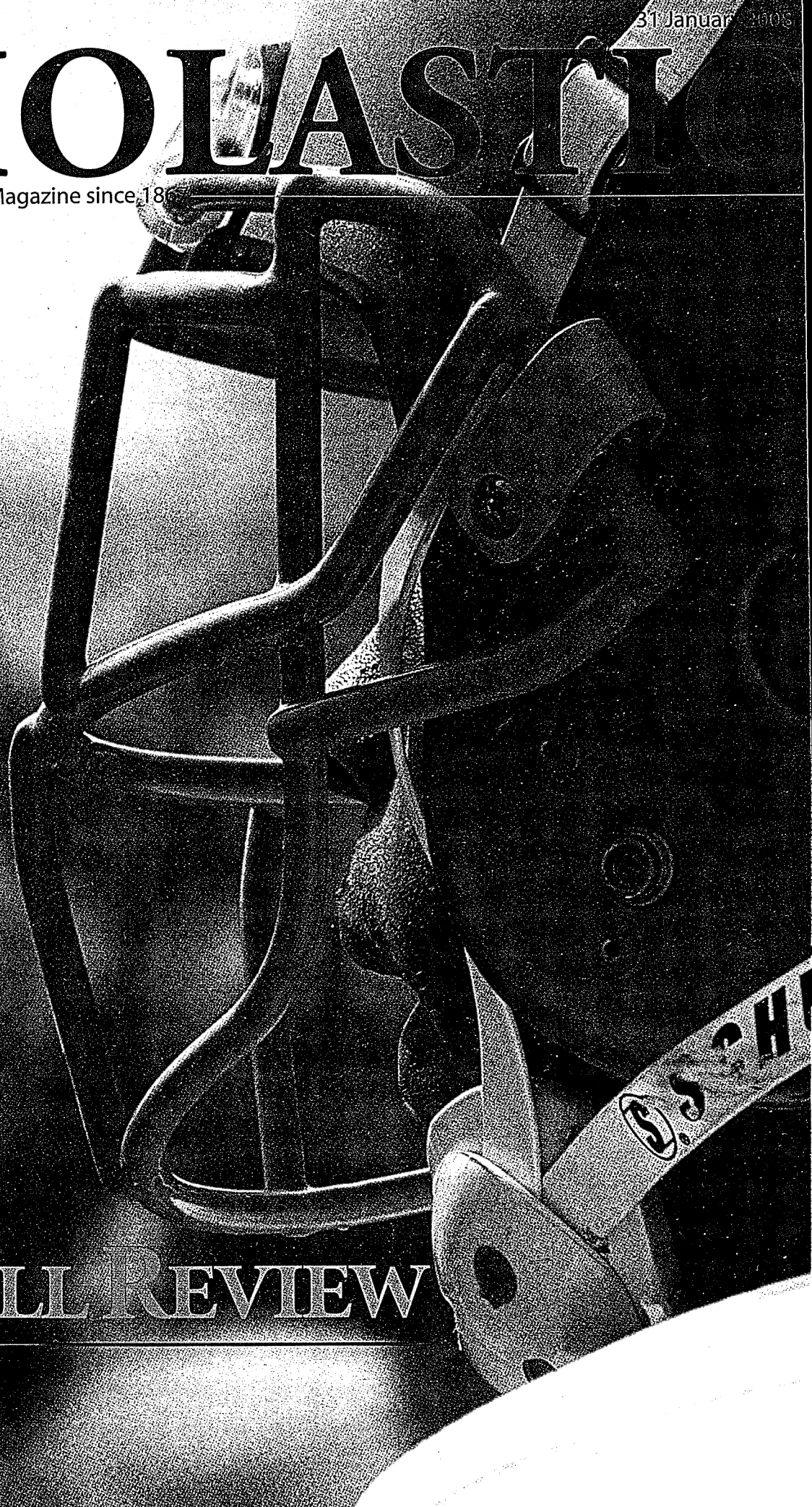


31 January 2006

# SCHOLIASTIC

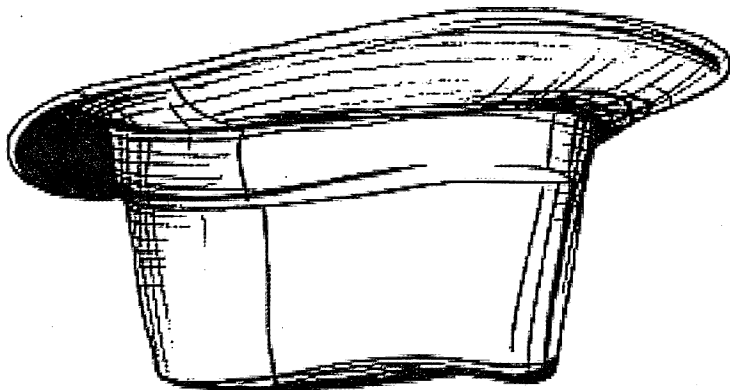
University of Notre Dame's Student Magazine since 1864



## FOOTBALL REVIEW

## 2007

50th Anniversary Collegiate Jazz Festival Coming Feb. 20-23



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# EDNOTES

*schadenfreude* (shad'n-froi'd)

n.

Pleasure derived from the misfortunes of others.

If we had to pick a word to describe the 2007 season, this would be it. This college football season was filled with *schadenfreude*, from our joy when Michigan lost to Appalachian State to the entire country's elation at seeing USC fall to Stanford — not to mention OSU's second consecutive loss to the SEC in the national title game. But of all the schools to suffer the unfortunate curse of *schadenfreude*, Notre Dame felt it the most. When fans around the country love to hate Notre Dame because they regard the Irish as perennially overrated and overhyped, it is a sweet, sweet feeling for those fans to see the supposedly spoiled fall from grace.

So what do you say about a year like 2007?

Without a doubt, the *Scholastic* sports staff struggled with this question. Bitter jokes permeated the brainstorming sessions for this football review issue. We even suggested (only half-jokingly) that we shouldn't go to print — after all, if the team didn't show up, why should we?

If we did that, though, we would be flying in the face of everything Notre Dame football represents. Yes, it was a bad year; yes, we struggled. But that is by no means an excuse to not go to work. This football issue is about more than merely recounting our struggles and successes from this year. It is a means of honoring the hard work that some of these players have put in for four, even five, years. To throw that all away after one bad season would be a grave mistake.

But that's not to say we don't have room to be critical. Assistant editor Marques Camp has a no-holds-barred critique of what went wrong this season on pages 4 and 5. News editor Mike Tresnowski offers his take on what our future recruiting classes will bring to the mix on pages 34 and 35. Reaching beyond the ND student bubble for some honest judgment, Jay and Pat from the Irish blog "The Blue-Gray Sky" tackle this season's impact in "The Final Word."

Our summaries offer the best of what our team accomplished this season, from Trevor Laws' stunning dominance to the emergence of some true freshmen stars. It's easy to be a proud fan when times are rich (see: 2005, 2006), but it's a true test of character to stick by your team when times are rough.

Use this football issue to remember the best of what this season had to offer, while never forgetting the lessons learned from a little *schadenfreude*. With the right changes, we will be the ones laughing next year.

Yours in the Irish,

Brittany Lash  
Sports Editor

Marques Camp  
Assistant Sports Editor

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FOOTBALL REVIEW

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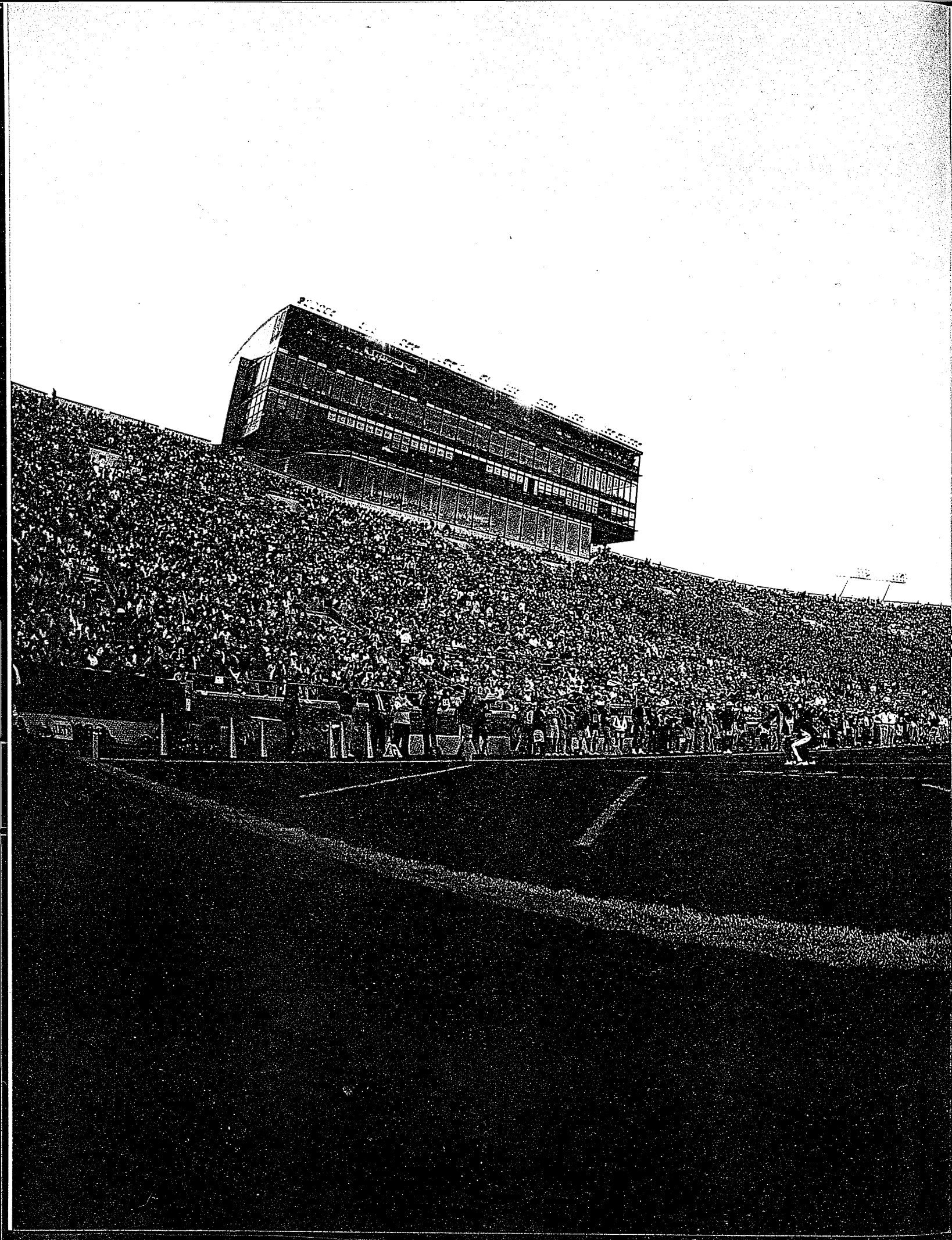
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Kristin Kave

*Dirige Quasi Semper Victurus*

*Vive Quasi Crux Mortuus*

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# Back to the Basics:

## What ailed the Irish in 2007?

### Marques Camp

Inevitably I get the same question when I catch up with friends back home or when I meet someone and tell them I go to Notre Dame. “What’s wrong with Notre Dame?” they ask rhetorically. The way everyone asks this question gives me the sense that they get a great feeling of delight at the sight of the Irish’s 2007 struggle. It is as if they want me to admit what they already know, that the Irish are overrated often to such a high degree by the media that our expectations have been raised to an astronomical level, which makes a 3–9 season even more difficult to cope with. So what went wrong?

#### **This much we know:**

The Irish came into the 2007 season having lost eight starters on offense and six on defense, leaving the team with a manifest lack of depth. After the Irish were thoroughly outplayed by many elite teams over the previous two seasons, and a nightmarish first two-thirds of the schedule

in 2007, nobody but the greatest of optimists would have predicted a third-straight BCS campaign.

#### **This much we found out:**

Despite the glaring deficiencies the Irish had coming into the season, we thought they still had a strong coaching staff that would keep the team competing every week. Perhaps, we thought, the Irish could gain a bit of momentum by knocking off an unranked Georgia Tech team sans No. 2 NFL draft pick Calvin Johnson. But the major drama heading into the game was, “Who will start at quarterback?” We soon found out that sophomore Demetrius Jones would start in a new spread offense. As we discovered, our young offensive line had a lot of trouble (to say the least) holding their blocks. Jones had equal difficulty holding onto the football. So, Weis promptly brought on Evan Sharpley and The Savior for mop-up duty. We found out that the defense was no match for Tech

running back Tashard Choice, as he shredded them for 196 yards and two scores.

Final score: 33–3. Maybe they were not quite as ready as we thought. “There’s a whole litany of things there we have to fix,” Weis said after the game.

Then the lopsided scores hit the Irish like an avalanche: 31–10. “I’m not doing cartwheels.” 38–0. “We’re starting training camp tomorrow.” 31–14. “You keep going until there’s a payoff.” 33–19. “This time, I was maybe a little more rough at halftime.” 38–0. “It’s a butt-kicking today.” 41–24. “You have to evaluate the teacher and the teaching to see why you can’t progress.”

Obviously, Weis and the team grew more frustrated and anxious with each loss. This season was not one during which we could single out a certain phase of the game as a primary reason for the team’s struggles. The responsibility should be equally shared. The offensive line could not block; Clausen held on to the ball a bit too long; the young receiving core had difficulties with route

running; the weary defense missed too many tackles; the special teams unit had trouble both kicking field goals and covering kicks, etc. These are the fundamentals. These are the basics, without which you cannot expect to compete at an elite level or even an average one, much in the same way you cannot expect to ace a differential equations course without first mastering beginning algebra. It was not a matter of not being able to come through in big games — it was a matter of being a team that often did not belong on the same field as our opponent.

**This much we hope Coach Weis learned:**

Hopefully Weis has learned a very valuable lesson. What we have discovered is that he has quite the talent for developing previously unheralded players. He proved this in 14 years in the NFL and his first two years at Notre Dame. And he has quite the knack for recruiting blue-chip talent. But, in the NFL, he was working with the cream of the crop in terms of football players, and for his first two years here he inherited a veteran, albeit unheralded, squad. What Weis probably did not have to spend much time on during his career was teaching the basics. Teaching how to win before drawing up creative and intelligent game plans. He certainly should possess this teaching ability, owing to his experience as a high school coach in New Jersey, and his four years on the staff at South Carolina. Perhaps he misjudged his priorities upon his arrival at Notre Dame.

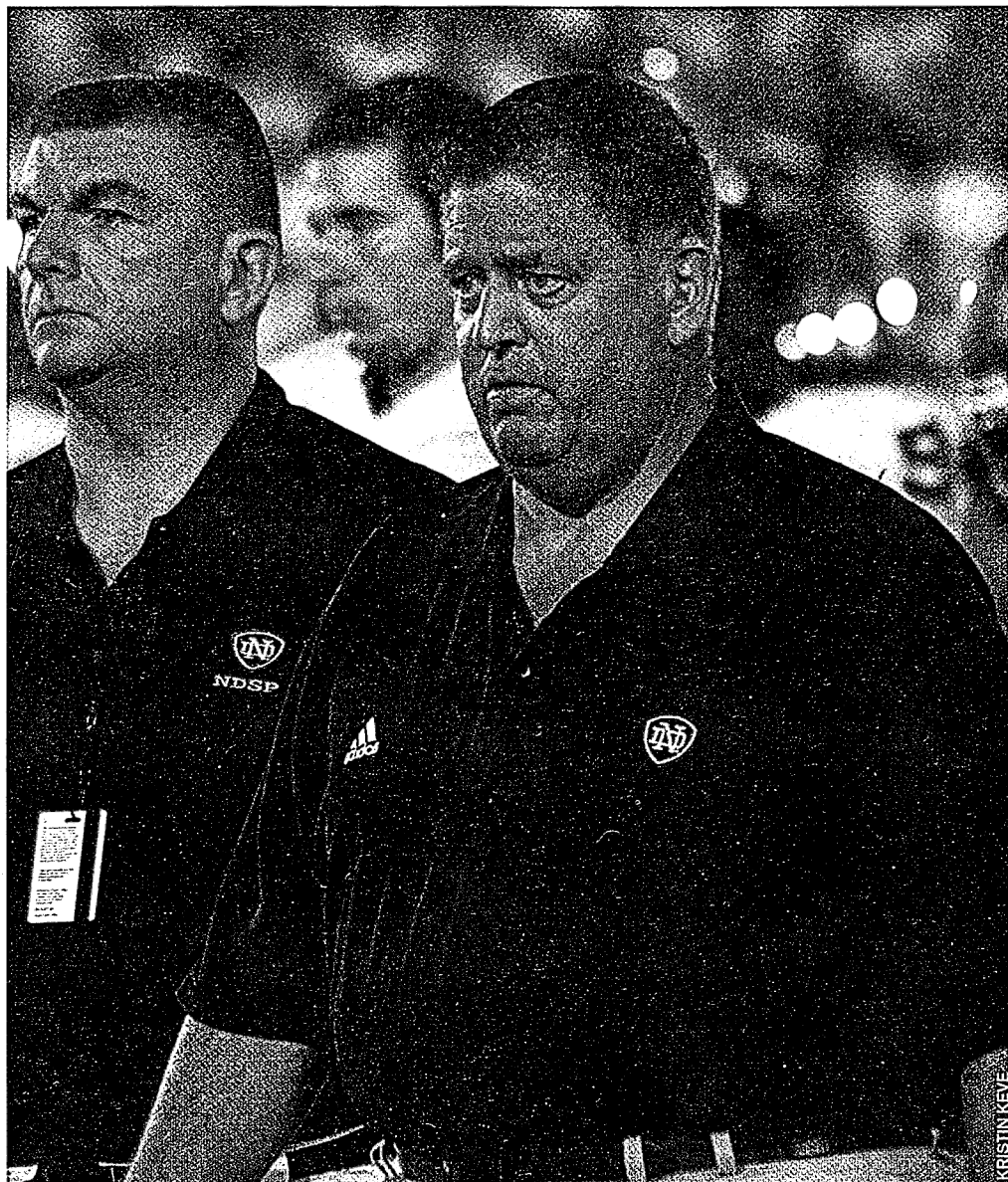
College is the in-between phase, and he might have made a mistake in assuming that a youthful college team already knew how to win. Thus, as a consequence, the “fundamentals” stone was left unturned. What Weis can take away from this season is that college football is a different animal. Teaching must take precedence over developing and game-planning. You simply cannot develop fundamentals that are not there in the first place. As more and more blue-chip recruits start to come to Notre Dame, I think Weis’ focus will turn to making sure his squad has mastered the basic skills needed to compete on a high level. It might take a few years, but it is necessary to build a strong, consistent, elite program. To satisfy the countless questions, I emphasize two things: Experience and fundamentals. The 2007 Irish did not have much of either.

**This much we can take away:**

Yes, at times the 2007 Notre Dame Fighting Irish looked like an unmitigated disaster. But there were several performances that shook us out of our season-long catatonic state, at least temporarily. Linebacker Maurice Crum at UCLA. Wide receiver Golden Tate and quarterback Evan Sharpley at Purdue. Running back James Aldridge at Michigan State. Safety Tom Zbikowski at Penn State. Defensive end Trevor Laws for pretty much the entire season. These moments were perhaps brief and fleeting, but at least they were there.

With apologies to all the departing seniors, perhaps our football program needed a season like this. We needed to be beat up, bloodied and humiliated. This season puts into perspective the ridiculously

high expectations for our football program. That is not to say that we should not expect to be competing for national championships annually, but rather to say that we are not immune to horrendous years. It is to say we cannot expect our brand name to carry us over the top anymore. Even a talented, creative mind like Weis, at a historically football-crazed institution can have a year of struggling with the Dukes and the Stanfords of the world for a win. I am not going to trot out the old cliché “there’s hope for the future,” because we do not know enough yet about the present to be able to make that claim. The jury is still out. But we do know that national powerhouses are not built (or rebuilt) overnight, and that losing has the potential to breed character. At least, we hope so. +





Notre Dame Stadium

September 1, 2007

Attendance: 80,795

All-Time Series: 27-6-1



	1	2	3	4	FINAL
GT	6	10	3	14	33
ND	0	0	3	0	3

KEY STATS	GT	ND
Total Yards	380	122
Rushing Yards	259	-8
Turnovers	0	3
Sacks	9	1

**BACKTRACK** Quarterback Demetrius Jones advances, but the Irish lose with negative yardage.

# Rude Awakening

GEORGIA TECH 33, NOTRE DAME 3

Jen Wulf

It was both the lowest scoring game of Head Coach Charlie Weis' career at Notre Dame and the most lopsided opening-game loss in Irish history. Irish fans who expected the same success as the past two seasons had a wake-up call in the season opener against Georgia Tech on Sept. 1.

