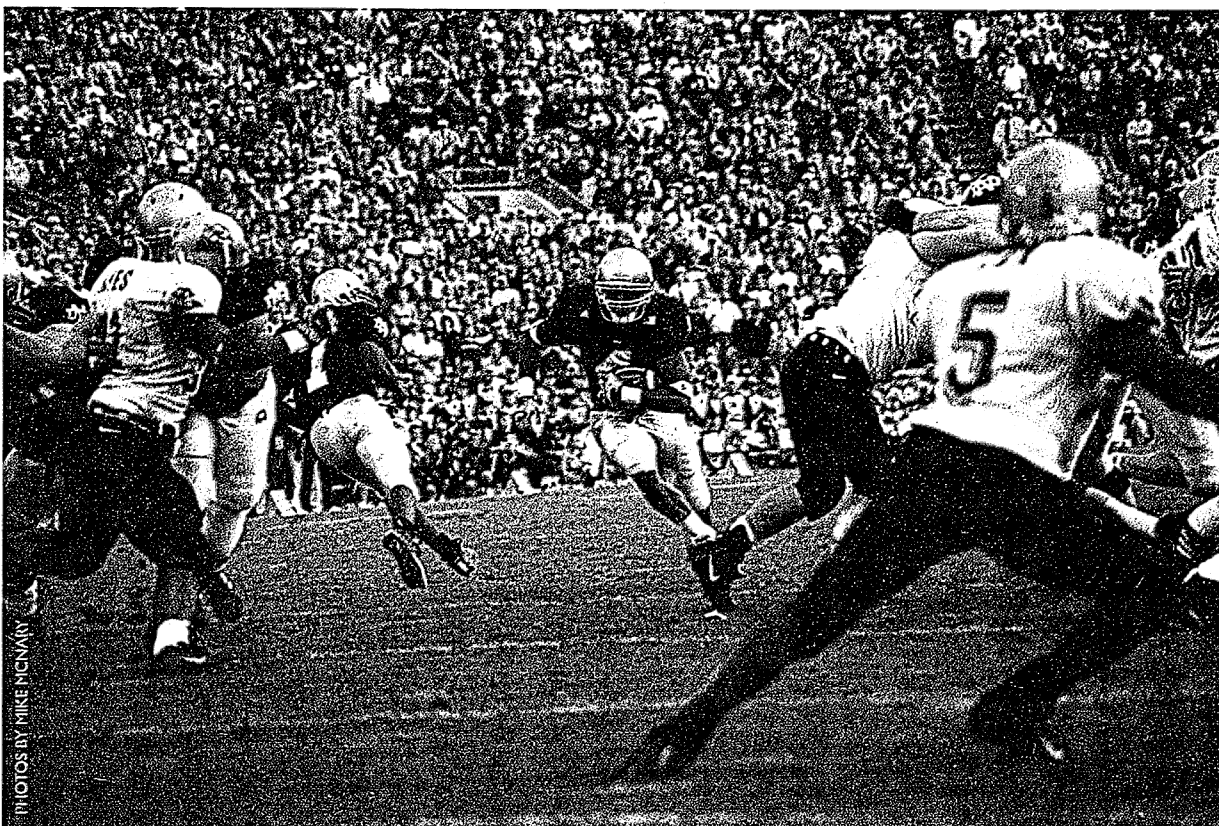
Midway through the third quarter, the Irish received their first big break in the game. Defensive end Justin Tuck sprinted around the Pittsburgh line to strip the ball from Rutherford, ending a long Panthers drive.

Notre Dame could not capitalize on the turnover, however, and it was forced to have Hildbold make one of his nine punts on the day. His punts proved to be very important for the Irish, and Harris admitted that inferior field position was one of the disadvantages his team faced all game long.

Notre Dame's offensive woes continued. After forcing another

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	PANTHERS
RUSHING YARDS	40	89
PASSING YARDS	145	313
FIRST DOWNS	10	21
TOTAL YARDS	185	402
TURNOVERS	2	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	27:34	32:26



SNEAK ATTACK Tailback Ryan Grant (4) dashes through a rare hole in the Panthers' tenacious defense.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Pittsburgh	3	3	0	0	6
Notre Dame	0	7	0	7	14

1st Quarter

PITT FG Abdul 29, 11:06; 3-0 PITT

2nd Quarter

ND Battle 11 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 9:51; 7-3 ND

PITT FG Abdul 24, 0:23; 7-6 ND

3rd Quarter —None—

4th Quarter

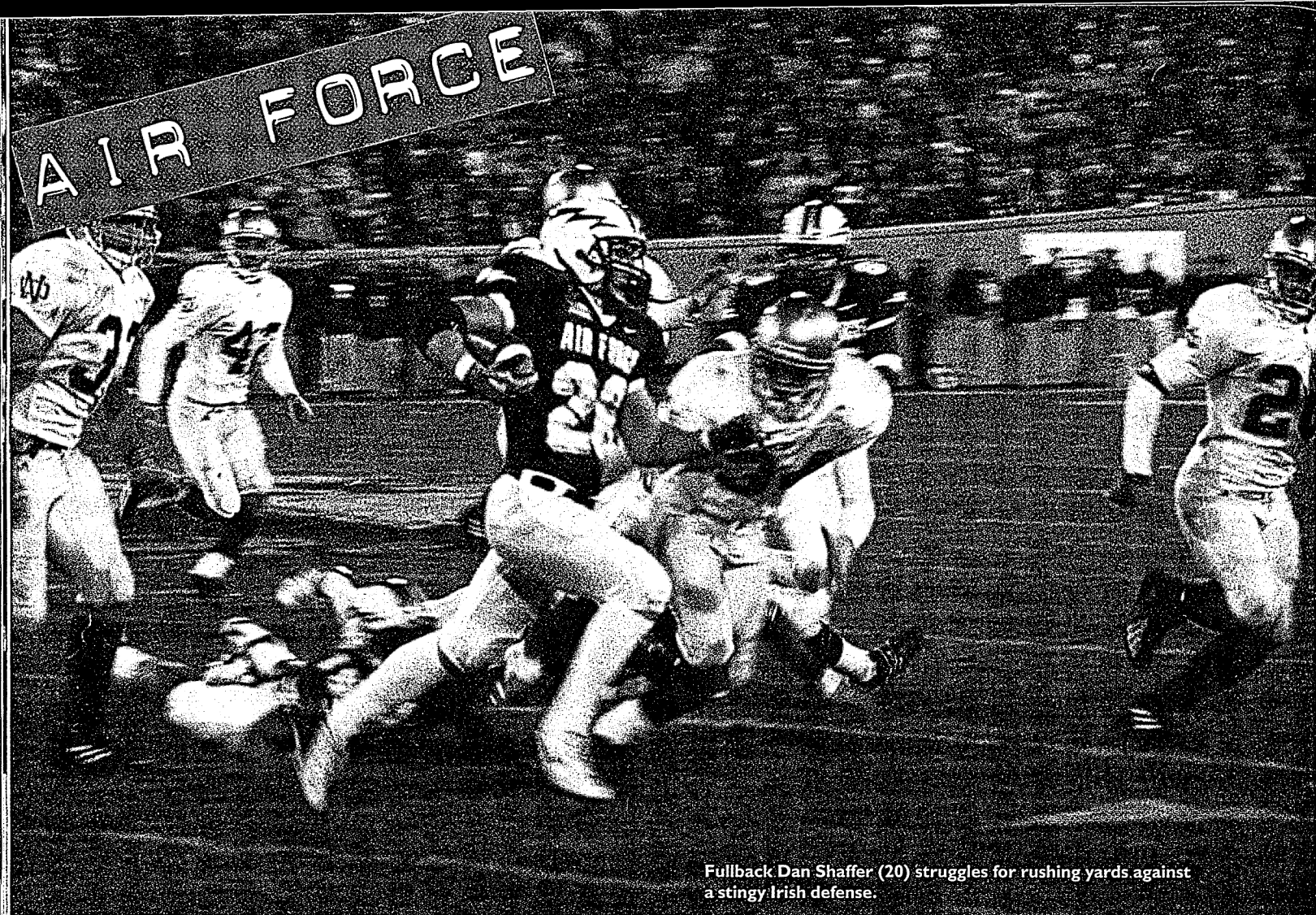
ND Grant 1 run (Setta kick), 7:08; 14-6 ND

Pittsburgh punt, the defense saw Holiday throw an interception into double coverage on the next play.

The only score of the fourth quarter occurred when sophomore tailback Ryan Grant punched it in from the 1-yard line with seven minutes left in the game. The teams exchanged punts until the final Pittsburgh drive that ended in an interception, the third turnover the Irish forced that day.

"What they've been living on is turnovers, and that was the difference in the game," said Harris, summing up the key to yet another Notre Dame victory. □

Irish defense sacked Pitt quarterback Rod Rutherford 8 times and forced 3 turnovers...



Fullback Dan Shaffer (20) struggles for rushing yards against a stingy Irish defense.

WISHBONE SNAPPED

SEANDUDLEY

On October 19, seventh-ranked Notre Dame flew into Colorado Springs and dominated the previously undefeated Air Force Academy in a night game that drew record numbers to Falcon Stadium. After struggling during the first six games of the season, the Irish offense gave a stellar performance with 447 total yards, and Notre Dame's defense shut down the Falcons' dangerous wishbone option attack. The offense, however, lost three fumbles and missed two field goals, keeping a lopsided game close on the scoreboard. The Irish won only by a touchdown, 21-14.

The Irish defense took the field first, stopping Air Force's opening drive at the Falcons' 46-yard line. Notre Dame started from its own 15 and easily marched downfield behind sophomore tailback Ryan Grant, who finished the game with a career-best 190 yards rushing. He had rushes of 5, 15 and 20 yards during Notre Dame's first drive, which ended at Air Force's 32-yard line when quarterback Carlyle Holiday was sacked from the blind side and fumbled the ball.

The Falcons couldn't capitalize on the turnover, though. They gained

NOTRE DAME	21
AIR FORCE	14

only one first down before punting the ball back to the Irish. Notre Dame and Air Force then exchanged three-and-outs, and the Irish began their third drive of the game at their own 15-yard line. The drive lasted only one down — Holiday was hit rushing up the middle, and the ball was knocked loose. Air Force's Marchel Graddy recovered the fumble and returned it 21 yards for a Falcons touchdown, putting Air Force up 7-0 with the extra point.

Notre Dame gained only 2 yards on the first two downs of its next possession and called a timeout. On third down, Holiday connected with Arnaz Battle for 15 yards and a first down on an inside slant route. Battle had all 112 of Notre Dame's receiving yards during the game, a career-best performance for the fifth-year senior. Two plays later, Holiday couldn't find any open receivers, so he tucked the ball away and took off, making up for his two fumbles earlier in the game. He ran 53 yards for a touchdown, tying the score at 7-7.

"The mistakes that cause turnovers, I don't think they bothered our guys one bit," head coach Tyrone Willingham said.

Holiday clearly wasn't bothered, rushing a total of nine times in the game for 71 yards and two touchdowns.

As the second quarter began, the Irish proved too fast for the Falcons to elude or contain. Air Force came into the game as the nation's

...Ryan Grant ran for 190 yards and a TD...Willingham became third coach in Irish history to

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	FALCONS
RUSHING YARDS	335	104
PASSING YARDS	112	57
FIRST DOWNS	22	10
TOTAL YARDS	447	161
TURNOVERS	3	1
TIME OF POSSESSION	35:33	24:27

top rushing team, averaging 339 yards per game on the ground. Air Force quarterback Chance Harridge had rushed for 615 yards and 15 touchdowns in the team's first six games. However, Harridge gained only 31 yards on the ground against the Irish and the high-flying Falcons could manage only 104 rushing yards, while Notre Dame had a season-best rushing game of 335 yards.

After Notre Dame's scoring drive, the Falcons gained only 27 yards before punting again, and they pinned the Irish at the 6-yard line. The Irish responded by running all over Air Force's defense. On the first play, Grant picked up 12 yards and a first down. Three plays later, he rushed for 30 yards on third and three. Running back Marcus Wilson then had a 17-yard run for a first down, taking Notre Dame all the way to Air Force's 28-yard line. After two short runs and an incomplete pass, the Irish sent in their kicking team. Nick Setta attempted the 41-yard field goal and missed wide right.

The Falcons went three and out on the following possession, and Notre Dame took over at its own 21-yard line. The Irish rushed 79 yards in four-and-a-half minutes, capping the drive with Grant's 18-yard touchdown run. The score remained 14-7 in favor of the Irish going into the half.

Notre Dame received the opening kickoff of the second half, and junior cornerback Vontez Duff fumbled the ball during the return. The Falcons recovered the fumble at the 16-yard line, their first and only trip into the red zone during the game. Air Force drove to the 1-yard line, and Harridge carried the ball into the end zone to tie the score at 14-14.

Duff returned the following kickoff 31 yards for the Irish. Grant, Holiday, Wilson, Tom Lopienski and Chris Yura all gained positive rushing yards during the ensuing drive. Battle caught a pass for 17 yards on a first-and-10 play. Holiday ran for a touchdown from the 1-yard line to put the Irish up 21-14.

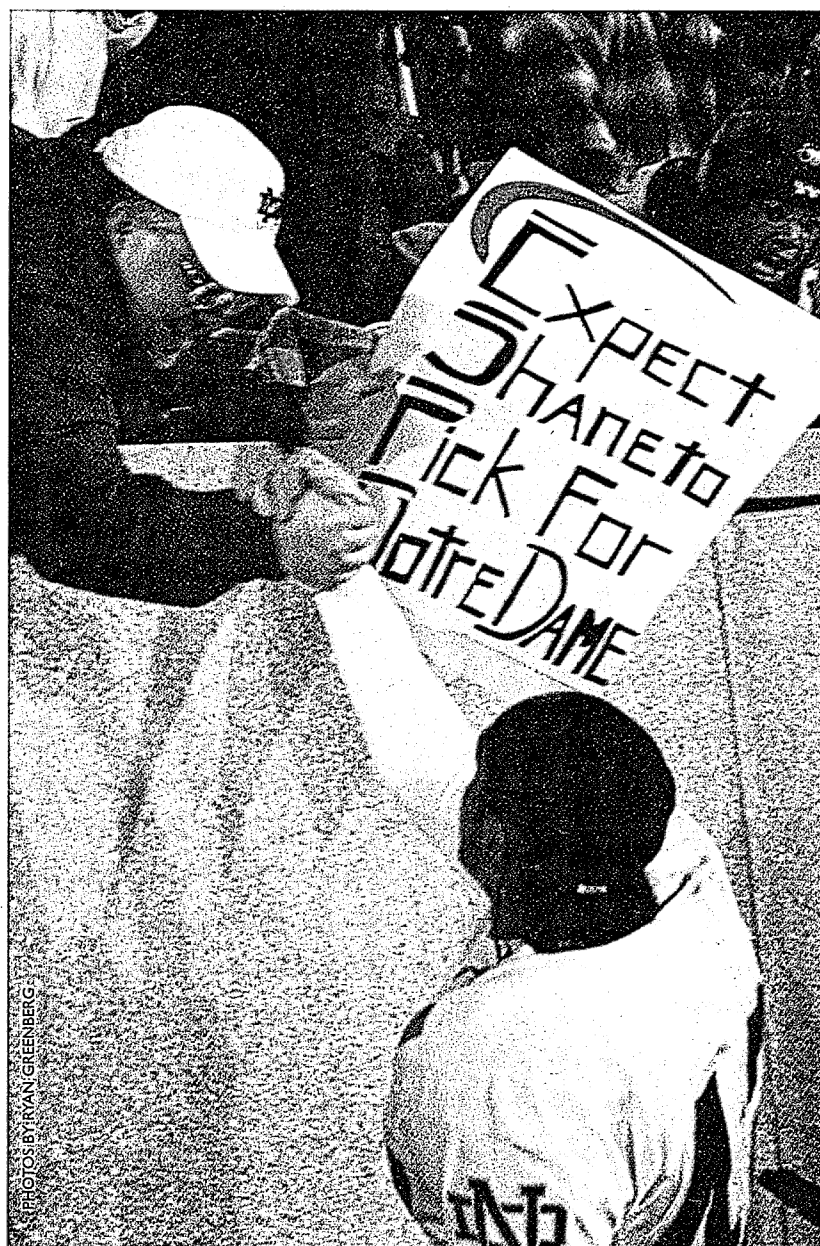
"I think our offensive line, our backs, our entire offensive team did an excellent job of execution," Willingham said.

Cornerback Shane Walton recorded his sixth interception of the season when he picked off Harridge during Air Force's next drive. The Irish secondary allowed only 57 passing yards in the game.

Notre Dame went three and out after the turnover, and Air Force gained only one first down before punting again. The Irish had possession as the third quarter ended, and on the last play of the quarter, Holiday found Battle on another inside slant for 15 yards and a first down.

Battle caught a 20-yard pass on the first play of the fourth quarter, which advanced the Irish to Air Force's 26-yard line. A 6-yard loss and a penalty set up a long second down, and Holiday hit Battle for a 25-yard gain. On third and one, Grant was hit for a loss, and Setta entered the game for another field-goal attempt. He missed from 31 yards out, as the ball again sailed wide right.

