

IRISH INSIDER

Friday, November 6, 2009

THE
OBSERVER



Flipping back
to safety

Sergio Brown's athleticism made him a starter, and his personality has made him a team favorite

COMMENTARY

Irish season now four games long

We've been told 9-3 is not good enough.

Is 10-2?

Because that's where the Irish could be. But it's going to take the same kind of focus that dragged them back from fourth-quarter deficits earlier this season.

Because last season, if you'll remember, Notre Dame had a 5-2 record, then dropped four of its last five and finished the regular season 6-6. That stretch included an overtime loss

to Pittsburgh, a four-interception goose egg against Boston College, a game-that-shall-not-be-spoken-of against Syracuse and a beating out behind the woodshed against USC.

True — the Irish can win some and lose some and be bowl-eligible and go to a bowl at 8-4 and win, but with what this team has shown itself to be capable of, that would be a disappointment.

It could also be a reality.

Look at who they face. Navy has had, um, success at Notre Dame Stadium recently. Pittsburgh proved last year how tough it plays (granted, the Panthers lost LeSean McCoy to the Eagles). Connecticut presents the easiest potential win for the Irish but we've seen what overlooking a Big East team on senior day can do. Toby Gerhart has 994 yards rushing and 13 touchdowns for Stanford and Andrew Luck has passed well so far this season. On the road, that's going to challenge the Irish.

But they've been challenged. Last season, I wrote that winning wasn't necessarily the be-all end-all of the game, that in a blowout win over Washington the Irish needed to find other positives besides the W. I've clearly never claimed to be the smartest crayon in the box because this season has shown that winning supercedes everything. The Irish squeaked out five wins in the final minutes. It doesn't matter that they had defensive lapses or poor offensive execution because they won.

No one, not the fans or the players or the coaches or the BCS, should care how the Irish got here. They're 6-2. That's the important part. They have the potential to win out, go 10-2 and be eligible for a BCS bowl.

This would give the Irish something they desperately need: success under Charlie Weis with players he recruited. He orchestrated great wins with Brady Quinn, Jeff Samardzija and Darius Walker running the offense. Then they left and the Irish went 3-9 and 6-6.

Now Weis has his players running his system.

Fans and critics heap tons of

criticism on Weis' performance, not all of it undeserved. He's won one bowl game in five years, he coached the team to 15 losses in 2007-08, the highest two-year loss total in school history, and his team lost to the first eight-loss team (those pesky Orange) in school history. He hasn't beaten USC in five tries and is 3-11 against opponents ranked higher than the Irish.

Uninspiring, right? At face value, yes. But that's not the whole story. The nice thing about the fact that sports follows the what-have-you-done-for-me-lately doctrine is that it works both ways. True, 2007 was awful and 2008 failed to live up to expectations. But it's 2009, the Irish are winning and they're clearly not the same team as before.

He's got a chance this season to burst out from under those stats, to prove to fans and the media that he can coach a team to success using his players. He's done it so far this year. It's that time, his fifth year, when he put all of his players in position and refined his system and defined his role in the coaching staff.

My hunch says the Irish do it.

They certainly have the talent. Jimmy Clausen, Kyle Rudolph and Golden Tate can throw and catch against anybody. Robert Hughes' increased performances enlivened the offense and countered Armando Allen's speed, and if he gets a head of steam he'll uproot the defenders in his way. The defensive line's increased penetration and the emergence of Manti Te'o as a playmaker solidified a defense that was shaky at the start of the season.

Which brings me back to my point. As Rick Moranis said in Spaceballs, the Irish are at now now. They shouldn't be worried about then, about what happened, about how they got here. They've got four teams to beat to capitalize on the opportunities this season presents, of which there are many: postseason awards, a BCS bowl, vindication of Weis' recruiting and playcalling, erasure of last year's poor finish.

But the cliché "clichés art true" is true for a reason, and the one-game-at-a-time approach must still guide the team. The Irish must use what's worked for them all season to beat Navy. They're going to need Te'o to break up the option and they're going to need the defensive line to plug the full-back's hole. They're going to need that passing game against a Navy pass defense that ranks 23rd in the nation.

The Irish season is now four games long. If they focus and play like they know they can, the after-party could be pretty exciting.

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

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Bill Brink

Managing Editor

FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Arizona athlete Flowers visits

By MICHAEL BRYAN
Associate Sports Editor

After a blowout victory over Washington State in San Antonio that may have helped Notre Dame's future recruiting in Texas, this weekend the Irish will welcome official visitor Marquis Flowers to South Bend to see the team take on Navy.

Flowers is an Arizona native that plays both safety and running back for his Millennium High School team. The high school senior piled up 87 tackles and three interceptions on defense in 2008 while rushing for 932 yards and eight touchdowns on offense.

"Marquis is a tremendous talent, he could play a number of different positions for Notre Dame," said Mike Frank, a Notre Dame recruiting analyst who runs the ESPN-affiliated Web site irishsportsdaily.com. "He makes a ton of plays, has a lot of offers, and seems to really like Notre Dame. I think Notre Dame likes his potential a great deal and you just don't see this caliber of athlete come along very often."