Following months of secrecy, Weis unveiled his starting quarterback, sophomore Demetrius Jones. After he redshirted the 2006 season, this was Jones' first and last appearance on the field with the Irish. In his debut, Jones rushed 12 times and completed one of four pass attempts for a combined 32 yards. Jones' second rush resulted in a fumble that led to Georgia Tech's first field goal, a 32-yard kick by Travis Bell.

The Irish went three-and-out in their next

two possessions in the first quarter, while Tech picked up another field goal to make it 6-0. Irish fifth-year senior defensive end Trevor Laws blocked a potential third field goal with a minute to go in the quarter.

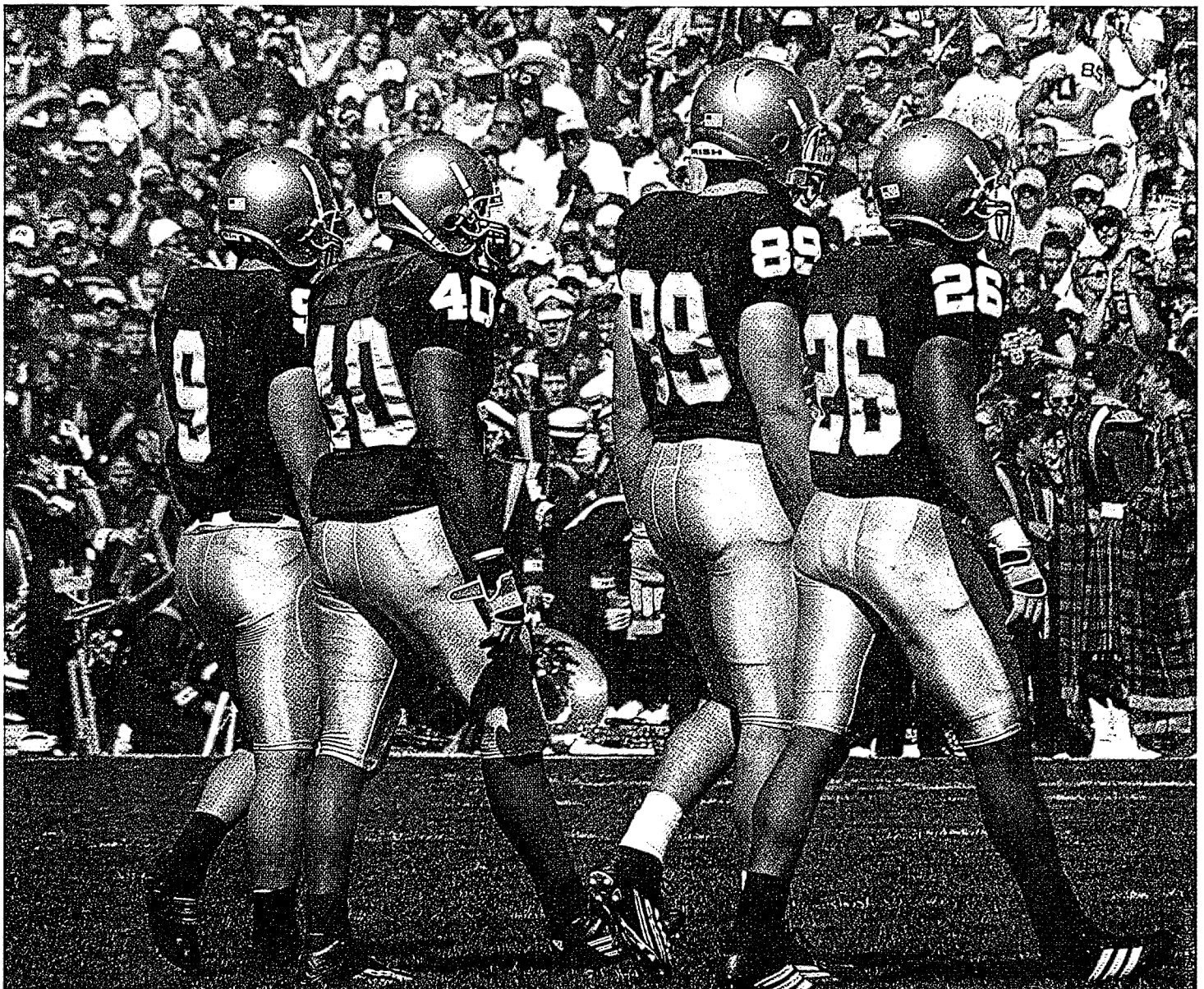
The second quarter echoed the first. The Irish relied on their rushing game, but they were easily outrun by Tashard Choice, who picked up a career high 196 yards. The Irish started the quarter with a series of rushes that brought them to the Georgia Tech 39-yard line, but another fumble by Jones put the ball back in the hands of the Yellow Jackets. Choice rushed 21 yards to the Notre Dame 23-yard line and Bell eventually kicked a 40-yard field goal, making it 9-0 Jackets.

After a few short runs by the Irish, Georgia Tech landed its first sack on Jones. ND went

three-and-out on their next two drives, and Tech took full advantage of its final possession of the half. Choice spearheaded the drive, rushing from 22 yards out for the touchdown, bringing the score to 16-0. With two and a half minutes on the clock, Weis pulled Jones and replaced him with junior quarterback Evan Sharpley for a two-minute drill. Sharpley started with a few complete passes, but was then sacked twice on the same possession, which left the Irish on their own 40-yard line at the end of the half.

In the third quarter, the Irish stepped up their passing game and were finally able to get themselves on the scoreboard, but they still had trouble holding back the Georgia Tech offense. Tech opened the half with another field goal from 39 yards. Sharpley





**THE CAPTAINS** From left to right, seniors Tom Zbikowski, Maurice Crum, Jr., John Carlson and Travis Thomas head onto the field for the first coin toss of the season.

FROM THE  
PRESS BOX

had a shaky start on the next drive, with an incomplete pass and a sack, but finally completed one pass to sophomore wide receiver Robby Parris and three to fifth-year senior tight end John Carlson. This landed the Irish on the Georgia Tech 5-yard line and, after an unsuccessful rush, put them on the scoreboard with a 24-yard field goal.

Notre Dame's fate was all but sealed going into the fourth quarter. Choice maintained his momentum from the third quarter and cut across the field for 45 yards, setting up a rushing touchdown.

Though Sharpley was able to complete a 20-yard pass on the next Irish possession, he was sacked three times and promptly returned the ball to Georgia Tech on the Notre Dame 17-yard line. After only two short rushes,

running back Jonathan Dwyer easily scored the Yellow Jackets' third touchdown.

Tech returned the ball to the Irish with just under nine minutes to go, and the team took the field led by freshman quarterback Jimmy Clausen. Those hoping for a miracle from the most celebrated recruit were soon disappointed. Although he was able to complete four short passes, he was also sacked for a loss of 13 yards.

Constantly rotating running backs and quarterbacks did nothing to stabilize Notre Dame's game. Choice was also a formidable force, and the Irish defense could do little to slow him down. +

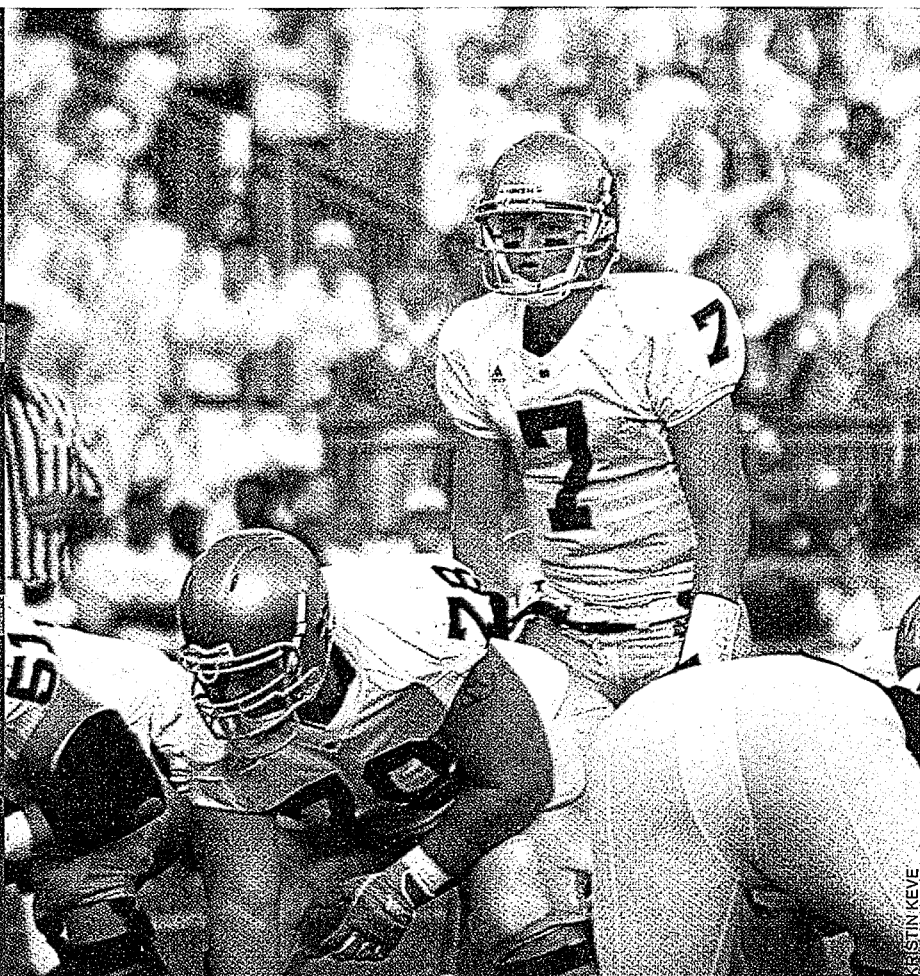
Despite a rather embarrassing match-up with Georgia Tech this season, the Irish do have a history of victory against the Yellow Jackets. Notre Dame's record for the entire series stands at 27-5-1. At home, they have a 15-2 record against Tech, and their most recent bout in Georgia resulted in an Irish win, 14-10. Though this may be a small comfort to witnesses of the game that started the worst season in Irish history, Irish fans may hope that the next few years will see a return to the glory days of yore.

**Beaver Stadium**

September 8, 2007  
 Attendance: 110,078  
 All-Time Series: 9-8-1

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
ND	7	0	3	0	10
PSU	7	7	10	7	31

KEY STATS	PSU	ND
Penalties/Yards	7/65	14/97
Rushing Yards	164	0
Third Down Efficiency	9-16	2-16
Sacks	6	2



**YOUNG GUN** Freshman Jimmy Clausen made his first collegiate start at Penn State. He went 5-6 on the opening drive of the game, leading the Irish into Nittany Lion territory.

# A Sad Day in Happy Valley

PENN STATE 31, NOTRE DAME 10

## Marques Camp

After sitting out most of the season opener recovering from off-season elbow surgery, freshman quarterback Jimmy Clausen made his first college start in front of 110,078 raucous fans in Happy Valley. The Penn State Nittany Lions made sure that this was an experience Clausen would not soon forget.

Penn State, looking to exact revenge on the Irish after falling 41-17 a year ago at Notre Dame Stadium, fed off the emotion expressed by their fans, all clad in white, giving credence to Beaver Stadium's new nickname: The White House.

Clausen, executing a conservative game

plan, finished 17-32 for 144 yards with one interception and was sacked six times. Clausen showed glimpses of promise during the opening drive, where he led the offense going 5-6 for 37 yards and even getting 12 yards with his legs. Unfortunately, the drive failed to turn into points, as sophomore kicker Nate Whitaker missed a 50-yard field goal attempt.

The Irish jumped to an early lead midway through the first quarter when sophomore Darrin Walls intercepted quarterback Anthony Morelli's pass and returned it 73 yards for a touchdown. But the Nittany Lions' Derrick Williams returned a punt 78 yards for a touchdown near the end of the

quarter to even the score.

As was the case against Georgia Tech the previous week, the Irish offense struggled to move the ball and failed to score an offensive touchdown for the second consecutive week, finishing with zero rushing yards. Penn State linebacker Dan Connor was crucial on defense and finished with a team-high of 12 tackles. The Nittany Lions' offense also struggled at times, but Morelli found junior wide receiver Jordan Norwood for a 10-yard strike in the second quarter, pushing the lead to 14-7.

After the Nittany Lions and the Irish exchanged field goals in the third quarter, Penn State running back Austin Scott





KRISTIN KEVE

**DOWNFALL.** Anthony Vernaglia and David Bruton take down a Penn State ball carrier. The Nittany Lions went for 295 total yards against the Irish defense, outgaining the Irish by 151 yards.

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

pounded the ball into the end zone with a 1-yard score 10 minutes into the third quarter to push the lead to 24-10 and scored on a 5-yard run midway through the fourth to extend the lead to 31-10. Scott finished with 116 yards rushing on 28 carries.

On a positive note for the Irish, senior safety Tom Zbikowski exhibited some of his trademark tenacity, forcing two fumbles on defense and returning a punt for 47 yards.

Clausen was also impressive during a drive late in the fourth quarter, as he engineered an 8-play, 65-yard drive down to Penn State's 10-yard line, before he had to force a throw on fourth down, which was intercepted in the end zone by Penn State's Justin King.

The blisteringly loud Penn State crowd seemed to get in the heads of the Irish, as they were whistled for 14 penalties for a total of 97 yards, including several key offsides penalties. Though the Irish won the turnover battle, turning the ball over once while forcing three for Penn State, the offense could not take advantage beyond Walls' return.

Though the Irish offense failed to find a consistent rhythm for the second consecutive game, Head Coach Charlie Weis did not think Clausen failed his first major college test. "I'm not doing cartwheels," Weis said. "But I can't say I'm displeased either. I think he wasn't the problem." +

Freshman quarterback Jimmy Clausen made his first college start at Penn State after appearing briefly in the fourth quarter the previous week against Georgia Tech. The 31-10 loss was Clausen's first loss as a starter in more than four years. Clausen led Oaks Christian High School in Westlake Village, Calif., to a 42-0 record as a starter, and four consecutive CIF-Southern Section championships. In 2006, Oaks Christian became only the second team in California history to finish with a 15-0 record.

Michigan Stadium

September 15, 2007  
 Attendance: 111,178  
 All-Time Series: 14-20-1

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
ND	0	0	0	0	0
MICH	10	21	7	0	38

KEY STATS	MICH	ND
First Downs	25	10
Total Offensive Yards	379	79
Fumbles: Number-Lost	2-2	2-2
Sacks	8	0



HAND IN HAND The Irish offensive line tries to hold strong.

KRISTIN KEVE

# A Big Loss in the Big House

MICHIGAN 38, NOTRE DAME 0

Marques Camp

**M**ichigan and Notre Dame, the two winningest programs in college football history, squared off in a battle for respectability on Sept. 15, 2007. The Irish, who were blown out by Georgia Tech and Penn State the previous two weeks, saw a prime opportunity to avenge last season's 47-21 home defeat to Michigan. The Wolverines, having suffered a shocking upset to FCS (formerly Division I-AA) school Appalachian State in week one and a blowout loss to Oregon week two, wanted to prove they could live up to their No. 5 preseason ranking in *The Associated Press Poll*.

This was the first time since college football polling started in 1936 that both of these programs came into the matchup unranked.

The Irish struggled mightily from the start, as their first offensive snap sailed over the head of freshman quarterback Jimmy Clausen, and the offense racked up -27 total yards of offense in their first two drives.

The Wolverines and their freshman quarterback Ryan Mallett were meanwhile feeding the Irish defense a steady dose of senior running back Mike Hart who, during the week, had guaranteed victory over the Irish. Hart,

who finished with 187 rushing yards on 35 carries and two touchdowns, punched in a 2-yard touchdown run midway through the first quarter and a 3-yard score less than a minute into the second quarter. Mallett, in his first career start, finished 7-15 for 90 yards but threw three scores to supplement the rushing attack.

The Irish offense was not able to keep pace with the Wolverines, as they fumbled the ball five times in the first half, lost two of them, and found themselves trailing 31-0 at the half.

The Irish defense showed up in the second half, but the offense still





KRISTIN KEVE

**HOLDING ON** Irish running back Armando Allen tries to break free.

continued to struggle, failing to score an offensive touchdown for the third consecutive game. Clausen, as he did during much of the first two games, found himself under constant pressure with no time to throw the ball. He was sacked eight times. Clausen finished 11–17 passing for 74 yards and an interception while backup senior quarterback Evan Sharpley came in for mop-up duty in the fourth quarter and finished 2–5 with an interception. For the third consecutive game, the Irish rushing attack found themselves on the negative side, as they finished with –6 rushing yards.

Head Coach Charlie Weis seemed as

perplexed as his team's fans were during the post-game press conference. "My confidence isn't shaken," Weis said. "But as an organization, we haven't done a very good job."

Weis promised reporters that the next week of practice would be the start of training camp for the Irish. "Obviously, after three games, this team is headed in the wrong direction. The only way I know how to fix that is to go back to the start of training camp and start swinging," he said. +

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

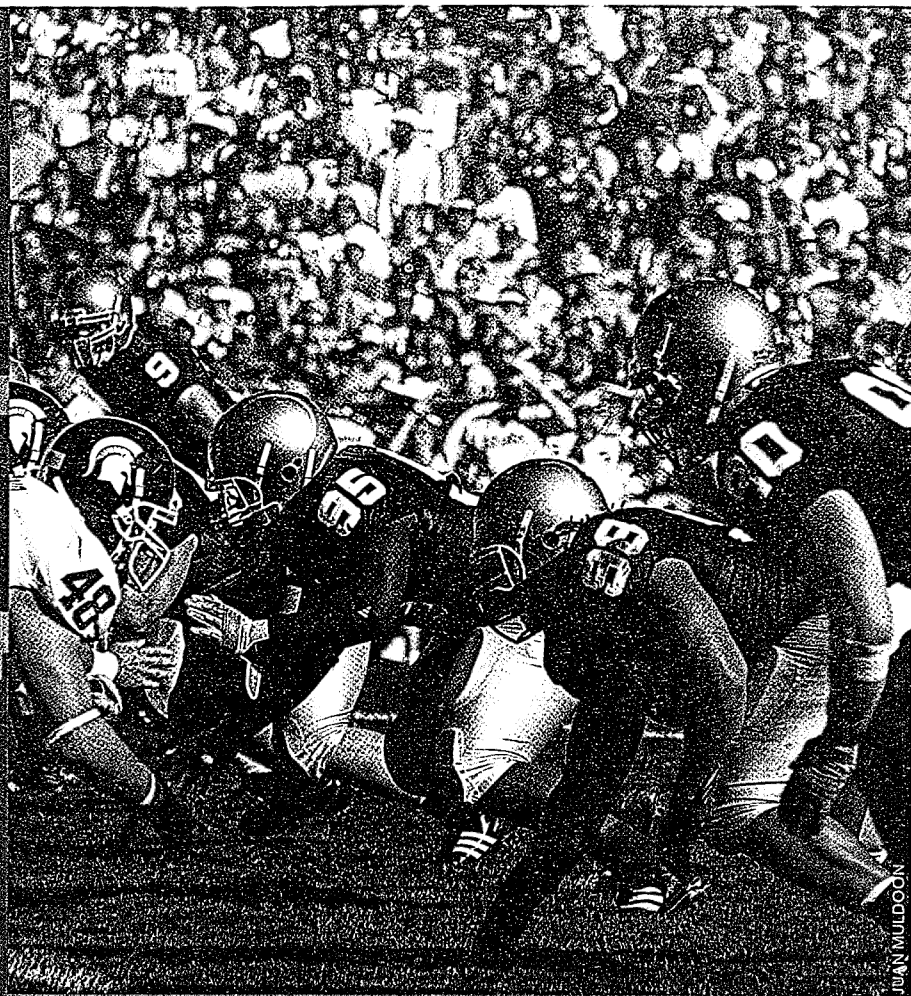
The Irish and Wolverines faced off as unranked foes for the first time since *The Associated Press* started ranking teams in 1936. With the loss, the Irish fell to 7–11 all time against the Wolverines in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which now holds a 20–14–1 all-time record against the Irish, is the only school besides Florida State to hold a winning record against the Irish (based on five all-time meetings). The Irish also tried to cut into Michigan's advantage in all-time wins. Going into the game, Michigan, the winningest program in college football history, posted 860 victories, while the Irish were second, with 821 victories.

Notre Dame Stadium

September 22, 2007  
 Attendance: 80,795  
 All-Time Series: 44-25-1

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
MSU	14	3	14	0	31
ND	7	7	0	0	14

KEY STATS	MSU	ND
First Downs	19	9
Rushing Yards	219	117
Passing Yards	135	86
Total Offensive Plays-Yards	354	203



THE TRENCHES Senior Trevor Laws and freshman Ian Williams line up against the Spartans.



WAVING WHITE FLAGS Adidas distributed 75,000 white towels at the MSU game for Charlie Weis' charity, Hannah & Friends. The towels read "Tradition Never Graduates — Notre Dame Football."

