

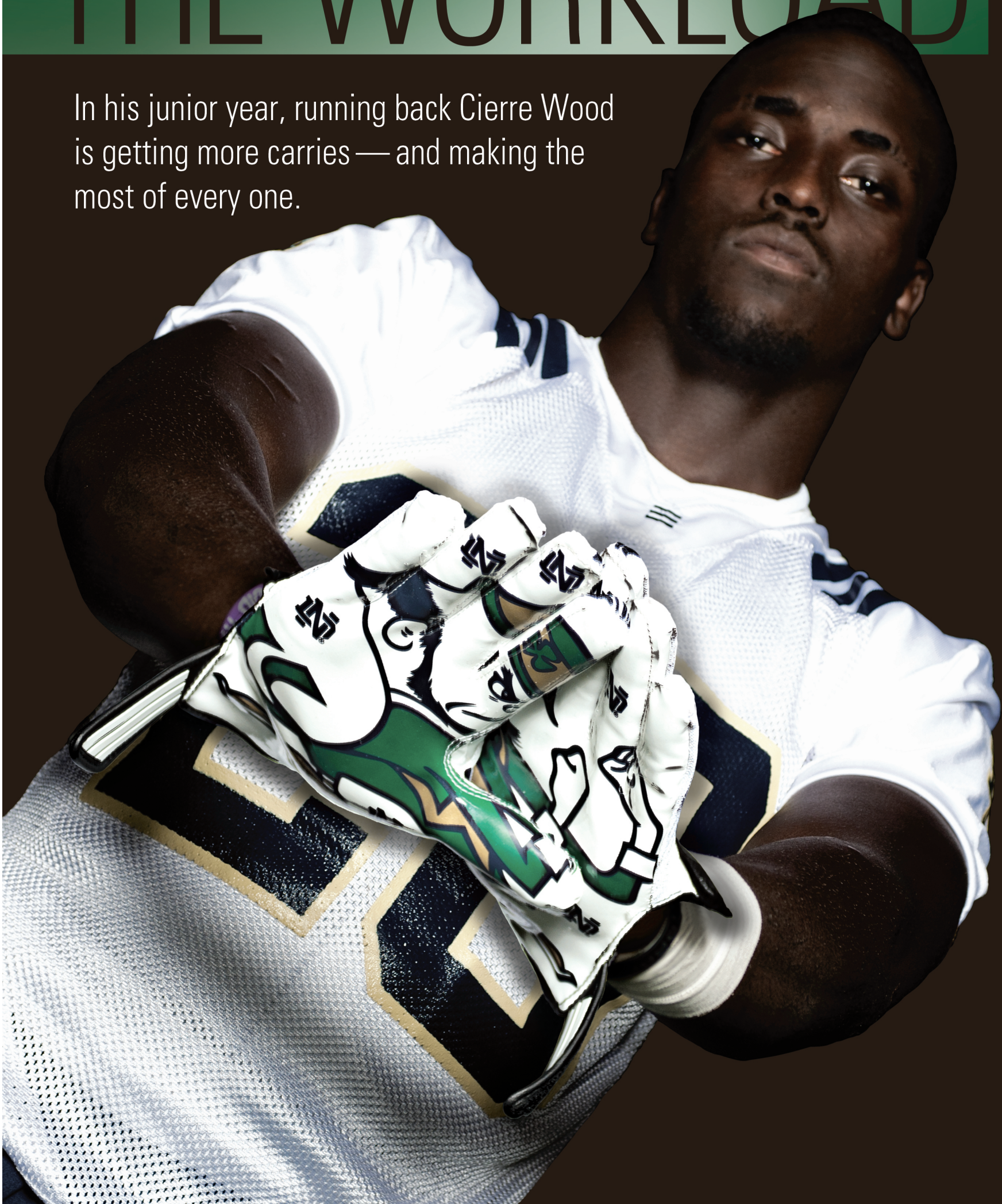
# IRISH INSIDER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2011

THE  
OBSERVER

## HANDLING THE WORKLOAD

In his junior year, running back Cierre Wood is getting more carries — and making the most of every one.