Air Force couldn't make it past midfield on either of its next possessions, and Notre Dame hoped to run out the clock when it received a punt with 4:14 left in the game. The Irish managed one first down but faced a third-and-five situation with two minutes left. With a stop, the Falcons would have had one last chance to drive for a tying score. They called their final timeout to set up for Notre Dame's third-down



IN SHANE WE TRUST Cornerback Shane Walton takes a moment to acknowledge an Irish fan after the game.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	7	7	7	0	21
Air Force	7	0	7	0	14

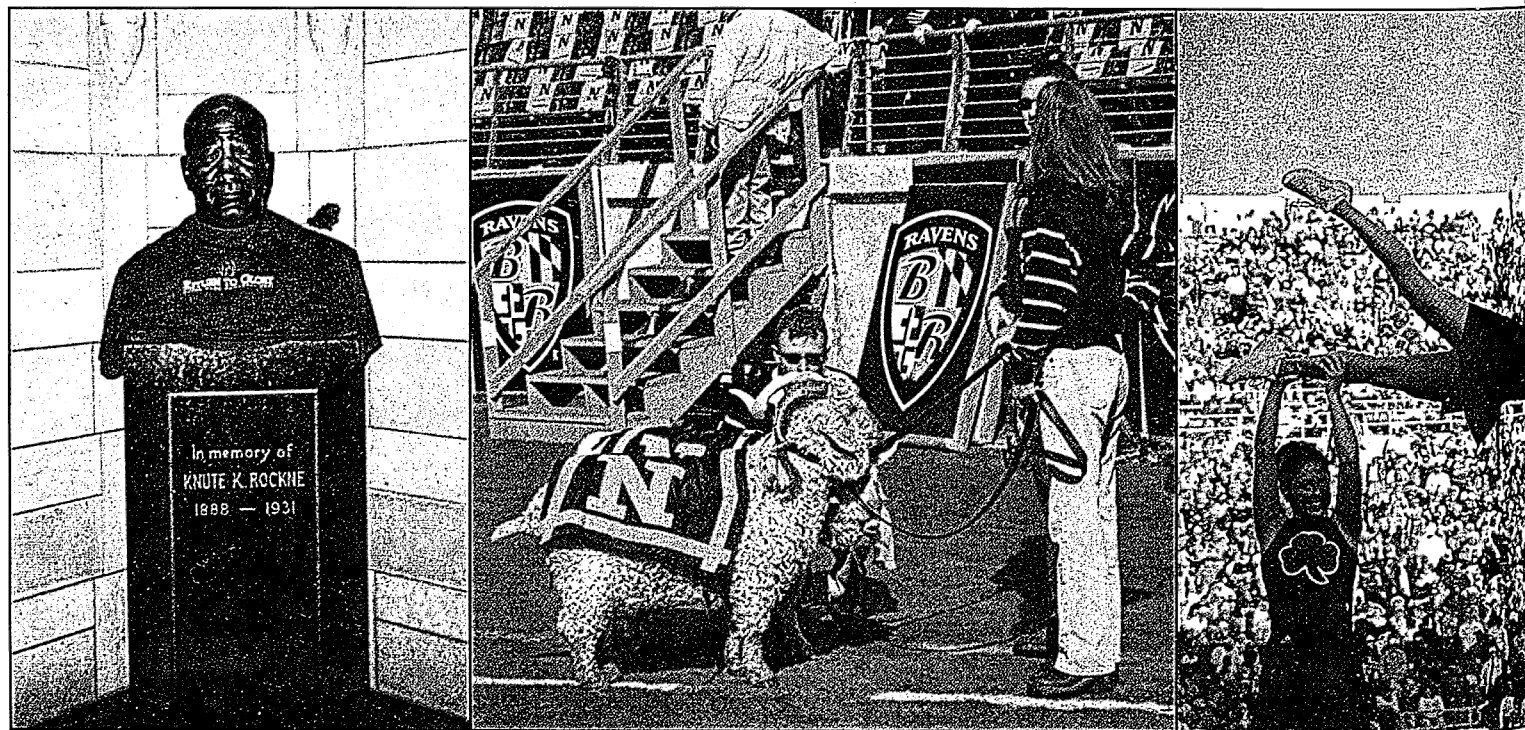
1st Quarter
AF Graddy 21 fumble return (Ashcroft kick), 3:52; 7-0 AF
ND Holiday 53 run (Setta kick), 1:12; 7-7

2nd Quarter
ND Grant 18 run (Setta kick), 1:01; 14-7 ND

3rd Quarter
AF Harridge 1 run (Ashcroft kick), 11:55; 14-14
ND Holiday 1 run (Setta kick), 6:15; 21-14 ND

4th Quarter -None-

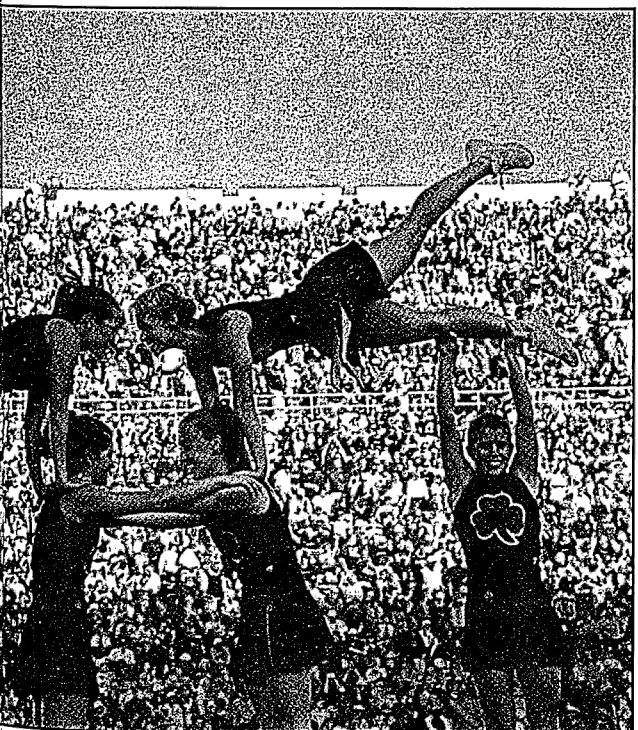
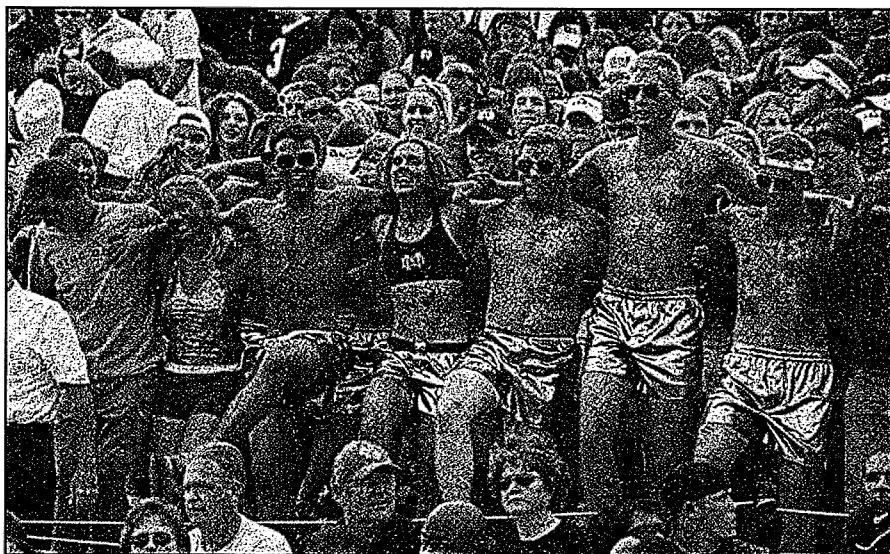
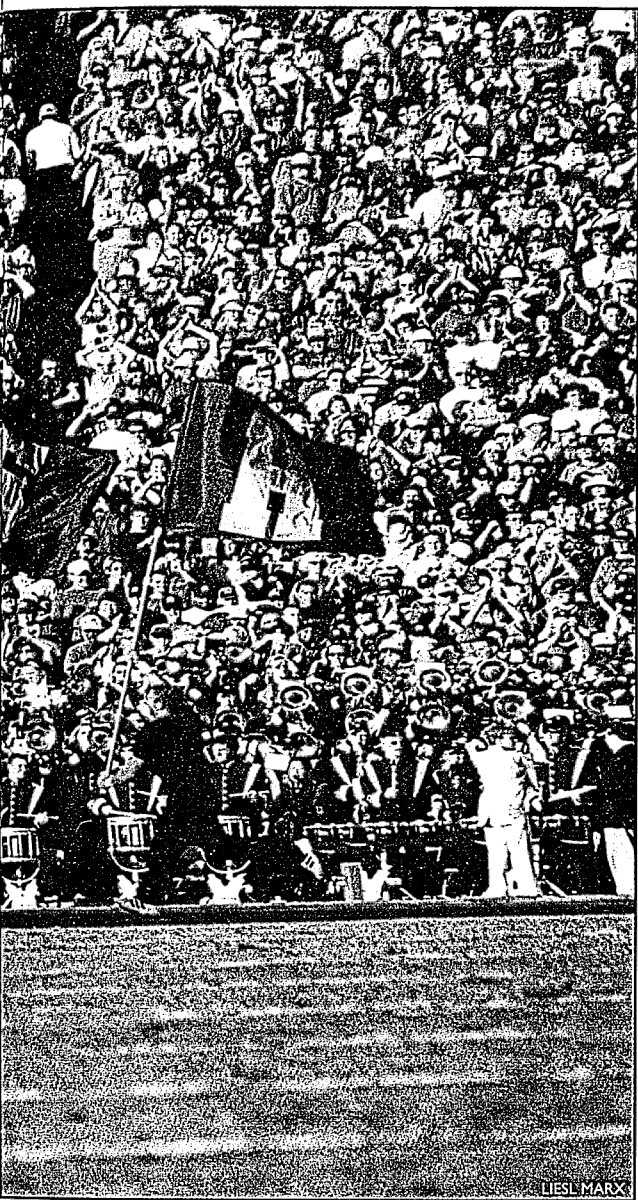
attempt. The Falcons were called for illegal participation on the play, and the Irish received 16 yards and a new set of downs. Holiday took a knee three times to let the clock run out, finishing the game 21-14. □



THE FANS

SUPPORT FROM THE STANDS

Notre Dame fans are notorious for their team spirit. Whether it be painting themselves green, celebrating touchdowns with mid-air push-ups or dancing a jig when the Notre Dame band plays "Rakes of Mallow," Irish fans strive to let their team know that it has their support. Even Knute Rockne got in on the action this season, donning The Shirt like so many other Irish fans this season. Though the Navy goats wore no green, they scored points for being the cutest opposing mascot, with Maryland's Testudo the Terrapin coming in a close second. Here's a brief collection of football fans in action.



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(((COMING AU

Your Place on Campus Where
Community Comes Together

ENDS

NOTRE DAME, THE PLACE
WHERE LEGENDS ARE BORN."

AUGUST 2003))))

re The Notre Dame
For Food, Drink & Fun.



Carlyle Holiday (7) throws downfield. The Irish exposed the Seminoles' weak secondary throughout the game.

BOWDEN

"BUMFUZZLED"

JIMMY ATKINSON

It took eight games, but Tyrone Willingham's football team finally had started to gain respect. After thoroughly trouncing Florida State, sixth-ranked Notre Dame was off to an 8-0 start and had many supporters back in South Bend dreaming of a national championship.

"Coach Willingham preaches us to be road warriors this year," Irish quarterback Carlyle Holiday said. "We really like that opportunity to come into someone else's house and take over."

The takeover came full force midway through the third quarter. In a blitzkrieg by the Irish defense, No. 11 Florida State turned the ball over three times in 2:21, leading to 17 Irish points in 3:30. Overall this season, the Irish converted 24 takeaways into 95 points.

The 17-point scoring binge was sparked by linebacker Courtney Watson's interception of Chris Rix's pass about midway through the third quarter. Nick Setta scored on a 35-yard field goal a few plays later. On Florida State's ensuing possession, Rix scrambled to his right to gain a few extra yards, but was drilled by safety

NOTRE DAME	34
FLORIDA ST.	24

Glenn Earl. The ball popped loose and junior cornerback Vontez Duff recovered at the Seminole 2-yard line. On the next play, sophomore tailback Ryan Grant converted the fumble into six points.

But Notre Dame wasn't done yet. Linebacker Carlos Pierre-Antoine picked Leon Washington's pocket during the kickoff return and linebacker Brandon Hoyte pounced on the loose ball. Two plays later, Holiday lobbed a perfectly thrown pass to wide receiver Omar Jenkins in the corner of the end zone for a 16-yard touchdown. With 17 points scored in under four minutes, the Irish had a 27-10 lead and had crushed the Seminoles' hopes. The wheels had fallen off the cart, and the game was effectively over.

Up until that point, the game had been tied 10-10 with neither team being able to secure an advantage. But once the floodgates opened, there was no looking back.

The Irish did not waste any time setting the tone of the ball game. Holiday connected on a 65-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Arnaz Battle on Notre Dame's very first play from scrimmage. Holiday rolled out to his right on a play-action bootleg and threw down the right side to Battle, who had beaten the Seminole cornerback with a nifty juke move to the outside. The safety fell as

On first trip to Doak Campbell stadium, Irish opened season 8-0 for first time since

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	SEMINOLES
RUSHING YARDS	116	93
PASSING YARDS	185	325
FIRST DOWNS	13	20
TOTAL YARDS	301	418
TURNOVERS	0	4
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:07	30:53

the reception was made, allowing Battle to scamper diagonally to the end zone for the opening score. The pass play was a career long for both Holiday and Battle. It also marked the first time since a 1985 game against Southern Cal that the Irish scored on their first scrimmage play.

"It was a stutter with the corner," Battle said about his run. "Florida State has aggressive and very confident corners. I was able to make a little move and actually get past them and Carlyle was able to put the ball in there and make a play. It was very important to come out and attack. We weren't going to sit back on our heels and let their defense dictate what we would do on offense."

This came after Notre Dame elected to put its defense on the field to start the game. The Irish defense came through, stopping three consecutive running plays short of the line to gain, and Florida State was forced to punt away its opening possession after the three and out.

Florida State struck back a few minutes later, however, when Xavier Beitia hit a 24-yard field goal midway through the first quarter. It was Beitia's first attempt since missing wide left on the final play of the game against Miami two weeks before. Senior place kicker Nick Setta responded with a 39-yard field goal late in the first quarter.

The Seminoles then began to wear down the Notre Dame defense, shifting the tide just before halftime. Rix drove his team 93 yards in 20 plays. On this series, Florida State converted five of six third down attempts and also converted one fourth down attempt. The marathon march ate up more than half of the second quarter, 8:21 in all. After two defensive stops at the Irish goal line, Torrance Washington plunged in on a one-yard run to tie the game at 10-10, the score until halftime.

But after the 17-point romp in the third quarter, the Seminoles had little hope of coming back in the 18 minutes left against a defense that hadn't allowed more than 23 points all season. But just to make sure, Grant definitely put the game out of reach on a 31-yard touchdown run with 10:14 in the fourth, giving the Irish a 34-10 lead.

The Seminoles' backup quarterback Adrian McPherson was put in the game in place of a struggling Rix, who had gone 13-of-32 for 207 yards and two interceptions. McPherson threw two touchdown passes in the final 72 seconds of the game, but it was too little too late for the frustrated Seminoles.

Florida State committed 11 penalties for 98 yards, compared to Notre Dame's 30 penalty yards. On offense, the FSU team appeared unprepared at times. There were infractions for illegal formations and, quite often, receivers and backs seemed clueless as to where they should line up.

With the exception of their second-quarter touchdown drive, the Seminoles were unable to sustain a drive until late in the fourth quarter. Turnovers played a huge part — Notre Dame had zero turnovers, while the Seminoles had four.

"The biggest fear when you play Notre Dame is turnovers," said Florida State's head coach Bobby Bowden. "That's how they beat



PHOTOS BY MIKE MCNARY

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS After Glenn Earl forced Chris Rix to fumble in the third quarter, Vontez Duff (34) recovers the ball at Florida State's 2-yard line.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	10	0	17	7	34
Florida State	3	7	0	14	24

1st Quarter

ND Battle 65 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 12:40; 7-0 ND

FSU FG Beitia 24, 7:05; 7-3 ND

ND FG Setta 39, 1:16; 10-3 ND

2nd Quarter

FSU Washington 1 run (Beitia kick), 4:14; 10-10

3rd Quarter

ND FG Setta 35, 5:26; 13-10 ND

ND Grant 2 run (Setta kick), 4:09; 20-10 ND

ND Jenkins 16 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 3:05; 27-10 ND

4th Quarter

ND Grant 31 run (Setta kick), 10:14; 34-10 ND

FSU Boldin 5 pass from McPherson (Beitia kick), 1:12; 34-17 ND

FSU Maddox 29 pass from McPherson (Beitia kick), 0:12; 34-24 ND



MIKE McNARY

CHRIS NIXED Justin Tuck (44) and the rest of the Irish defensive line frustrated Chris Rix (16) throughout the game, stunting the Seminoles' offense.

everybody. Just count us in the club."

Florida State was limited to just 93 yards rushing, becoming the sixth team that Notre Dame held to under 100 rushing yards this year.

"If you can shut down the running game, which I think we were able to do, and not allow them to have any big plays, then you make it difficult for them to sustain a drive," Willingham said. "If you can eliminate them from sustaining a drive, then eventually at some point a team stops themselves."

Time and again during the season, the Irish relied on turnovers to give the offense a short field with which to work with. Florida State beat Notre Dame in almost every statistical category, including first downs, passing yards, rushing yards and time of possession, but turnover margin proved to be the most important. Four turnovers, three of which resulted in 17 points, made all the difference in this contest. In the three-and-a-half minute explosion, the Irish took control of the game, and momentum remained in their favor until the waning moments.

Perhaps the only real bright spot for Florida State was wide receiver Anquan Boldin, who finished with nine receptions for 175 yards. He beat Duff on an out-and-up early in the game. Later on, he broke five or six tackles on an inside screen pass.

But even Boldin had his share of rough times, as he dropped balls on more than one occasion. And just like Michigan State's Charles Rogers five weeks earlier, Boldin finished with 175 yards but no win to show for it.

With Florida State's defeat, Willingham had won his first eight games as Notre Dame's head football coach, a feat only accom-

plished twice before, by Ara Parseghian in 1970 and Jesse Harper in 1913.

"We're back," Holiday said afterwards. "It proves that we can go to a hostile environment and come out with a win. We've done that the past two weeks and that just shows what kind of a team that we are. We are a team that's for real. Everything we do is the way champions should do it ... [but] there's still a lot of room to grow," he said.

"We're getting better every week," Battle added. "You can't go from option-style team to West Coast passing and expect to put up 34 points every game right off the bat.

"I think it starts with the offensive linemen and then it goes to quarterback, running backs, and receivers," he said. "Across the line, we're starting to execute more and more and learn the offense, and learning concepts and what we're trying to do."