Flowers is also considering USC, Arizona, Arizona State and UCLA.

"He seems to have a strong interest in Notre Dame," Frank said. "He was scheduled to visit [for the USC game] and then rescheduled, and the fact that he's willing to reschedule and come back

means he's pretty interested."

While the Irish hope to impress Flowers Saturday, they appear to have already made strides towards future recruiting in Texas following their 40-14 rout of Washington State in San Antonio last week. Several high school juniors were in attendance and looking to learn more about Notre Dame and the football program.

"I think a lot of local players enjoyed being able to check out Notre Dame," Frank said. "It's a nice way for Notre Dame to showcase their program, and tell recruits to check them out because they probably don't know much about them." Notre Dame already heard good news last week shortly before arriving in Texas, receiving a verbal commitment from Lone Star state native Toney Hurd Jr. last Friday.

"Toney's stock just continues to rise and rise. He's a very smart kid, extremely intelligent, and I think its starting to come into play and work with his athleticism," Frank said. "He's becoming a very good corner and has had a great senior year."

Hurd chose the Irish out of

more than 15 major schools that offered him a scholarship, including Texas A&M, Oregon, Florida State and Oklahoma.

The Irish also recently received good news regarding top wide receiver prospect Kyle Prater, who is currently verbally committed to USC. The number one receiver in many recruiting service rankings, Prater is returning to South Bend for an official visit to see Notre Dame take on Connecticut. The Illinois player was also on campus

for the USC game on an unofficial visit.

"Kyle Prater is a big guy that makes plays," Frank said. "He uses his body well and has the potential to be a Michael Floyd down the road. He likes a lot about USC but staying close to home could interest him, and his best friend Corey Cooper is also interested in Notre Dame."

For more on Notre Dame recruiting, check out Mike Frank's irishsportsdaily.com.

E-mail Mike at mikefrank18@sbcglobal.net and tell him The Observer sent you.

Contact Michael Bryan at mbryan@nd.edu

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Recycle
The Observer.

Heart and soul

Sergio Brown uses natural speed and personal strength to expand his role

By MATT GAMBER
Sports Editor

His teammates and coaches call him Notre Dame's best athlete. But just how athletic is senior safety Sergio Brown?

He's been dunking alley-oop passes on the basketball court since early in high school. He says he's never lost a foot race in his hometown of Maywood, Ill.

And he can do back flips — in full pads after playing a football game in front of 80,000-plus. Or in a Notre Dame polo shirt, baggy blue jeans and street shoes, as he did for *The Observer* Wednesday.

"Me and my brother were always just goofing around in the house. It really started after the movie '3 Ninjas' came out," Brown said. "We just started trying to flip and stuff outside with mattresses. My mom started getting scared, so she said if we're going to do all this flipping, we might as well learn how to do it so we won't hurt ourselves. I've just been flipping since."

Brown's back flips have only recently become a staple of the Irish postgame celebration. But position-wise, he's been flipping since he arrived at Notre Dame.

Until now.

Path to safety

A four-star safety recruit out of Proviso East H.S., Brown made 97 special teams appearances in 11 games as a freshman in 2006, making four tackles in kickoff and punt coverage. The next season was much of the same, as he played in nine games and made seven tackles but saw limited action in the secondary.

Brown emerged as an impact player out of the nickel defense as a junior last season. He made his first career start in the 2008 season-opener against San Diego State and flashed much of the potential that had excited the Irish coaching staff in his first two seasons. Brown made six tackles (one for a loss), broke up two passes and blocked a punt against the Aztecs to set the tone for a solid junior season, high-

lighted by 28 tackles, six pass breakups and a pair of blocked punts.

"I just had to be patient and wait for my time to play," Brown said. "A lot of special teams, and then my role got bigger last year playing some nickel. Now I'm on the field a lot, and I'm loving it right now."

His coaches are loving it, too, as Brown's play at safety the past two weeks has allowed the Irish to shuffle its personnel to produce Notre Dame's best consecutive defensive performances of the season the past two weeks.

Brown made his first start at safety for the Irish in their 20-16 win over Boston College, as Notre Dame bumped junior Harrison Smith back to the linebacker spot where he enjoyed success last season. After the Irish thumped Washington State 40-14 last weekend, Brown is slated to make his third straight start at safety — and seventh of the year overall — Saturday against Navy.

"I think he's earned his way into being a full-time player on defense," Irish coach Charlie Weis said. "So just the fact that it's taken some time for him to get there, but he's there now, he's playing on every down. I think that's where he's made the most significant progress."

Flip, Flop 'n Fly

There's never been a shortage of ability for Brown, who was a long jump state qualifier and, as a high school junior, returned five of his six interceptions for touchdowns. In fact, Brown was showcasing his athleticism long before he suited up at the high school level — and on a much different stage.