# MSU Blues

MSU 31, NOTRE DAME 14

Molly Conaty

**B**y the end of September, Notre Dame football fans across the country began to accept the possibility of a losing season. Going 0-4 would be unprecedented for the Irish program, but the team was already statistically the worst offense in the country after the Michigan game. Waving white spirit towels in apparent surrender, the students nevertheless cheered for their team, perhaps still encouraged by last season's fourth-quarter comeback in East Lansing.

Something woke up the echoes and invited the Irish to play, if only for a half. This was a team that had not yet scored an offensive touchdown, but the Irish came out of the tunnel and scored two touchdowns

on their first two possessions. They reached season-highs in both rushing (117) and total (203) yards. During the first three games, Notre Dame was penalized 24 times for 173 yards but had only four penalties for 35 yards against the Spartans.

After MSU quarterback Brian Hoyer fumbled a snap, senior Irish defensive end Trevor Laws recovered the ball and set up senior Travis Thomas' 1-yard touchdown run, and loyal students finally got to complete the long-awaited celebration push-ups. The second quarter followed the first with equal momentum. An 80-yard scoring drive, highlighted by sophomore James Aldridge's 43-yard run, was capped by freshman Robert Hughes' 3-yard run





**SOLEMN SOLIDARITY** The team joins together after the game, win or lose, to sing the alma mater with the student body, a tradition started by Weis in 2005.

to the end zone. Halftime came and victory seemed attainable, with the Irish up 17-14.

Michigan State's first-year coach Mark Dantonio pumped up his team at the half by reviewing last year's dreadful defeat. "Our guys had been mocked, and our guys had been made fun of, and we lost coaches; there was a coaching change and a lot of things happened. We internalized that and turned it in our favor," he said after the game. Notre Dame's window of opportunity slammed shut as Michigan State reenergized and scored twice more in the third quarter. The Irish were unable to put together a successful drive, losing 31-14.

Though the Irish fell to 0-4 for the first time ever, the younger members of the team

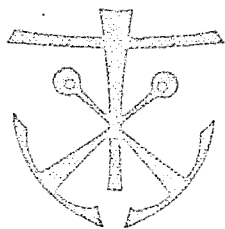
provided hope for future games. Aldridge made his first career start against MSU and ran for over 100 yards. Hughes made his first debut in college and rushed for 33 yards on six carries. Freshman Jimmy Clausen played for a majority of the game and did not throw a pick.

"I do know this," Weis said after the game. "I do know that after last week's game, the guys could have done one of two things, okay. They could have come in and thrown in the towel, or they could have come in slugging it out, and they came out slugging it out. You could see that from the start of the game. This wasn't a team that was anywhere close to packing it in." +

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

The Michigan State game proved just how offensive the Irish offense was in early 2007. The Irish scored 27 points through four games, the third fewest in school history. The 1933 team managed just 12 points and the 1928 team coached by Knute Rockne scored 25. In the next eight games, the Irish would score 170 points, for a total of 197 points on the season. The Irish defense, by comparison, allowed opponents to score a total of 345 points in 12 games.

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men.



# Is God calling you?

**Feb 1**

## **DISCERNMENT**

with Fr. Jim King, C.S.C.  
Fr. Tom Eckert, C.S.C.  
& Seminarian Thomas Haan  
from Old College

**Feb 8**

## **PRAYER**

with Fr. Nick Ayo, C.S.C.  
& Fr. Michael Wurtz, C.S.C.

**Feb 22**

## **COMMUNITY**

with Fr. Peter Jarret, C.S.C.  
Fr. Austin Collins, C.S.C.  
Fr. Gary Chamberland, C.S.C.

**5:30-7:30 p.m.**

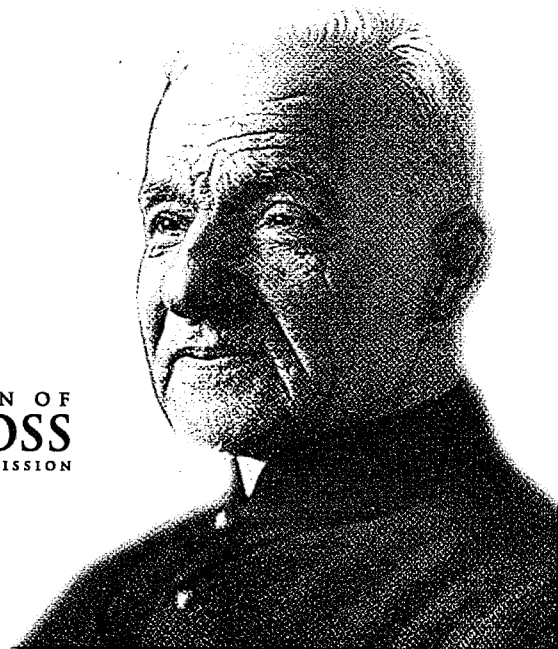
*beginning at Log Chapel  
with dinner to follow at the  
Coleman-Morse Center*

## **Blessed Brother André Bessette, C.S.C. Dinners**

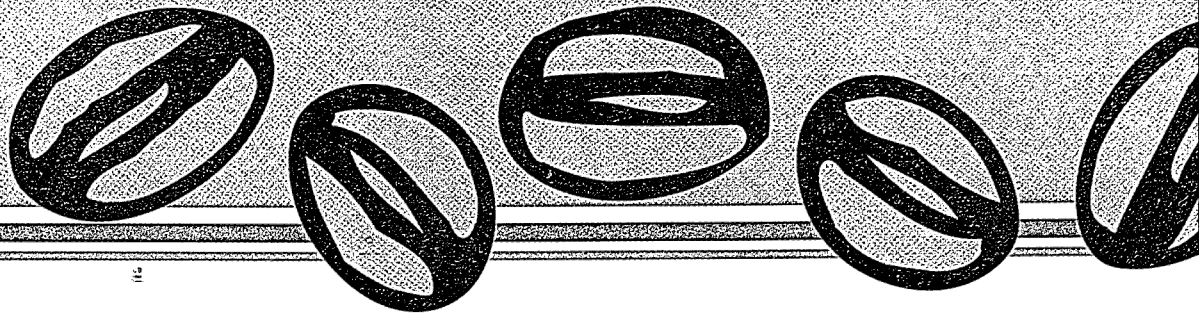
Have questions?  
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**Ross-Ade Stadium**

September 29, 2007

Attendance: 62,250

All-Time Series: 51-26-2

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
ND	0	0	6	13	19
PURDUE	10	13	3	7	33

KEY STATS	PURDUE	ND
Passing Yards	377	252
Penalties/Yards	11/110	9/67
Turnovers	2	3
Total Offense	426	371



**BREAKING THROUGH** Duval Kamara scores one of three Irish receiving touchdowns.

# A Good Drumming

Malisha Samarasekera

PURDUE 33, NOTRE DAME 19

**A**fter four tough losses, the Fighting Irish finally showed the ability to play winning football during their game at Purdue — at least for 30 minutes. Despite an inspired second half, the points came too little too late, as was the case many times this season.

The catch-up football began after the Boilermakers ran for 54 yards and scored a field goal on their first drive. Despite freshman quarterback Jimmy Clausen's 15-yard pass to sophomore George West Jr., the Irish could not sustain the drive and punted on their first possession. The Irish defense also stalled, allowing Purdue to score a touchdown soon after.

Down 10-0 at the beginning of the second quarter, things did not improve. With a 17-yard completion to junior David Grimes on the first play, the Irish drive seemed to have potential, but an interception by Purdue

cornerback Terrell Vinson at the Notre Dame 31-yard line erased any progression. The Boilermakers capitalized, with Chris Summers kicking a 34-yard field goal.

The Irish offense faltered again, and after regaining the ball, quarterback Curtis Painter led the Boilermakers to an 11-yard touchdown. A fumble by freshman running back Armando Allen gave way to another Purdue field goal for 26 yards, and the bad luck of the Irish continued. After finally reaching the red zone with seconds left in the first half, a 35-yard field goal attempt by freshman Brandon Walker was blocked.

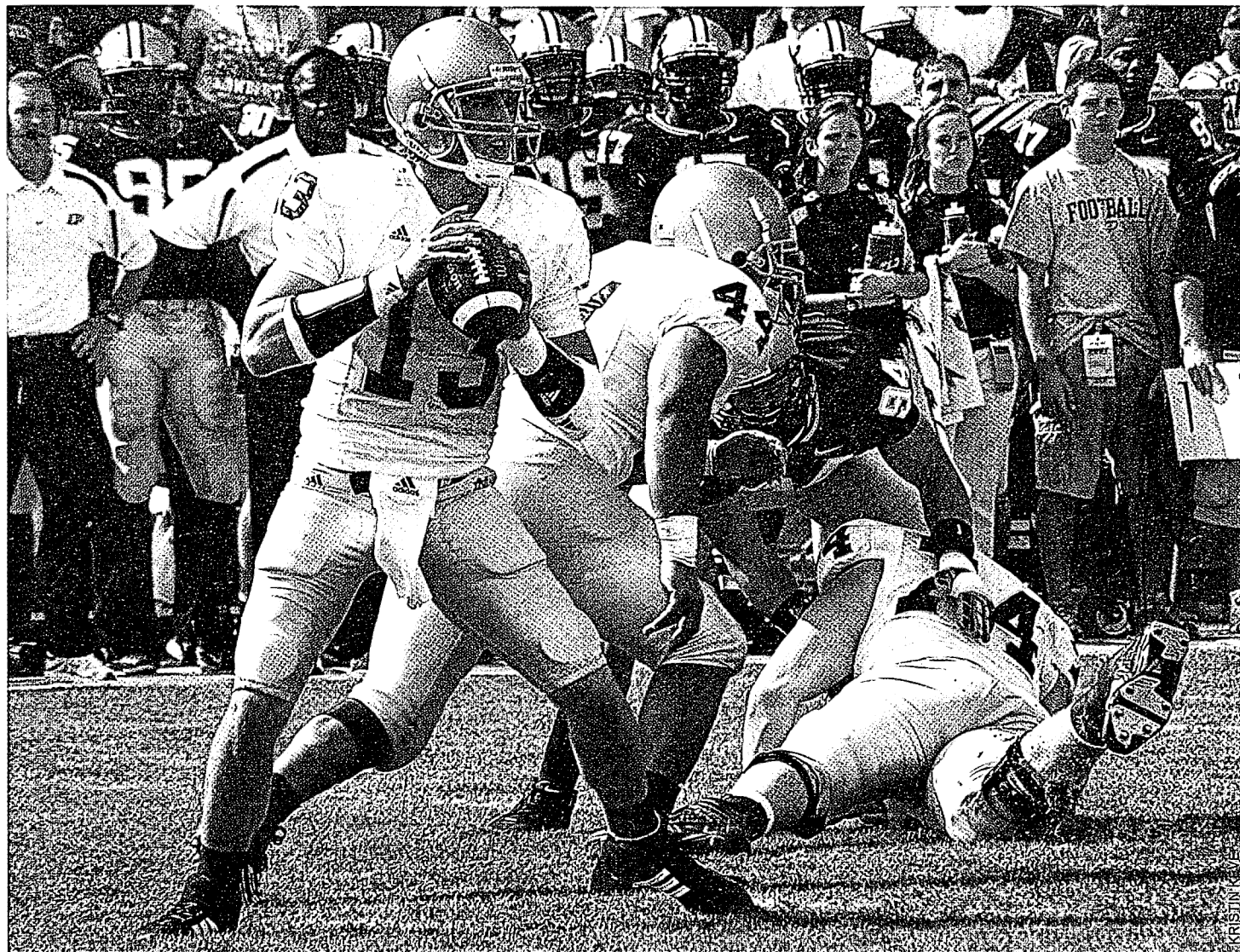
Entering halftime trailing the Boilermakers 23-0, Head Coach Charlie Weis used tough love to motivate the team before retaking the field.

"I prefer not to have to use that approach. But every once in a while you're forced to go to that level, and fortunately they responded,"

Weis said.

After punting on their first possession in the second half, the defense came through with an interception by senior safety Tom Zbikowski at the Purdue 37-yard line. The offense rebounded, and Clausen led the team to the first passing touchdown of his college career with a 5-yard throw to senior tight end John Carlson. Though Walker missed the extra kick, the Irish were on the board with a score of 23-6 with 7:46 left in the third quarter.

It was after this drive that much of the controversy surrounding the Irish began. Following a 16-yard pass to Duval Kamara for a first down, Clausen exited the game due to a hip injury. Junior Evan Sharpley stepped in, but the team was unable to accrue another first down on that drive. The Boilermakers took advantage of good field position, settling for a 29-yard field goal.



**BOILED OVER** Evan Sharpley's 208 passing yards were insufficient to lead the Irish to a victory against the Boilermakers.

Purdue did not have time to adjust to the new Irish quarterback before the old one returned. After attempting to play through the pain, Clausen left the field for good as the third quarter came to a close. Sharpley took advantage of the opportunity. Leading the Irish 81 yards down the field in 11 plays, Kamara scored a touchdown after a 7-yard pass from Sharpley. The point-after kick failed again, however, this time as a result of a Purdue block.

Trailing 26-12 with 12:15 remaining in the game, Irish morale was low until a quick stop by the defense allowed Sharpley to take another turn with the ball. Beginning at the 21-yard line, Sharpley marched the Irish down the field, attempting 11 passes and rushing twice for six yards. Notable plays from the drive include a 24-yard connection with sophomore Robby Parris and a 25-yard bomb to freshman Golden Tate for Sharpley's second touchdown of the quarter. Trailing only by a touchdown, an Irish resurgence

seemed to be brewing.

The momentum did not last long, with Painter regrouping his offense on Purdue's next possession. After a 23-yard return allowed Purdue to begin at their own 41-yard line, running back Kory Sheets rushed 21 yards for another first down. Three plays later, Purdue scored after a 14-yard touchdown pass to Dustin Keller.

Facing a daunting score to overcome and only 5:18 left, Sharpley committed a grave error. Following a 21-yard completion to Parris and a 15-yard penalty for roughing the passer, the ball was again intercepted by Vinson at the goal line. Time eventually ran out in a hard-fought victory for the undefeated Boilermakers.

The Irish won the second half of the game, outscoring the Boilermakers 19-10. Sharpley's impressive play provided fodder for what would become a season-long debate over which quarterback would be the one to lead the Irish. +

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

The game against Purdue was not only an offensive breakthrough for the Fighting Irish this season — it was also a stepping stone for former Irish quarterback Brady Quinn. During the fourth game of the 2003 season, Quinn made his first start as a Notre Dame player against Purdue, throwing for the third longest pass in school history with an 85-yard bomb down the field to wide receiver Maurice Stovall for a touchdown. Quinn threw for a total of 297 yards, one of the most productive performances by an Irish quarterback since Jarious Jackson in 1999.

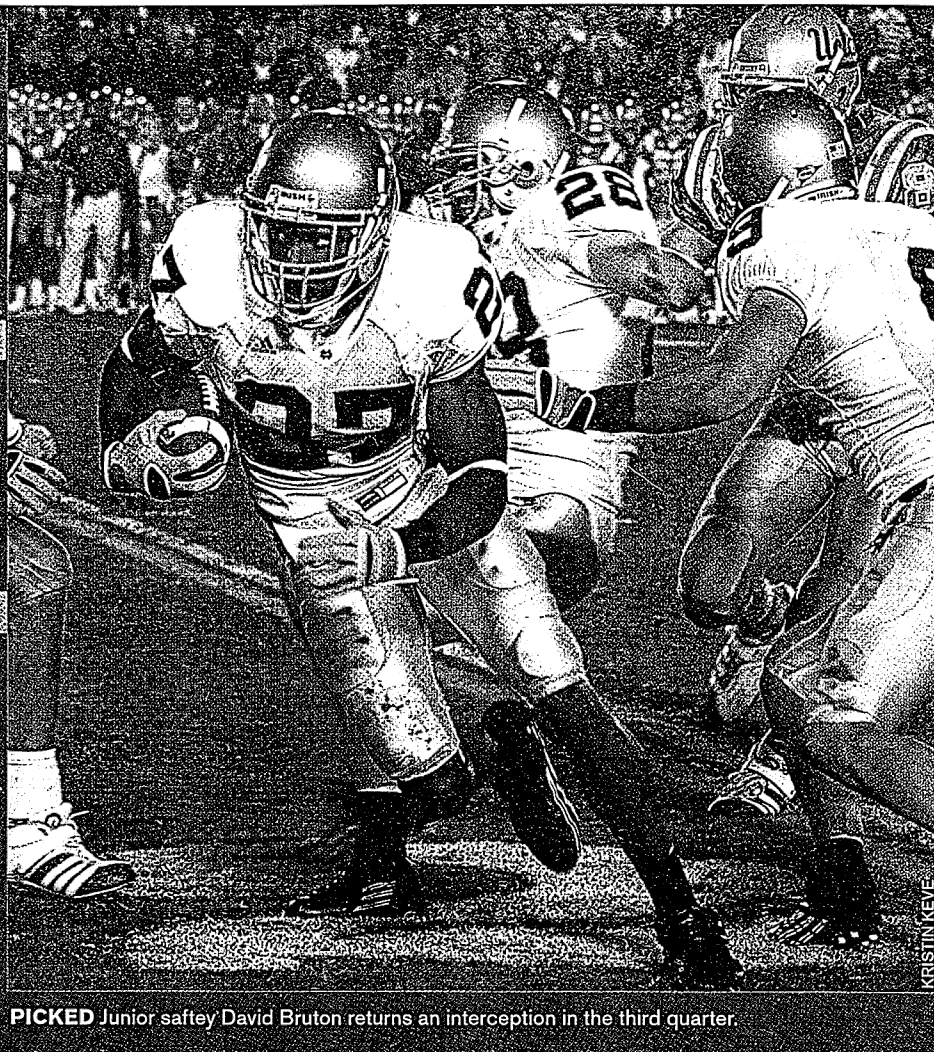


Rose Bowl

October 6, 2007  
 Attendance: 78,543  
 All-Time Series: 37-8-4

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
ND	3	0	17	0	20
UCLA	3	3	0	0	6

KEY STATS	UCLA	ND
Total Offense	282	140
Third Down Efficiency	3-17	4-15
Turnovers	6	0
Penalties/Yards	11/93	8/61



PICKED Junior safety David Bruton returns an interception in the third quarter.

# Ending the Losing Streak

Andy Gray

NOTRE DAME 20, UCLA 6

**W**hile in the first five games of the season and on the verge of tying the longest losing streak in school history at eight, the Irish arrived at the Rose Bowl on Oct. 6 in dire need of a win. UCLA seemed poised to thwart the Irish effort, standing at 4-1 and seeking vengeance for the previous season's last-minute game-winning Notre Dame drive. Yet Bruins' starting quarterback Patrick Cowan and running back Chris Markey were sidelined with injuries, and hope could still be found in Utah's 44-6 dismantling of UCLA a few weeks prior.

That hope came alive when freshman quarterback Jimmy Clausen, starting despite a recent hip injury, completed his first three passes for two first downs. But the Irish opening drive stalled thereafter and senior Geoff Price was called in to punt. After an

exchange of two more fruitless drives, the Bruins managed to get on the scoreboard with a 29-yard field goal.

The Notre Dame offense failed to move the ball once again on the ensuing drive. The well-established pattern of a sputtering offense, placing the Irish defense in a tough position, asserted itself once again. If this squad was going to make something happen, the defense would need to provide the spark.