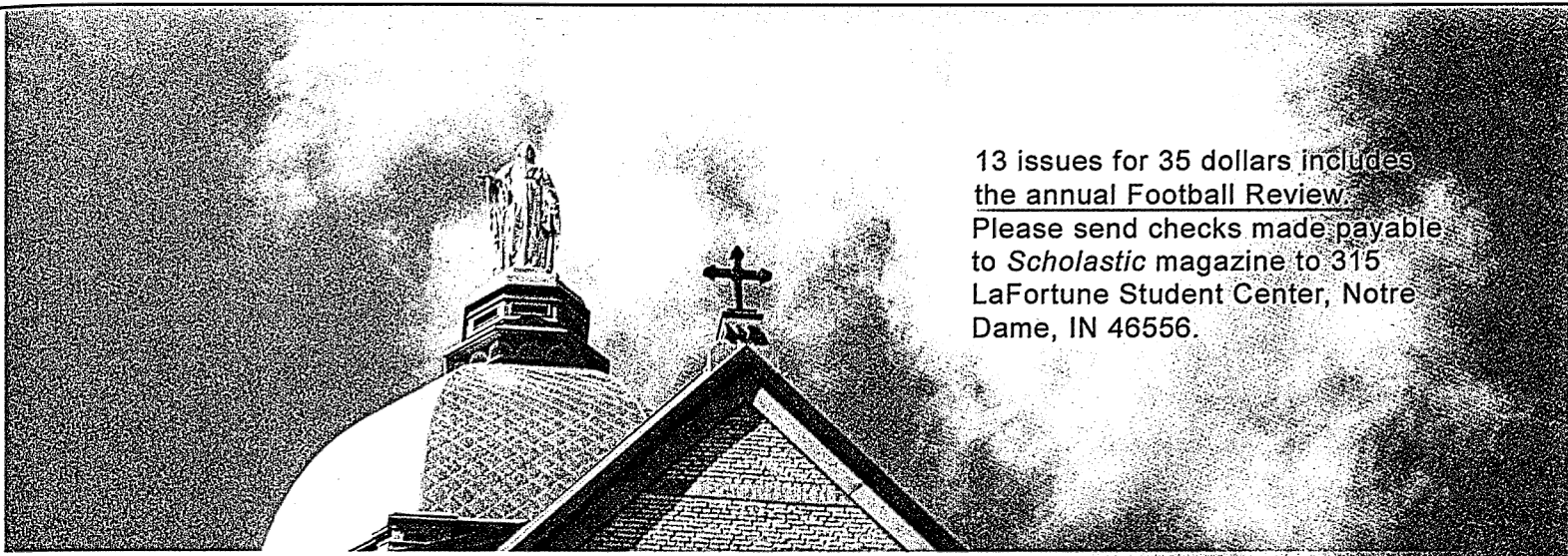
With an undefeated Notre Dame team improving each week and shooting up the polls, Willingham's famous stoic glare remained publicly unchanged. This was not the case in private with his players, however.

He smiles in the locker room after the game," Holiday said. "When we sing that fight song, he gets happy."

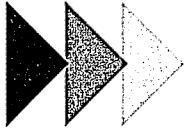
As Irish players made their way through the locker room, many of them held up eight fingers in celebration of knocking off the Seminoles to start 8-0. But Willingham was cautious not to make much ado about the win.

"It means an eighth victory," Willingham said. "One more step, that's all. It is a great step, but if you don't get the next one, what does it mean?" □

...Irish held Greg Jones, who had 189 yds against No. 1 Miami the week before, to 34 yds.



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BOSTON COLLEGE

FLUNKING HISTORY

GERARD MESKILL

If Hollywood had scripted Notre Dame's first nine games, most people wouldn't be surprised. The parallels between the 1993 and 2002 seasons were staggering. For the first time since 1993, the Irish opened a football season with eight consecutive wins. Both seasons featured victories over Michigan, Michigan State, Purdue, Stanford and Florida State. And both seasons pitted the Irish against Boston College the week after upsetting the Seminoles. In 1993, the Eagles edged the Irish on a last-second field goal, dashing Notre Dame's championship run.

Jump to 10 years later. The same Irish squad that began the 2002 season unranked found itself in the thick of the championship race entering its contest with Boston College. Aware of dramatic history between the two teams and the potential for a letdown after an emotional win in Tallahassee, Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham decided to call upon an external motivator, making the decision to dress the football team in green jerseys for the first time since the 1999 Gator Bowl.

"We have been talking about the Sea of Green all season, and I wanted to get our team involved in it," said Willingham. "The Sea of Green is important, because it talks about attitude. It talks about the Notre Dame family and football team coming together as one. I thought it was a good time for our team to become part of that oneness, the single-mindedness and the pursuit of victory."

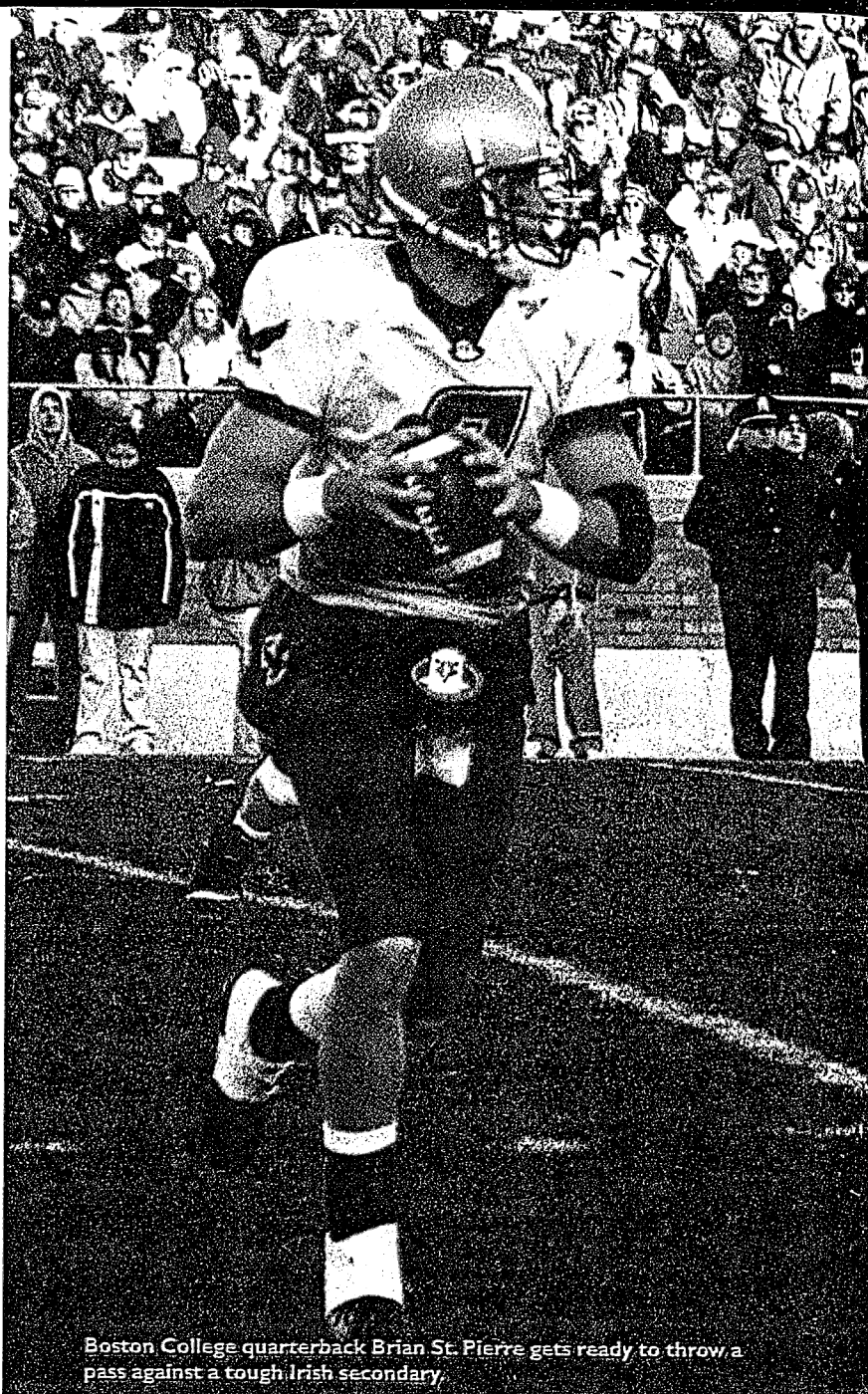
Although the strategy succeeded in exciting the Irish players and fans, it had an unforeseen side effect — one that would prove costly for Notre Dame.

"The kids were excited when we saw the green jerseys," said Boston College head coach Tom O'Brien. "They took the green jerseys as a sign of great respect, as if we were something to be reckoned with."

The Irish found out all too soon that the Eagles were indeed a force to be reckoned with, as they ended Notre Dame's perfect run with a 14-7 victory.

Despite its lowest score of the season, Notre Dame's offense actually had one of its most fruitful games in terms of yardage. However, the offense stalled five consecutive times inside the red zone. On its first possession of the game, Notre Dame reached the Eagles' 20-yard line, but failed to gain a single yard on its next three plays, including a fourth-down rush.

Irish halfback Ryan Grant fumbled on the first play of the next pos-



Boston College quarterback Brian St. Pierre gets ready to throw a pass against a tough Irish secondary.

B.C.	14
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session, and Eagles' linebacker Josh Ott recovered the ball at Notre Dame's 38-yard line. Six plays later, tailback Derrick Knight gave Boston College a 6-0 advantage on a 3-yard run. Sandro Sciortino missed the point after touchdown, kicking the ball wide right.

On its next possession, Notre Dame forged its way to the Eagles' 18. On third and 11, quarterback Carlyle Holiday evaded Boston College's all-out blitz and threw an apparent touchdown pass to Omar Jenkins in the end zone. However the officials ruled that Jenkins had caught the ball out of bounds, though many thought the replay showed he had possession of the ball a full foot inside the end zone.

"It is a good emotional thing if it's called a touchdown," said Jenkins. "When it doesn't get called, we just feel we have to go out there and score on the next play."

...BOSTON COLLEGE HAS WON 3 OF ITS LAST 4 CONTESTS AGAINST NOTRE DAME...IRISH HAVE NOT WON

Facing fourth and 11, the Irish opted to settle for three points. However, David Miller dropped the hold on the 35-yard field goal attempt, and he was forced to hand off to kicker Nick Setta, who was tackled for a 12-yard loss.

Following the series, Willingham removed Holiday from the game, as the quarterback seemed disoriented.

"He was a little woozy so we decided to hold him out for a period of time to get himself together," Willingham said.

That period of time proved costly for the Irish. Facing third and six with roughly four minutes remaining in the half, backup quarterback Pat Dillingham faced pressure from Eagles cornerback Trevor White. Trying to avoid a sack, Dillingham attempted a desperation pitch to Grant, but Ott intercepted the toss in stride, cruising untouched for a 71-yard score.

"You don't know when everything is going to come to you, but the trick is to always be around the ball and eventually something is going to happen," Ott said.

Boston College quarterback Ryan St. Pierre connected with a wide-open Sean Ryan for a successful two-point conversion, giving Boston College a 14-0 advantage at halftime.

The Irish opened the second half exactly where they left off in the first, losing a fumble at the Eagles' 11-yard line on their first possession. Irish safety Gerome Sapp intercepted St. Pierre's pass on the next play, but Grant fumbled at the Eagles' 16 two plays later, and Boston College again recovered the ball.

The Irish failed to create any more offensive opportunities until early in the fourth quarter, when a Boston College penalty on special teams started Notre Dame at the Eagles' 41. The Irish pushed their way to second and goal at the 5, but a fumble and two false start penalties quickly created a fourth and goal at the 22. Holiday did not connect with Battle on fourth down, as the Irish again penetrated the red zone without amassing any points.

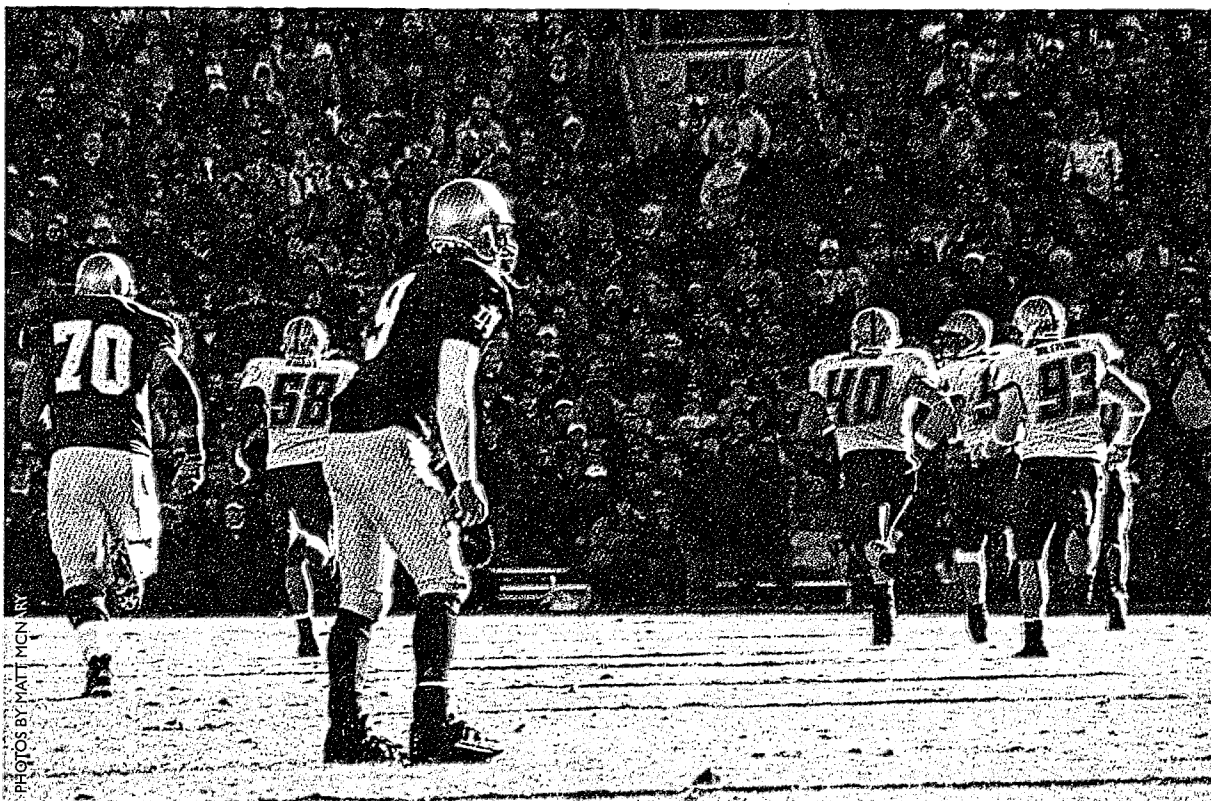
Notre Dame's next possession came with 3:46 remaining in the game. With time working against him, Holiday completed three long passes on an eight-play scoring drive, including a 20-yard touchdown by Maurice Stovall with 2:25 to play.

Following the point after, Willingham questionably elected not to attempt an onside kick, reasoning that his defense, armed with three timeouts, could prevent time from running out. His gamble worked somewhat, as the Irish regained possession at their own 24 with 12 seconds left. A holding call on first down ate away precious time and forced Holiday to attempt an 86-yard Hail Mary pass to Stovall. The bomb fell incomplete as time expired, and Boston College once again spoiled Notre Dame's National Championship aspirations.

Despite the eerie similarities to the 1993 season, Boston College head coach Tom O'Brien insists that history had no say in the

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	EAGLES
RUSHING YARDS	122	107
PASSING YARDS	235	77
FIRST DOWNS	22	9
TOTAL OFFENSE	357	184
TURNOVERS	5	1
TIME OF POSSESSION	33:58	26:02



GREEN WITH ENVY Irish quarterback Pat Dillingham looks on as Eagles linebacker Josh Ott returns an interception for a 71-yard touchdown.

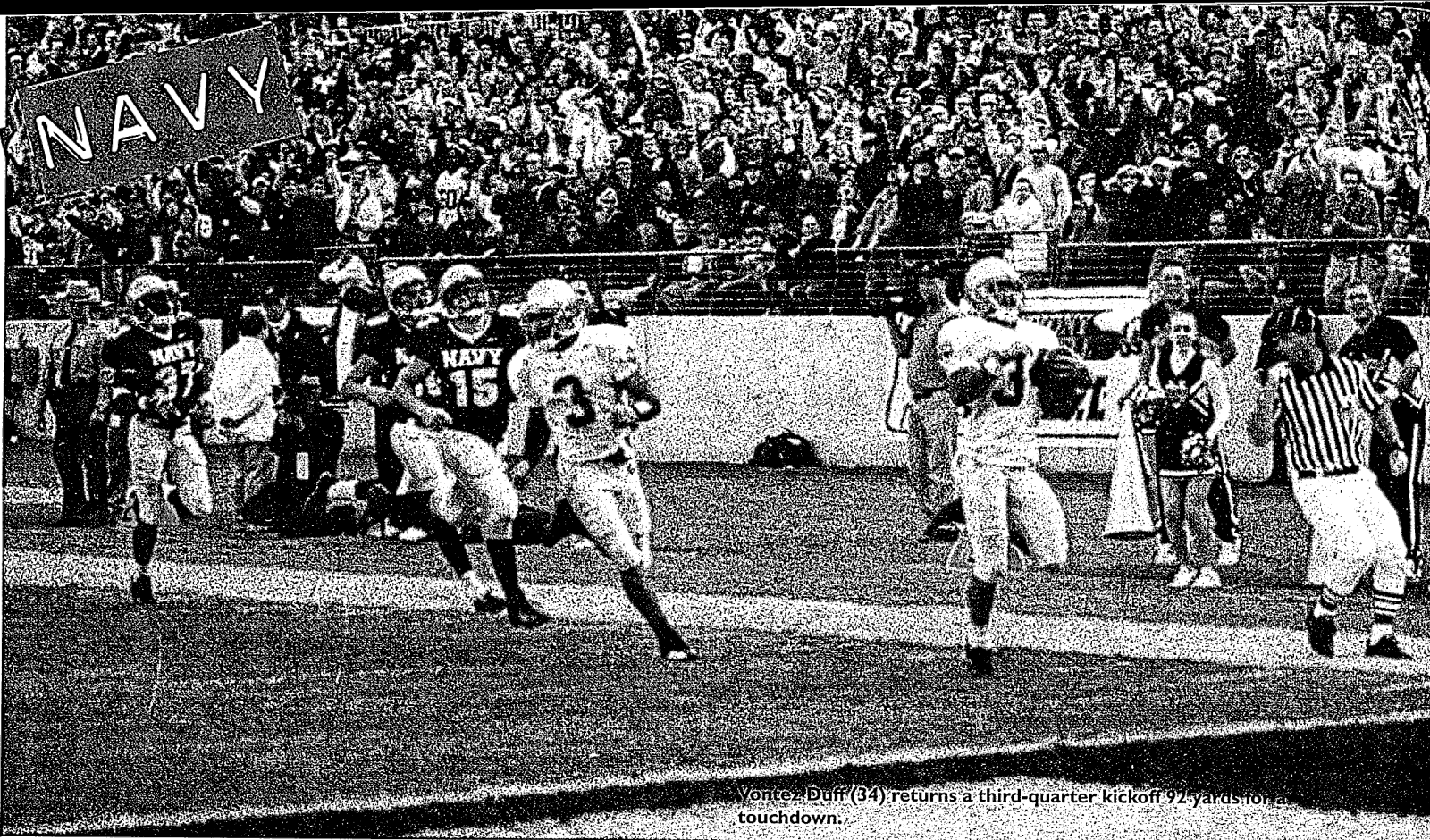
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
B.C.	6	8	0	0	14
Notre Dame	0	0	0	7	7
1st Quarter					
BC Knight 3 run (Scortino missed kick), 2:39; 6-0 BC					
2nd Quarter					
BC Ott 71 INT return (St. Pierre to Ryan), 4:03; 14-0 BC					
3rd Quarter -None-					
4th Quarter					
ND Stovall 20 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 2:25; 14-7 BC					

outcome.