He performed with Mr. Ernie's Flip, Flop 'n Fly, a Maywood-based tumbling group, as a grade school student — times he couldn't help but laugh about as he looked back.

"We did parades and shows and all that other stuff," Brown said. "Once I got bigger, it started getting a little harder to flip."

So he started to use his athletic ability in other ways.

"We race a lot in the neighborhood to see who's the fastest," Brown said. "I'm still undefeated."

That's not hard to believe, considering Scout.com listed his high school 40-yard dash time at a blazing 4.4 seconds, the kind of speed that can't be taught. He's come a long way from his tumbling days, but he can still flip and fly.

"He's one of the most athletic guys on our team," sophomore defensive lineman Ethan Johnson said. "He can jump through the roof, and he's really fast. He can bring so much to the table at the next level, too. He's definitely a special player."

Goof ball hawk

Brown's teammates say he's a special person as well. His personality and his relationships with his teammates have made his success even more enjoyable for the entire Irish squad.

"He's a guy you can't help but root for," sophomore linebacker Steve Filer said. "He's a great guy. You can't help but just cheer for him and hope he does his best."

So far, so good for Brown, who has looked comfortable in his move back to safety alongside senior captain Kyle McCarthy. He is fifth on the team with 18 solo tackles for the season, but perhaps his greatest contributions have come with the emotional spark he has provided a defense that, at times earlier in the season, lacked the confident swagger and positive attitude he brings.

"You say he's emotional, but really, he's upbeat," Johnson said. "He's a good kind of emotional. It's infectious, and he really brings something else to our team that's going to be hard to replace next year."

It seems no one, not even Weis, can talk about Brown without a chuckle and a smile.

"He's a passionate kid," Weis said. "He's fun to be around. He's a goof ball. But I really like being around Sergio, and so do his teammates. And I think that he's not selfish. He wants to be around the fellas, and he's just



VANESSA GEMPIS/The Observer

Irish safety Sergio Brown performs his signature backflip following Notre Dame's 40-14 victory over Washington State in San Antonio.

one of those heart-and-soul type players that people like being around."

Fun with Splurge

Notre Dame students who have had a class with Brown might know him by something else, since he asks all his teachers to call him by the nickname he picked up from a rap song during his freshman year.

"One of my teachers, it's hilarious," Brown said. "I'm the only football player in there with dreads, so every day he'll look around the class [joking] like, 'Is Splurge here today?'"

The Nelly song by the same name may have faded from memory, but the nickname Splurge seems to have stuck — though some of Brown's teammates may have a new one for him.

"Fake Whoopi Goldberg!" Johnson yelled at Brown as he left Wednesday's media session, no doubt ragging on the safety's patented dreadlocks.

That's the kind of relationship Brown has with his teammates — and the fun goes both ways.

"One time we were in the training room and Jimmy [Clausen] was talking to [former Irish quarterback] Joe Theismann," Brown said. "I really didn't know it was Joe Theismann at the time, and I was just standing behind him, waving and making faces at Jimmy while they were talking, acting like a fool. Jimmy started to bust down laughing. We just all mess with each other."

But Brown's fun isn't limited to jokes with teammates. Last spring, he filmed a one-minute spot for *insidenotredamefootball.com* in which he and Jack Swarbrick, Notre Dame's director of athletics, mimicked the popular Geico commercials featuring

celebrity spokesmen for "real people." The video idea stemmed from Brown's comedic performance as a presenter at the 2008 OSCARS (Outstanding Student-Athletes Celebrating Achievements and Recognition Showcase), held annually to highlight the achievements of Notre Dame's athletic teams.

Brown said Charmelle Green, senior assistant athletics director for student-athlete welfare and development, approached him with an idea for a video that would air at last spring's OSCARS.

"They asked if I wanted to do a little commercial with Jack Swarbrick, and I was like, OK, sure," Brown said. "They wanted us to be like the Geico commercials, so we set it up and it was hilarious, a lot of fun."

In the video, Brown yells at the camera, dances with a Notre Dame blanket draped over his back and, of course, does a back flip — all while Swarbrick talks about Notre Dame's Monogram Club in a professional office setting.

"They had me do a back flip at least 12 times — way more than you all had me do one," Brown said.

Not that it was a problem for Brown, who will likely be in the north end zone, preparing himself for another back flip after Saturday's game as his teammates gather to sing the Alma Mater.

"I like to have a lot of fun," he said. "I'm serious when the time is called, but everything's always better when you're having fun."

And that includes the Irish defense, especially with Sergio Brown.



IAN GAVLICK/The Observer

Irish safety Sergio Brown runs off the field following a Nevada turnover during Notre Dame's 33-0 win over the Wolf Pack on Sept. 5. Brown recently moved from nickel back to starting at free safety.