Tom Zbikowski did just that. On UCLA's first play after the punt, he flew into the backfield to sack quarterback Ben Olsen at his own 12, forcing a fumble that was recovered by Notre Dame freshman Kerry Neal and returned to the 1-yard line. Olsen was forced to leave the game with a knee injury after the play. Though the Irish offense was unable to push the ball into the end zone and settled for the tying field goal, UCLA's loss

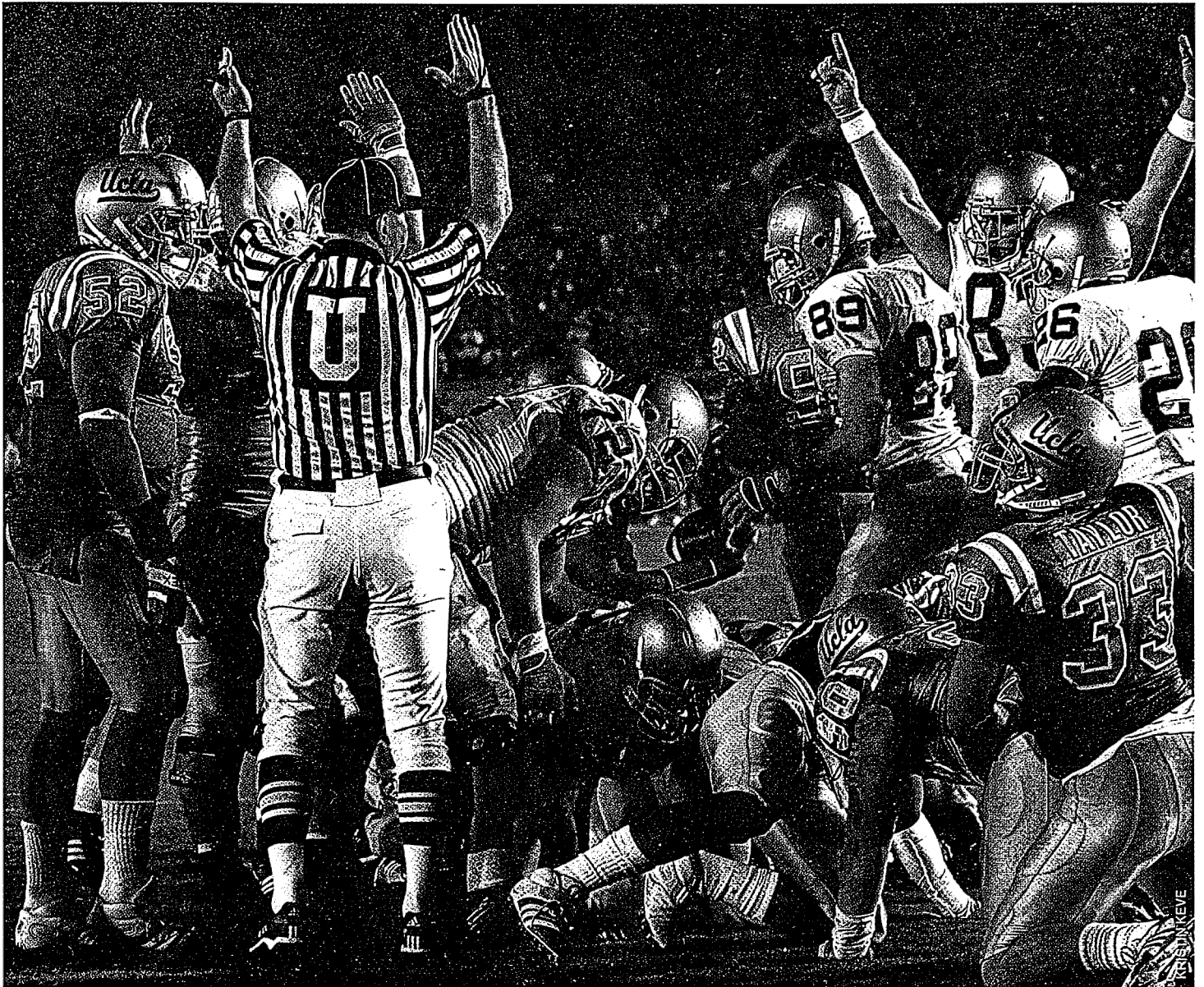
of its only available experienced quarterback would prove pivotal.

Olsen's replacement was McLeod Bethel-Thompson, a walk-on who had never thrown a pass in collegiate action. Bethel-Thompson was able to manage his offense and hand the ball to running back Kahlil Bell to secure another field goal for the Bruins just before halftime, but these were the last points UCLA would put on the scoreboard.

On the opening drive of the second half, senior Maurice Crum Jr. made the first of many key plays on a Bruin fourth down play, sacking Bethel-Thompson for a loss of eight yards. The turnover on downs was converted into another Irish field goal, tying the game at 6-6. It also marked the first crack in the UCLA offense, a precursor of the deluge of miscues that were to come.

Crum forced and recovered a Bell fumble





**VICTORY** The win against the Bruins marked the end of ND's longest season-opening losing streak.

on UCLA's next play. The Irish offense failed to move, but Price pinned the Bruins at their own 1-yard line. The inexperienced Bethel-Thompson panicked in his end zone, throwing a pick to Irish safety David Bruton, the first of four interceptions he would throw in the game. The turnover was converted into points by a 1-yard Clausen touchdown run.

Celebration promptly began on the Irish sidelines, but Head Coach Charlie Weis knew the game was not over. "It's been a while since we've been up in the second half," Weis said. "So I told my guys to act like they've been there before. Don't make me look like an idiot."

The defense was not finished. Just three plays later, Bethel-Thompson was sacked by sophomore linebacker John Ryan, forcing a fumble. Crum recovered the fumble in the

backfield and barreled 34 yards to the end zone, putting Notre Dame up 20-6, the final score.

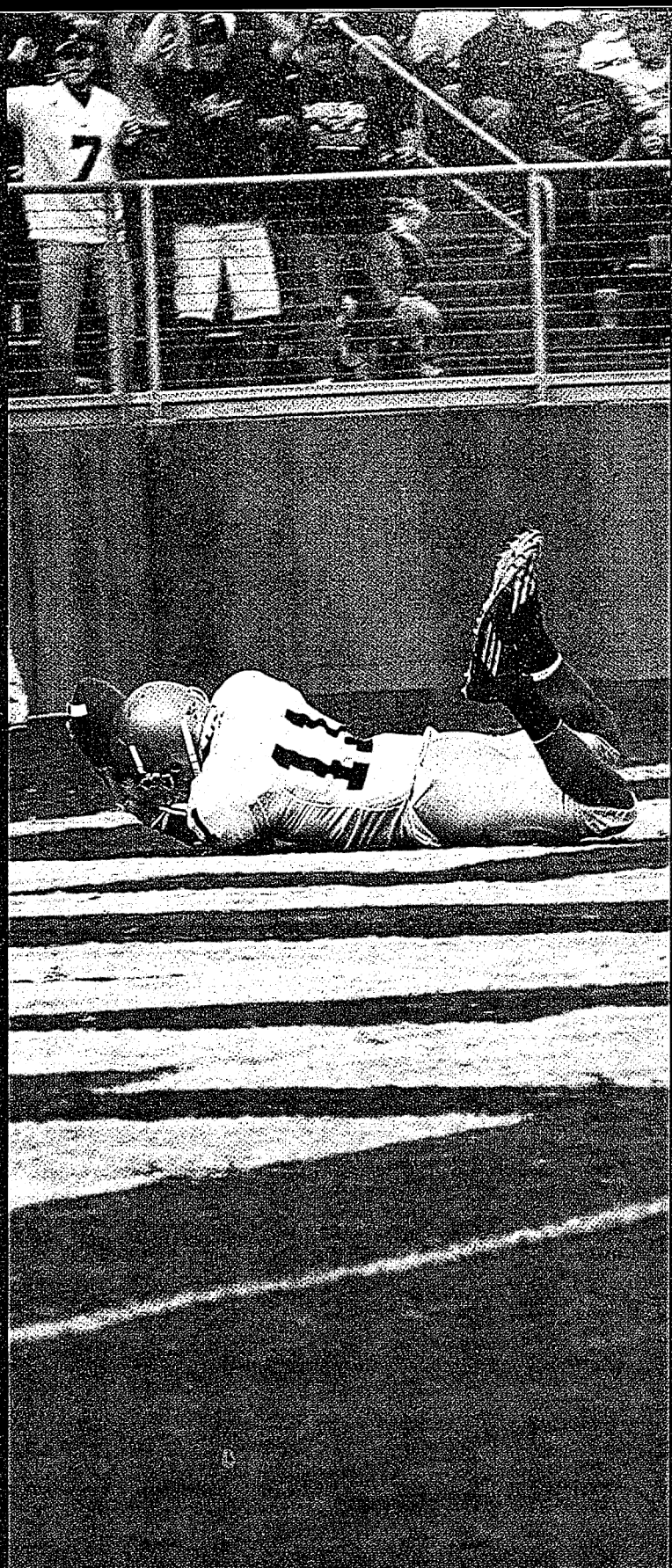
Bethel-Thompson's passes would be intercepted three more times, once by senior Terrail Lambert and twice by Crum.

Crum, a senior who will return for a fifth-year, finished the game with two fumbles forced, two fumbles recovered, two interceptions, one interception returned for a touchdown, seven tackles and a sack.

Asked about his spectacular performance, for which he was named the Walter Camp National Defensive Player of the Week, Crum said, "We were playing great as a team, as a unit. So I think we kind of fed off each other. When you are feeding off each other like that, the plays are bound to happen. I just happened to be there [...] I guess every dog has his day, and I guess it was my turn." †

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

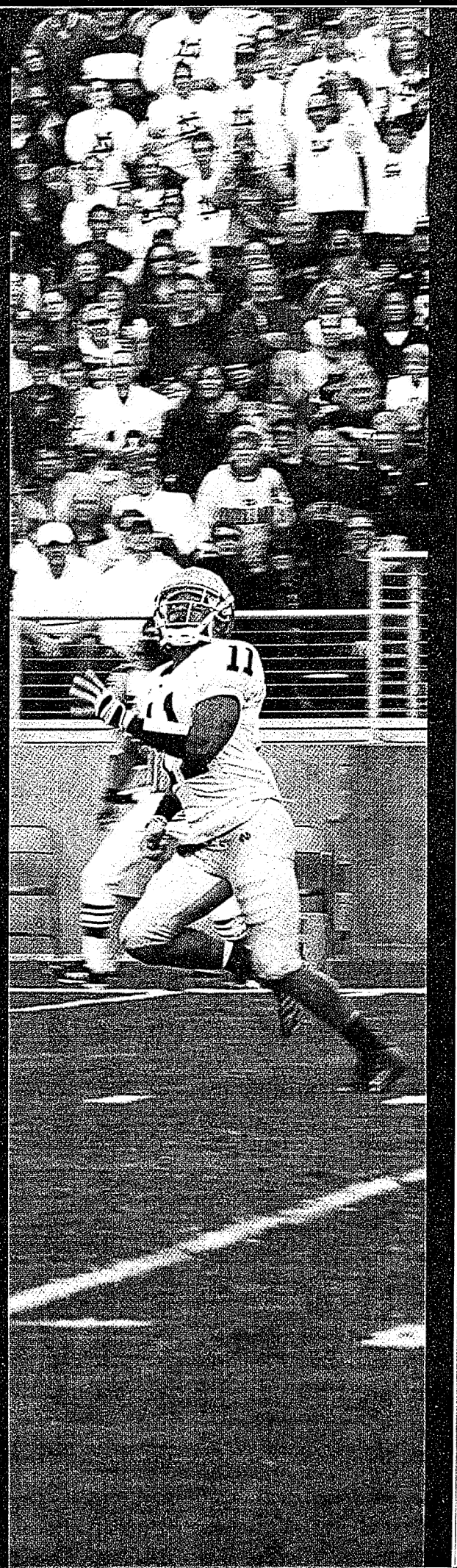
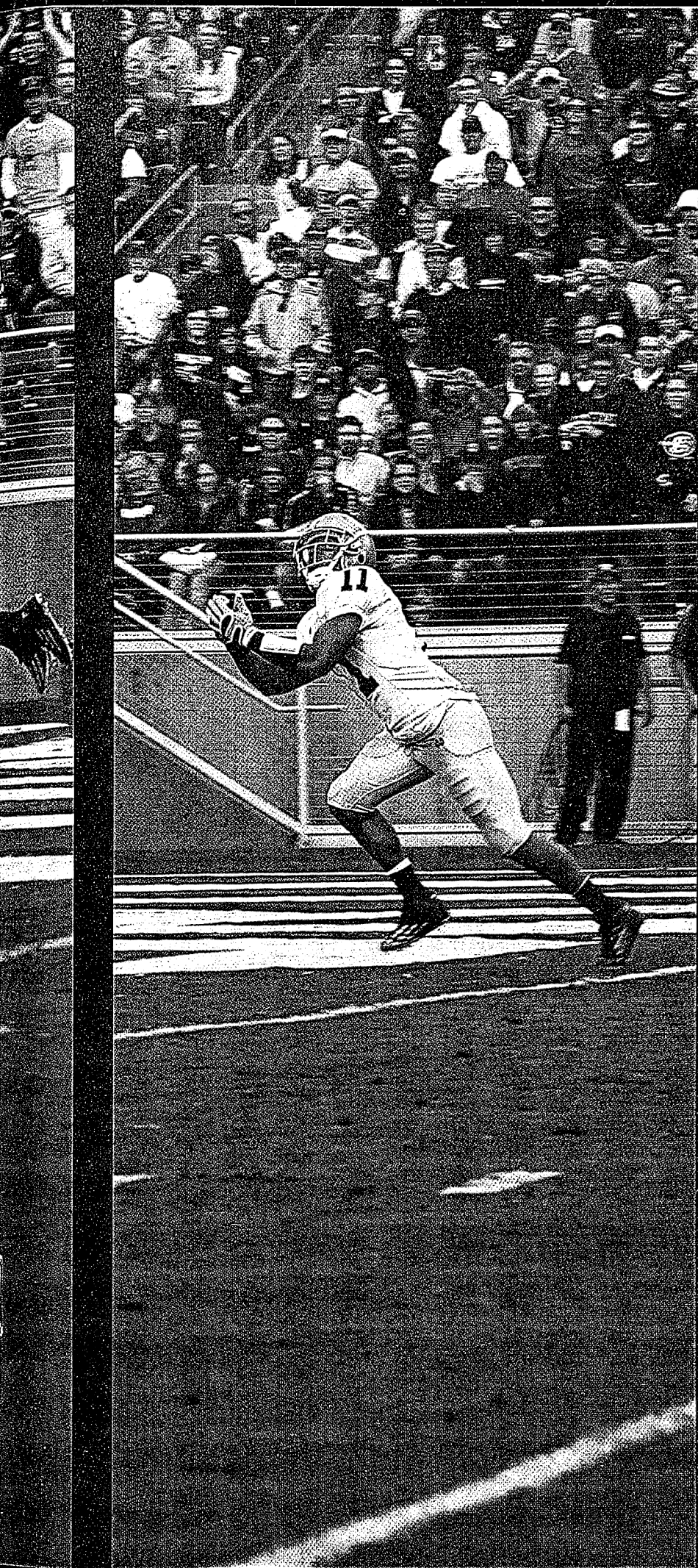
The exciting Oct. 6, 2007 game against UCLA was Notre Dame's second trip to the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. The significance of the first contest, which came 82 years prior, was of an entirely different sort. At the end of the 1925 season, Knute Rockne and the Four Horsemen met a Stanford squad coached by Pop Warner. The Irish won that Rose Bowl game 27-10 and earned Notre Dame's first undisputed National Championship.



Junior wide receiver David Grimes makes what seems to be an amazing diving touchdown grab in the season finale at Stanford. The catch was later overturned, much to the disappointment of the Irish.

*Photos by Juan Muldoon.*





**Notre Dame Stadium**

October 13, 2007  
 Attendance: 80,795  
 All-Time Series: 9-8-0

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
BC	6	7	14	0	27
ND	0	0	14	0	14

KEY STATS	BC	ND
Total Offense	458	222
Rushing Yards	168	27
Penalties	15/131	7/64



**READY TO FIRE** Jimmy Clausen passed for 60 yards against the Golden Eagles, but threw two interceptions.

# Eagles Fly Off With A Win

*BOSTON COLLEGE 27, NOTRE DAME 14*

Vanessa Adjei

**T**he Notre Dame–Boston College game on Oct. 13, was a chance at redemption. The Irish last faced the Eagles on October 23, 2004, falling in a nail-biting loss that left a bitter taste in the mouth of the Irish. Before the game started hopes were high, as the Irish were coming off their first victory of the season against UCLA the previous week. But the Eagles also had momentum riding a six-game winning streak to start the season.

“We came into this game thinking we can show everybody that we can still play [...] If we play well and beat Boston College, spoiling their season is one thing ... beating the No. 4 team in the nation is even better,”

senior defensive end Trevor Laws said before the game. The Eagles were victorious despite the high hopes of the Irish.

The game started out with a hint of foreshadowing as L.V. Whitworth of Boston College made a 52-yard rush in the first quarter, the longest of the season by a Notre Dame opponent. However, senior John Carlson made his 80th career reception on a 6-yard grab in the first quarter, showing signs of promise for the Irish team.

In the middle of the second quarter, senior Trevor Laws blocked a 34-yard field goal attempt by the Eagles’ Steve Aponavicius. By the end of the game Laws finished with 11 tackles, a career high. Success was fleeting, however, as the Eagles drove 41 yards to

score, increasing their lead to 13–0. Later, the Eagles used an interception return to the Irish 11-yard line to their advantage, leading to another touchdown that placed the score at 20–0.

The Irish fans in the stands grew restless as they waited for a score from the Irish. In an attempt to change things up, junior quarterback Evan Sharpley entered the field in the third quarter. He led the Irish on a 79-yard scoring drive, which put the score at 20–7. Sharpley engineered the Irish to their three longest scoring drives of the season, including one of 79 yards in the Boston College game. Teammate junior nose tackle Pat Kuntz said of Sharpley, “He’s good, and there’s nothing much else I can say about





**GET READY** Freshman Brandon Walker winds up on an extra point in the third quarter.

Many in the stands hoped this wind of change would spell victory for the Irish. Sophomore wide receiver Robby Parris had a memorable 28-yard grab in the third quarter that began Notre Dame's first scoring drive. The resulting 19-yard touchdown catch was the first of Parris' career. It seemed that the luck of the Irish was kicking in as a second touchdown brought the Irish within six points of the Eagles due to freshman offensive linebacker Brian Smith's 25-yard interception return that led to a touchdown in the middle of the third quarter.

Irish fans began to feel that a victory was within their grasp. But just as things seemed to be turning in favor of the Fighting Irish, the team was slapped with

a penalty of excessive celebration following the touchdown, and the ensuing kickoff was pushed back to the 15-yard line. The Eagles answered by returning the kick 18 yards to Notre Dame's 44-yard line. Toward the end of the game Boston College players Matt Ryan and Kevin Challenger completed a 13-yard pass putting Boston College up 27-14. Despite the disappointment, seniors Joe Brockington and Trevor Laws had the impressive accomplishment of 10 or more tackles in a single game. Weis accepted the defeat, saying, "I think we had a chance in this game, but the bottom line is they won 27-14." +

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

Longtime Notre Dame fans know of the strained history between the Irish and the Eagles. The competition between the two teams stems largely from the fact that they are the nation's only Catholic schools with Division I-A football teams. The rivalry is relatively new; the Irish have only faced the Eagles 16 times. In 1993 the Eagles dashed Irish hopes of a national title, increasing the heat of the rivalry. The Eagles managed another upset in 2002, defeating the undefeated No. 4 Irish.

Notre Dame Stadium

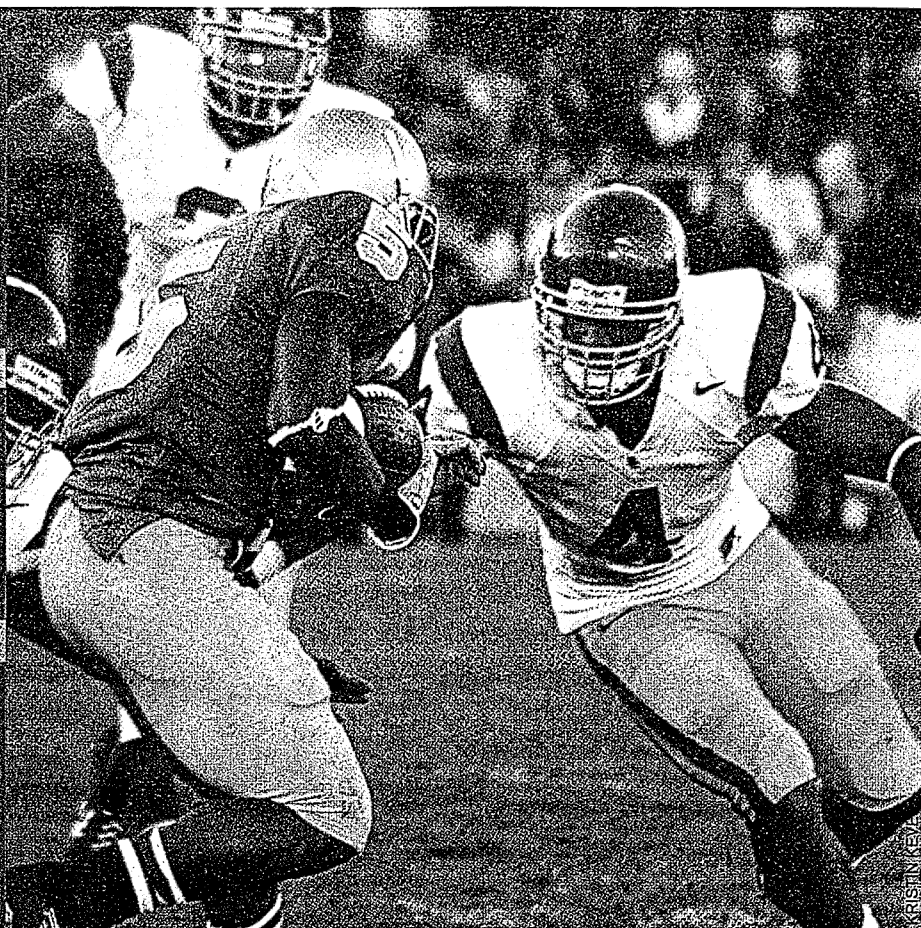
October 20, 2007

Attendance: 80,795

All-Time Series: 42-32-5

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
USC	6	10	14	7	38
ND	0	0	0	0	0

KEY STATS	USC	ND
Total Offensive Yards	462	165
Rushing Yards	227	48
Third Down Efficiency	5-14	4-17
Sacks	7	0
Turnovers	3	0



**FRESHMAN PROMISE** First year running back Armando Allen tries to evade USC safety Kevin Ellison. Allen gained 58 yards on 11 carries in the game.