"These kids were 11 and 12 years old," he said. "'93 had nothing to do with this game."

Turnovers did, however. But even as the Irish fumbled seven times, Willingham insisted that practice goals would remain the same.

"We do not need to change our focus," Willingham said. "We work on not turning the ball over every day, and we work on creating turnovers every day. I think the plan we have in place has served us well this year. Now, we just have to get back to executing it the way we know we can." □



Vontez Duff (34) returns a third-quarter kickoff 92 yards for a touchdown.

ALMOST SUNK

GERARD MESKILL

Notre Dame's storied football program is one laden with rich traditions. One of its longest-standing rivalries is its annual contest with the United States Naval Academy, which has been played since 1927. However, the Irish have started a new tradition in the past few contests of its NCAA-record 39-game win streak against Navy: trailing the underdog Midshipmen late in the game only to break their hearts with a last-minute score.

Notre Dame's 30-23 victory over the Midshipmen marked the third time in the past six years that the Irish have rallied with a game-winning scoring drive in the last six minutes of the contest.

Trailing 23-15 for most of the fourth quarter, Notre Dame took control of the ball at Navy's 48-yard line with 7:27 remaining. From there, the Irish utilized three rushes by Rashon Powers-Neal and a scramble by Carlyle Holiday to arrive at the 31-yard line.

From that point, Holiday carried the Irish on his shoulders. On second and eight, he threw to wide receiver Omar Jenkins for a 29-yard gain to the Navy 2-yard line. Two goal-line rushes by Powers-Neal resulted in an Irish touchdown, narrowing the deficit to 23-21 with 4:28 to play. Notre Dame completed the two-point conversion when Holiday connected with receiver Arnaz Battle on a corner route.

"It was all about having pride in yourself. For me, I just decided to take a leadership role and make some plays with the ball in my hands," Holiday said.

Less than two minutes later, the Midshipmen were forced to punt the ball back to the Irish. Wasting no time, Holiday connected with Jenkins on the first play of the possession, a play-action pass for the 67-yard game-winning touchdown. The reception was the long-

NOTRE DAME	30
NAVY	23

est of Jenkins' career and lifted him to a career-best 166-yard game.

"The first thing I tried to do was just catch the ball," Jenkins said. "I pre-read the coverage and knew the inside release would work. I did it and got open."

Notre Dame very easily could have walked away from the game disappointed, but Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham looked at the experience as positive for his program.

"I am really proud of the way Navy played today, but evenly proud of the way we played," Willingham said. "It would have been easy for these young men to give up but they didn't. We continued to battle and made enough plays to win the football game. At some point, we needed to win like this, and the guys did that today."

The same could not be said for Navy coach Paul Johnson, who found no consolation in the aftermath of his team's failed attempt to upend the nation's ninth-ranked team.

"I told the guys there are no moral victories," Johnson said. "I was disappointed for our team. They laid it out on the field. I'll get another shot at Notre Dame, but our seniors won't. They deserved a better fate than this."

Despite the victory, the Irish offense's sloppy play reminded many of the previous week's defeat against Boston College, when the Irish fumbled seven times and threw two interceptions for a total of five turnovers. Against the Midshipmen, the Irish again struggled to maintain control of the football, losing three of five fumbles, including two dropped by Ryan Grant.

"We don't have an explanation for them," Willingham said.

...ND marked its 39th consecutive win over Navy...Vontez Duff became first player in Irish

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	MIDSHIPMEN
RUSHING YARDS	68	216
PASSING YARDS	272	52
TOTAL OFFENSE	340	268
FIRST DOWNS	13	17
TURNOVERS	3	2
TIME OF POSSESSION	27:11	32:49

"Those things are things we work on everyday in practice. We are just in one of those stretches."

On Notre Dame's first offensive play of the game, Holiday threw to Jenkins for a 62-yard gain, only to see Navy's Josh Smith force a fumble, which the Midshipmen recovered.

Luckily for the Irish, the turnover did not prove costly, as a high snap on fourth and three at the Navy's 34 forced Midshipman punter John Skaggs to retreat to his own end zone for an Irish safety and 2-0 lead.

After forcing the Irish to go three and out, the Midshipmen responded on their next possession. With starting quarterback Craig Candeto out of the game after suffering an ankle sprain on Navy's first possession, backup Aaron Polanco took the helm of the Midshipmen offense at their own 5-yard line. Navy's option scheme cruised for 95 yards on 12 plays to take a 7-2 lead over Notre Dame.

The Irish replied with a scoring drive of their own on the next possession. Facing third and six at Notre Dame's 30-yard line, Holiday found Gary Godsey for a 20-yard completion. The Irish slowly proceeded from there to reach the Navy's 39 before Holiday connected with wideout Maurice Stovall for a 38-yard pass early in the second quarter. Fullback Tom Lopienski rushed for the final yard, putting Notre Dame ahead, 9-7.

That score held until halftime but disintegrated early in the third quarter. On Navy's first possession of the third quarter, Aaron Weedo returned Joey Hildbold's 48-yard punt all the way to the Irish 44-yard line, for a gain of 45 yards. Polanco's option attack took just six plays to convert the big return into another Midshipmen touchdown and 14-9 lead, and he personally tucked away the ball for the score.

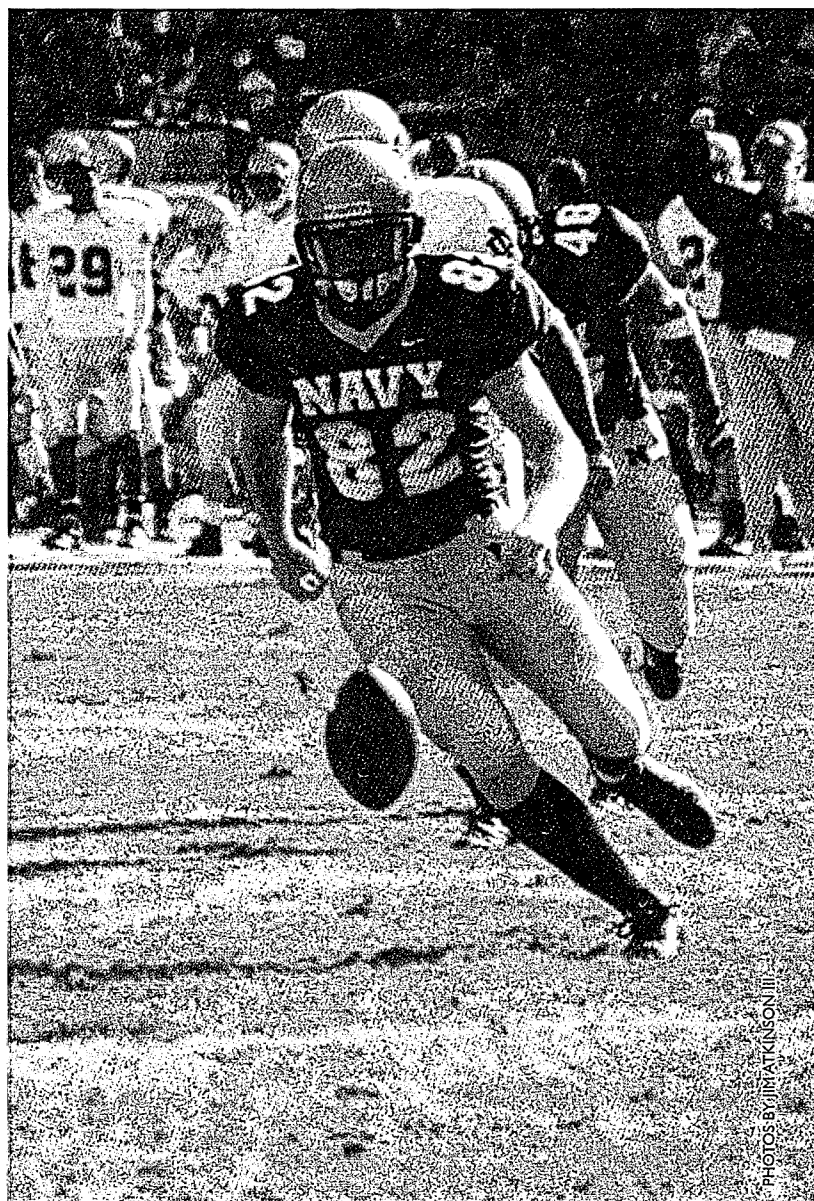
The Irish immediately struck back, as Vontez Duff took Eric Rolfs' kickoff 92 yards for the Notre Dame touchdown. With the score, Duff became the first player in Notre Dame history to tally at least one touchdown off of a punt return, interception and kickoff return in the same season.

Leading 15-14, Willingham questionably opted to attempt a two-point conversion, and Holiday's throw to receiver Battle fell incomplete.

Following Setta's unreturnable kickoff, the Midshipmen took possession at their own 20-yard line. In one of the most impressive drives lobbied against the Irish this season, Polanco captained a scoring drive consisting of 12 straight-rushes against one of the nation's stingiest ground defenses, giving Navy a 20-15 lead. Like Willingham, Johnson opted to attempt a third-quarter two-point conversion. A fumbled snap doomed the attempt, as the Midshipmen nullified Notre Dame's earlier failed attempt.

Tailback Ryan Grant fumbled Notre Dame's first play following the Navy's touchdown, turning the football over at the Irish 20-yard line. The Midshipmen gained 2 more yards before kicking a 35-yard field goal to extend the lead to 23-15 late in the third quarter.

Notre Dame and Navy each exchanged possessions in the fourth quarter before a punt by Hildbold locked the Midshipmen inside their own 15-yard line. Unable to convert on third and eight with less than eight minutes remaining, Navy was forced to punt, setting up Notre Dame's game-tying scoring drive. □



OVER THE TOP Punter John Skaggs recovers a poor snap and retreats into his own end zone for an intentional safety.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	2	7	6	15	30
Navy	7	0	16	0	23

1st Quarter

ND Safety, 10:38; 2-0 ND

NAVY Polanco 12 run (Rolfs kick), 4:30; 7-2 NAVY

2nd Quarter

ND Lopienski 1 run (Setta kick), 13:01; 9-7 ND

3rd Quarter

NAVY Polanco 1 run (Rolfs kick), 9:19; 14-9 NAVY

ND Duff 92 kickoff return (pass failed), 9:01; 15-14 ND

NAVY Roberts 10 run (rush failed), 3:17; 20-15 NAVY

NAVY FG Rolfs 36, 1:07; 23-15 NAVY

4th Quarter

ND Powers-Neal 1 run (Holiday to Battle complete), 4:28; 23-23

ND Jenkins 67 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 2:08; 30-23 ND

PHOTOS BY JIM ATKINSON III

history to return a kickoff, a punt and an interception for touchdowns in a single season.



Rutgers quarterback Ryan Hart (11) fumbles in the first half.

CLIMBING OUT OF A RUT

GERARD MESKILL

Through its first 10 games, Notre Dame's offense ranked among the worst in college football. Enter the Scarlet Knights, who could not have come into South Bend at a better time, a week when the Irish were coming off their worst two-game stretch of the season, including a 14-7 loss against Boston College and a 30-23 nail-biter at perennial doormat Navy.

The Irish started off slowly against Rutgers, scoring its first points four minutes into the second quarter, but never looked back en route to a 42-0 victory. The Irish defense turned in a dependably dominating performance, holding the Scarlet Knights to 176 yards of total offense and contributing seven points to the final score. But it was the offense that stole the spotlight, as Notre Dame posted five offensive touchdowns for the first time in the season.

"We believed that at some point this season our offense would show its true potential," said Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham. "Today, our offense did exactly that."

Though it took Notre Dame until its last home game to demonstrate

RUTGERS

0

NOTRE DAME

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mastery over Willingham's complex West Coast scheme, the Irish still managed to post a 10-win season for the first time since 1993.

Trailing 7-0 midway through the second quarter, Rutgers saw the game begin to slip away after a controversial call gave Irish cornerback Shane Walton his seventh interception of the season, which he ran back for a Notre Dame score. With the ball at his own 49-yard line following a punt from Notre Dame's Joey Hildbold, Scarlet Knights quarterback Ryan Hart came under pressure on the first play of the possession. Hart attempted to throw the ball away, sending it in the direction of running back Clarence Pittman, but it was picked off by Walton. Replays showed that the ball hit the ground before Walton reached down to scoop it, but the officials did not make the call.

"The referees said that they did not see it," said Rutgers head coach Greg Schiano after the game. "The officials are human beings and everyone makes errors. They just did not see it the way I did. For good teams, one play should not make the difference. Today, it did not."

A record-setting third quarter cooled the once-animated Schiano's perception of the controversial turnover, as the Irish tallied 28 more points, setting the school mark for points scored by the Irish in a third quarter.

...Ryan Grant became seventh player in Notre Dame history to rush for 1,000 yards in a season...

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	SCARLET KNIGHTS
RUSHING YARDS	190	14
PASSING YARDS	288	158
FIRST DOWNS	20	15
TOTAL OFFENSE	478	176
TURNOVERS	2	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	27:42	32:18

Irish quarterback Carlyle Holiday had a career day, tying another school record with four touchdown passes in a game, three of those in the third quarter.

"[Holiday] played a great game," said Irish wide receiver Arnaz Battle. "He's the guy that's steadily learning offense. He's making that transition and doing a good job."

Holiday's three third-quarter touchdown throws came on a total of nine plays. The Irish began the second half with the ball at their own 20. On first down, Holiday found wide receiver Omar Jenkins for a 17-yard gain. On the next play, he connected with Battle for a 63-yard touchdown, giving the Irish a 21-point lead.

Nick Setta's kickoff was unreturnable, and the Irish downed it at the 13-yard line. Rutgers running back Markis Facyson gained 1 yard on a first-down rush before Notre Dame linebacker Mike Goolsby sacked backup quarterback Ryan Cubit for a 9-yard loss. Cubit failed to convert on third and 18, and the Scarlet Knights were forced to punt the ball.

After Vontez Duff returned Mike Barr's punt for a gain of 12 yards, the Irish resumed control at the Rutgers 37-yard line. Holiday found Jenkins for a touchdown pass on the next play, making it 28-0 Notre Dame with 12:21 left in the quarter.

Holiday's third touchdown pass came at the end of a six-play drive and marked Notre Dame's fourth consecutive conversion of a possession into touchdown. Grant carried twice for a net gain of 4 yards, and the Irish drew Rutgers' defense offside on his first carry, pushing the ball forward 5 yards and setting up third and one. Fullback Tom Lopienski carried for 1 yard, gaining enough for an Irish first down. From there, Holiday took over, making two completions to wide receiver Maurice Stovall, the latter a 26-yard touchdown pass.

Between Holiday's third and fourth touchdown throws, halfback Ryan Grant rushed for a 28-yard score to give the Irish a 35-0 lead.

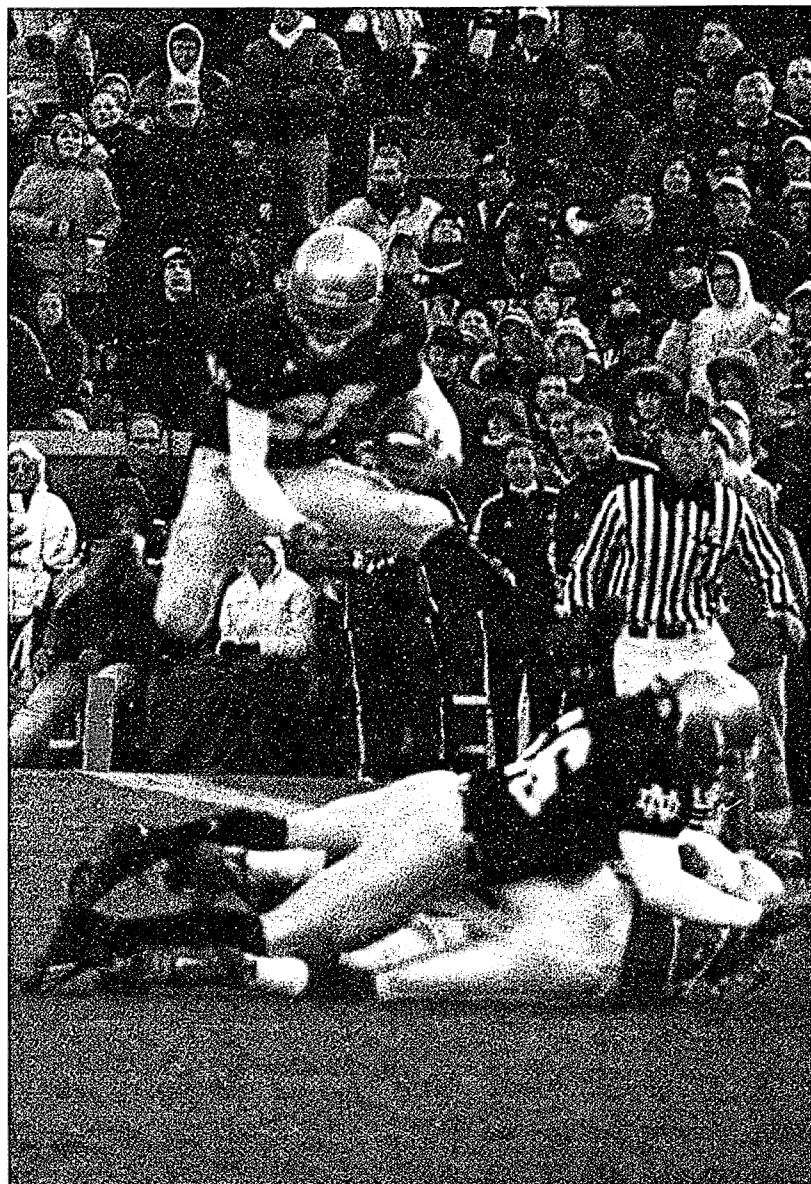
On the final play of the third period, Grant's 5-yard carry added another dimension of Irish history to an already memorable quarter. The gain gave Grant 1,001 yards on the season, making him the seventh Notre Dame rusher ever and first since Autry Denson in 1998 (1,176) to rush for 1,000 yards.