Contact Matt Gamber at mgamber@nd.edu

Notre Dame Fighting Irish

Record: 6-2

AP: 19 Coaches: 21 BCS: 21



Charlie Weis
head coach

5th season at Notre Dame

career record:
35-23
at home
19-12
against Navy:
3-1



Jon Tenuta
Def. Coordinator
Assistant HC



Corwin Brown
Co-Def. Coord.
Associate HC

2009 Schedule

Sept. 5	Nevada — W
Sept. 12	@ Michigan — L
Sept. 19	Michigan St. — W
Sept. 26	@ Purdue — W
Oct. 3	Washington — W
Oct. 17	Southern Cal — L
Oct. 24	Boston College — W
Oct. 31	Washington St. — W
Nov. 7	Navy
Nov. 14	@ Pittsburgh
Nov. 21	Connecticut
Nov. 28	@ Stanford

Head-to-Head

ND OFFENSE	NAVY DEFENSE
Scoring: 31.25 ppg (28th)	Scoring: 21.44 ppg (38th)
Total: 457.63 (5th)	Total: 315.56 ypg (27th)
Rushing: 147.88 (58th)	Rushing: 137.44 ypg (59th)
Passing: 309.75 ypg (8th)	Passing: 178.11 ypg (23rd)
Turnovers against: 6 (3rd)	Turnovers for: 13 (76th)
Fumbles lost: 3 (5th)	Fumbles rec.: 4 (101st)
Interceptions: 3 (6th)	Interceptions: 9 (40th)
Sacks Allowed: 17 (70th)	Sacks: 11 (104th)
T.O.P. for: 33:19 (5th)	T.O.P. against: 25:42 (2nd)

Statistical Leaders

ND OFFENSE	NAVY DEFENSE
QB JIMMY CLAUSEN 172-257, 2318 yds., 18 TD	LB ROSS POSPISIL 37 solo, 5.5 TFL, 2.5 sacks
RB ARMANDO ALLEN 104 rush, 514 yds., 3 TD	LB TYLER SIMMONS 24 solo, 1 TFL, 1 FFL
RB ROBERT HUGHES 64 rush, 311 yds., 4 TD	LB TONY HABERER 26 solo, 6 TFL, 1 INT
WR GOLDEN TATE 56 rec., 927 yds., 9 TD	S WYATT MIDDLETON 24 solo, 2 TFL, 3 INT
TE KYLE RUDOLPH 31 rec., 346 yds., 3 TD	DE CRAIG SCHAEFER 12 solo, 3 TFL, 3 sacks

HEAD T

Irish Offense vs. Midshipmen Defense

IRISH PASSING

As if the Notre Dame passing attack had not seen enough success, quarterback Jimmy Clausen and the Irish will get an additional boost Saturday with the return of star sophomore wideout Michael Floyd. With Floyd back on the field along with Golden Tate and Kyle Rudolph, Clausen should have a

field day against the Midshipmen and for the rest of the season. There is no better passing attack in the country than Notre Dame's with everyone healthy.

Navy's defense has been solid against the pass but has not faced any attack close to the caliber of Clausen and the Irish. The Midshipmen have nine interceptions on the season but

have not generated a consistent pass rush with just 11 sacks all season. Sophomore guard Trevor Robinson will miss the game because of a high ankle sprain, but the Notre Dame offensive line should not have any issues. Clausen should have time to throw and continue to put up Heisman-worthy numbers.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH RUSHING

Junior running back Armando Allen is "day-to-day" because of nagging injuries, but it may not make much of a difference with the way classmate Robert Hughes has played. Hughes rolled up 131 yards and a touchdown on the ground in the rout of Washington State in San Antonio, and showed off some

pass-catching ability as well with four receptions for 51 yards. The Irish offensive line should be able to take advantage of their advantage in size over the Navy defensive front.

The Navy defense was described by Irish coach Charlie Weis as easily the best he has faced, and has given up just 315 yards per game. The run defense, however, has not been the

Midshipmen's strength, and they were shredded on the ground for 267 yards by Temple running back Bernard Pierce last week. The Irish should be able to be successful on the ground against an undersized Navy defense that will first be looking to defend the pass.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH SPECIAL TEAMS

Nick Tausch set a Notre Dame record against the Cougars last week by making two more field goals, giving him 14 in a row. Classmate Ben Turk had a roller coaster game in San Antonio, pinning Washington

State down at the 2-yard line, but also dropping a snap and badly missing one.

The Irish kick return game has been consistent but unspectacular, and needs to use its talent advantage against lesser opponents.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

Weis has to be happy to have Floyd back in the Irish offense, opening up the playbook for the matchup against the Midshipmen. Hopefully Weis balances the creativity he displayed in using the Wildcat moving Golden Tate around the Notre

Dame offense and letting Clausen run the pro-style offense with Floyd, Tate, and Rudolph. The offensive line should dominate and it will be hard to call a bad play against Navy.

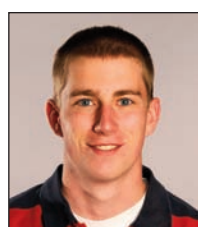
EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH OFFENSIVE COACHING

Our Picks

Think we're crazy?