# Easy Beating Green

USC 38, NOTRE DAME 0

Alex Hellmuth

On Oct. 20, 2007, the Fighting Irish took the field in green jerseys and yellow pants that were replicas of what the No. 11-ranked 1977 National Championship team wore when they upset No. 5 University of Southern California 49-19. Head Coach Charlie Weis was in the stands as a college senior for that historic game, and although the throwback uniforms were the same, the outcome could not have been more different.

In the 79th meeting of the nation's premier inter-sectional rivalry, No. 13 USC crushed Notre Dame with a final score of 38-0. The loss placed the Trojans as the third school ever to hold a winning streak of six games or more against the Irish and extended Notre Dame's losing streak at home to four games.

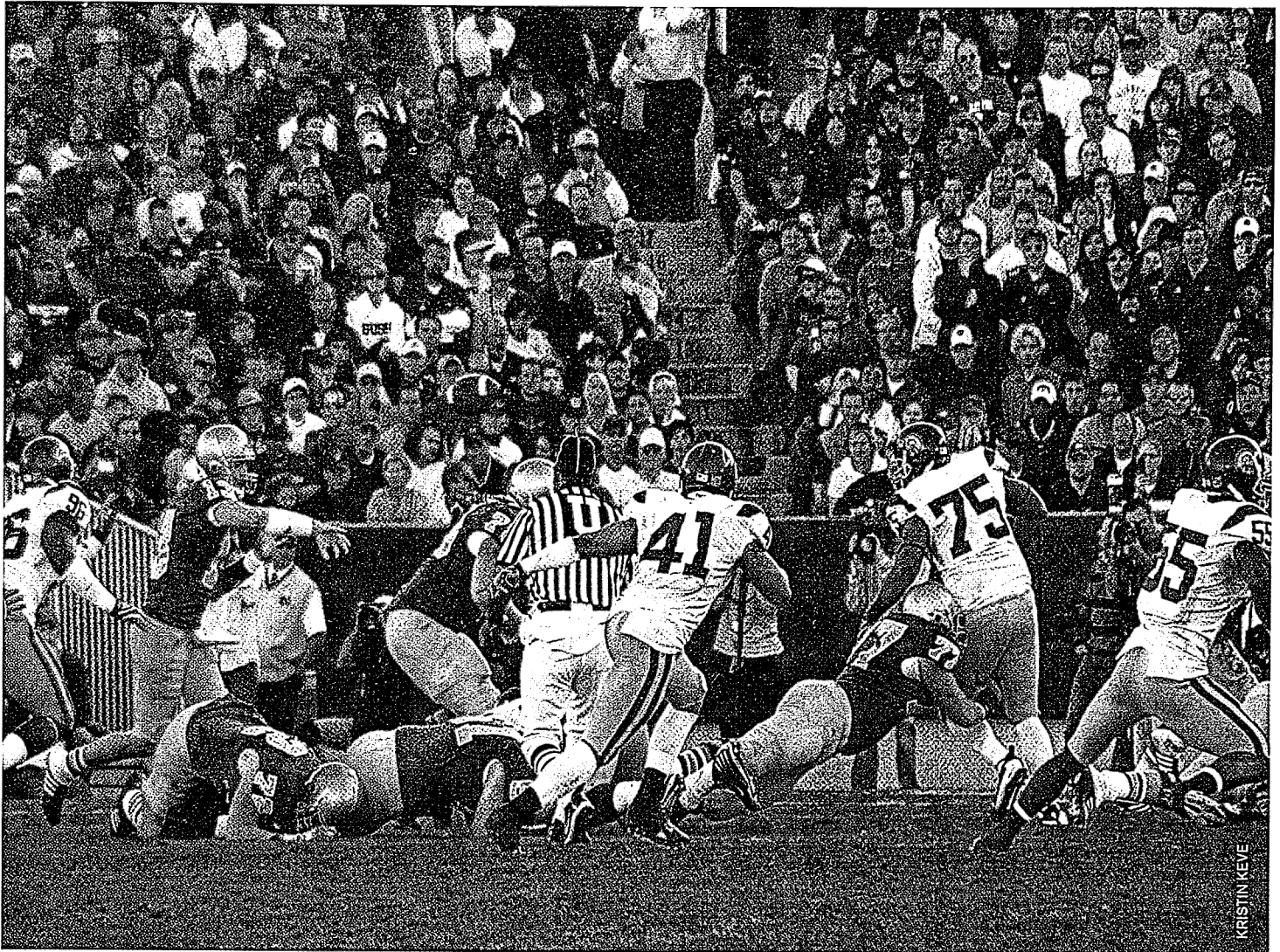
Before game day, Weis announced that junior Evan Sharpley would be the starting quarterback in place of freshman Jimmy Clausen. At a press conference before the game, Weis described USC's John David Booty as one of the best quarterbacks in the nation. But Trojan quarterback Mark Sanchez started the game due to Booty's finger injury and proved to be more of a threat to the Irish than Weis may have thought. Sanchez threw four touchdown passes in front of a crowd that included members of the '77 National Championship team, along with Joe Theismann, watching from the stands.

The majority of the first half was competitive. USC started the scoring with a 10-yard touchdown pass from Mark Sanchez to wide receiver Fred Davis. The

Irish failed to capitalize on a blocked punt by junior David Bruton that he returned to the USC 29-yard line. Sharpley and the offense could only muster six yards, and freshman Brandon Walker's 40-yard field goal attempt was subsequently blocked. Sanchez then added another score for the Trojans with an 8-yard pass to wide receiver Allen Bradford with 3:55 left in the half. After a Trojan field goal with 55 seconds until halftime, the Irish went into the locker room trailing 17-0.

In the second half, the Irish continued to crumble. After senior Travis Thomas fumbled on the ND 13-yard line in the first minute of the third quarter, Sanchez threw a 5-yard touchdown pass to running back Stanley Havili. Sanchez added a 48-yard score late in the third quarter. USC





KRISTIN KEVE

**GROUNDING** The 38–0 loss was the worst home loss since the Irish were defeated 40–0 by top-ranked Oklahoma in 1956.

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

running back Joe McKnight finished off the scoring in the fourth quarter with a 51-yard touchdown run.

The Irish only managed 48 yards rushing on 30 carries, and Sharpley was sacked five times for a loss of 36 yards, setting a new school record for sacks allowed in a season with 39, with four games still to play. Sanchez passed for 235 yards and four touchdowns, with no sacks or interceptions.

Weis attributed the loss in part to Notre Dame's inability to "stay on the field on offense, specifically on third down." A defeated Sharpley said to the press after the game, "It's very frustrating. It's frustrating any time you lose, no matter who it is. Yeah, losing doesn't get any easier." +

Despite Notre Dame's losing record, the stadium was still sold out, and the traditional pep rally was extremely enthusiastic, especially due to the presence of the '77 National Championship team who sat in green jerseys alongside the current players in the Joyce Center. In 1977, Head Coach Dan Divine, who received a suggestion from basketball coach Digger Phelps, ordered special green jerseys for the Irish-Trojan game. Referred to as the best-kept secret in Notre Dame football history, even most of the team was unaware of

the uniform switch until 20 minutes before kickoff. At the pep rally, Phelps referred to the football team as the "green machine," a name that was made clear to the student body at the game, who rolled a Trojan horse onto the field before the start of the game. The Irish swept USC 49–16 and wore the green jerseys for the rest of the season, which culminated in the National Championship. When Weis was asked about the jerseys before the game he said, "I think they're ugly."



**Notre Dame Stadium**

November 3, 2007  
 Attendance: 80,795  
 All-Time Series: 71-10-1

	1	2	3	4	OT	FINAL
NAVY	0	14	6	8	18	46
ND	7	14	0	7	16	44

KEY STATS	NAVY	ND
Total Offense	338	375
Rushing Yards	257	235
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-2	6-8
First Downs	23	27
Punts	2	0



**OPEN FIELD** Freshman Armando Allen evades Navy linebacker Ram Vela. Allen ran for 91 yards on 16 carries

# 43-1

NAVY 46, NOTRE DAME 44

Lisa Schultz

**N**otre Dame and the Naval Academy have met on the gridiron 82 times, a historic matchup with a tradition of respect sparked by hardship at both schools during World War II. Notre Dame suffered financially during the war, and the Navy needed to train more officers. The solution to these problems was the establishment of a Naval training center at Notre Dame. The university was able to sustain itself, and the Navy trained 12,000 officers in South Bend.

But when it comes to football, Irish fans usually expect a win — and with good reason. Before 2007, Notre Dame had beaten Navy for 43 consecutive years, an NCAA record. But considering the season's trends to that point, Irish fans did not want to take this game for granted.

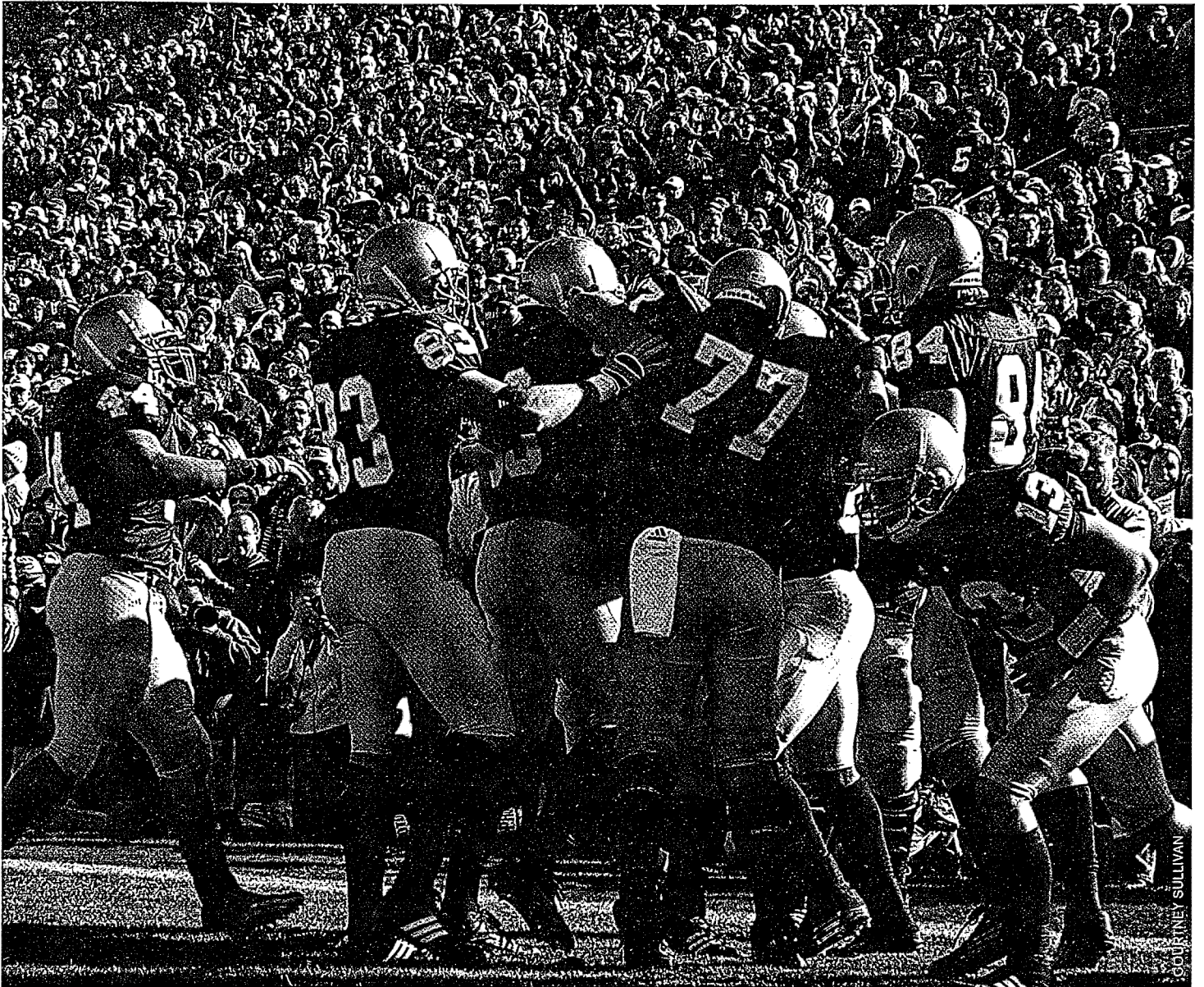
The game began with a moment of silence for Irish freshman running back Robert Hughes' brother Tony, who was fatally shot during the previous week, and Ryan Shay, a former Notre Dame runner who died that Saturday morning during the U.S. men's marathon Olympic trials.

The atmosphere quickly changed. After junior Evan Sharpley's quick strike to sophomore receiver Robby Parris for 21 yards, sophomore James Aldridge set up the Irish with a second-and-goal from the 3-yard line. Weis made the call for Hughes to score Notre Dame's first touchdown, and Hughes delivered. Teammates who stood by him at his brother's funeral the day before celebrated with him on the sidelines.

Celebration continued, but on the opposite

side of the field. Navy converted a fourth-and-1 on their second drive to keep moving downfield, ending in a touchdown. The Irish responded as senior Travis Thomas scored from one yard out to put the Irish up 14-7, reviving a struggling ground game that would eventually gain 235 yards. Navy fired back to tie the game at 14, but Notre Dame went into halftime leading for the first time this season on a 21-yard pass to freshman Duval Kamara with 12 seconds to go, putting the Irish up 21-14.

Navy came out firing in the second half, scoring a touchdown on their first drive but missing the extra point. This error forced them to go for two on their next touchdown, a Sharpley fumble that was returned 16 yards for the Navy score. Kaipo-Noa Kaheaku-



COURTNEY SULLIVAN

**A GLIMMER OF HOPE** The Irish celebrate after a Notre Dame touchdown.

Enhada rushed in for the conversion, giving Navy the 28–21 lead.

Thomas tied the game with a 3-yard touchdown run with just over three minutes left. The Irish held Navy to a 3-and-out, but Chris Kuhar-Pitters' acrobatic sack of Sharpley in ND's last drive forced overtime.

Both teams scored touchdowns with the extra point in the first overtime and swapped field goals in the second. In the third overtime, Navy completed a 25-yard pass for the touchdown and a quick pass for the two-point conversion. Notre Dame responded with a Thomas touchdown run. On the first conversion attempt, Navy was flagged for pass interference, moving ND to the 1-yard line. Thomas was stuffed on the next attempt, giving Navy the win.

"It's a big win for the academy," then-Navy Coach Paul Johnson said. "I'm happy I don't have to answer anything else about the streak every time we play." Navy celebrated by giving its students the day off from classes on the following Monday.

Weis said the streak was insignificant to him and his team, and his players echoed that sentiment.

"They made one more play than we did," senior strong safety Tom Zbikowski said. "It's another loss. I don't care about the streak. We lost today, and that's all that matters." †

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

In allowing Robert Hughes to score the first touchdown against Navy, Weis provided a chance for Hughes to honor his brother on the field. Off the field, Weis personally drove Hughes to Chicago to be with his family after the tragedy and also insisted that the football team have buses to attend Tony's funeral on the Friday before the game. He also planned to give the ball from the touchdown to Hughes' family.

**Notre Dame Stadium**

November 10, 2007  
 Attendance: 80,795  
 All-Time Series: 22-5-0

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
AF	10	7	14	10	41
ND	0	10	0	14	24

KEY STATS	AF	ND
Total Offense	405	304
Rushing Yards	285	58
Sacks	6	0
Third Down Efficiency	7-14	4-15



**HIGH-STEPPING** Sophomore James Aldridge faces hot pursuit from the Falcons.

# Mayday, Mayday!

AIR FORCE 41, NOTRE DAME 24

Maria Sellers

Crowds filing into the gates of Notre Dame Stadium on Nov. 10 held the spirit of the Fighting Irish in their hearts. The second parents' weekend brought a slew of parents, students and fans, all hoping for a win to recover from the heartbreaking loss to Navy the previous week. With a 22-5 series lead against Air Force, the Irish were aiming for victory.

The start of the game did not bring the fans what they had anticipated. A fumble by senior tight end John Carlson during the first play of the game led to a 19-yard field goal by Falcon kicker Ryan Harrison and Air Force's early 3-0 lead. The Irish attempted to recover with freshman Armando Allen's 20-yard kickoff return and a first down by

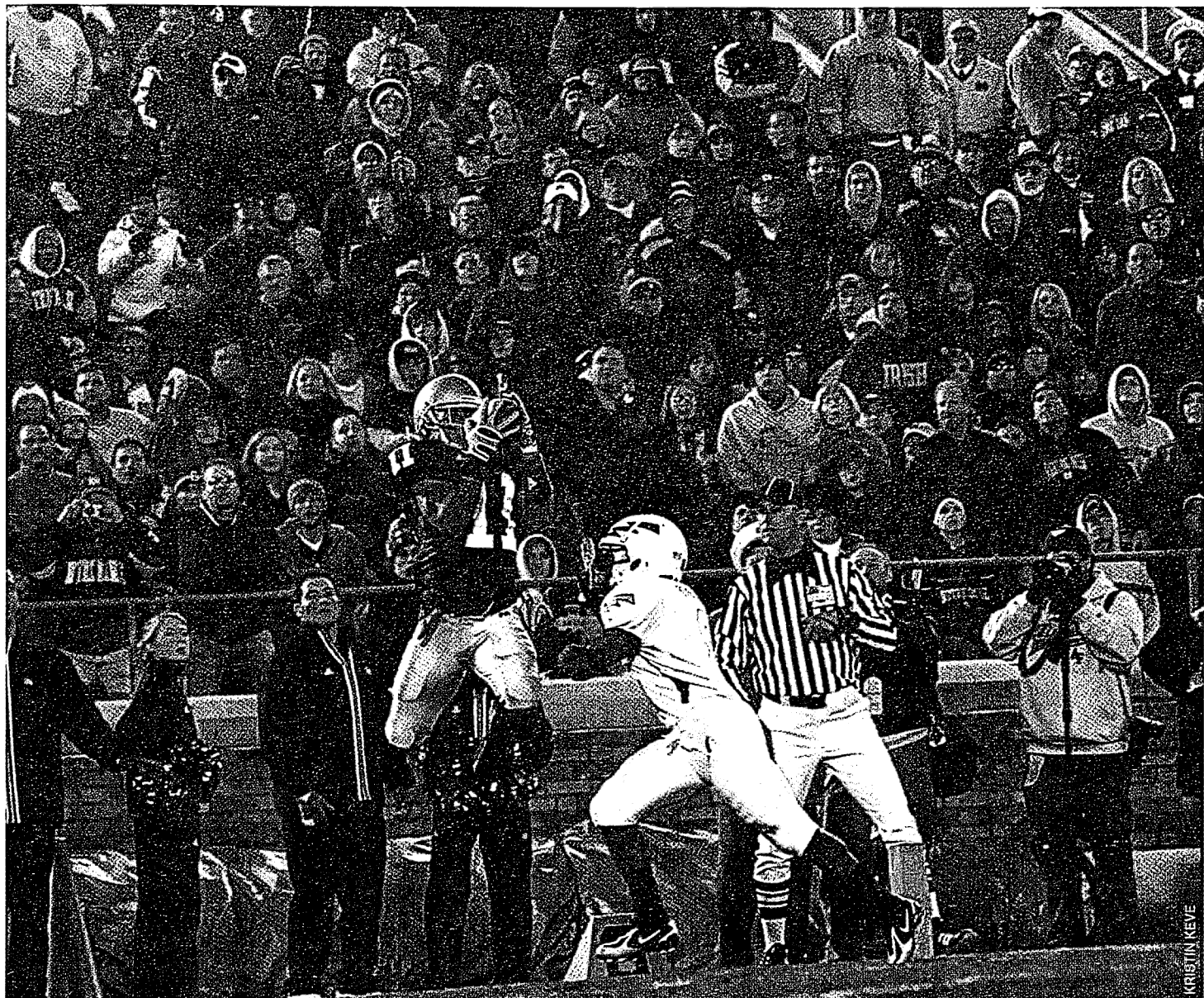
sophomore James Aldridge, but a fumble by junior Asaph Schwapp led to a recovery by Air Force's John Rabold for a touchdown. But the Irish began to pick up speed in the second quarter, as freshman Brandon Walker completed a 28-yard field goal and Carlson caught freshman Jimmy Clausen's 2-yard pass for a touchdown, tying the game at 10-10.