Notre Dame's record-setting third quarter gave Willingham the luxury of playing seniors during the fourth quarter of their final game at Notre Dame Stadium. Notable among those inserted for the final frame was running back Tim O'Neill, referred to by teammates and coaches as "Tiny Tim" due to his 5-6, 172-pound frame. O'Neill entered the game with overflowing energy and his presence sparked a warm reaction from the crowd. He carried six times for a gain of 52 yards; when he broke free from the Irish 14-yard line on second down for a 42-yard gain, he made his coaches nervous that the Scarlet Knights might interpret his performance as an attempt to run up the score.

"We were fearful he would score," joked Willingham about O'Neill's enthusiasm. Rutgers linebacker Will Gilkison caught up to O'Neill, however, preventing him from reaching the end zone.

The drive stalled quickly thereafter, and after the Scarlet Knights failed to convert a fourth and 14 attempt at the Irish 49, Notre Dame knelt out the clock to end an emotional game for its senior class.

"I had to get my last look of the stadium full," said Walton. "Before the



IN THE AIR Irish free safety Quentin Burrell returns a fourth-quarter interception for 30 yards.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Rutgers	0	0	0	0	0
Notre Dame	0	14	28	0	42

1st Quarter -None-

2nd Quarter

ND Battle 38 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 11:17; 7-0 ND

ND Walton 45 interception return (Setta kick), 7:25; 14-0 ND

3rd Quarter

ND Battle 63 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 14:16; 21-0 ND

ND Jenkins 37 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 12:21; 28-0 ND

ND Grant 28 run (Setta kick), 8:50; 35-0 ND

ND Stovall 26 pass from Holiday (Setta kick), 5:36; 42-0 ND

4th Quarter -None-

game, I felt a little teary-eyed. Now, it's done and it's over."

It ended the best way possible for the seniors, with every aspect of the Irish game clicking on all cylinders. The underclassmen on the team felt that this was the only proper way for the team's leaders to end their Notre Dame careers. "I felt that we have to win it for these guys," said Jenkins. "It's their last time, and I hope they had a good one." □

Irish set new team record for third-quarter points with 28...Holiday threw four touchdowns...

SOUTHERN CAL

TROJAN CONQUEST

JIMMY ATKINSON

Never before in 114 years of football has Notre Dame been so thoroughly defeated, especially in a season which previously had been so successful. The Irish entered the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum 10-1, ranked seventh in the nation with a mighty defense. But that Saturday, it seemed the Coliseum had been transformed into the Roman Colosseum of ancient times. And the Irish were fed to the lions.

Sixth-ranked Southern Cal dismantled the Irish defense, which before this game had seemed nearly impenetrable. Southern Cal senior quarterback Carson Palmer sliced through the Notre Dame pass coverage repeatedly, completing 32 of 46 attempts for 425 yards, two interceptions and four touchdowns. Palmer's 425 passing yards marked the most surrendered through the air by Notre Dame in school history.

"He's a great player," said Irish linebacker Mike Goolsby, who intercepted Palmer once. "By the end it caught up to us. He just picked us apart."

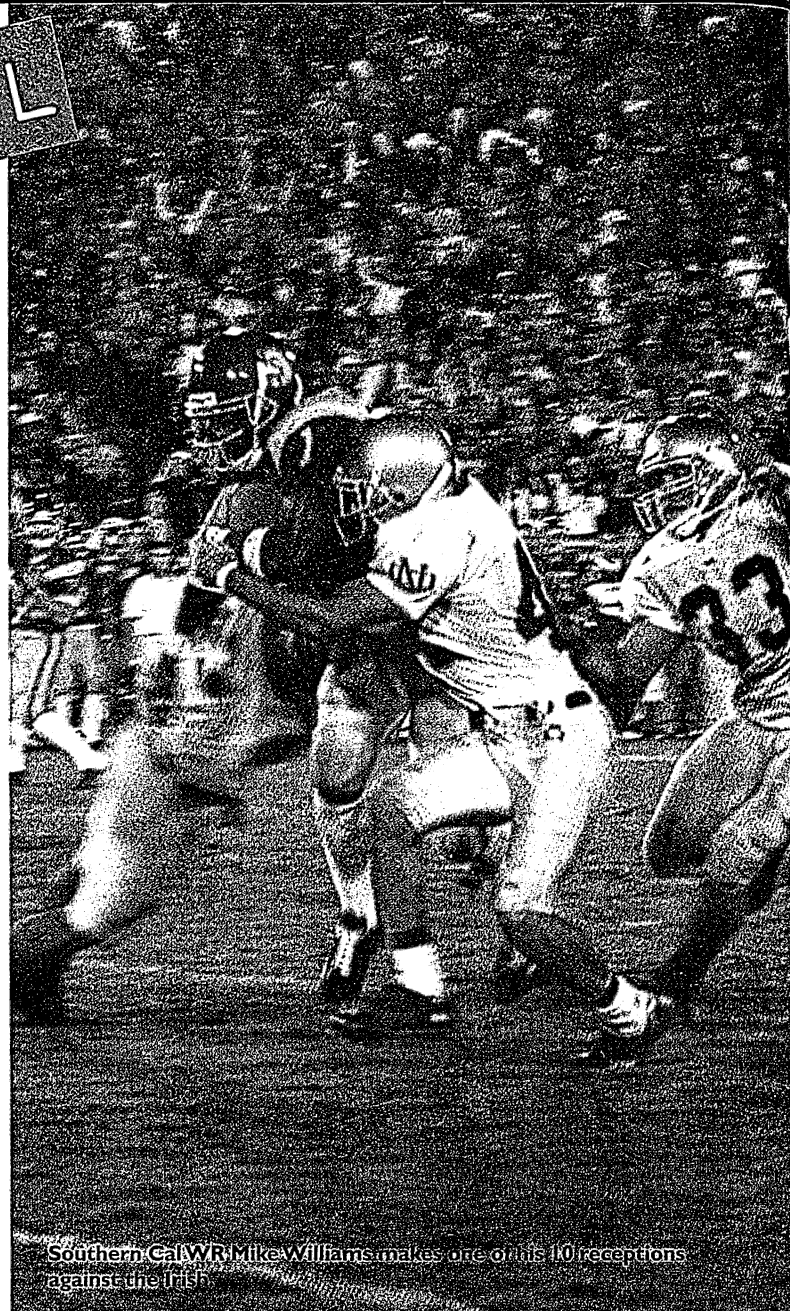
The Trojan receivers and backfield simply were too fast for the Irish. Notre Dame had been able to shut down a Florida State team with a lot of outside speed, the Trojans' speed, combined with Palmer's precision throwing ability, proved too much for the Irish's pass coverage. Freshman wide receiver Mike Williams, known for his size and speed, led the Trojan receiving unit with 10 receptions for 169 yards and two touchdowns, both in the second quarter.

When it wasn't the pass killing the Irish, it was the run. Southern Cal rushed 38 times for 185 yards. Senior tailback Justin Fargas led the backfield with 120 yards on 20 carries. He darted past would-be tacklers and showed his strength by dragging defenders for extra yardage. Fargas also caught four passes for 41 yards.

"[Southern Cal] executed their scheme very well," Willingham said. "Tonight they were most impressive, both offensively and defensively. Probably as good as any offensive team we've seen."

The game was close at halftime. Southern Cal managed only a 17-13 lead at the break, with the go-ahead score coming just five seconds before halftime. But it was this score that effectively demoralized the Irish, showing them that whatever they could do, Southern Cal could do it faster and better.

After two field goals by place kicker Nick Setta gave the Irish a 6-0 advantage at the end of the first quarter, the Trojans responded with a touchdown and a field goal to make the game 10-6. Notre Dame rallied with what proved to be the high point in the game for Irish fans. With just 1:07 remaining before halftime, senior Irish linebacker Carlos Pierre-Antoine broke through the Trojans' line



Southern Cal WR Mike Williams makes one of his 10 receptions against the Irish.

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to block a punt and recover it in the end zone for a touchdown. This gave the Irish a 13-10 lead and a momentum that they expected to carry into the locker room.

However, Palmer proved that the Trojans had the weapons to strike at any time. With great poise, he drove Southern Cal right down the field, 75 yards in just 1:02, with the score coming courtesy of a 19-yard touchdown reception by Williams. Quickly and decisively, the Trojans had retaken the lead at the end of the first half, leaving the Irish frustrated. One could sense that the Trojans had just begun. The Trojans' four-point lead could easily have been a much larger margin had it not been for penalties – two turnovers and a blocked punt – and mistakes – six for 35 yards. Southern Cal had, in fact, dominated the Irish in every category up to that point and already had racked up 328 yards of total offense to Notre Dame's 94.

Southern Cal's 410 total offensive yards were the most ever surrendered by Notre Dame.

In the second half, Southern Cal prevented Notre Dame from threatening a comeback by wearing down the Irish defense and scoring 27 unanswered points. The game slipped away from the Irish for good in the third quarter, when Palmer completed a 15-yard touchdown pass to fullback Malaefou MacKenzie. The defense could not make a stop and the offense could not gain 10 yards for a first down, let alone sustain a drive. Notre Dame only had two first downs until late in the fourth quarter, when they added two more. Southern Cal finished with 31 first downs.

"I don't know if it's that they do anything much differently [offensively]," Irish linebacker Courtney Watson said. "It's just that they executed very well. They were clicking on all cylinders to-night, and we weren't."

It became clearer as the half wore on that Notre Dame was no longer even in the same league as Southern Cal. The Irish had found ways to capitalize on the Trojans' mistakes in the first half. After halftime, the Southern Cal defense was error-proof. The Trojans' blitzing scheme pressured junior quarterback Carlyle Holiday more than he could handle, and Irish receivers had a hard time finding open space. Holiday became preoccupied with the pass rush, making it difficult to make good throws. The result: Holiday's worst game of the season, 10-of-29 passing for 70 yards and three interceptions.

The quarterback took a lot of the responsibility for Notre Dame's poor performance offensively. "I know I didn't play that well," Holiday said. "I know I didn't give my team a chance to win it in some cases."

The rushing game did no better. Notre Dame was unable to open any holes for sophomore tailback Ryan Grant, who finished the day with 10 carries for 16 yards, coming into the game with 1,101 yards. Nor was Holiday able to put on his usual scrambling show. He finished with only 12 yards on six carries.

"I thought their defense did a great job in every category to-night," Willingham said. "They pressured at great times and kept us off balance, didn't allow us to get very much running gain, and made it very difficult at times to find the right throwing lanes."

"That was last year's team that showed up tonight," Irish offensive tackle Jordan Black said of Notre Dame's effort.

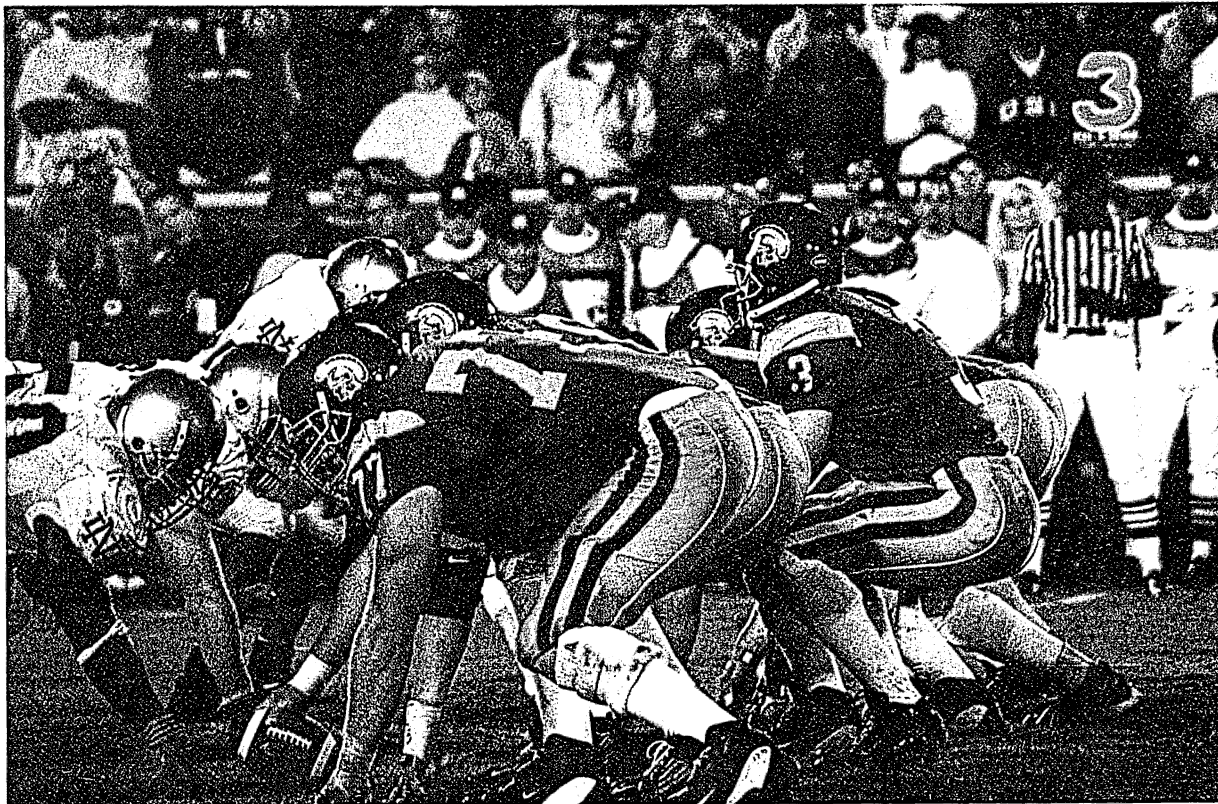
Notre Dame offensive coordinator Bill Diedrick echoed Black. "I think it's a step back for everybody," he said. "But, you know, we'll wake up tomorrow, pick up the pieces, and move on."

Their chances at a BCS game were severely hurt by the loss, but the players shook it off.

"We just want to get out and play another game and just show what kind of Notre Dame football team we are," Holiday said, "regardless of what bowl game it is. [The team's attitude] is fine. We

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	TROJANS
RUSHING YARDS	39	185
PASSING YARDS	70	425
FIRST DOWNS	4	31
TOTAL YARDS	109	610
TURNOVERS	3	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	21:55	38:05



HEISMAN POSE Quarterback Carson Palmer (3) threw for 425 yards, the highest total ever amassed against the Irish.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	6	7	0	0	13
Southern Cal	0	17	13	14	44

1st Quarter

ND FG Setta 34, 4:10; 3-0 ND

ND FG Setta 32, 3:46; 6-0 ND

2nd Quarter

USC Williams 6 pass from Palmer (Killeen kick) 10:49; 7-6 USC

USC FG Killeen 22, 3:34; 10-6 USC

ND Pierre-Antoine 27 blocked punt return (Setta kick) 1:07; 13-10 ND

USC Williams 19 pass from Palmer (Killeen kick) 0:05; 17-13 USC

3rd Quarter

USC MacKemzie 15 pass from Palmer (Killeen kick) 12:01; 24-13 USC

USC FG Killeen 27, 6:36; 27-13 USC

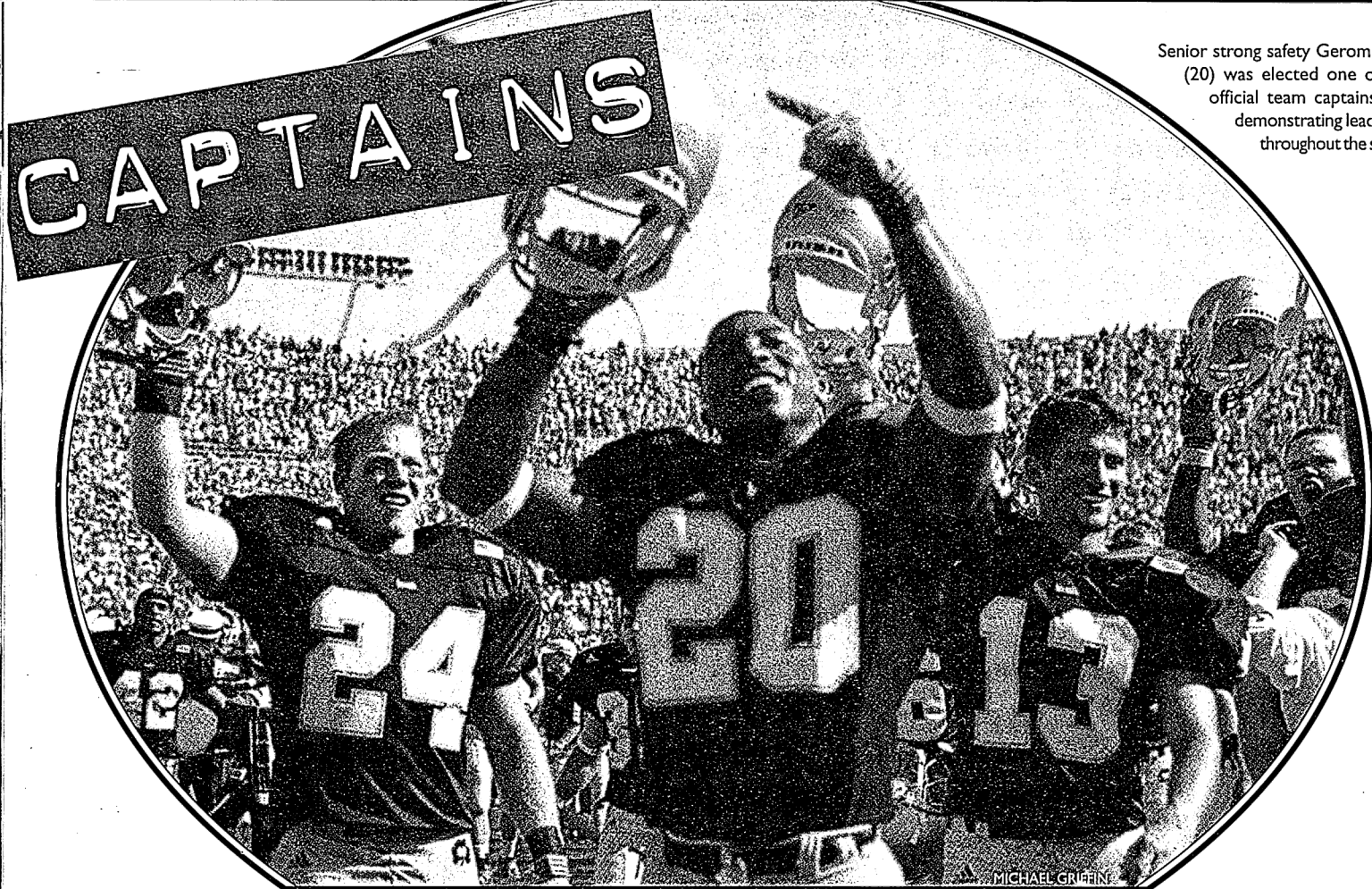
USC FG Killeen 29; 2:15; 30-13 USC

4th Quarter

USC McCullough 11 run (Killeen kick) 11:58; 37-13 USC

USC MacKenzie 10 pass from Palmer (Killeen kick) 7:23; 44-13 USC

realize that we didn't play that well today but we have to do a good job of putting these kind of games behind us." □



Senior strong safety Gerome Sapp (20) was elected one of four official team captains after demonstrating leadership throughout the season.