## COMMENTARY

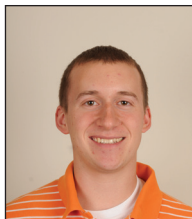
# Time for Irish to start winning by not losing

"You can't start winning until you stop losing ..."

Thus Irish coach Brian Kelly summed up Notre Dame's 23-20 loss to South Florida Saturday. It perfectly describes the situation in which the program currently finds itself.

For the first time since Lou Holtz was roaming the sidelines, the Irish have a proven winner leading the team.

The defense has shown it can be dominating and is even more talented than last year's squad, which suffocated opposing offenses down the stretch en route to a 4-0 finish.



Andrew Owens

Associate  
Sports Editor

Saturday's starting quarterback, sophomore Tommy Rees, has won games in Notre Dame Stadium, Yankee Stadium and the Los Angeles Coliseum during his short career. He has a treasure chest of playmakers to get the ball to and an offensive line experienced enough to let him do exactly that.

But the Irish are at a crossroads as they head to Michigan Stadium for the first-ever night game at the Big House.

They can't start winning until they stop losing.

Everything is in place for this team to succeed, and now they simply need to win. It all starts with cutting the mistakes that haunted them in Saturday's defeat.

Muffed punts can't happen. 15-yard personal foul facemask penalties can't happen — especially from a senior captain. Converting only two red zone opportunities in six attempts and turning the ball over three times inside the 5-yard line can't happen.

Much of Saturday's performance was encouraging, but those aspects have taken a back seat to the many errors. Junior running back Cierre Wood rushed for a career-high 104 yards on 21 carries, and it would have been much more had the Irish not been forced to pass the entire second half due to the 16-0 halftime deficit.

Senior wide receiver Michael Floyd showed once again just how dominating he can be with

his 12 reception, 154-yard day that included two scores.

Sophomore nose guard Louis Nix overpowered South Florida offensive linemen for much of the game and is in much better game shape than when he arrived on campus a little over a year ago. But the fact is, the Irish made too many mistakes.

People can make all the excuses they want. This week, it's Kelly's controversial sideline demeanor, the weather delays and the fans who decided not to return after the aforementioned delays that are turning the conversation away from the play on the field.

All of those issues will take care of themselves when the team starts winning and stops losing. Now is the time to trust Kelly's leadership in turning the momentum of this season in a positive direction.

This weekend's matchup between No. 1 (Michigan) and No. 2 (Notre Dame) in all-time winning percentage is unique. 2007 marked the first time the two programs met with neither team ranked in the top-25. Then it happened again in 2008, 2010 and, now, in 2011, as neither team will be ranked when they kick off Saturday night.

Rather than jockeying for position in the top-10 in pursuit of a national championship, as has been the case so many times during this rivalry's history, both teams have more mundane goals in 2011.

For Michigan, Brady Hoke has replaced Rich Rodriguez after the most disastrous three-year stretch in program history. While implementing a completely new system and changing the culture of the program will take time, the Wolverines can expedite that process with a home win Saturday.

For Notre Dame, it is time to prove that they are a good enough team to travel into an intimidating environment and defeat a bitter rival who has won the last two matchups in the final minute.

When it is all said and done Saturday, Notre Dame can't start winning until they stop losing.

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

Contact Andrew Owens at aowens2@nd.edu

## FOOTBALL RECRUITING

## Irish target OT Zach Banner

By ALLAN JOSEPH  
Sports Editor

Notre Dame's coaching staff will not be able to talk to any recruits this weekend per NCAA rules regarding recruiting during away weekends, but the Irish will be hoping to impress a big-time recruit nonetheless.

Washington offensive tackle Zach Banner will be in Ann Arbor to watch the first night game in Michigan Stadium history. Though Banner is on a visit to Michigan, Notre Dame is heavily recruiting him, Irish recruiting analyst Jason Sapp said.