With less than two minutes left in the second quarter, the Falcons' Spencer Armstrong rushed eight yards for a touchdown. The clock ran out before the Irish could score off fifth-year senior Tom Zbikowski's recovery of an Air Force fumble on the Notre Dame 33-yard line, and the Irish finished the first half down 17-10.

During the third quarter, Air Force continued to dominate the Irish. Three minutes into the second half, Air Force quarterback Shaun Carney completed a 7-yard pass to Sean Quintana for the Falcons' third touchdown. After alternating attempts, Air Force's Keith Madsen scored another touchdown. Harrison's extra point brought the Falcons to a 31-10 lead.

The Irish began to gain momentum in the fourth quarter, but unfortunately it was not enough to overcome the deficit. The team began the quarter with a first down run by Clausen, which set up a 21-yard touchdown pass to junior David Grimes and an extra-point completion by Walker. The Irish defense held the Falcons to a field goal on





**FLYING HIGH** Junior wide receiver David Grimes leaps to catch a high ball near the sideline.

the next drive. Clausen then responded with a touchdown pass to Allen. After a series of drives, Air Force scored the final touchdown of the game, resulting in a final score of 41–24. The loss was the first upset by the service academy in over 11 years.

The Irish finished the day with a total of 304 yards, 19 first downs and 25 minutes of possession against the Falcons' 405 yards, 23 first downs and 34 minutes of possession. Clausen went 22-for-40 for a career high of 246 passing yards, surpassing Carney's 126 yards. The Irish rushing attack gained only 58 yards compared to the Falcons' 285 yards.

Although the game ended disappointingly for Notre Dame, it still showed admiration

for Air Force. Fifth-year senior John Carlson said, "I've always had a lot of respect for the academies, for many reasons. First of all, they play hard the whole game. And obviously the fact that they defend our country. I've always had a great deal of respect for these guys."

The season's second loss to a service academy was difficult, but fans, players and coaches walked away from game looking to a positive future and the game against Duke. Junior safety David Bruton admitted the team's struggle but had faith for a comeback. "As a team, we're at that low point, basically the lowest of lows," he said. "But we've got to keep plugging." †

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

Notre Dame's first game against the Academy was played on Air Force soil on Oct. 10, 1964. The Irish won 34–7. Since then, the Irish have held a 22–6 lead in the series. Each meeting between the teams is greeted by the ceremonial entrance of the Air Force Cadets into the stadium before the game. It is then concluded with both teams' acknowledgement of each other's alma maters, a tradition started by Weis.

**Notre Dame Stadium**

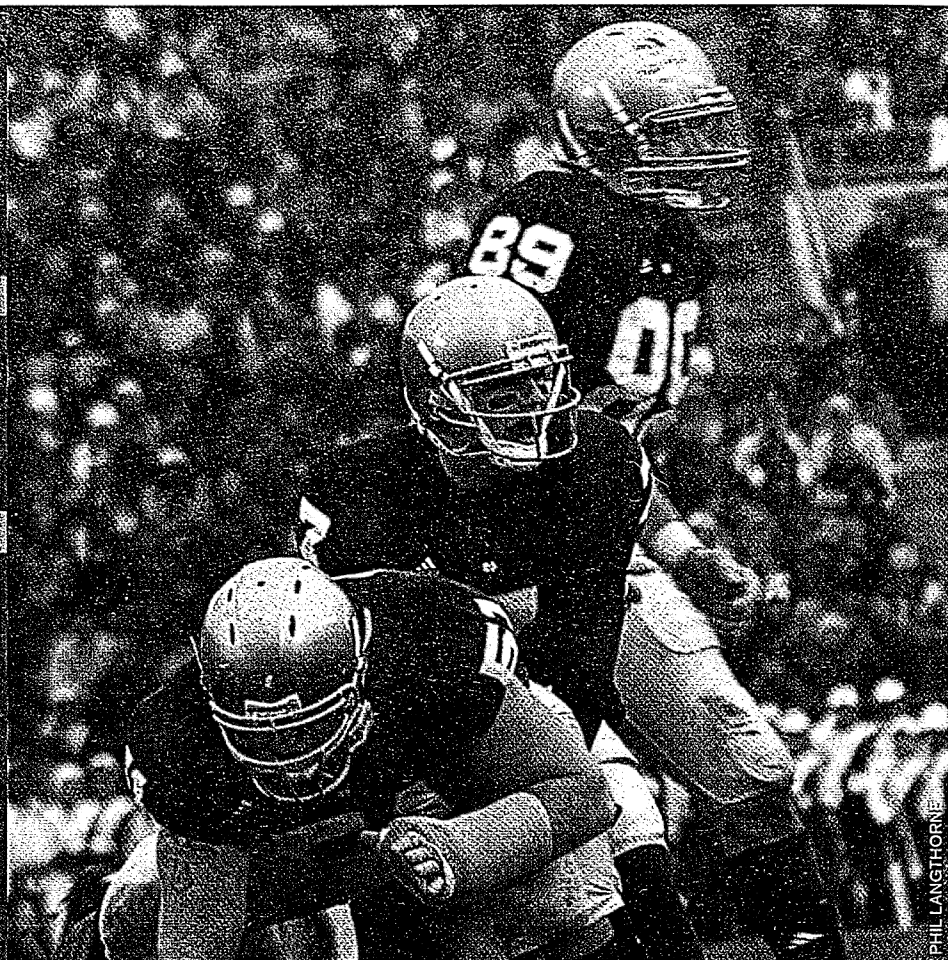
November 17, 2007

Attendance: 80,975

All-Time Series: 3-1-0

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
Duke	0	0	0	7	7
ND	0	14	7	7	28

KEY STATS	DUKE	ND
First Downs	12	26
Total Offensive Yards	150	439
Fumbles: Number-Lost	2-1	4-1
Sacks By: Number-Yards	1-3	3-20



**HARD COUNT** Quarterback Jimmy Clausen posted his second career victory as a starter against the Blue Devils. He was later replaced by safety Tom Zbikowski in the fourth quarter.

# The Futility Bowl

NOTRE DAME 28, DUKE 7

Meagan McGinley

**T**he Fighting Irish burst into Notre Dame Stadium for the last time in the 2007 season on Nov. 17, hoping to end their record-setting six-game home losing streak with a win against Duke, also 1-9. The Irish and the Blue Devils had only met twice before on Irish turf, when the Irish trounced them in both 1958 and 1966. After a disappointing, nearly scoreless first half in which numerous dropped passes on both sides were attributed largely to the sleeting, wintry conditions, the Irish upheld their undefeated series status at home with a final score of 28-7.

Both teams struggled, and failed, to build momentum in their offensive drives in the first half. The game remained scoreless until late in the second quarter when freshman quarterback Jimmy Clausen capitalized on

a Duke fumble with a 25-yard touchdown pass to junior wide receiver David Grimes. Seventy-three seconds later, Clausen followed a second forced Duke fumble with another 25-yard touchdown pass to freshman wide receiver Duval Kamara with four seconds remaining in the half.

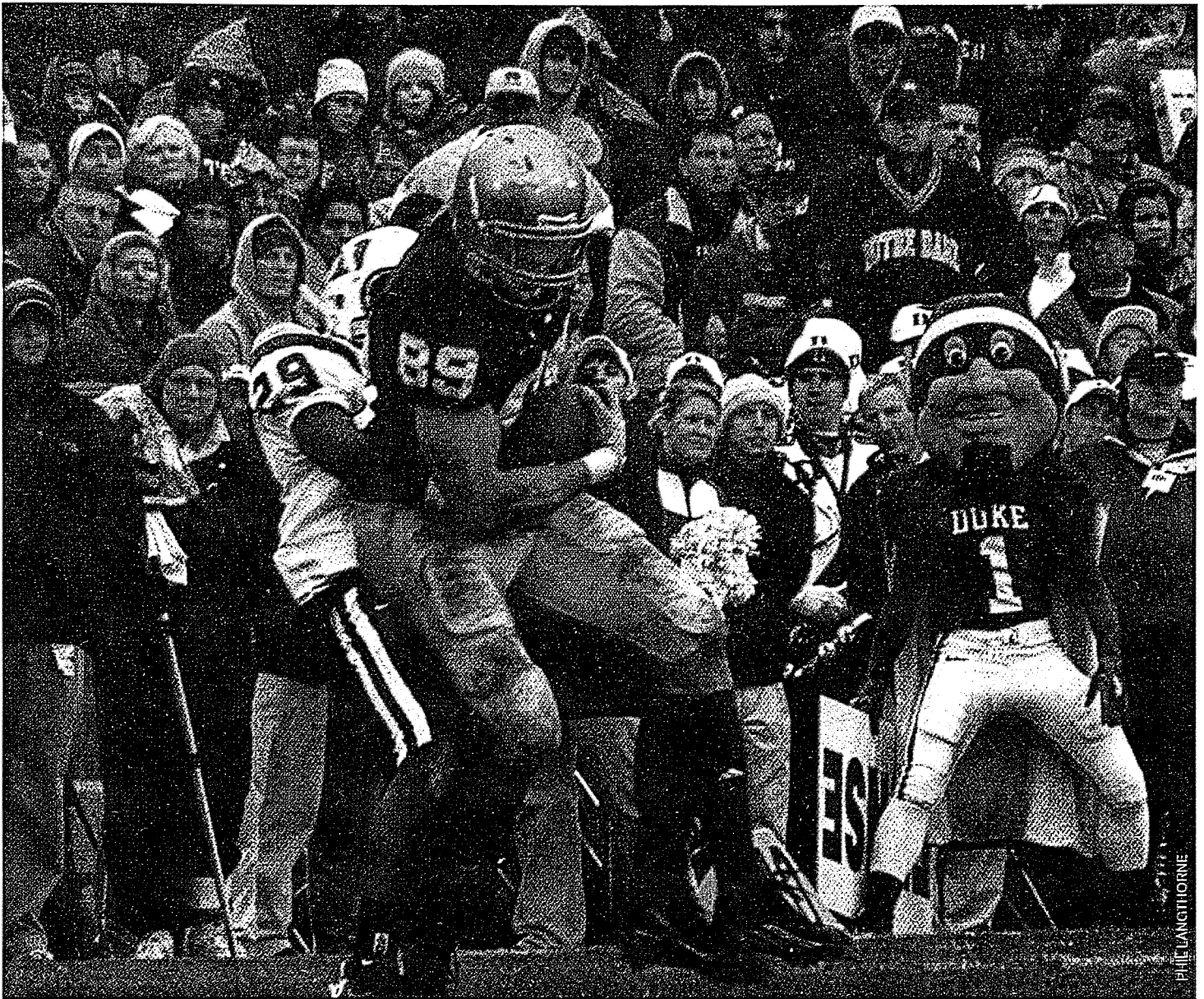
The appearance of 14 points on the board demoralized the Blue Devils, who had to watch another 14 points added to the board as freshman running back Robert Hughes ran in another touchdown during the third quarter from 13 yards out and fifth-year wide receiver John Carlson snatched a 9-yard pass from Clausen in the end zone with 6:07 left in the game.

The Irish were well on their way to repeating the shutout achieved in their last face-off against the Blue Devils in 1966, which would be the first for the Irish defense

in five years. But an untimely fumble by the Irish offense allowed Duke's backup quarterback Zack Asack one last chance to salvage some points. Asack ran for six yards into the Irish end zone to put Duke on the board with 72 seconds left in the game.

Head Coach Charlie Weis seemed more concerned with getting seniors playing time in their last home game than guarding the shutout, however, as he let the patient and overshadowed workhorses flex on the field toward the end of the fourth quarter. Weis even allowed senior strong safety and fan favorite Tom Zbikowski to debut as quarterback, where he made small forward progress before senior running back Travis Thomas fumbled the ball in the play that would lead to Duke's only touchdown.

Emotions were the only thing running high that November evening as the



**OLD RELIABLE** Fifth-year senior tight end John Carlson led the Irish with 40 receptions this season.

temperature seemed to plummet faster than the Blue Devils' hope of avoiding being branded with an embarrassing 10th loss. The senior Fighting Irish class held their gold helmets in the air as they jogged a victory lap around the field of the stadium, celebrating the win and years of dedication, discipline and sacrifice.

After paying their respects to the Duke team, the Irish gathered in front of the swaying student section as the band played the alma mater. Students and fans alike then quickly poured out of the stadium in search of warmer quarters. The band and the marshmallow-stained Class of 2008 remained stoically behind in the emptied stadium, however, dancing the Irish jig and paying homage in solidarity to their peers in the graduating football class, chanting "We Are ND" until the ushers booted them out and officially brought the 2007 home football season to a close. +

## FROM THE PRESS BOX

Notre Dame has played Duke in 1951, 1958 and 1966. The last time the Fighting Irish faced the Blue Devils was in 1966 at Notre Dame Stadium. The Irish won 64-0 as Rocky Bleier ran for two touchdowns and quarterback Terry Hanratty threw for two more to jumpstart the shutout's 43-0 halftime score. The win brought the Irish to an 8-0 record and a No. 1 national ranking as they headed into what would be dubbed "the Game

of the Century" against No. 2-ranked defending National Champion Michigan State at Spartan Stadium. The game against Michigan State remains one of the most controversial in collegiate football history, as the Irish notoriously declined to try for the end zone in the final series, resulting in a tie, 10-10. The Spartans and the Irish consequently shared the 1966 National Championship.

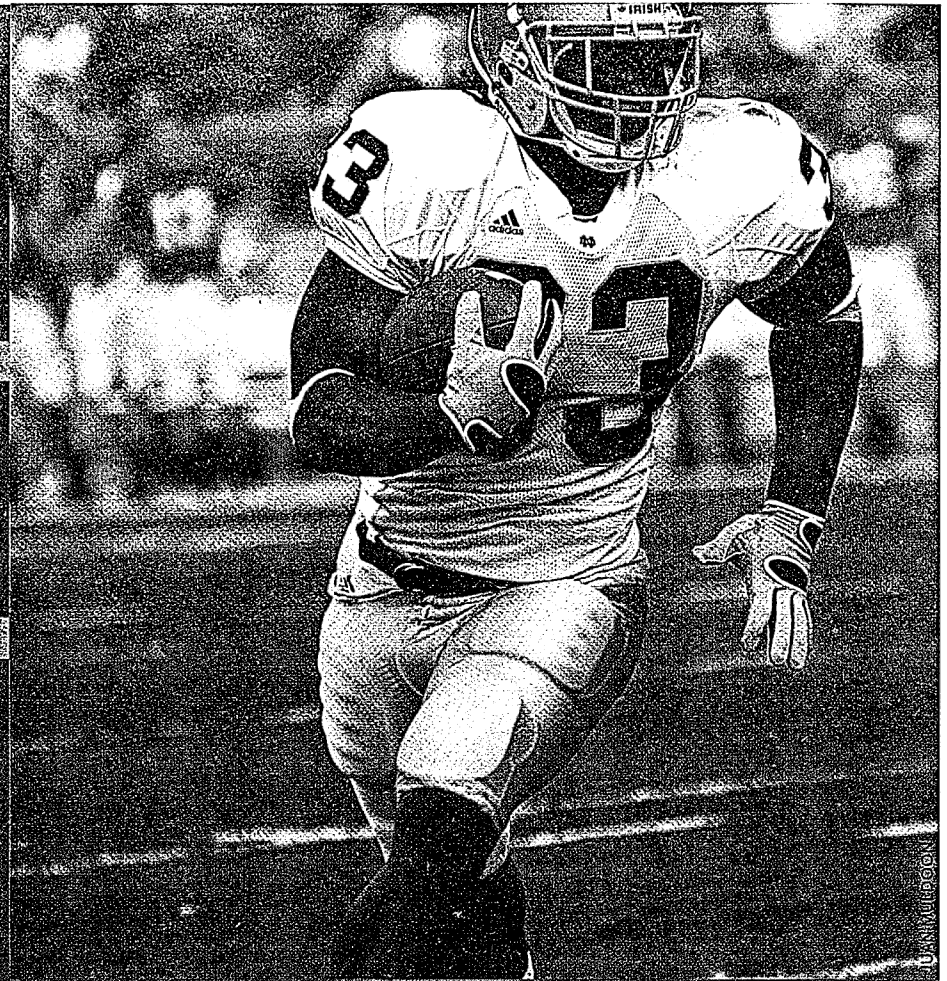


Stanford Stadium

November 24, 2007  
 Attendance: 48,953  
 All-Time Series: 16-6-0

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
ND	7	7	0	7	21
STANFORD	7	7	0	0	14

KEY STATS	STANFORD	ND
Total Offense	327	313
Sacks	5	5
Penalties/Yards	8/81	4/46
Turnovers	4	2



**FINISHING HARD** Freshman Robert Hughes rushed for 136 yards, averaging 7.6 yards per carry.

# Cardinal Directions

NOTRE DAME 21, STANFORD 14

Brittany Lash

**L**oud, celebratory voices chanting and cheering the lyrics of the Victory March rang out through the thick concrete walls of the visitors' locker room after Notre Dame's 21-14 victory over Stanford on Nov. 24, 2007.

"We sang the fight song about 100 times," said junior wide receiver David Grimes. "Weis, Zibby, John Carlson, Sully, Trevor Laws all did it [...] the captains and the leaders." Head Coach Charlie Weis echoed his sentiments. "I wanted to make sure those fifth year seniors got their just due," Weis said. "It was a happy locker room."

The Irish had good reason to celebrate, closing the season 2-0 for the first time in 15 years and gaining much-needed momentum heading into the offseason. No one could call the game error-free, as both teams looked inept and confused during stretches, but the Irish will was strong, as the team rallied to

send its fifth-year seniors out on the note they deserved.

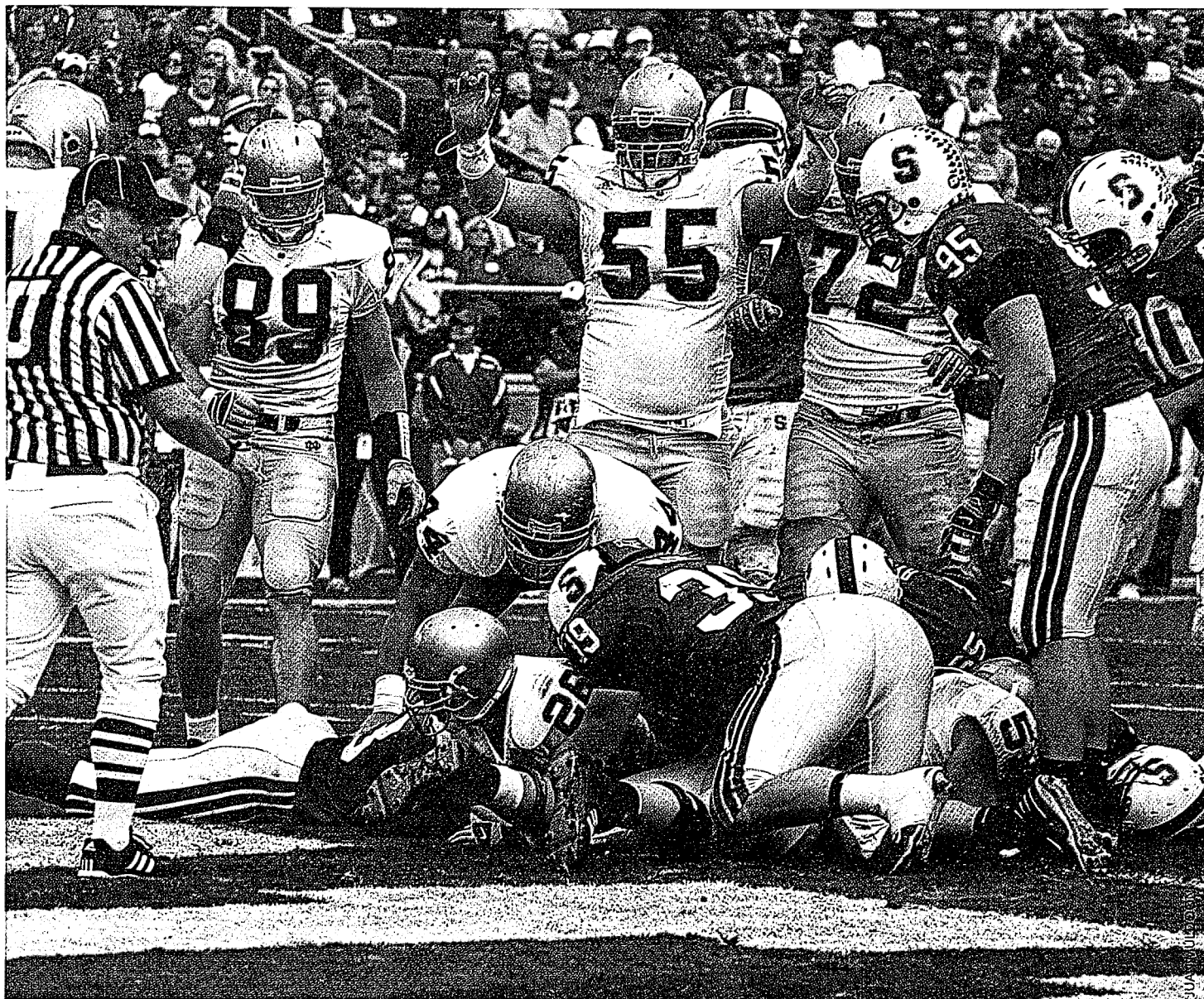
Freshman running back Robert Hughes set the tone of the game on the first play of Notre Dame's first drive, ripping off a 45-yard run to the Stanford 33-yard line, the longest run of the season for the Irish. Hughes would have a great day, rushing for 136 yards and one touchdown. Unfortunately, he would also set the tone for offensive blunders, as he fumbled a screen pass from freshman quarterback Jimmy Clausen on a second-and-goal play.