LEADING BY COMMITTEE

MIKEBORGIA

When new head football coach Tyrone Willingham and his staff took over the Fighting Irish in January 2002, they knew a formidable task was ahead of them. At a school expecting consistent success on the field, changes were desperately needed — but the most glaring and critical was a change in the program's attitude.

Easier said than done. The team had suffered two losing seasons out of its last three and hadn't won a bowl game since 1994. The answer was manifold, but the coaching staff believed much of the responsibility for that answer lay with the team's leaders. To cultivate this leadership, the staff decided to employ a unique system to select the team's captains.

Most football programs select their captains at the beginning of the year to serve for the entire season. For this year's squad, several players were chosen by their coaches and teammates to serve in this role for each game, and the official season captains weren't announced until after regular season play. This only is

the second time that Irish captains have been chosen on a game-by-game basis, the first being the 1946 National Championship season under coach Frank Leahy.

Willingham and his staff strove to foster the team's depth of leadership this season, and they believe that the unique captain selection system propelled the team toward such a goal. "I think it helps us be a deeper, stronger team," Willingham says. "I would think that in any organization, if you can promote leadership from top to bottom, you allow this to happen."

Compared to most college football programs, in which permanent captains are selected at the beginning of the season, choosing temporary captains for each game allows every player the opportunity to serve as a team leader and provides extra incentive to put it all on the line in practice. "It gives everyone the chance to fit that role," explains sophomore defensive end Justin Tuck. "[Coach Willingham] didn't want to give it to four people. We've got more than four leaders on this team."

Says Willingham: "If there is a young man that is demonstrating clearly that he is a leader, then he should be rewarded

SHANE WALTON



SEAN MAHAN



ARNAZ BATTLE



GEROME SAPP



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
SPORTS INFORMATION

for that. I would hate to have a young man on our football team think or believe that he can't be a leader because he wasn't selected a captain at the beginning of the year ... I think this system allows for more young people to be included in that leadership mantle than if you voted just two or three guys [before the season]."

Further deviating from the NCAA norm, Willingham and his staff didn't limit the potential pool of captains to seniors. "Usually, you're not really eligible as a younger guy," says senior defensive tackle Cedric Hilliard. "But Coach allowed juniors to be eligible this year so I think it does give a motivating factor."

At the same time, however, the new system allowed the coaches to honor the accomplishments and tenacity of the team's veteran players. "Coach always talks about how important the senior class is, and this year all the seniors deserved to be captain at some point," says sophomore quarterback Pat Dillingham.

"Guys worked harder. They wanted to be captains ... and it was an honor for them to be chosen by their teammates," says junior quarterback Carlyle Holiday. "It motivated me to work harder and I'm sure it motivated everyone else, too."



CHEERLEADER Senior Shane Walton, chosen as one of four official team captains at the end of the season, encourages the crowd to voice its support.

All-American senior cornerback and team MVP Shane Walton, along with senior strong safety Gerome Sapp, senior offensive guard Sean Mahan and senior wide receiver Arnaz Battle were honored as the official team captains for the year at the football banquet held after the regular season.

"We've elected captains at the end of the season, as opposed to the beginning because, in my opinion, you want leadership to be demonstrated for the entire time," Willingham says. "... At the end of the season, you let the team de-

cide who those four, or three, or two, or five individuals were that had exceptional leadership to be your captains."

Willingham's innovative method of selecting captains proved effective, encouraging abundant leadership on the team and motivating a previously 5-6 squad to 10 victories and a final ranking of 17th in the AP and Coaches' polls.

With yet another tough schedule and even higher expectations for next season, the team will need sturdy leaders. Given the loss of so many outstanding leaders to graduation this year, the depth of leadership developed under this new system likely will become an essential component to the program's continued success. □

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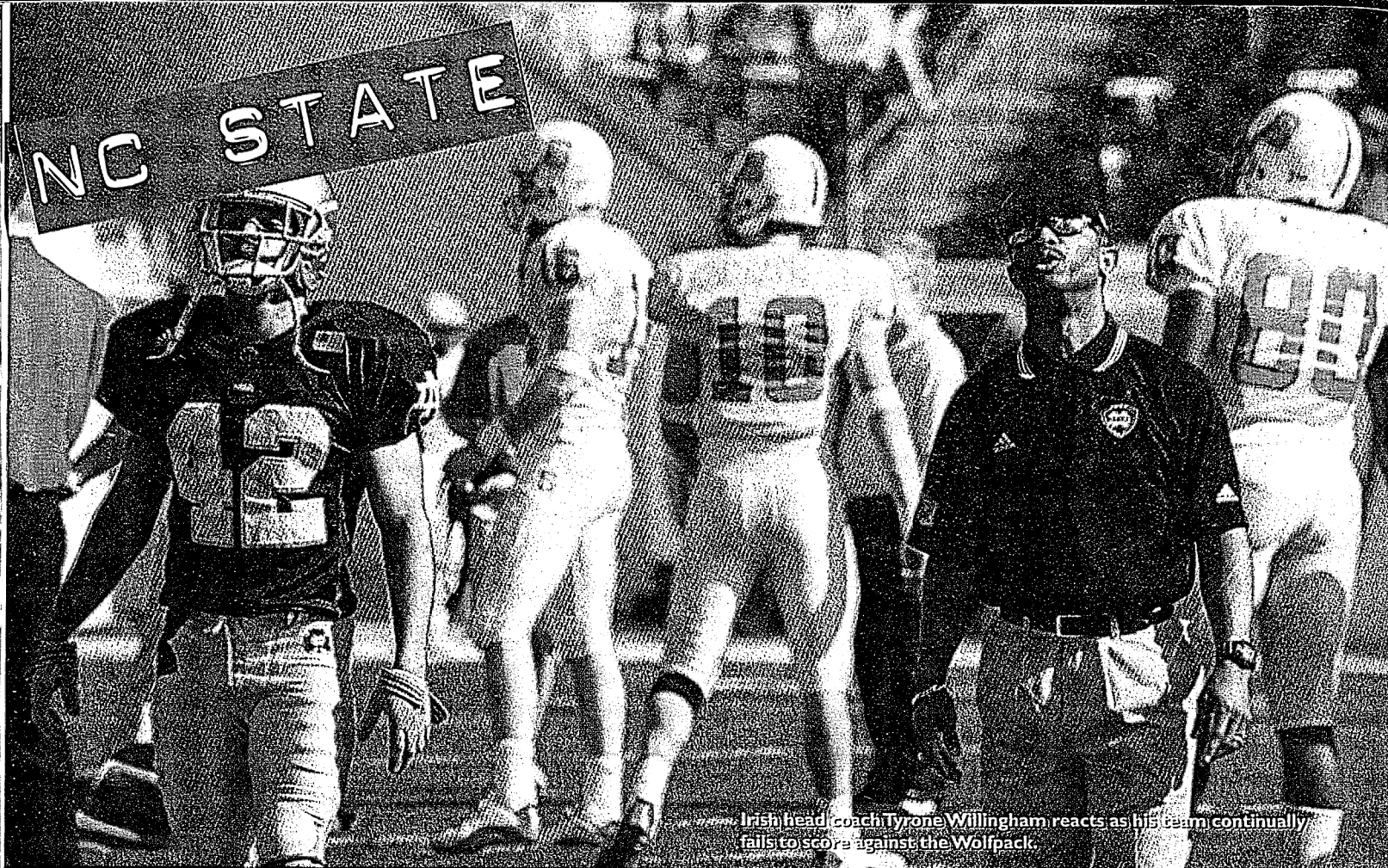
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Irish head coach Tyrone Willingham reacts as his team continually fails to score against the Wolfpack.

HOLIDAY LOSS

GERARD MESKILL

Head coach Tyrone Willingham has asserted throughout the season that no one person can bring success to a football team. However, his theory — and his quarterback, for that matter — took a serious hit against North Carolina State in the Gator Bowl.

Carlyle Holiday separated his shoulder late in the first quarter when Wolfpack linebacker Dantonio Burnette pummeled him on a quarterback sweep on second and goal at the 1. The Irish settled for a field goal and 3-0 lead, but Notre Dame's offense failed to overcome Holiday's absence, falling to the Wolfpack by a final score of 28-6.

"Anytime you lose a starting player, it puts additional difficulty on your success, but we don't look at Carlyle [Holiday]'s loss as stopping us from doing the things that we needed to do," said Willingham after the game. "We still have playmakers out there, and we still have opportunities that were there that we could not make the plays, and [North Carolina State] did some very good things and prevented us from making some plays."

Throughout the 2002 season, North Carolina State head coach Chuck Amato had employed trick plays designed to throw off opposing defenses. The Wolfpack made use of these plays to beat the vaunted Irish defense for three touchdowns in the second quarter and to take a permanent lead in the game.

"Every game, they show you something you haven't seen," said Irish safety Glenn Earl. "They were able to get us off balance."

In fact, it was the second consecutive game in which the oft-

NC STATE	28
NOTRE DAME	6

heralded Notre Dame defense fell victim to a Norm Chow offensive scheme. Chow, who currently is in his second season as Southern Cal's offensive coordinator, previously served as offensive coordinator at North Carolina State and is the architect of the Wolfpack's short-pass attack.

Following Nick Setta's field goal, the Irish managed to pin the Wolfpack at its own 4-yard line when a holding call erased Lamont Reid's 7-yard kickoff return. However, quarterback Philip Rivers went 6-for-6 passing and wide receiver Bryan Peterson added another completion on a trick play as the Wolfpack stormed 96 yards downfield for a touchdown. While the score gave North Carolina State only a four-point lead, the distance of the drive and its juxtaposition with Notre Dame's own failed attempt to score significantly deflated the already shaken Irish sideline.

"Well, anytime you give up a drive that long there are a lot of things involved in it," Willingham said. "First of all, the time they take off the clock, which means you can't have the ball, keeping your defense on the field, which may have some impact later in the ballgame. But probably the biggest thing was, in a game of this nature you feel like you've got to score touchdowns. When we missed that opportunity to get a touchdown, that to me is huge."

Unfortunately for the Irish, Rivers wasn't finished. After backup quarterback Pat Dillingham failed to put Notre Dame in scoring position, Rivers again led the Wolfpack from bad field position into the end zone. Once again, he completed six consecutive passes, raising his streak to 12 completions in a row.

...Philip Rivers completed 13 consecutive passes in the first half...Notre Dame has not

PLAY BY NUMBERS

	IRISH	WOLFPACK
RUSHING YARDS	86	62
PASSING YARDS	200	255
FIRST DOWNS	23	21
TOTAL YARDS	286	317
TURNOVERS	3	0
TIME OF POSSESSION	33:03	26:57

And once again, Amato resorted to wholesale trickery. Peterson threw his second pass of the day, missing intended receiver Rivers on first and 10 at the Irish 23. Rivers had better success finding Peterson, connecting for a 12-yard gain that gave the Wolfpack first and goal at the 3.

From there, Amato put an exclamation on the drive, calling for a fumblerooski on the next play: Rivers took the snap from a shortened shotgun formation, then slipped the ball under the legs of tailback T.A. McLendon, who was positioned in front of the quarterback. Rivers ran one way while feigning possession of the ball and drawing the Irish defense. Meanwhile, McLendon snuck across the goal line untouched, increasing the Wolfpack lead to 14-3.

"Give credit where credit is due," said Irish offensive tackle Jim Molinaro. "They played a better game than we did. The second quarter, they really jumped ahead of us."

Down but not out, the Irish resumed control of the football at their own 35 with 4:58 left in the half after a kickoff by North Carolina State's Adam Kiker sailed out of bounds. However, Notre Dame maintained possession for only three plays. Free safety Rod Johnson tallied his first of three interceptions against Dillingham when the Irish quarterback opted to throw to receiver Arnaz Battle, despite double coverage.

With the ball at Notre Dame's 48, Rivers raised his mark to 15 consecutive completions and Peterson once again tallied a successful pass as the Wolfpack scored its third touchdown of the quarter.

Despite gaining possession of the ball with 1:10 left in the half, the Irish managed only a 38-second drive and a loss of 6 yards before giving the Wolfpack another chance to score. However, Rivers finally threw off target, and time ran out before North Carolina State could effect any more damage.

Having won the coin toss, the Wolfpack began the second half with possession of the football, but couldn't advance past their own 35-yard line. The ensuing punt and return put Notre Dame at its own 32. Notre Dame's offense showed signs of life, moving to North Carolina State's 42-yard line on the strength of a pass-interference call. On first and 10, tailback Ryan Grant gained 9 yards before being brought down by Wolfpack roverback Andre Maddox. However, two more Grant rushes gained nothing, forcing the Irish to face fourth and one. Stuck in a field position too close to the end zone for a punt, but too far away to attempt a field goal, Willingham elected to keep the offense on the field, and Grant rewarded him with a 4-yard gain.

Given a second life, Dillingham threw to Battle three consecutive times, completing two for a net gain of 5 yards. Again facing fourth down, but this time with 5 yards to go and in field-goal range, Willingham elected to go for it. Dillingham tried to find Battle in the end zone, but he was triple-covered, and Johnson again intercepted the Irish quarterback, this time for a touchback.

"We were trying to get as many points as fast as we could," Willingham said. "When you look back at it, maybe three there might have given us a better chance, but you're never sure."

In either case, the decision didn't cost Notre Dame much, since North Carolina State's offense went three and out after possessing



THRICE Free safety Rod Johnson garners his third interception off Pat Dillingham.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
NC State	0	21	0	7	28
Notre Dame	3	0	3	0	6

1st Quarter

ND FG Setta 23, 4:12; 3-0 ND

2nd Quarter

NCSU McLendon 2 run (Kiker kick), 14:03; 7-3 NCSU

NCSU McLendon 3 run (Kiker kick), 5:02; 14-3 NCSU

NCSU Cotchery 9 pass from Rivers (Kiker kick), 1:16; 21-3 NCSU

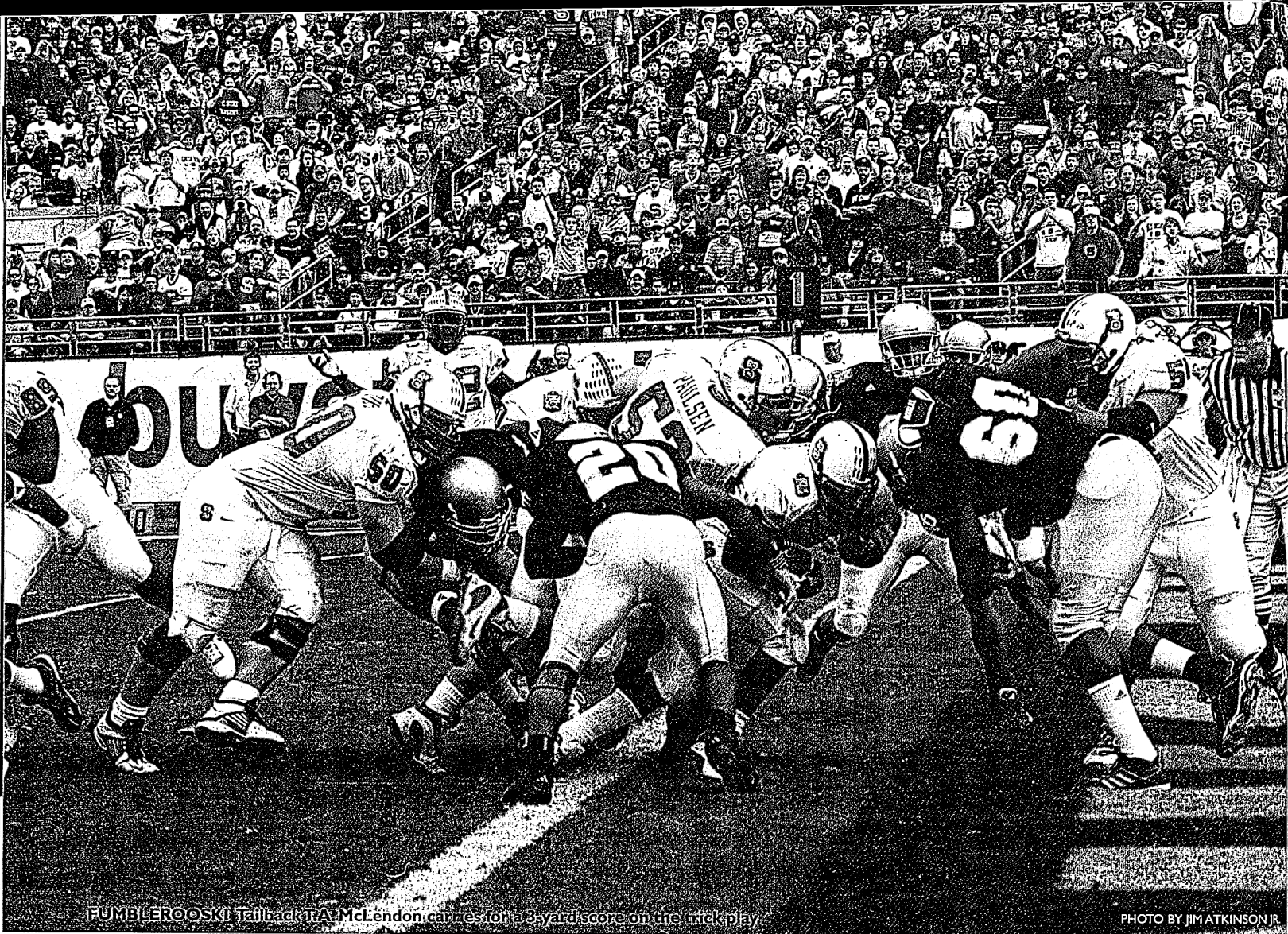
3rd Quarter

ND FG Setta 41, 1:44; 21-6 NCSU.