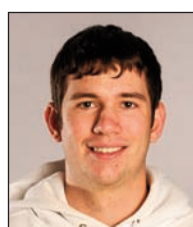
Send yours to irishinsider@gmail.com



Bill Brink
Managing Editor

Ready yourselves for frustration, because Navy's triple option always causes it. Quarterback Ricky Dobbs runs the option well and has an absurd 16 rushing touchdowns this season. Now cue Manti Te'o hitting the gap and destroying the pitch man just as he gets the ball because the defensive line has sealed up the fullback's hole and Darius Fleming pressured Dobbs to force the pitch. That won't happen every time, but it'll happen enough to secure a win for Notre Dame. Jimmy Clausen has been ridiculous without Michael Floyd. With him back, even as a decoy, the rest of the offense opens up and scores a ton of points on a solid but overmatched Navy defense. Navy will control the clock and score, but not nearly enough to win.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 34, Navy 17



Michael Bryan
Associate Sports Editor

The return of Michael Floyd is absolutely huge for this Irish team. With Floyd, Notre Dame can hang with almost every team in the country just on the strength of their passing attack. Even if he does not play considerable time against Navy, the game experience will be valuable for Floyd to be ready against a tough Pittsburgh team. The Notre Dame offense should be able to control the line of scrimmage and continue to dominate through the air. The run defense is playing very well, and Manti Te'o should have a big game against the triple option attack. Ricky Dobbs will have success at times, but the Irish offense will be too much.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 37, Navy 17



For more matchups and pregame at ndsmcobserver.com

O HEAD

Midshipmen Offense vs. Irish Defense



Navy Midshipmen Record: 6-3 AP: NR Coaches: NR BCS: NR



Ken Niumatalolo
head coach

2nd season at Navy

career record: 14-8

on road: 5-3

against ND: 0-1



Ivin Jasper
Off. Coordinator



Buddy Green
Def. Coordinator

2009 Schedule

Sept. 5	@ Ohio St. — L
Sept. 12	Louisiana Tech — W
Sept. 19	@ Pittsburgh — L
Sept. 26	Western Kentucky — W
Oct. 3	Air Force — W
Oct. 10	@ Rice — W
Oct. 17	@ SMU — W
Oct. 24	Wake Forest — W
Oct. 31	Temple — L
Nov. 7	@ Notre Dame
Nov. 14	Delaware
Nov. 28	@ Hawaii
Dec. 12	Army

The nature of the triple option offense makes the Navy passing game rare, but quarterback Ricky Dobbs is one of the better passers to come through the school. Dobbs has completed 50 percent of his passes this season for 618 yards and three touchdowns on the season.

Still, if the Midshipmen are passing the ball often, it does not bode well

for their chances to upset the Irish.

The Notre Dame pass defense has struggled mightily this season but had a strong performance against Washington State. Freshman quarterback Jeff Tuel was confused by the Irish blitzes and never looked comfortable dropping back to pass. Tuel managed just 102 yards and was intercepted twice in San

Antonio.

While the Notre Dame passing defense has been porous all season, they should have a break against a Navy offense that passes the ball only in effort to catch defenses completely off guard or in a last-ditch effort to get back in the game.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

NAVY PASSING

Navy's triple option rushing attack is one of the most difficult to defend in college football. It requires discipline and patience on the part of the defense, and the Midshipmen have numerous formations, options and runners to use against opposing defenses.

Navy has seven players on its roster with more than 100 yards rush-

ing on the season, led by the quarterback Dobbs. Despite missing some time due to injury Dobbs has 16 touchdowns already on the year. Fullback Vince Murray also has 638 yards to lead the Midshipmen in that category.

The Irish rush defense has improved dramatically over the past several games. Defensive linemen

Kapron Lewis-Moore, Ethan Johnson and Ian Williams have all stepped up in recent games to stifle opposing running backs.

Linebackers Manti Te'o and Darius Fleming should provide speed and athleticism off the edge to keep the Navy rushing attack somewhat in check.

EDGE: EVEN

NAVY RUSHING

NAVY SPECIAL TEAMS
Navy back Gee Gee Green is a dangerous returner on kickoffs, and the Midshipmen have put up solid numbers in punt returns as well. Kyle Delahooke has averaged 43.2 yards a punt, and has pinned 10 punts inside the opponents 20-

yard line.

Kicker Joe Buckley is eight of 10 on the season, and has made every field goal he has attempted from outside of 40 yards.

This is a very solid unit for Navy that could have a big impact on field position.

EDGE: NAVY

The triple option is one of the most complicated schemes in football, and the Navy coaching staff does an excellent job showing different looks and personnel packages. Jon Tenuta and the Irish defense will have to be careful not to be overly aggressive and give up a big

play on the ground to the Midshipmen.

The Notre Dame coaching staff must emphasize discipline and staying in their lanes against an attack that relies on misdirection.