"He's a big-time offensive tackle out of Washington, and he actually plays basketball as well," said Sapp, the football recruiting editor at Blue and Gold Illustrated. "He's a big, 6-foot-9, 330-pound kid."

Banner will visit Notre Dame for the USC game Oct. 22.

Sapp praised Notre Dame's pursuit of high-quality defensive linemen, highlighted by the recent signing of New York defensive tackle Jerron Jones.

"Notre Dame is a program that's really done well on the defensive line," Sapp said. "[Recently] there have been some great efforts, even comparable with some SEC schools."

Four Notre Dame commits — long snapper Scott Daly, safety John Turner, offensive tackle Taylor Decker and outside linebacker David Perkins — visited campus during Notre Dame's season-opening loss to South Florida.

"All four of them felt the same way most Irish fans felt," Sapp said.

Arizona offensive lineman Evan Goodman also visited campus last weekend, and while he did not expect to be impressed by the Irish, he came away swayed.

"He came into town more as a joyride," Sapp said. "He ended up really having a good time. He talked to the staff and had some good meetings with them ... Notre Dame left a good impression on him."

While much ado has been made about Oregon and Maryland's radical uniform design as a recruiting tool, Sapp does not believe the throwback uniforms Notre Dame will wear Saturday will have a significant effect on recruits.

"I don't think [uniforms] come down to being an actual factor," Sapp said. "At the end of the day, the primary factor

in 99 percent of these decisions comes down to comfort level. In my experience covering and working and being a recruit, it really comes down to how comfortable you are with the program. That's why official visits are key." Sapp said Notre Dame is exceptionally good at convincing recruits during official visits. "Notre Dame does a great job of really rolling out the red carpet," he said. "If recruits are coming into town, [the Irish] have a chance. That's the way it is."

*For more information on Notre Dame recruiting, check out Blue and Gold Illustrated Online. For a limited time, BGI is honoring subscriptions to any other Irish football website.*

Contact Allan Joseph at a joseph2@nd.edu

## Fall 2011 Exhibitions

Snite Museum of Art, *University of Notre Dame*

Tuesday & Wednesday: 10 am - 4 pm • Thursday - Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm • Sunday: 1 - 5 pm



*Sleeping Rinaldo*, 1686, chalk drawing by Charles de la Fosse. Gift of John D. Reilly '63

### THE EPIC AND THE INTIMATE

FRENCH DRAWINGS  
FROM THE JOHN D.  
REILLY COLLECTION

O'Shaughnessy Galleries II and III

August 28 - October 9



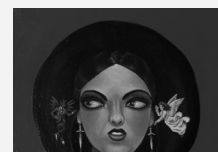
*Untitled #1*, 2009, photograph by Nandita Raman. Acquired with funds provided by the Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography

### CINEMA PLAY HOUSE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
NANDITA RAMAN

Kaeser Mestrovic Studio Gallery

September 4 - December 4



*La Envidiosa*, 2009, acrylic painting by Ricardo Ruiz. On loan from the Cheech Marin Collection

### CHICANITAS

SMALL PAINTINGS  
FROM THE CHEECH  
MARIN COLLECTION

O'Shaughnessy Gallery West

September 4 - November 13



*Jane Fonda*, 1983, Polaroid by Andy Warhol. Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

### WARHOL'S CAMERA

Scholz Family Works on Paper Gallery

September 18 - November 13

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# All Wood needs is gloves

Irish junior running back Cierre Wood wastes no time showcasing his talents or his gloves

By DOUGLAS FARMER  
Editor-in-Chief

Early in the second quarter Saturday, Cierre Wood took a handoff, slipped past a few defenders, and romped 14 yards into the end zone. He then proudly displayed the gloves you see on the cover of this Insider to the Notre Dame Marching Band, oblivious to the penalty flag behind him which would negate the score. “These gloves are nice,” Wood said of the accessories he has been raving about since their arrival in June. “Best thing Adidas has made so far.”