4th Quarter

NCSU Berton 7 pass from Rivers (Kiker kick), 10:41; 28-6 NCSU

the ball for just 28 seconds. With Dillingham struggling to find his receivers, Notre Dame's offense took to the ground. Tailbacks Grant and Rashon Powers-Neal combined to gain 19 yards on three rushes. Having established a rushing threat, Dillingham connected with



FUMBLEROOSKI! Tailback TIA McLendon carries for a 3-yard score on the trick play.

PHOTO BY JIM ATKINSON JR.

receiver Omar Jenkins for a 17-yard gain, bringing the Irish to the Wolfpack's 22. After two rushes netted 5 yards, defensive end Drew Wimsatt sacked Dillingham on third and five. This time facing fourth and 12, the Irish sent out the special teams, and Setta successfully kicked a 41-yard field goal to reduce North Carolina State's lead to 21-6.

Now within two scores, the Irish remained optimistic that they still could stage a 15-point comeback in the fourth quarter. The Wolfpack quickly put an end to such sentiments.

After Notre Dame's opening drive of the quarter stalled at its own 42, North Carolina State regained possession at its own 31. Running a conventional offense, Rivers resumed his mastery of the Notre Dame defense, completing five of his seven passes in the drive, including a 7-yard throw to tight end Sean Berton in the end zone.

Now facing a 22-point deficit, Notre Dame's offense became desperate for a score. Starting from his own 28, Dillingham attempted passes on seven of eight plays, while scrambling for 2 yards on a third and one at midfield. However, he was unable to continue the drive, and so on fourth and 17, senior punter Joey Hildbold threw to Jenkins for a 12-yard gain, a play incredibly uncharacteristic for a Notre Dame team that had played so conservatively all season.

North Carolina State went three and out after Rivers attempted three more passes, a sign that the Wolfpack either sought to run up the score or feared the Irish still could come back.

On Notre Dame's next possession, Dillingham again attempted

to advance the Irish offense through the air, but he was picked off by Johnson at the Wolfpack's 21, and the safety returned the interception for a 36-yard gain.

North Carolina State reached the Irish 25 on several more Rivers completions, but did not add to its total when the quarterback failed to complete a pass to Peterson on fourth and nine.

Looking to make the final score closer, Notre Dame drove 73 yards downfield, gaining a first and goal at North Carolina State's 3-yard line. However, the Irish failed to score despite an unsportsmanlike conduct call against the Wolfpack that gave Notre Dame a fresh set of downs at the 1. With the game in hand, Rivers scrambled 3 yards, allowing the clock to run out on Notre Dame's season.

Although the Irish turned in poor performances in their final two games, Willingham insisted that it did not spoil the season.

"It's still a very good season," Willingham said. "There are not that many 10-win teams in the country at this time. But at the same time, we've got to get accustomed to winning our last ball games, whether it's our regular-season ball game or the bowl game, because the word in our program that will be spread is that championship teams win their last ball game. And that's the goal for our program."

Battered and beaten, the Irish walked out of Alltel Stadium knowing that they weren't yet a championship team. But despite the painful defeat, the Irish gathered before a small patch of green engulfed in a sea of red and raised their helmets in the air, reminding the faithful few who remained until the end that they were still Notre Dame.

DAME SURRENDERED 72 POINTS IN ITS FINAL TWO CONTESTS AFTER GIVING UP 145 IN ITS FIRST 11...

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His dying words were "Father, forgive
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ALL-

TOPPONE

2002-03 Scholastic All-Opponent Team

Scholastic's sports staff designates the best representatives of Notre Dame's 2002-03 opponents position by position.

HEAD COACH

- **Chuck Amato**, North Carolina State: Amato introduced several new offensive schemes to the Notre Dame defense, enabling his team to gain the upper hand. Many of these schemes involved trick plays, including a fumblerooski, four-man shifts and wide receiver Bryan Peterson throwing several passes.

OFFENSE

Offensive Coordinator

- **Norm Chow**, Southern Cal: Chow's offensive scheme, which was flawlessly executed by Heisman Trophy winner Carson Palmer, punched holes in the Notre Dame secondary. Southern Cal amassed a whopping 610 yards of total offense, including 425 yards passing.

Wide Receivers

- **Anquan Boldin**, Florida State: 9 catches for 175 yards, TD
- **Charles Rogers**, Michigan State: 7 catches for 175 yards, 2 TD
- **Mike Williams**, Southern Cal: 10 catches for 169 yards, 2 TD

Offensive Line

- **Derek Jaskowiak, Josh Goodin, Grant Moody, Matt Nye, Shane Todd, Navy**: The Navy offensive line allowed two sacks and enabled the Midshipmen to run for 216 yards, the highest total of any Notre Dame opponent this season.

Tight End

- **Bennie Joppru**, Michigan: 7 catches for 80 yards, TD

Quarterback

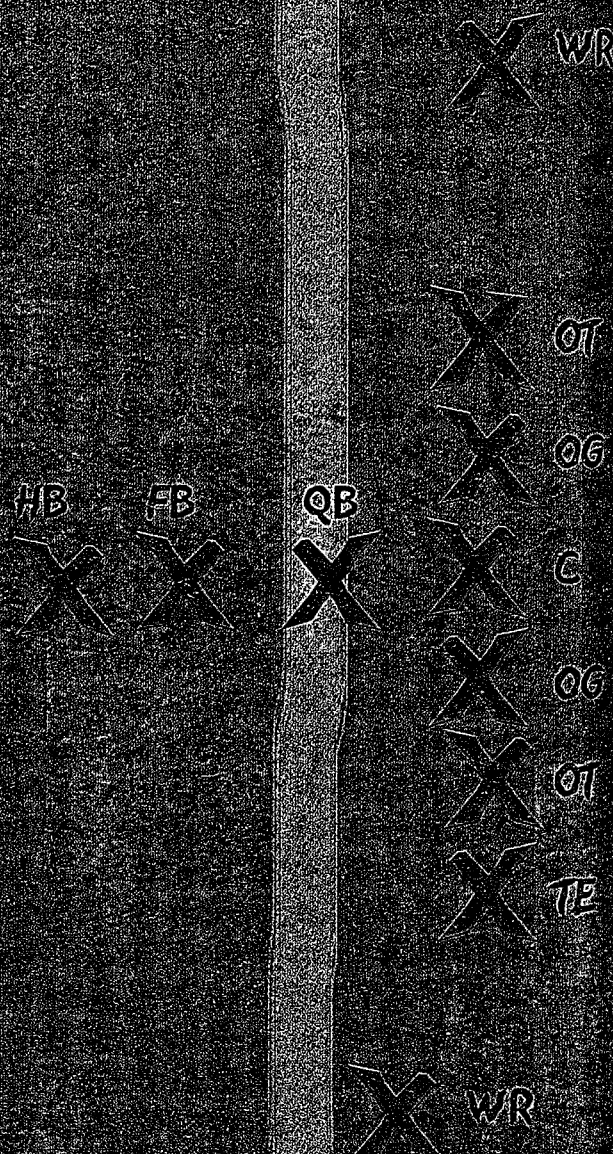
- **Carson Palmer**, Southern Cal: 32 of 46 for 425 yards, 4 TD

Fullback

- **Kyle Eckel**, Navy: 13 carries for 37 yards

Halfback

- **Justin Fargas**, Southern Cal: 20 carries for 120 yards



NT

TEAM

DEFENSE

Defensive Coordinator

- **Paul Rhoads**, Pittsburgh: Despite losing at Notre Dame, Pittsburgh held the Irish offense largely in check. The Irish accumulated just 185 yards of total offense, the second lowest total for Notre Dame in the season. Only Southern Cal held the Irish to less (109), but the Trojans had the added benefit of an offense that dominated the play clock and scoreboard, keeping the Irish offense off the field.

Defensive Ends

- **Clifford Dukes**, Michigan State: 7 tackles, 1 sack
- **Alonzo Jackson**, Florida State: 4 tackles, 3 for loss, 2 sacks

Defensive Tackles

- **Vince Crochunis**, Pittsburgh: 8 tackles, 2 for loss
- **Randy Starks**, Maryland: 5 tackles

Linebackers

- **E.J. Henderson**, Maryland: 11 tackles
- **Josh Ott**, Boston College: 12 tackles, INT for TD
- **Anthony Shlegel**, Air Force: 19 tackles

Cornerbacks

- **Curome Cox**, Maryland: 8 tackles, 1 sack
- **Andre Maddox**, North Carolina State: 10 tackles, 1 sack
- **Leigh Torrance**, Stanford: 7 unassisted tackles

Safeties

- **Rod Johnson**, North Carolina State: 3 interceptions, 2 tackles
- **Troy Polamalu**, Southern Cal: 5 tackles, 1 sack, 1 forced fumble

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker

- **David Abdul**, Pittsburgh: 2 FG, touchback, 1 inside 20

Punter

- **Mike Barr**, Rutgers: 8 punts for 329 yards, long 50, 2 inside 20

CB

FS

DE

OLB

DT

ILB

DT

OLB

DE

SS

CB

SEASON STATISTICS

	NOTRE DAME	OPPONENT
SCORING	290	217
Points Per Game	22.3	16.7
FIRST DOWNS	201	217
Rushing	99	75
Passing	85	126
Penalty	17	16
RUSHING YARDAGE	1812	1242
Yards gained rushing	2231	1674
Yards lost rushing	419	432
Rushing attempts	528	438
Average per rush	3.4	2.8
Average per game	139.4	95.5
TDs rushing	15	11
PASSING YARDAGE	2264	2662
Att-Comp-Int	341-172-13	453-223-21
Average per pass	6.6	5.9
Average per catch	13.2	11.9
Average per game	174.2	204.8
TDs passing	11	12
TOTAL OFFENSE	4076	3904
Total plays	869	891
Average per play	4.7	4.4
Average per game	313.5	300.3
KICK RETURNS: # Yards	38-877	34-621
PUNT RETURNS: # Yards	53-518	33-288
INT RETURNS: # Yards	21-314	13-182
KICK RETURN AVERAGE	23.1	18.3
PUNT RETURN AVERAGE	9.8	8.7
INT RETURN AVERAGE	15.0	14.0
FUMBLES-LOST	28-15	17-12
PENALTIES-YARDS	80-696	93-760
Average per game	53.5	58.5
PUNTS-YARDS	79-3069	94-3864
Average per punt	38.8	41.1
Net punt average	35.2	35.6
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:02	28:58
3RD DOWN CONVS.	64/198	60/200
3rd down percentage	32%	30%
4TH DOWN CONVS.	7/15	6/17
4th down percentage	47%	35%
SACKS BY-YARDS	37-241	38-234
MISC YARDS	58	21
TOUCHDOWNS SCORED	35	27
FIELD GOALS-ATTEMPTS	14-25	10-15
PAT-ATTEMPTS	32-32	23-24
ATTENDANCE	484,910	307,129

RUSHING	Att	Net	Yds/C	TD	Long	Yds/G
Grant, Ryan	261	1085	4.2	9	38	83.5
Powers-Neal, Rashon	77	333	4.3	2	27	33.3
Holiday, Carlyle	92	200	2.2	3	53	16.7
Wilson, Marcus	39	110	2.8	0	17	11.0
O'Neill, Tim	9	74	8.2	0	42	10.6
Lopianski, Tom	20	48	2.4	1	9	4.0
McNair, Mike	6	25	4.2	0	12	1.9
Yura, Chris	1	7	7.0	0	7	0.5
Battle, Arnaz	3	2	0.7	0	0	0.2
Navakov, Dan	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	-1.0
Miller, David	1	-12	-12.0	0	0	-3.0
Team	12	-24	-2.0	0	0	-5.0
Dillingham, Pat	6	-35	-5.8	0	0	-5.0
Total	528	1812	3.4	15	53	139.4
Opponents	438	1242	2.8	11	47	95.5

PASSING	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng
Holiday, Carlyle	117.58	257	129	5	50.2	1788	10	67
Dillingham, Pat	82.41	81	41	7	50.6	434	1	60
Battle, Arnaz	76.00	2	1	1	50.0	30	0	30
Hildbold, Joey	200.80	1	1	0	100.0	12	0	12
Total	109.23	341	172	13	50.4	2264	11	67
Opponents	98.06	453	223	21	49.2	2662	12	52

RECEIVING	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Battle, Arnaz	58	786	13.6	5	65
Jenkins, Omar	37	633	17.1	3	67
Stovall, Maurice	18	312	17.3	3	44
Godsey, Gary	16	155	9.7	0	20
McKnight, Rhema	9	91	10.1	0	21
Grant, Ryan	9	22	2.4	0	14
Clark, Jared	7	104	14.9	0	37
Campbell, Carlos	4	38	9.5	0	12
Wilson, Marcus	4	16	4.0	0	10
Lopianski, Tom	3	31	10.3	0	17
Rodamer, Ronnie	2	14	7.0	0	9
Holiday, Carlyle	1	30	30.0	0	30
Shelton, Matt	1	18	18.0	0	18
McNair, Mike	1	6	6.0	0	6
Powers-Neal, Rashon	1	4	4.0	0	4
Palmer, Billy	1	4	4.0	0	4
Total	172	2264	13.2	11	67
Opponents	223	2662	11.9	12	52

FIELD GOALS	FGM	FGA	Pct	Long	Blkd
Setta, Nicholas	14	25	56.0	51	2

SCORE BY QRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
Notre Dame	45	84	92	69	290
Opponents	43	63	53	58	217

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Walton, Shane	7	84	12.0	2	45
Sapp, Gerome	4	17	4.2	0	13
Watson, Courtney	4	123	30.8	1	60
Earl, Glenn	2	9	4.5	0	9
Burrell, Quentin	1	30	30.0	0	30
Duff, Vontez	1	33	33.0	1	33
Goolsby, Mike	1	18	18.0	0	18
Jackson, Preston	1	0	0.0	0	0
Total	21	314	15.0	4	60
Opponents	13	182	14.0	2	71

PUNTING	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	In-20	Blkd
Hildbold, Joey	78	3038	38.9	53	30	0
Fitzpatrick, DJ	1	31	31.0	31	0	0
Total	79	3069	38.8	53	30	0
Opponents	94	3864	41.1	66	20	1

PUNT RETURNS	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Duff, Vontez	40	385	9.6	1	76
Walton, Shane	9	85	9.4	0	20
Battle, Arnaz	2	12	6.0	0	10
Pierre-Antoine, C.	1	27	27.0	1	27
McKnight, Rhema	1	9	9.0	0	9
Total	53	518	9.8	2	76
Opponents	33	288	8.7	1	76

KICK RETURNS	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Duff, Vontez	19	526	27.7	1	92
Battle, Arnaz	16	335	20.9	0	34
Shelton, Matt	1	12	12.0	0	12
Ellick, Dwight	1	7	7.0	0	7
Pierre-Antoine, C.	1	-3	-3.0	0	-3
Total	38	877	23.1	1	92
Opponents	34	621	18.3	0	51

DEFENSIVE LEADERS	GP	Solo	Tackles	Sacks	Pass Def	Fumbles
			Asst Total	TFL/Yds	No-Yds	Int-Yds BrUp Rcv-Yds FF Saf
Watson, Courtney	10	51	39	90	10-39	3-27 4-123 4 0 0 0
Earl, Glenn	13	52	29	81	4-18	1-9 2-9 4 2-0 2 0
Goolsby, Mike	13	51	24	75	13-41	4-21 1-18 3 0 1 0
Sapp, Gerome	11	42	29	71	3-6	0-0 4-17 7 1-54 1 0
Walton, Shane	13	46	22	68	5-12	0-0 7-84 7 1-0 1 0
Hoyt, Brandon	12	42	15	57	4-11	1-1 0-0 0 1-0 0 0
Tuck, Justin	13	33	11	44	10-36	5-26 0-0 2 0-0 1 0
Roberts, Ryan	13	24	18	42	9-43	8-43 0-0 1 1-0 0 0
Duff, Vontez	13	31	5	36	1-3	0-0 1-33 6 2-0 0 0
Curry, Derek	13	24	10	34	7-27	4-22 0-0 2 1-0 1 0
Campbell, Darrell	13	18	15	33	8-47	6-44 0-0 0 0-0 0 0
Bible, Garron	13	17	15	32	1-9	1-9 0-0 3 1-0 0 0

DEFENSIVE LEADERS	Tackles				Sacks		Pass Def		Fumbles	
	GP	Solo	Asst	Total	TFL/Yds	No-Yds	Int-Yds	BrUp	Rcv-Yds	FF Saf
Hilliard, Cedric	10	19	12	31	5-18	2-9	0-0	1	0-0	1 0
Jackson, Preston	13	20	6	26	3-8	0-0	1-0	0	0-0	0 0
Budinscak, Kyle	13	13	7	20	6-30	3-24	0-0	3	0-0	0 0
Pierre-Antoine, C.	13	6	8	14	1-6	1-6	0-0	0	0-0	1 0
Pauly, Greg	13	8	3	11	3-10	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Ryan, Pat	11	6	4	10	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1-0	0 0
Thomas, Justin	13	4	3	7	1-4	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	1 0
Ellick, Dwight	13	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Clark, Jared	13	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Setta, Nicholas	13	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Mays, Corey	10	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	1 0
Stovall, Maurice	13	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Bolen, Lionel	11	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1-4	0 0
McNair, Mike	13	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Campbell, Carlos	12	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Beidatsch, Brian	9	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Burrell, Quentin	13	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	1-30	0	0-0	0 0
Hildbold, Joey	13	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Sapp, Jason	5	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Yura, Chris	13	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Collins, Gerome	12	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Jenkins, Omar	13	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Crowther, John	13	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Battle, Arnaz	13	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
DeBolt, Chad	11	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
TM Team	8	1	0	1	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 2
Shelton, Matt	9	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0 0
Total	13	539	290	829	95-370	37-241	21-314	43	12-58	11 2
Opponents	13	564	404	968	98-367	38-234	13-182	41	15-21	18 0