After a Stanford three-and-out, the Irish received the ball back only to have Clausen fumble it away on the first play of the drive. In all, Stanford and Notre Dame combined would force six turnovers, miss five field goals and have four plays overturned by instant replay, three of which went against the Irish.

With five minutes to go in the first quarter, the tide turned in favor of the Irish as Stanford quarterback Tavita Pritchard threw an interception into the waiting arms of Tom Zbikowski on the Stanford 19-yard line. Zbikowski returned the pick five yards to the 14-yard line, setting up a 12-yard reception by freshman wide receiver Duval Kamara and 2-yard touchdown rush by Clausen.

Stanford quickly responded with a rushing touchdown of its own, making the score 7-7 at the end of the first quarter. A second quarter filled with errors followed, as Stanford missed a field goal, the Irish fumbled and both teams went three-and-out twice. The Cardinal took advantage of a winded Irish defense with six minutes to go in the half, rushing in from 11 yards out to bring the score to 14-7.

But the Irish bounced back in a big way.



**TURN IT OVER AGAIN** The Irish and Cardinal totalled six turnovers in an often sloppy match.

On third-and-20, Clausen hit running back Junior Jabbie with a 4-yard pass. Jabbie broke free for 40 more yards with a wide gap on the right side, setting up a Travis Thomas goal-line touchdown to tie the game.

The third quarter brought controversy for the Irish. After a penalty for roughing the kicker gave Notre Dame a first down, an athletic, diving touchdown grab by David Grimes was ruled a touchdown on the field, only to be overturned by Pac-10 officials in the booth. Photos after the game showed that Grimes had one hand underneath the ball, and Irish fans were riled up over the call.

Stanford pulled Pritchard after a huge hit by Terrail Lambert, bringing in former starter T.C. Ostrander. Ostrander marched the Cardinals down the field for the go-ahead score, but kicker Derek Belch missed a 30-yarder, the first of two he would miss in the fourth quarter.

The Irish scored with six minutes to go following a game-breaking 44-yard run by Hughes to make it 21-14. In the last minute, Stanford had four tries from 10 yards out to score, but the Irish defense crushed two runs and Ostrander's final two passes were dropped to cement the Irish victory.

The team rushed to greet ecstatic Irish fans in both end zones. An emotional Weis, who teared up at the sight of his players post-game, spoke about his fifth-year seniors when asked who he looked for after the win:

"I was looking at John Carlson and John Sullivan, Trevor Laws and Zbikowski and some of those guys that, you know, had an opportunity to leave last year. They stuck around for another year, then the year doesn't go very well [...] I was just happy for them that they could walk out of here with a win." †

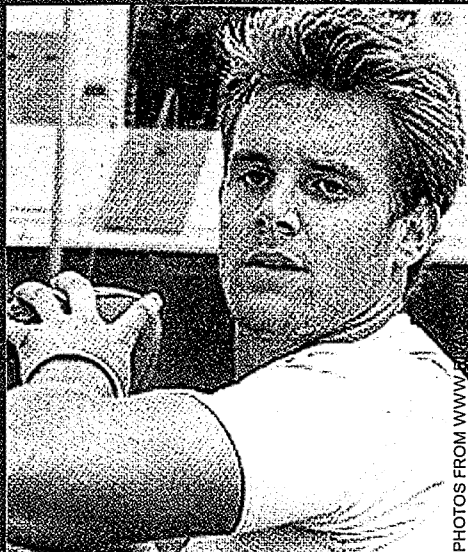
## FROM THE PRESS BOX

The Irish almost went up 21-14 at the end of the first half on a spectacular play right out of the Stanford football history books. Safety David Bruton picked off a last-second Pritchard pass on the Stanford 3-yard line, beginning a series of laterals with Tom Zbikowski that stretched 97 yards to the end zone. Zbikowski's touchdown on the play was negated by a personal foul away from the play by Trevor Laws. The lateral return occurred almost exactly 25 years after "The Play," where Cal used a last-second series of laterals to rush into the Stanford end zone, where the band was already assembling for a post-game show. The trombones were safe this time.

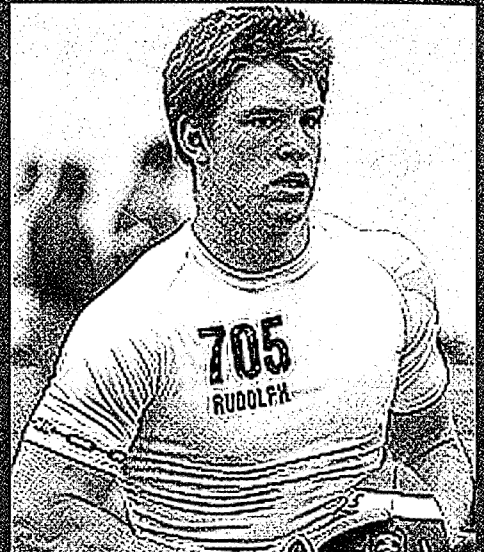
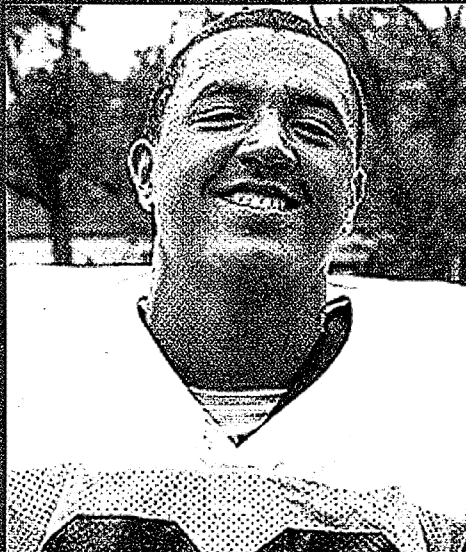


# Bring in the Cavalry

Can Charlie Weis' recruiting prowess save the Irish?



PHOTOS FROM WWW.WWV.VI



**DAYNE CRIST**, No. 3 Quarterback  
 Passing yards: 2,178  
 Touchdowns: 16  
 Interceptions: 1



**MICHAEL FLOYD**, No. 5 Wide Receiver  
 Receiving yards: 1,247  
 Touchdowns: 17  
 Receptions: 59



**KYLE RUDOLPH**, No. 1 Tight End  
 Receiving yards: 544  
 Touchdowns: 10  
 Receptions: 30

## Mike Tresnowski

**B**elieve it or not, 14 Fighting Irish football players took the field for a bowl game on Jan. 6, 2008. Granted, the players were high schoolers verbally committed to play at Notre Dame next year and the game was the U.S. Army All-American Bowl, a high school exhibition game for highly-ranked recruits. Nonetheless, a strong showing at one of the most prestigious high school all-star games is a welcome sign of hope for the Irish after the hopeless 2007 season.

The strength of the class on the tail of one of the worst seasons in Notre Dame history is almost shocking. Both rivals.com and scout.com rank Notre Dame as the No. 1 recruiting class in the country. CSTV.com recruiting guru Tom Lemming called it "[Notre Dame's] best class since 1990 when they produced five first-round NFL draft picks."

While the university cannot publicly comment on individual recruits until

National Signing Day on Feb. 6, many of the class' 22 recruits have publicly stated and restated their commitment to Notre Dame despite the results of the 2007 season. Quarterback recruit Dayne Crist told *The South Bend Tribune* the group is growing closer as their high school careers come to a close. "This is an extremely tight-knit class. You could ask any one of these guys the same question, and they'll give you the exact same answer verbatim. We don't want any loose ends in the family. That's how we feel. We are a family and we feel very strongly about that. We're now brothers," Crist said.

### Offensive Recruits

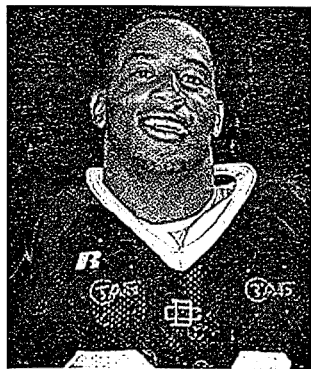
Crist has emerged as the leader of the class. Lemming writes on his Web site that Crist has a "rifle arm," and scout.com ranks Crist as the third-best quarterback recruit in the nation. While Crist should expect to compete with rising sophomore Jimmy Clausen for playing time, Crist cites Clausen

as one of the reasons he chose to commit to the Irish. The two attended the same middle school, Clausen hosted Crist during his visit to Notre Dame, and they share the same private quarterback coach. "Notre Dame wasn't on my radar until Jimmy contacted me," Crist told *Sports Illustrated*.

Whoever ends up throwing passes for the Irish in the future, it is certain that there will be a talented receiver on the other end. The class of 2008 includes tight end Kyle Rudolph and three highly-ranked wide receivers in Michael Floyd, Deion Walker and John Goodman. The U.S. Army All-American game provided fans with a glimpse of the future as Crist connected with Floyd for a touchdown strike from 56 yards out. Floyd finished the game with four catches for 118 yards and two touchdowns. Lemming called Floyd the "second-best player on the field."

The Irish welcome running back Jonas Gray to an already crowded backfield. Gray committed to Nebraska last August but





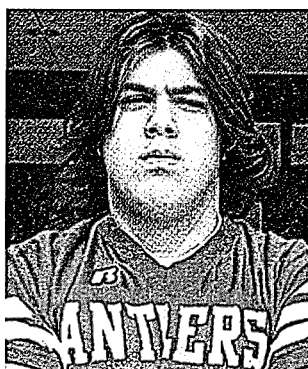
**JONAS GRAY**

No. 21 Running Back  
Rushing yards: 2,485  
Touchdowns: 31  
Average per rush: 8.1



**ETHAN JOHNSON**

No. 4 Defensive End  
*(Statistics from junior year)*  
Tackles: 83  
Sacks: 10



**TREVOR ROBINSON**

No. 6 Offensive Guard



**DARIUS FLEMING**

No. 2 Outside Linebacker  
Tackles: 69  
Sacks: 10



**SEAN CWYNAR**

No. 14 Defensive Tackle  
Tackles: 93  
Sacks: 12



**BRAXTON CAVE**

No. 2 Offensive Center

**2008 Recruits**

*Scout.com National Position Rankings*

1. Robert Blanton, No. 15 CB
2. Braxton Cave, No. 2 C
3. Lane Clelland, No. 18 OG
4. Dayne Crist, No. 3 QB
5. Sean Cwynar, No. 14 DT
6. Joseph Fauria, No. 11 TE
7. Steven Filer, No. 4 MLB
8. Darius Fleming, No. 2 SLB
9. Michael Floyd, No. 5 WR
10. Mike Golic, No. 30 OG
11. John Goodman, No. 21 WR
12. Jonas Gray, No. 21 RB
13. Ethan Johnson, No. 4 DE
14. Dan McCarthy, No. 8 S
15. Anthony McDonald, No. 8 MLB
16. Brandon Newman, No. 16 DT
17. David Posluszny, No. 30 WLB
18. Trevor Robinson, No. 6 OG
19. Kyle Rudolph, No. 1 TE
20. Jamoris Slaughter, No. 11 S
21. Deion Walker, No. 11 WR
22. Hafs Williams, No. 38 DT

changed his mind after a visit to Notre Dame in October. Scout.com calls Gray "one of the nation's top power backs."

The offensive line took the brunt of criticism in the 2007 season, but adds four new recruits in 2008, including Mishawaka native Braxton Cave, ranked the No. 1 center by ESPN.com and guard Trevor Robinson, who enrolled early at the university for the spring semester.

**Defensive Recruits**

On defense, the Irish welcome numerous four-star recruits. ESPN.com ranks defensive end Ethan Johnson the No. 85 overall player in the nation. Johnson is joined on the line by early enrollee Sean Cwynar, named Mr. Illinois Football in 2007, and tackle Brandon Newman. The No. 2 defensive tackle in the country, Omar Hunter, had committed to play at Notre Dame but changed his mind in January, telling ESPN that Notre Dame's "style and the way they played" were

reasons for decommitting. Considering the graduation of Trevor Laws and the uncertain status of Pat Kuntz for the 2008 season, a true freshman lineman may need to see the field next year.

Two four-star safeties, Jamoris Slaughter and Dan McCarthy, will join a secondary that loses captain Tom Zbikowski. McCarthy joins his older brother Kyle, a senior safety for the Irish. Also joining the Irish secondary is Robert Blanton, ranked the No. 15 cornerback in country by scout.com.

The team adds four linebackers, a priority in Corwin Brown's 3-4 defensive system. Darius Fleming is ranked the No. 94 overall recruit by ESPN.com. Fleming played defensive end in high school, but runs a 4.57 40-meter dash and could fit in at strong side linebacker. Fleming is joined by fellow Chicago native, Steve Filer. Filer was a runner up to his future teammate Cwynar for Mr. Illinois Football.

**Looking Forward**

While the class has been lauded by recruiting services, there is no guarantee that the projections will pan out. A highly-ranked recruiting class does not always lead to more wins. In 2004, both Miami and Florida State had top-5 recruiting classes, yet both teams found themselves on the bottom half of their conference standings in 2007. Meanwhile, Missouri finished No. 4 in the 2007 AP Poll despite not having a recruiting class place higher than No. 36 on scout.com in the past five years.

As Charlie Weis enters his fourth year at the helm, he has yet to see one of his own recruits develop into a star. But as many of his original recruits mature into starting roles, he has managed to bring in his finest recruiting class yet. Assuming things go smoothly until National Signing Day on Feb. 6, it appears as though for the first time in a long time, Irish fans will have something to cheer about.

+

# STATISTICS

	NOTRE DAME	OPPONENTS
<b>SCORING</b>	197	345
Points Per Game	16.4	28.8
<b>FIRST DOWNS</b>	187	255
Rushing	73	132
Passing	89	99
Penalty	25	24
<b>RUSHING YARDAGE</b>	903	2345
Yards Gained Rushing	1513	2603
Yards Lost Rushing	610	258
Rushing Attempts	437	548
Average Per Rush	2.1	4.3
Average Per Game	75.2	195.4
TDs Rushing	11	20
<b>PASSING YARDAGE</b>	2004	1939
Att-Comp-Int	389-217-9	344-181-11
Average Per Pass	5.2	5.6
Average Per Catch	9.2	10.7
Average Per Game	167.0	161.6
TDs Passing	12	19
<b>TOTAL OFFENSE</b>	2907	4284
Total Plays	826	892
Average Per Play	3.5	4.8
Average Per Game	242.2	357.0
<b>KICK RETURNS-YARDS</b>	58-1142	40-910
<b>PUNT RETURNS-YARDS</b>	26-237	32-238
<b>INT RETURNS-YARDS</b>	11-206	9-76
<b>KICK RETURN AVERAGE</b>	19.7	22.8
<b>PUNT RETURN AVERAGE</b>	9.1	7.4
<b>INT RETURN AVERAGE</b>	18.7	8.4
<b>FUMBLES-LOST</b>	26-16	21-14
<b>PENALTIES-YARDS</b>	78-693	85-741
Average Per Game	57.8	61.8
<b>PUNTS-YARDS</b>	76-3178	57-2296
Average Per Punt	41.8	40.3
Net Punt Average	37.9	34.4
<b>TIME OF POSSESSION/ GAME</b>	28:03	31:57
<b>3RD-DOWN CONVERSIONS</b>	60/193	78/185
3rd-Down Pct	31%	42%
<b>4TH-DOWN CONVERSIONS</b>	19/35	5/16
4th-Down Pct	54%	31%
<b>SACKS BY-YARDS</b>	19-132	58-415
<b>MISC. YARDS</b>	0	-36
<b>TOUCHDOWNS SCORED</b>	26	42
<b>FIELD GOALS-ATTEMPTS</b>	6-13	17-26
<b>PAT-ATTEMPTS</b>	23-25	38-40
<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	565,745	411,002
Games/Avg Per Game	7/80,821	5/82,200

RUSHING	Att	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
Aldridge, James	121	463	3.8	0	43	42.1
Allen, Armando	86	348	4.0	0	15	29.0
Hughes, Robert	53	294	5.5	4	45	26.7
Thomas, Travis	27	58	2.1	5	13	4.8
Jabbie, Junior	10	35	3.5	0	10	2.9
Jones, Demetrius	12	28	2.3	0	10	28.0
Schwapp, Asaph	12	14	1.2	0	4	1.2
Schmidt, Luke	2	6	3.0	0	5	0.5
Tate, Golden	1	4	4.0	0	4	0.3
Zbikowski, Tom	3	0	0.0	0	2	0.0
Price, Geoff	1	-12	-12.0	0	0	-1.3
Sharpley, Evan	38	-95	-2.5	0	13	-11.9
Clausen, Jimmy	62	-187	-3.0	2	11	-18.7
TEAM	9	-53	-5.9	0	0	-7.6
Total	437	903	2.1	11	45	75.2
Opponents	548	2345	4.3	20	52	195.4

PASSING	Effic	Att	Comp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng
Clausen, Jimmy	103.85	245	138	6	56.3	1254	7	44
Sharpley, Evan	106.66	140	77	3	55.0	736	5	43
Jones, Demetrius	44.53	3	1	0	33.3	4	0	4
Allen, Armando	184.00	1	1	0	100.0	10	0	10
Total	104.61	389	217	9	55.8	2004	12	44
Opponents	111.80	344	181	11	52.6	1939	19	51

RECEIVING	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Carlson, John	40	372	9.3	3	41
Kamara, Duval	32	357	11.2	4	35
Parris, Robby	29	361	12.4	1	35
Grimes, David	27	224	8.3	2	25
Allen, Armando	24	124	5.2	1	16
West, George	21	172	8.2	0	20
Jabbie, Junior	14	123	8.8	0	44
Tate, Golden	6	131	21.8	1	43
Yeatman, Will	6	37	6.2	0	10
Aldridge, James	5	30	6.0	0	11
Schwapp, Asaph	3	27	9.0	0	15
Hughes, Robert	3	17	5.7	0	13
Schmidt, Luke	3	16	5.3	0	10
Hord, D.J.	2	7	3.5	0	5
Ragone, Mike	1	7	7.0	0	7
Thomas, Travis	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
Total	217	2004	9.2	12	44
Opponents	181	1939	10.7	19	51

FIELD GOALS	FGM	FGA	Pct	Lg	Blk
Walker, B.	6	12	50.0	48	2
Whitaker	0	1	0.0	0	0

SCORE BY	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Notre Dame	31	52	50	48	16	197
Opponents	80	102	85	60	18	345

INTERCEPTIONS	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Bruton, David	3	20	6.7	0	17
Crum, Maurice	2	46	23.0	0	33
Zbikowski, Tom	2	41	20.5	0	24
McCarthy, Kyle	1	0	0.0	0	0
Smith, Brian	1	25	25.0	1	25
Walls, Darrin	1	73	73.0	1	73
Lambert, Terrail	1	1	1.0	0	1
Total	11	206	18.7	2	73
Opponents	9	76	8.4	0	30

PUNTING	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	In-20	Blkd
Price, Geoff	54	2260	41.9	57	11	0
Mauts, Eric	21	884	42.1	53	9	1
TEAM	1	34	34.0	34	0	0
Total	76	3178	41.8	57	20	1
Opponents	57	2296	40.3	53	19	1

PUNT RETURN	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Zbikowski, Tom	23	234	10.2	0	60
Bruton, David	1	11	11.0	0	0
Prince, Munir	1	-8	-8.0	0	0
TEAM	1	0	0.0	0	0
Total	26	237	9.1	0	60
Opponents	32	238	7.4	1	78

KICKOFFS	No.	Yds	Avg	TB	OB
Whitaker, Nate	28	1647	58.8	0	1
Walker, Brandon	13	733	56.4	0	0
Total	41	2380	58.0	0	1
Opponents	68	4066	59.8	6	1

FUMBLE RETURN	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Neal, Kerry	1	11	11.0	0	11
Crum, Maurice	1	34	34.0	1	34
Total	2	45	22.5	1	34
Opponents	3	51	17.0	2	19