When Wood first saw the gloves in the Notre Dame locker room, he immediately tweeted a photo of himself showcasing the pattern which forms a complete leprechaun when his hands are held just right. In similar fashion, the junior wasted no time in showcasing his abilities Saturday, in his first season as the outright starter at running back.

On Notre Dame’s first snap from the line of scrimmage, Wood caught a screen pass near the right sideline, moved across the field, and covered 31 yards to enter South Florida territory. By the end of the afternoon, Wood had set career highs in carries (21), rushing yards (104), and tied his career high in touchdowns with a score in the fourth quarter.

Add in his three receptions for 44 yards and all in all, it was a pretty good start to the season for the California native.

“Cierre’s just a better football player than he was a year ago,” Irish offensive coordi-

nator Charley Molnar said. “You’re just seeing the results of his hard work, and I would anticipate that Cierre will have a lot of good nights running the football as the season goes on.”

Last season Wood started five of Notre Dame’s 13 games, using 119 carries to total 603 yards. Obviously, he is already well ahead of that pace this season. Aside from one hit, Wood insisted he woke up feeling fine Sunday morning.

“My neck was really hurting, other than that I was fine,” he said. “I was going over a guy,

and started leaning, and he brushed past me, and I got a little whiplash effect.”

Aside from the tweaked neck — which in fact cut this interview short as Wood was whisked off to the trainers’

room for treatment — Wood said he was ready for even more in Notre Dame’s loss.

“I wanted to be in the game more as the game went on,” he said. “In the beginning I was a little tired, had to get my body used to going through so many plays at one time. But after the first drive, I was good to go. I wanted to get on the field as often as I could.”

Wood should be careful what he wishes for, as Molnar said more is assuredly a possibility.

“He’s well prepared for it,” Molnar said. “He’s done the work in the offseason as far as the weight training and the conditioning and getting himself mentally prepared for that task, and in the spring he had a lot of carries.”

“As the weather gets cooler, that’ll work in his favor. I wouldn’t be surprised if Cierre

has 200-plus carries this year.”

### More, and smarter

Just because Wood utilized a career-high in carries to produce a career-high in yards does not mean he felt his tallies were enough. In fact, he is disappointed with some pieces of his performance.

“I want to explode a bit better,” he said. “There were a couple times where I saw a hole I could have gone to, but I went somewhere else. I want to make more decisive decisions on where I go.”

While Wood didn’t go so far as to say he missed holes, the “better reads” he should have made frustrated him so much because of the work he put in with the offensive line during the offseason.

“We worked really hard over the offseason as far as the run game goes. I was always talking with the linemen, and asking them how they block this play, that play, making sure everything is correct.

“That way I can make sure my reads are correct. When I fit off them, everything is correct, make sure my footwork is correct. It’s a lot of hard work that got us to this point.”

And while some success has come, that hard work has not stopped.

“It was good, but it can get a lot better,” Wood said. “That’s what we’re doing. We’re working day-in, day-out to make the run game as good as possible.

“I know what we’re capable of. I know what we can do. I know what we have done.”

### Big duties at the Big House

Hitting the road, heading to the first night game in Michigan Stadium history, the Irish will need to silence the Wolverines’ crowd early or suffer the wrath of 109,000 fans.

It will be a familiar experience for Wood, minus the darkness and the active role



SARAH O’CONNOR/The Observer

Junior running back Cierre Wood looks for a hole during Notre Dame’s 23-20 loss to South Florida on Sept. 3.

on the field, that is. Two years ago, Wood watched Michigan come from behind to upset No. 18 Notre Dame with a last-minute touchdown 38-34. Throughout the whole game, Wood, mired in a redshirt season, envisioned himself on the field.

“I loved every second of it,” he said. “I was imagining myself out there at the time, and this time around it’s going to be a reality for me.