ALL-PURPOSE	G	Rush	Rec	PR	KOR	IR	Tot	Avg/G
Battle, Arnaz	13	2	786	12	335	0	1135	87.3
Grant, Ryan	13	1085	22	0	0	0	1107	85.2
Duff, Vontez	13	0	0	385	526	33	944	72.6
Jenkins, Omar	13	0	633	0	0	0	633	48.7
Powers-Neal, Rashon	10	333	4	0	0	0	337	33.7
Stovall, Maurice	13	0	312	0	0	0	312	24.0
Holiday, Carlyle	12	200	30	0	0	0	230	19.2
Walton, Shane	13	0	0	85	0	84	169	13.0
Godsey, Gary	13	0	155	0	0	0	155	11.9
Wilson, Marcus	10	110	16	0	0	0	126	12.6
Watson, Courtney	10	0	0	0	0	123	123	12.3
Clark, Jared	13	0	104	0	0	0	104	8.0
McKnight, Rhema	12	0	91	9	0	0	100	8.3
Lopienski, Tom	12	48	31	0	0	0	79	6.6
O'Neill, Tim	7	74	0	0	0	0	74	10.6
Campbell, Carlos	12	0	38	0	0	0	38	3.2
McNair, Mike	13	25	6	0	0	0	31	2.4
Burrell, Quentin	13	0	0	0	0	30	30	2.3
Shelton, Matt	9	0	18	0	12	0	30	3.3
Pierre-Antoine, C.	13	0	0	27	-3	0	24	1.8
Goolsby, Mike	13	0	0	0	0	18	18	1.4
Sapp, Gerome	11	0	0	0	0	17	17	1.5
Rodamer, Ronnie	13	0	14	0	0	0	14	1.1
Earl, Glenn	13	0	0	0	0	9	9	0.7
Ellick, Dwight	13	0	0	0	7	0	7	0.5
Yura, Chris	13	7	0	0	0	0	7	0.5
Palmer, Billy	13	0	4	0	0	0	4	0.3
Novakov, Dan	1	-1	0	0	0	0	-1	-1.0
Miller, David	12	-12	0	0	0	0	-12	-1.0
Team	8	-24	0	0	0	0	-24	-3.0
Dillingham, Pat	7	-35	0	0	0	0	-35	-5.0
Total	13	1812	2264	518	877	314	5785	445.0
Opponents	13	1242	2662	288	621	182	4995	384.2

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	Plays	Rush	Pass	Total	Avg/G
Holiday, Carlyle	12	349	200	1788	1988	165.7
Grant, Ryan	13	261	1085	0	1085	83.5
Dillingham, Pat	7	87	-35	434	399	57.0
Powers-Neal, Rashon	10	77	333	0	333	33.3
Wilson, Marcus	10	39	110	0	110	11.0
O'Neill, Tim	7	9	74	0	74	10.6
Lopienski, Tom	12	20	48	0	48	4.0
Battle, Arnaz	13	5	2	30	32	2.5
McNair, Mike	13	6	25	0	25	1.9
Hildbold, Joey	13	1	0	12	12	0.9
Yura, Chris	13	1	7	0	7	0.5
Navakov, Dan	1	1	-1	0	-1	-1.0
Miller, David	12	1	-12	0	-12	-1.0
Team	8	12	-24	0	-24	-3.0
Total	13	869	1812	2264	4076	313.5
Opponents	13	891	1242	2662	3904	300.3

— All statistics courtesy of Sports Information



SCRAMBLIN' MAN Irish quarterback Carlyle Holiday eludes Navy linebacker Lane Jackson.

JIM ATKINSON/JL

2002 Schedule and Results

August 31	vs. Maryland (21/20)	W	22-0
September 7	(23/24) PURDUE	W	24-17
September 13	(20/21) MICHIGAN (7/6)	W	25-23
September 21	(12/12) at Michigan State	W	21-17
October 5	(9/9) STANFORD	W	31-7
October 12	(8/8) PITTSBURGH	W	14-6
October 19	(7/7) at Air Force (18-15)	W	21-14
October 26	(6/6) at Florida State (11/13)	W	34-24
November 2	(4/6) BOSTON COLLEGE	L	7-14
November 9	(9/10) vs. Navy	W	30-23
November 23	(8/8) RUTGERS	W	42-0
November 30	(7/7) at Southern Cal (6/6)	L	13-44
January 1	(11/12) N.C. State (17/17)	L	28-6

2003 Schedule

September 6	WASHINGTON STATE
September 13	at Michigan
September 27	at Purdue
October 11	at Pittsburgh
October 18	Southern Cal
October 25	at Boston College
November 1	FLORIDA STATE
November 8	NAVY
November 15	BYU
November 22	at Syracuse
November 29	at Stanford

RECRUITING

NOTRE DAME'S CLASS OF 2007

Compiled by Jessica Daues

Photos courtesy of NDRecruiting.com

With signing day looming large on February 5, and more recruits committing by the day, it's hard to predict how the Irish class of 2007 will rank among the rest of the NCAA. At press time, *The Insiders* ranked Notre Dame's recruiting class ninth in the nation behind Oklahoma, Louisiana State, Texas, USC, Georgia, Texas A&M, Miami and Michigan.

The commitment of top tight end Greg Olsen and cornerback Tom Zbikowski last week helped the Irish rank-

ing, but there still are many top ducks left in the hunt, such as defensive lineman Victor Abiamari, offensive linemen Mike Jones, John Sullivan and Joe Thomas, wide receivers Mark Bradford and Ambrose Wooden and other prep standouts.

For now, however, all Irish fans can count on is the bird in the hand. Here's a look at Notre Dame's verbal commitments as of Jan. 19. Because of NCAA regulations, the Notre Dame coaching staff cannot comment about recruits until signing day in February.

DEFENSE



Linebacker

Joe Brockington

Palmyra High School (Penn.)

Ranked the 12th-best linebacker in the East by *Student Sports/The Sporting News*, Brockington had 65 tackles from his linebacker spot last season. He also plays fullback, and ran for 1,048 yards and nine touchdowns. According to *Student Sports/The Sporting News*, Brockington (6-2, 215)

is built like a rock and has great intensity, as well as great speed; he runs the 40 in 4.56 seconds. At Notre Dame, he's projected to play outside linebacker.



Linebacker

Nick Borseti

St. John's Prep (Danvers, Mass.)

Borseti admits to being a mean and nasty player on the field (he models his game after Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis) and his stats back up that statement: He averaged 10 tackles per game as a junior and had 11 sacks. The ferocious 6-4, 218-pound prep star likely will line up as a middle linebacker for Notre Dame. ESPN's Tom Lemming ranks him

as 16th-best prep outside linebacker in the nation.



Defensive Lineman

Trevor Laws

Apple Valley High School (Minn.)

Last season, Laws made 73 tackles, including 23 tackles for loss and three sacks. The 6-3, 285-pound lineman can bench-press 260 pounds, and he also wrestles. He has earned Wrestling All-American honors the past two years and won the Minnesota State Wrestling Championship his junior year. Laws ranks third in Lemming's

list of top prep defensive tackles and 39th-best prep recruit overall.



Cornerback

Freddie Parish

Long Beach Poly
(Calif.)

Though he is one of the most sought-after safeties on the West Coast, *Rivals* reports

that Parish (6-1, 195) didn't start a single game as a junior; he backed up All-American safety Darnell Bing, now at Southern Cal. But when he did play, he shined, making 21 tackles, breaking up four passes and making one pick. ND plans to convert him to cornerback. According to *Student Sports/The Sporting News*, Parish is a big hitter with solid coverage skills.

No photo
available

Cornerback

Tom Zbikowski

Buffalo Grove High
School (Ill.)

Zbikowski (6-1, 190) played both quarterback

and safety for his high school, although it's at cornerback where Lemming ranks him as the nation's fourth best, as well as the 26th-best recruit in the nation. As a safety this season, Zbikowski had 41 tackles and two interceptions. He also is an amateur boxer with an overall record of 60-13, so watch for him in Bengal Bouts next year.

OFFENSE



Tight End

John Carlson

Litchfield High School (Minn.)

Carlson, ranked the eighth-best tight end in Lemming's rankings, caught 41 passes for over 500 yards and seven touchdowns his senior season. At 6-6, 230, Carlson also played varsity basketball for Litchfield and is considered one of Minnesota's top five basketball prospects. Carlson is undecided as to whether he'll also try to play basketball for the Irish.



Running Back

Isaiah Gardner

Salem High School (Virginia Beach, Va.)

Gardner has serious speed — he ran 4.49 in the 40-yard dash last summer — and versatility — he can line up as a receiver and also as a cornerback, which he likely will do for the Irish. He played only seven games this season because of an injury and a suspension, but he managed to post 1,068 rushing yards and 18 touchdowns, averaging nine yards per carry. Lemming ranked Gardner the 25th-best prep tailback in the country on Jan. 8.



Offensive Lineman

Ryan Harris

Cretin-Derham Hall (St. Paul, Minn.)

Harris, a U.S. Army High School All-American, was recruited by everyone from Miami to USC, says *Student Sports/The Sporting News*. But the 6-5, 270-pound offensive lineman chose ND, where he is projected to be a left tackle. According to Lemming, Harris might be the nation's most mobile prep offensive lineman. He ranks him as the 50th-best prep recruit in the nation and the fourth-best on his list of guards and centers.



Running Back

David Marrero

St. Thomas Aquinas (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.)

According to *Fighting Irish Insider*, the 5-11, 185-pound high-school track star ran an electrifying 4.34 at the Nike camp last summer. As a junior, Marrero ran for 547 yards on 71 carries and 14 touchdowns, while also catching 10 passes for 149 yards. Lemming ranked Marrero as the 13th-best prep athlete on Jan. 8; he plans to run track for the Irish, as well as play football.



Running Back

Ashley McConnell

Adairsville High School (Ga.)

According to Mike Frank of *Fighting Irish Insider*, the 5-11, 230-pound fullback is a talented blocker who is able to catch the ball out of the backfield. Though relatively unknown until he committed to the Irish, others now are recognizing McConnell's talent, and Lemming ranks him sixth among all other prep fullbacks.



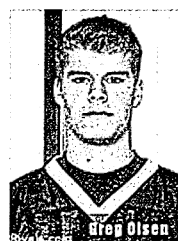
Wide Receiver

Chinedum Ndukwe

(Chin-a-doom New-duk-wee)

Coffman High School (Dublin, Ohio)

A teammate and favorite target of fellow Notre Dame recruit, quarterback Brady Quinn (*below*), Ndukwe (6-3, 195) caught 48 passes for 659 yards and nine touchdowns this season for Coffman. The "Duke" put up even better numbers during his junior season, when he caught 59 passes for 838 yards and 11 touchdowns. These numbers caused *Student Sports/The Sporting News* to rank him as the No. 4 wide receiver prospect in the Midwest.



Tight End

Greg Olsen

Wayne Hills High School (N.J.)

Olsen, brother of Notre Dame's red-shirt freshman quarterback Chris Olsen, is considered by many sources the nation's top prep tight end, including Lemming, who ranks him No. 1 among tight ends and No. 3 among all recruits in the nation. The 6-6, 240-pound high school All-American had 38 catches for 703 yards and 15 touchdowns during his senior season, while also rushing the ball six times for 116 yards.



Quarterback

Brady Quinn

Coffman High School (Dublin, Ohio)

The 6-4, 195-pound U.S. Army All-American threw 25 touchdown passes and ran for six more during his senior season. He threw only four interceptions. As a junior, he threw for 2,200 yards and 21 touchdowns with 15 interceptions. Quinn ranked as the 18th-best prep recruit and the fifth-best prep quarterback in the nation, according to Lemming. *Student Sports* reports that Quinn reminds scouts of Oregon quarterback Joey Harrington.



Wide Receiver

Jeff Samardzija (Some-are-jaw)

Valparaiso High School (Ind.)

One of the best prospects in Indiana, Samardzija (6-4, 190) had 51 catches for 1,197 yards and 11 touchdowns as a junior. *Fighting Irish Insider* compared him to Tampa Bay Buccaneer wide receiver Joe Jurevicius. Samardzija, who ranked 23rd in Lemming's list of top receivers, has the raw athleticism to play defensive back in college as well as receiver.



Running Back

Travis Thomas

Washington High School (Penn.)

Thomas, another U.S. Army All-American among Notre Dame's recruits, ran for 1,176 yards and 16 touchdowns this season and had 90 solo tackles and 50 assists as a strong safety this year. Thomas stands out among running backs because of his dynamic combination of size (6-1, 200) and breakaway speed (4.4 in the 40-yard dash). Lemming ranks him as the nation's 15th-best prep tailback.

A New Irish Leader

by Cappy Gagnon

Coach Tyrone Willingham is going to lead Notre Dame to a lot of wins, providing tumultuous joy to 10,000 green-shirted Notre Dame students, the 104,000 co-coaches from the Notre Dame Alumni Association and lifelong fans. He is going to accumulate many more coaching accomplishments and honors than the armful he picked up during his first season in Riverbend.

He proved at Stanford that he can produce the kind of offensive juggernauts which make for loud crowds and rested defenses. In short, by the time the football accomplishments of Lionel Tyrone Willingham are reviewed in a career context, there is no doubt in the mind of this writer that Ty will join Knute, Frank and Ara on the Fighting Irish Mt. Rushmore.

No matter how many games he wins, don't look for Coach Willingham to be resting on his laurels. He knows that the pursuit of excellence is not a destination, but a continuing journey. He would tell you that he is proud of the hard work of the 2002 team and he just as quickly would tell you that he was not satisfied with the results.

By the time the football accomplishments of Lionel Tyrone Willingham are reviewed in a career context, there is no doubt in the mind of this writer that Ty will join Knute, Frank and Ara on the Fighting Irish Mt. Rushmore.

*Cappy Gagnon, '66,
is security manager
and head usher at
Notre Dame Stadium.*

Having said all the above, Coach Willingham's greatest impact is likely to extend far beyond the borders of the Notre Dame gridiron. It will be in *how* he accomplishes his life's work more

than how many wins he accumulates. He is the perfect metaphor for the American Dream: "Work hard; trust in God; achieve success." Because of his acclaim and the bright lights under which the Notre Dame football program is scrutinized, the Tyrone Willingham story is going to be known by every person with access to a television or a computer. School children should aspire to emulate his approach to life. A century ago, Horatio Alger was the model. When I was a kid I read about Jackie Robinson, Lou Gehrig and the Hardy Boys. What better story can there be for our age than what is now unfolding within the shadow of the Dome?

Tyrone Willingham's ancestors did not come over on the Mayflower. He faced daunting challenges in his early education years. He was not blessed with the physique which attracts college football recruiters and Tom Lemming. He had to write schools to find someone who would give him a chance to walk on.

A major cow college and football power gave him a chance. Willingham became a valuable player — a "Rudy" with real talent. He made better athletes play closer to their potential by dint of his hard work, a form of courage not often found among peers but *loved* by coaches. He willingly switched positions to help his team. He became a scholar-athlete — a "Rudy" with academic honors. He labored in the football-coaching vineyard, working with all three units of a football team under many different coaches while earning his coaching merit badges. Through all of the travails he faced — and conquered — Tyrone Willingham never took the easy way. No shortcuts. No excuses. No whining. If we all adopted these traditional values, how much stronger our families, teams, workplaces and country would be.

The most telling reason behind the success of the Irish this year can be discerned from the nickname hung on Willingham by some of his players: "The Prophet." All coaches know the game of football, but not all coaches can get their players to completely buy into their philosophy. Willingham accomplished that. He did it with a single-minded focus. He did it through the strength of his character and personality (which is *much* wittier and looser than the media knows). He did it with a very cohesive coaching staff — and it's a major plus that some of those men hold AARP cards. He did it by refusing to make an excuse or accept one. Schedule too tough? "We're Notre Dame; we expect to play the best." Academics too tough? "I don't see any reason why our young men can't be good in the classroom and good on the playing field." Injuries a problem? "We have other good players on our team." How's recruiting? "We're going to play with the young men who show up."

Willingham swats away every single attempt at an excuse or a whine like Jordan Cornette playing interior defense. This is a major life lesson. When we realize that nothing is given to us except the right to compete, we must discard the impediments that hold us back. It is then that we are able to approach our potential. Willingham learned that lesson early in life at the knee of great role models. He carries himself with the class he insists his players represent.

While wearing my head usher hat, I love the Sea of Green and the renewed enthusiasm in the stadium. While wearing my security manager hat, I appreciate working with a consummate pro. While wearing my alumnus hat, I am proud that the glory has returned. While wearing my *Scholastic* writer's hat, I am thankful that I have a wonderful subject on which I can expound. □

MISSING STUDENT

LAST SEEN DEC 12, 2002

CHAD SHARON



FIRST-YEAR STUDENT

HEIGHT: 5'10"

WEIGHT: 140 POUNDS

RACE: CAUCASIAN

HAIR: SHORT BLONDE

EYES: BLUE

LAST SEEN WEARING:

JEANS, A WHITE SWEATER AND
A RED JACKET WITH DARK LETTERING

ANYONE WITH INFORMATION REGARDING THIS CASE SHOULD
CONTACT THE NOTRE DAME SECURITY/POLICE DEPARTMENT AT
(574) 631-5555. THE UNIVERSITY IS OFFERING A REWARD OF
UP TO \$25,000 FOR CREDIBLE INFORMATION LEADING TO
CHAD'S SAFE RETURN OR TO VERIFIED COMMUNICATION WITH HIM
BY UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS.

CHAD IS SCHOLASTIC'S WEB DESIGNER. OUR STAFF CONTINUES
TO KEEP HIM AND HIS FAMILY IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS.