EDGE: EVEN

NAVY OFFENSIVE COACHING



Matt Gamber

Sports Editor

Navy lost to Temple last week, but that was without its best player, quarterback Ricky Dobbs. Dobbs should be back running the Midshipmen's classic option attack, which the Irish defense shut down for most of last year's matchup. The same should happen again, as the maligned secondary should get a bit of respite because of Navy's run, run, run style of play. The offense will need to play mistake-free football as it has all year to maximize its limited possessions, and Charlie Weis said he'd be sure to involve all his weapons, including the newly returned Michael Floyd. As always, Notre Dame is a much bigger, faster, more talented team than Navy, and this year, the Irish will just be too

much for the Midshipmen. This one won't be close.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 27, Navy 7



Sam Werner

Associate Sports Editor

After a break last week in San Antonio, Jimmy Clausen will likely have to play the whole game against the Midshipmen. Notre Dame is more talented than Navy, to be sure, but the option-style offense will keep the game closer than it probably should be. The Irish won't be able to control the clock for nearly 40 minutes like they did against the Cougars, and Navy always comes to South Bend fired up and ready to play. That being said, though, the Midshipmen (or anyone else in the country, for that matter) will have trouble stopping a Notre Dame offense with both Golden Tate and Michael Floyd in the lineup. Robert Hughes could also have another big day against an

undersized, if opportunistic, Navy defense.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 38, Navy 20

Head-to-Head

NAVY OFFENSE	ND DEFENSE
Scoring: 29.44 ppg (42nd)	Scoring: 22.88 (51st)
Total: 351.44 ypg (79th)	Total: 384.00 ypg (83rd)
Rushing: 279.78 ypg (3rd)	Rushing: 123.88 ypg (50th)
Passing: 71.67 (118th)	Passing: 260.13 ypg (109th)
Turnovers against: 9 (12th)	Turnovers for: 17 (34th)
Fumbles lost: 6 (31st)	Fumbles rec.: 6 (73rd)
Interceptions: 3 (6th)	Interceptions: 11 (17th)
Sacks Allowed: 17 (65th)	Sacks: 17 (50th)
T.O.P. for: 34:18 (2nd)	T.O.P. against: 26:41 (5th)

Statistical Leaders

NAVY OFFENSE	ND DEFENSE
QB RICKY DOBBS 170 rush, 595 yds., 16 TD	SS KYLE MCCARTHY 40 solo, 2 TFL, 5 INT
FB VINCE MURRAY 130 rush, 638 yds., 4 TD	MLB BRIAN SMITH 22 solo, 5 TFL, 1 INT
SB MARCUS CURRY 46 rush, 393 yds., 4 TD	WLB MANTI TE'O 14 solo, 4.5 TFL, 1 sack
FB ALEXANDER TEICH 55 rush, 266 yds.	SLB DARIUS FLEMING 15 solo, 11.5 TFL, 3 sacks
WR MARIO WASHINGTON 8 rec., 144 yds.	DE K. LEWIS-MOORE 20 solo, 6 TFL, 1.5 sacks



Our Picks

Think we're crazy?

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HOW ND'S OPPONENTS FARED

	(5-3) W 31-21 Hawaii	@ San Jose St.
	(5-4) L 38-13 Illinois	Purdue
	(4-5) L 42-34 Minnesota	Western Michigan
	(3-6) L 37-0 Wisconsin	@ Michigan
	(3-5) Bye	@ UCLA
	(6-2) L 47-20 Oregon	@ Arizona St.
	(6-3) W 31-10 C. Michigan	@ VA
	(1-7) L 40-14 ND.	@ Arizona
	(6-3) L 27-24 Temple	@ ND
	(7-1) Bye	Syracuse
	(4-4) L 28-24 Rutgers	@ Cincinatti
	(5-3) Bye.	Oregon

THE OBSERVER CLASSIFIED



#6
RAY HERRING
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What is your favorite class? Probably poetry class because I liked that I could write what was on my mind.

What's your favorite movie? Con-Air

What's your favorite 80s song? What's that song that goes (sings quietly) ... AC/DC, "Hells Bells."

What's in your burrito at Chipotle? Chicken, rice and pinto beans. None of that hot corn stuff.

What's your favorite crayon? Blue.

What's your favorite saying? Keep sleeping — it comes from my old teammates because I hit so hard, they said you'd better watch out, keep sleeping.

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Floyd returns for battle against Navy

By MICHAEL BRYAN
Associate Sports Editor

The doctors said he was healed. Irish coach Charlie Weis gave the go-ahead for star sophomore receiver Michael Floyd to play against Navy. Floyd felt confident and ready to go.

But there was still one more person whose approval Floyd sought before returning to the

field.

"[Coach Weis] gave his vote, and I gave my vote too," Floyd said. "And then he asked me to ask my mom if it was OK, and she went down the line asking me all the questions if I was 100 percent and ready to go."

After Floyd assured her he was indeed healed from his broken clavicle, the wide receiver was given the green light to play Saturday against the Midshipmen. Weis, Floyd

and a certain quarterback were all thrilled at the prospects of the wideout's return.