“It was an experience that I think everyone who plays football should have. The Big House is a real college football environment. Fans are cussing at you, just like you’d think they are.”

Wood has plans for that crowd though, hoping to start off in a similar fashion as he did against South Florida. Against the Bulls, not only did Wood gain 31 yards on the opening play, but he also added 60 net rushing yards in the opening quarter.

“If we are rolling on offense as far as the run game goes, we’ll take the crowd right out of it. If we start hitting them with 20-yard runs, 30-yard runs, they’ll start backing up, and then we’ll hit them with the air game.”

That air game knows it is a piece of the run game as well. Without senior receiver Michael Floyd’s blocking on the edge, Wood’s getaway speed would run out of space much more frequently. When too

aggressive though, the edge blocking can be counter-productive — the holding penalty on Wood’s initial touchdown run against South Florida was indeed on Floyd, who was attempting the block which sprung Wood.

“It’s a huge responsibility for me, and I think it’s a big thing for the other wide receivers too,” Floyd said. “You never know when [senior] Jonas Gray or Cierre Wood is going to pop out of the backfield, just making sure that we do our job, and that’s catching

balls, but also run blocking on the perimeter.”

The better he is at it, the easier Floyd’s life becomes.

“That’s a huge lift off our shoulders knowing that the defense has to worry

about our running game too,” the preseason All-American said. “When they have to worry about both passing and running, it makes it kind of easier for us and it makes it easier for [Wood] to be able to split through holes and get five, six yards for us.”

And before long, those “five, six yards” can turn into touchdowns, to build on Wood’s five total from last season. Once in the end zone, he’ll be back to displaying those gloves.

“As long as it’s not excessive celebration.”

Contact Douglas Farmer at dfarmer1@nd.edu

*“Cierre’s just a better football player than he was a year ago.”*

**Charley Molnar**  
offensive coordinator



SARAH O’CONNOR/The Observer

Junior running back Cierre Wood runs the ball during the second half of Notre Dame’s 23-20 loss to South Florida on Sept. 23. Wood had a career-high 104 yards against the Bulls.



IRISH PASSING

Tommy Rees will not be fazed by a crowd of over 111,000 when the Irish take the field Saturday. The sophomore has already won games at Notre Dame Stadium, Yankee Stadium, and the Los Angeles Coliseum in only four career starts. Rees threw for 296 yards in the second half against South Florida Saturday, but he will have the advantage of a running game to open up the passing game this week, a luxury he did not have while attempting to bring the Irish back from a 16-0 halftime deficit.

Senior wide receiver Michael Floyd snared 12 passes for 154 yards and two touchdowns in the first game of the season, and Rees will need to find him often Saturday if the Irish are going to pull off the road victory.

Notre Dame will face a below average secondary that surrendered over 260 passing yards per game and 33.8 points per game in 2010. If the Irish can get junior Theo Riddick involved, Rees will be able to take advantage of the lack of talent in the Michigan secondary.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH RUSHING

Junior Cierre Wood rushed for a career-high 104 yards on 21 carries in Saturday's 23-20 loss, but it would have been much more had the Irish not trailed 16-0 at halftime. He easily had his best collegiate game, and Notre Dame will need more of the same this weekend.

Wood benefited from strong blocking, but he also hit the hole quickly. If the offensive line can create space for the junior, he could have a big day against a Michigan defense that allowed 187.6 yards per game on the ground in 2010. Offensive coordinator Charley Molnar will look to assert the running game early, and to do it he will need not only Wood but also senior Jonas Gray. In his return to his home state, Gray will need to overcome his recurring fumbling problem, as the Irish offense can afford no costly turnovers in a difficult environment. His first quarter fumble near the goal line Saturday shifted the momentum of the game and caused a 14-point swing from which the Irish never recovered.