DEFENSIVE LEADERS	Tackles			TFL/Yds	Sacks/No-Yds	Pass Defense/Tnt-Yds	Fumbles				
	GP	Solo	Ass				Ttl	Rev-Yds	FF	Saf	
Laws, Trevor	12	53	59	112	8.0-44	4.0-31	0	5	2-0	0	0
Brockington, Joe	12	52	56	108	8.5-13	1.0-1	0	1	1-0	0	0
Bruton, David	12	55	30	85	4.5-16	1.0-10	3-20	2	1-0	1	0
Crum, Maurice	12	35	49	84	4.5-21	1.0-8	2-46	5	2-34	3	0
Zibikowski, Tom	12	42	38	80	1.5-9	1.0-8	2-41	1	2-0	3	0
Williams, Ian	12	19	26	45	1.5-3	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Kuntz, Pat	10	19	23	42	2.5-3	0-0	0-0	9	0-0	0	0
Stephenson, Dwight	12	17	23	40	4.0-6	1.0-1	0-0	2	0	1	0
Ryan, John	12	20	19	39	5.0-30	2.5-23	0-0	0	0-0	1	0
Lambert, Terrail	12	19	15	34	0-0	0-0	1-1	0	0-0	0	0
Walls, Darrin	12	23	9	32	2.5-17	0-0	1-73	9	0-0	2	0
Brown, Justin	10	11	19	30	3.5-18	1.0-4	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Wooden, Ambrose	12	19	8	27	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1-0	0	0
Smith, Brian	11	11	14	25	4.0-16	1.5-7	1-25	0	0-0	1	0
Neal, Kerry	12	8	12	20	2.0-9	2.0-9	0-0	3	2-11	0	0
Vernaglia, Anthony	10	9	11	20	1.0-3	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
McCarthy, Kyle	12	11	9	20	0-0	0-0	1-0	1	0-0	1	0
Smith, Scott	12	7	11	18	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1-0	0	0
Smith, Toryan	11	6	8	14	0.5-1	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
McNeil, Raeshon	11	6	3	9	1.0-10	1.0-10	0	3	0-0	0	0
Brown, Sergio	9	4	3	7	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Richardson, Morrice	9	4	3	7	1.5-13	1.0-13	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Ragone, Mike	11	0	6	6	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Carlson, John	12	4	2	6	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Anello, Mike	8	4	2	6	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Gaines, Jashaad	4	1	5	6	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Jansen, J.J.	12	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Jabbie, Junio	12	5	0	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Thomas, Travis	12	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Quinn, Steve	12	3	2	5	1.0-2	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Herring, Ray	4	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	2-0	0	0
Hand, Derrell	4	0	3	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Prince, Munir	10	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0-0	0	0
Ferrine, Leo	6	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0-0	0	0
Yeatman, Will	12	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Washington, Kevin	4	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Mullen, Paddy	3	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Williams, William D.	1	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Erickson, Brandon	1	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Talericco, Michael	1	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Grimes, David	10	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Whitaker, Nate	10	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Parris, Robby	12	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Tate, Golden	12	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Price, Geoff	9	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
Clausen, Jimmy	10	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0-0	0	0
TEAM	7	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0-0	0	0
Total	12	487	482	969	57-234	19-132	11-206	44	14-45	13	0
Opponents	12	484	342	826	112-567	58-415	9-76	42	16-51	18	0

KICK RETURNS	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Allen, Armando	33	704	21.3	0	38
Tate, Golden	15	326	21.7	0	40
Hughes, Robert	5	41	8.2	0	15
Jabbie, Junior	3	40	13.3	0	20
West, George	1	22	22.0	0	22
Olsen, Eric	1	9	9.0	0	9
Total	58	1142	19.7	0	40
Opponents	40	910	22.8	0	68

### 2007 Schedule and Results

September 1	GEORGIA TECH	L	3-33
September 8	at Penn State	L	10-31
September 15	at Michigan	L	0-38
September 22	MICHIGAN STATE	L	14-31
September 29	at Purdue	L	19-33
October 6	at UCLA	W	20-6
October 13	BOSTON COLLEGE	L	14-27
October 20	USC	L	0-38
November 3	NAVY	L	44-46
November 10	AIR FORCE	L	24-41
November 17	DUKE	W	28-7
November 24	at Stanford	W	21-14

ALL PURPOSE	G	Rush	Rec	PR	KOR	IR	Tot	Avg/G
Allen, Armando	12	348	124	0	704	0	1176	98.0
Aldridge, James	11	463	30	0	0	0	493	44.8
Tate, Golden	12	4	131	0	326	0	461	38.4
Carlson, John	12	0	372	0	0	0	372	31.0
Parris, Robby	12	0	361	0	0	0	361	30.1
Kamara, Duval	11	0	357	0	0	0	357	32.5
Hughes, Robert	11	294	17	0	41	0	352	32.0
Zbikowski, Tom	12	0	0	234	0	41	275	22.9
Grimes, David	10	0	224	0	0	0	224	22.4
Jabbie, Junior	12	35	123	0	40	0	198	16.5
West, George	12	0	172	0	22	0	194	16.2
Walls, Darrin	12	0	0	0	0	73	73	6.1
Thomas, Travis	12	58	-1	0	0	0	57	4.8
Crum, Maurice	12	0	0	0	0	46	46	3.8
Schwapp, Asaph	12	14	27	0	0	0	41	3.4
Yeatman, Will	12	0	37	0	0	0	37	3.1
Bruton, David	12	0	0	11	0	20	31	2.6
Jones, Demetrius	1	28	0	0	0	0	28	28.0
Smith, Brian	11	0	0	0	0	25	25	2.3
Schmidt, Luke	11	6	16	0	0	0	22	2.0
Olsen, Eric	11	0	0	0	9	0	9	0.8
Ragone, Mike	11	0	7	0	0	0	7	0.6
Hord, D.J.	6	0	7	0	0	0	7	1.2
Lambert, Terrail	12	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.1
Prince, Munir	10	0	0	-8	0	0	-8	-0.8
Price, Geoff	9	-12	0	0	0	0	-12	-1.3
Sharpley, Evan	8	-95	0	0	0	0	-95	-11.9
Clausen, Jimmy	10	-187	0	0	0	0	-187	-18.7
TEAM	7	-53	0	0	0	0	-53	-7.6
Total	12	903	2004	237	1142	206	4492	374.3
Opponents	12	2345	1939	238	910	76	5508	459.0

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	Plays	Rush	Pass	Total	Avg
Clausen, Jimmy	10	307	-187	1254	1067	106.7
Sharpley, Evan	8	178	-95	736	641	80.1
Aldridge, James	11	121	463	0	463	42.1
Allen, Armando	12	87	348	10	358	29.8
Hughes, Robert	11	53	294	0	294	26.7
Thomas, Travis	12	27	58	0	58	4.8
Jabbie, Junior	12	10	35	0	35	2.9
Jones, Demetrius	1	15	28	4	32	32.0
Schwapp, Asaph	12	12	14	0	14	1.2
Schmidt, Luke	11	2	6	0	6	0.5
Tatke, Golden	12	1	4	0	4	0.3
Price, Geoff	9	1	-12	0	-12	-1.3
TEAM	7	9	-53	0	-53	-7.6
Total	12	826	903	2004	2907	242.2
Opponents	12	892	2345	1939	4284	357.0

### 2008 Schedule

September 6	SAN DIEGO STATE
September 13	MICHIGAN
September 20	at Michigan State
September 27	PURDUE
October 4	STANFORD
October 11	at North Carolina
October 25	at Washington
November 1	PITTSBURGH
November 8	at Boston College
November 15	NAVY
November 22	SYRACUSE
November 29	at USC





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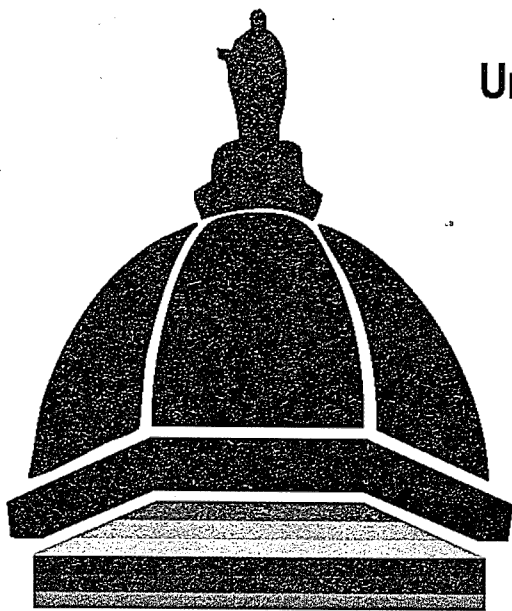
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### The Core Council for Gay and Lesbian Students

(Information, education, and resources)

**Contact:** Sr. Sue Dunn, OP, 1-5550, Melanie (Mel) Bautista,  
[Bautista.5@nd.edu](mailto:Bautista.5@nd.edu)

### Office of Campus Ministry

(Annual retreat for gay/lesbian/questioning students  
and their friends; pertinent library resources  
in 304 Co-Mo; discussion and support)

**Contact:** Fr. Joe Carey, CSC, at 1-7800

### University Counseling Center

(Individual counseling)

**Contact:** Dr. Maureen Lafferty at [Lafferty.3@nd.edu](mailto:Lafferty.3@nd.edu)

Visit our web site at

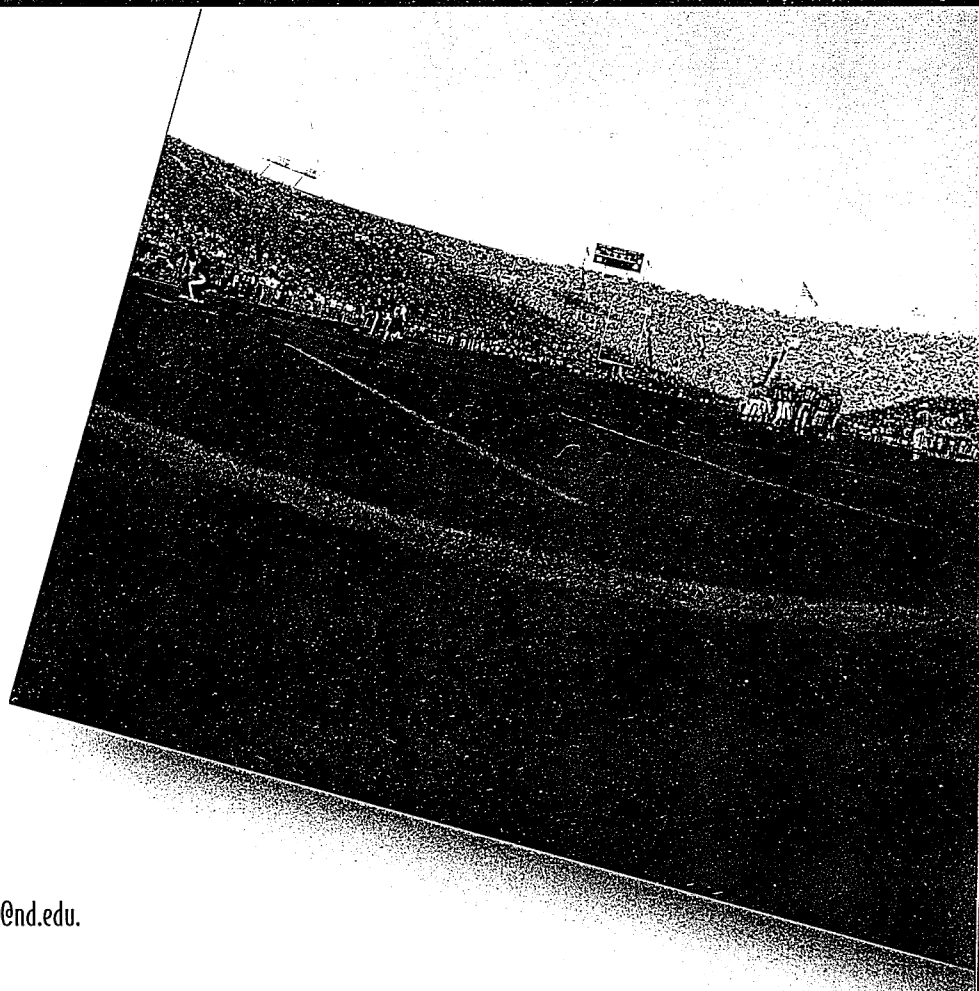
<http://corecouncil.nd.edu>

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# Football Fiasco

Notre Dame alumnus and founder of the Irish football blog Blue-Gray Sky weighs in on the disappointment of 2007

Jay Barry

**A**s I was tailgating before the Navy game this past season, my friend Brian and I chatted about the incredibly frustrating year of football we'd already witnessed. The chief question of the day was, "Can it really get any worse?" We were coming off of 38-0 blanking by Southern Cal, and the season had officially gone to pot. Rick Patel, the proprietor of America's Best Value Inn on U.S. 31, admitted to me upon check-in the day before the USC game that he was forced to sell rooms to Trojan fans, but only because so many ND fans were canceling. "And I hate to rent to Trojans, Jay. HATE it," he exclaimed.

Yet here we were, eating brats and drinking a couple of beers, expecting a win. Whatever else happened this season, we agreed, we'd always have Navy: that one guaranteed win on the schedule, a perpetual point of light. You could ink that win over Navy on your scorecard before each year began, heck, carve it in stone for the next 40 years. Four hours and three overtimes later, that "guaranteed win" rose up and punched us in the mouth. The Middies danced jigs and cried tears of glee, and we sat there in a stunned silence. Could it get any worse? Yes, it could.

That was the season of 2007, and I never want to see another like it. It would take one more loss to a service academy (Air Force, the following week) before we got back on the winning track. But 2007, holy hell — what a year. It was the worst any of us has seen, in all our years of watching Notre Dame football. But I'll tell you this: It wasn't boring. Especially if you measure your thrills in terms of sheer terror. Every game turned into a horror show, every play a white-knuckle gasp.

How bad was it? The dead-last, worst, most ineffective offense in college football: 242 yards per game, nearly 40 yards worse than the next offense (that would be Florida International, for those of you keeping score at home). Nine losses, each one worse than the last, a record for losses in a season. Hell, most ND classes go all four years without seeing nine losses. (You could look it up: Since Rockne took over, 45 classes graduated

having seen less carnage over four years than the '07 squad packed into one miserable season.) A 1-11 Duke team was our only home win. The year was so bad for Notre Dame that the only piece of memorabilia I wore proudly was an Appalachian State T-shirt.

It's simple to say, but the season wasn't supposed to go like this. Sure, we were graduating some serious players, including Brady Quinn, who'd led us to two terrific seasons. But we were reloading with exciting young talent, and Charlie Weis hadn't had his "genius" label forcibly ripped off his letter jacket yet, so the offense was expected to reload and keep firing at a high level. More importantly, Charlie had taken measures to improve the unit that really needed fixin' — the defense — by bringing in the enthusiastic and invigorating Corwin Brown. Every Irish fan I know was thinking we'd go at least 8-4, even with a new quarterback at the helm. Heck, in a preseason poll on BGS, we didn't even *include* a choice for 3-9. That's how unfathomable and unexpected was the fiasco of 2007.

Speaking of fiasco, there was an episode once on NPR's "This American Life" all about the definition and nature of a *fiasco*: what constitutes a fiasco, when do you know you're stuck in one, etc. A fiasco, as you might imagine, is more than just a failure; it's a complete and utter spiraling out of control. A fiasco seems to occur when you're grasping for something just a little further than you can actually reach. To me, that seemed a perfect summation for 2007. It was perhaps folly to think we could plug in new starters at major positions — quarterback, offensive line, receivers, running backs — and expect to compete against what turned out to be one of the stronger schedules in the nation. It was perhaps folly to think Charlie could soak up the complexities of a spread offense in a weekend retreat to West Virginia, impart that

knowledge to a young team, and have them ready to rip and roar by the opening kickoff. Everywhere, we tried to grasp further than we could reach. The coaches went soft on blocking and tackling in fall camp, hoping to prevent injuries and preserve freshness, only to have that softness come back to haunt them when other teams, rough and tough and ready to fight, beat us up. Everything came flying apart, almost immediately: Georgia Tech came in for the first game, de-pants'd us, and laughed. A classic fiasco had begun.

**"A fiasco seems to occur when you're grasping for something just a little further than you can actually reach."**

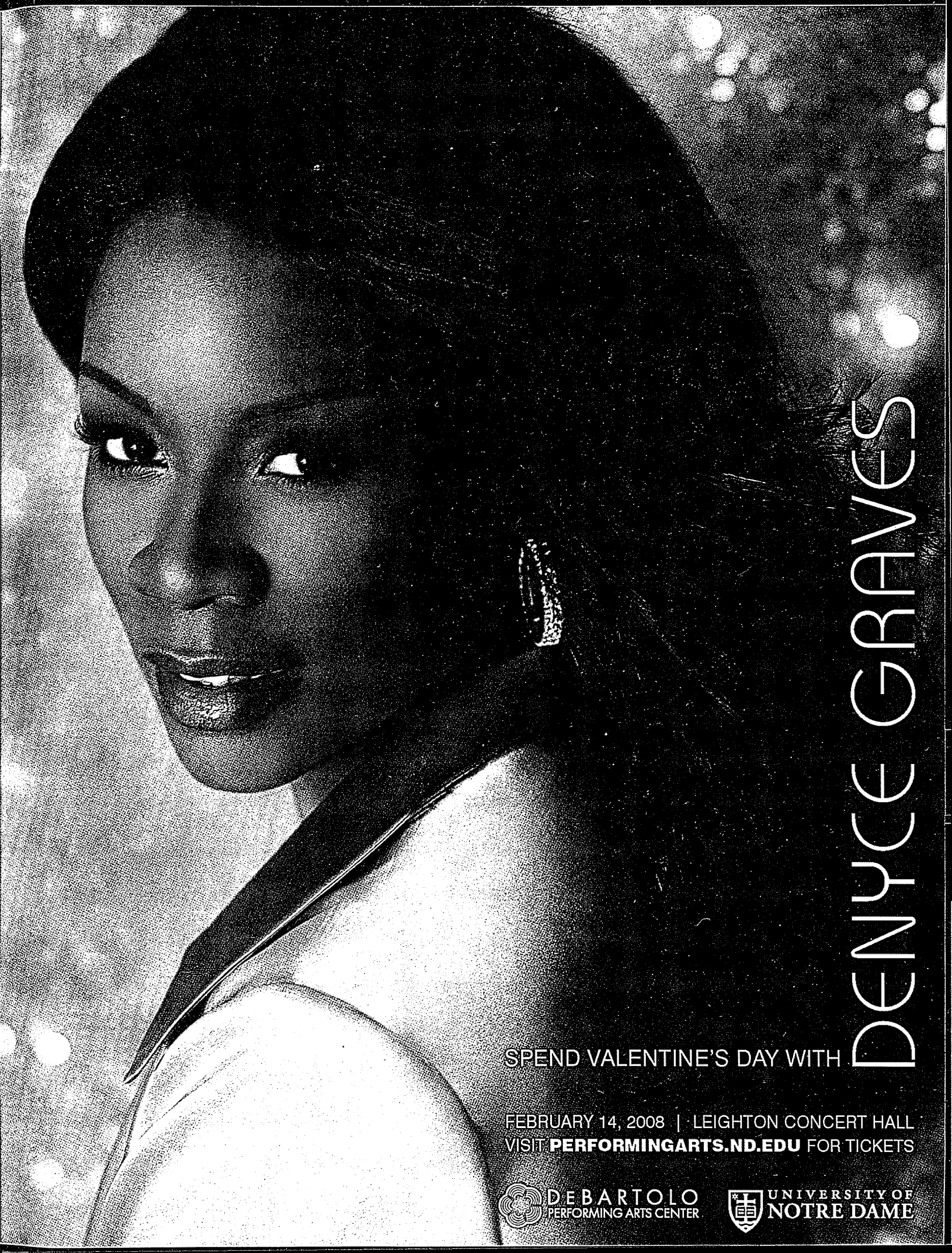
The fascinating paradox of a fiasco, however, is that it is those same exact conditions that often produce an unprecedented success. Many championship

teams achieve the top prize precisely *because* they reached beyond their grasp. Think of all those teams that seemed to be greater than the sum of their parts. This is my hope for 2008.

Just using the law of averages, going *worse* than the worst season in our lifetimes is highly unlikely. But hell, I know, that's not hardly enough. Let's build on it. Small confidences are the first step: Everyone is a year older, and experience is everything in college football. Our coaches, too, are presumably a little wiser and won't use pillow fight drills in prepping the troops this time around. We have a clear starter at quarterback, an offensive line that's been through the fire and a defensive coordinator who's no longer a novice. Remember, each time we've had a rotten season, the team has rebounded, and often in short order. As horrible as 2007 was, it might prove to be a welcome tonic; for if we take these lessons to heart, and continue to improve, and if things break right, it could be just the gut check that propels this team to greater heights. +

"Blue-Gray Sky," is run by Jay Barry ('92) and Pat Mitsch ('99). Their Web site is <http://bluegraysky.blogspot.com>.





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