"It wasn't too much longer when I was already getting texts from number seven," Weis said, referencing quarterback Jimmy Clausen. "As happy as number three was, I think number seven might have been just as happy."

Floyd had dominated the first two and half games he had

played in this season before breaking his clavicle in the second quarter against Michigan State.

In the season opener against Nevada, Floyd was tackled only once and ran wild for 189 yards and three touchdowns on four receptions.

In Ann Arbor Floyd's success continued, bringing in seven receptions for 131 yards and a score in the close Notre Dame loss to Michigan.

Floyd's return should give opposing defenses nightmares as they try to defend against two of the best wide receivers in the nation as well as an elite tight end.

"I'm very happy to be able to go into those meetings yesterday and say, 'OK, we've got Floyd back, what do we want to do?'" Weis said. "Your game-planning on Monday becomes a whole different element when you're adding a top-flight player like Michael to the mix."

With Floyd out, junior receiver Golden Tate picked up the slack despite being the focus of numerous double-teams by opposing defenses. During the time of Floyd's absence, Tate piled up 743 yards receiving and 147 rushing and nine total scores.

"It will certainly take a lot of pressure off of Golden," said Weis. "Not only will take pressure off of Jimmy, it will take it off of Kyle, it will take it off of Golden. Having a guy like that

back there, that balances off your offense."

Floyd said he agreed his return would help open up opposing defenses for Tate.

"I love Golden, he makes spectacular plays. It just takes stress off of him. I think he's probably just going to keep doing his own thing, making big plays," Floyd said. "I think we get a little leeway off of each other. Both it's one on one or double-team and the other guy is free. We're both excited and when they try to double-team us, it leaves inside wide receivers open."

Weis said that while Floyd is completely healed, he will not receive a full workload against Navy.

"We have a plan for what we're going to do with Michael. He won't play every play," Weis said. "The biggest thing that he's going to have to happen is get tackled once. He'll get hit in practice some, but I doubt that we're going to try it out in practice and see how that shoulder feels getting tackled."

Even if it isn't for every down, the Irish are excited to have one of the best players in the nation back.

"It's great to have one of the best receivers in the nation back to help you out," Tate said. "I'm excited for him, I'm excited to have him back, and I know he's been waiting patiently to get back on the field. I'm expecting him to make plays."

"Not only will it take pressure off of Jimmy, it will take it off of Kyle, it will take it off of Golden."

Charlie Weis
Irish coach

Contact Michael Bryan at
mbryan@nd.edu



IAN GAVLICK/The Observer

Sophomore wide receiver Michael Floyd races down the sidelines for a touchdown in the season-opening win against Nevada. Floyd will return to play Saturday after breaking his clavicle against Michigan State.

Dobbs leads potent triple option attack for Midshipmen

By SAM WERNER
Associate Sports Editor

With the triple option offensive system that Navy runs, the quarterback position is slightly different than at other schools.

While Notre Dame quarterback Jimmy Clausen has attempted 257 passes so far this season, the man under center for the Midshipmen, junior Ricky Dobbs, has thrown only 66. Dobbs has, however, rushed for 595 yards and an eye-popping 16 touchdowns on the season.

"As much as I would love to pass the ball on every down, I know the school that I came to features the option," Dobbs said at Navy's pre-season media day. "We worked really hard on our own this summer getting the option down so we can continue the tradition of winning the rushing title."

Last season, Dobbs played in eight of Navy's 13 games, rushing for 495 yards and eight touchdowns on only 106 carries, good for a 4.7 yards per carry average.

With the graduation of Jarod Bryant and Kaipō-Noa Kaheaku-Enhada, Dobbs entered this season as the unquestioned starter.

"[Navy] coach [Ken Niumatalolo] told me last year to always prepare like I was the starter and I did that, so really the only thing that has changed is that I really am the starter," Dobbs said. "I have always prepared like I was the starter. I just have to make sure I don't put a lot of pressure on myself, because doing so will only drive me into the dirt and I will try to become somebody that I'm not."

Last season, Navy had three legitimate options at quarterback in Dobbs, Bryant and Kaheaku-Enhada. This year, though, Dobbs and sophomore Kriss Proctor

are the only non-freshmen on the Midshipmen roster.

"If I could put Ricky in a bubble I would do it," Niumatalolo said at Navy's pre-season media day. "We are not as deep at that position as we have been in the past. We have some young guys we are very excited about. I am very excited about Kriss Proctor, but he is a young quarterback and he has a ways to go to become the starter."

Niumatalolo's worst fears came true, though, when Dobbs injured his right knee against Southern Methodist on Oct. 17. The Midshipmen needed over-



Observer File Photo

Navy quarterback Ricky Dobbs scrambles for a big gain in Baltimore in 2008. Dobbs has 16 TDs and leads a potent ground attack that is third in the nation in rushing.

time to beat the Mustangs, and only managed 13 points in a win over Wake Forest the next week. Navy didn't throw a single pass against the Demon Deacons.

Against Temple on Oct. 31, the impact of Dobbs' injury was felt

in full. Even though Dobbs played in limited action against the Owls, he wasn't at full strength and Navy lost 27-24 to drop its record to 6-3 on the season.

Dobbs is back to full strength for this week's game, though,

and could give himself the highlight of his career with a good performance, or even a win, against the Irish in Notre Dame Stadium.

Contact Sam Werner at
swerner@nd.edu

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“Going Global: Medical Ethics in the Age of AIDS”

Maura Ryan
John Cardinal O’Hara
Associate Professor of Christian Ethics
Department of Theology



12 Noon
Saturday, November 7, 2009
Annenberg Auditorium
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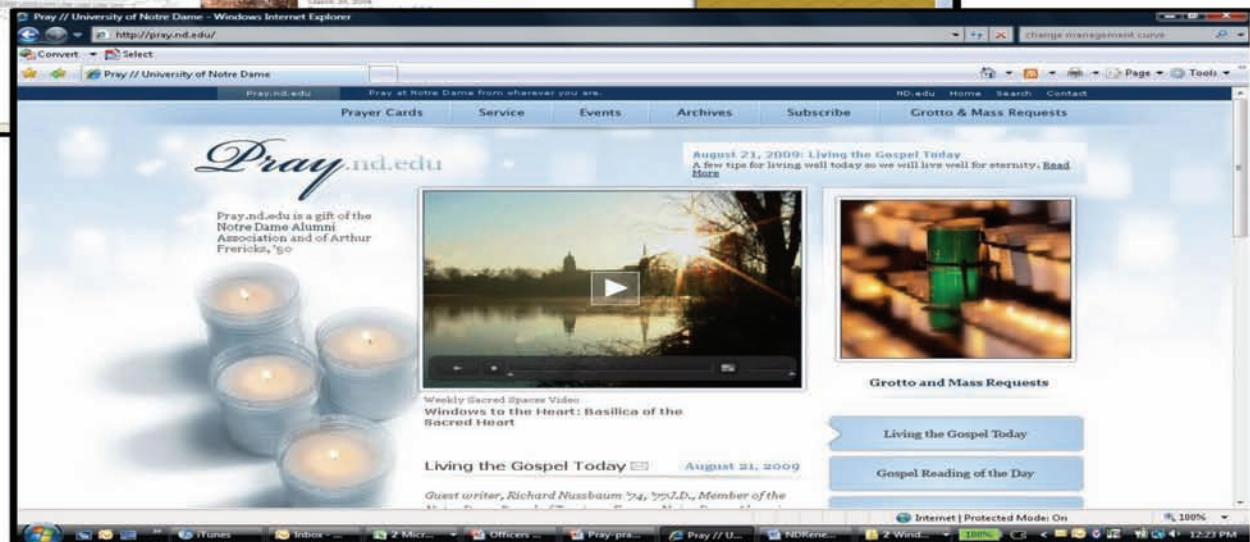
Since it was first recognized in 1981, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has contributed to the deaths of more than 25 million people. Of those infected with HIV/AIDS in 2007, 68 percent lived in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this lecture, Ryan explores what AIDS has taught us about health and illness, poverty and vulnerability, hope and solidarity.

FALL 2009 SCHEDULE

- ☾ 9.5.09 (vs. Nevada)
“Memorial Mania: Public Art and Public Feelings in America Today”
Erika Doss, Professor and Chairperson, Department of American Studies
- ☾ 9.19.09 (vs. Michigan State)
“International Security Studies: What the Eggheads Can Teach the Generals”
Michael Desch, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Political Science
- ☾ 10.3.09 (vs. Washington)
“Images That Matter: The U.S. as Seen Through Latin American Eyes”
Thomas F. Anderson, Associate Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
- ☾ 10.17.09 (vs. USC)
“Shakespeare in the 21st Century”
Peter D. Holland, McMeel Family Professor in Shakespeare Studies, Department of Film, Television, and Theatre
Scott Jackson, Executive Director, Shakespeare at Notre Dame
- ☾ 10.24.09 (vs. Boston College)
“The French Revolution, or How to Keep Your Head in Turbulent Times”
Julia V. Douthwaite, Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
- ☾ 10.31.09 (vs. Washington State) *game in San Antonio; lecture at 10 am, Marriott Rivercenter*
“Latinos and the Renewal of American Catholicism”
Virgilio P. Elizondo, Notre Dame Professor of Pastoral and Hispanic Theology, Department of Theology
Daniel G. Groody, CSC, Assistant Professor, Department of Theology
Timothy M. Matovina, Professor, Department of Theology
- ☾ 11.7.09 (vs. Navy)
“Going Global: Medical Ethics in the Age of AIDS”
Maura Ryan, John Cardinal O’Hara Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, Department of Theology
- ☾ 11.21.09 (vs. Connecticut)
“Understanding the Cultural, Religious, and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults (18–23 Year Olds)”
Christian Smith, William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology



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