Michigan senior safety Jordan Kovacs picked up 10 tackles, two for loss, in the Wolverines' 34-10 victory over Western Michigan in a game that was shortened by weather Saturday.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH OFFENSIVE COACHING

It is safe to assume the Irish coaches emphasized fundamentals in practice this week after Saturday's five-turnover performance. The key for Irish coach Brian Kelly and offensive coordinator Charley Molnar is to establish the running game early to provide opportunities for Tommy Rees in the passing game. The Wolverines are not talented in the secondary, so if the Michigan defense places eight defenders in the box to stop the run, Rees will connect with Michael Floyd, Tyler Eifert and Theo Riddick early and often.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH SCHEDULE

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

IRISH SPECIAL TEAMS

Notre Dame had a nightmarish effort on special teams Saturday. Theo Riddick muffed two punts, one of which was a turnover that led to three South Florida points. With four minutes left in the fourth quarter, senior kicker David Ruffer, who failed to convert only one field goal in 2010, missed a 30-yard attempt that would have cut the South Florida lead to six points. The lone positive from Notre Dame's special teams effort came courtesy of Kyle Brindza on kickoffs, as he proved to be more than capable in his debut.

EDGE: EVEN

Notre Dame Specialists

PK	97	David Ruffer	Sr.
P	35	Ben Turk	Jr.
LS	60	Jordan Cowart	Jr.
PR	6	Theo Riddick	Jr.
KR	6	Theo Riddick	Jr.
KO	2	Bennett Jackson	So.
	27	Kyle Brindza	Fr.

S	22	Harrison Smith	Sr.
	15	Dan McCarthy	Sr.
ILB	48	Dan Fox	Jr.
	44	Carlo Calabrese	Jr.
ILB	5	Manti Te'o	Jr.
	54	Anthony McDonald	Sr.
S	26	Jamoris Slaughter	Sr.
	17	Zeke Motta	Jr.

CB	12	Robert Blanton	Sr.
	23	Lo Wood	So.

OLB	45	Darius Fleming	Sr.
	46	Steve Filer	Sr.
DE	90	Ethan Johnson	Sr.
	19	Aaron Lynch	Fr.
NG	98	Sean Cwynar	Sr.
	9	Louis Nix III	So.
DE	89	Kapron Lewis-Moore	Sr.
	7	Stephon Tuitt	Fr.
OLB	55	Prince Shembo	So.
	13	Danny Spond	So.

CB	4	Gary Gray	Sr.
	2	Bennett Jackson	So.

Predictions

Allan Joseph

Sports Editor



On the one hand, the Irish are the superior team. Notre Dame has more talent and is vastly improved from a year ago (especially on the defensive side of the ball), while the Wolverines are under a first-year coach and aren't a huge threat beyond Denard Robinson.

On the other hand, there is no evidence the Irish can avoid repeating last week, when they made mental mistake after mental mistake. They were flat-out sloppy. Those mistakes will be even costlier in a raucous night game. Simply put, the Irish must play mistake-free football to win this game, and after last week, that's hard to see happening.

Still, the Irish can win this game. They should win this game. But I'm only barely confident they will.

Douglas Farmer

Editor-in-Chief



Oh, I believe in yesterday. Er, maybe six years ago.

Six years ago I nearly broke my ankle one Friday evening on a trampoline. I distinctly remember the next afternoon, running as fast as my crutches would carry me, to tell my father Notre Dame was about to upset third-ranked Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Two weeks ago I nearly broke my ankle being an idiot. Tomorrow, I am heading to Ann Arbor hoping for a repeat of the past. Unfortunately, I don't foresee this ending the same way as it did when I was in high school. For one thing, the Irish are favored. Why? I'm not sure.

A week ago, all of Notre Dame's troubles seemed so far away. Now, it looks as though they're here to stay.

Eric Prister

Sports Writer



Turnovers inside the five-yard-line. Fumbled punts. Dropped passes. Missed field goals. Unacceptable defensive penalties after the whistle. It was for all of these reasons that Notre Dame lost to South Florida. It was the mistakes that defined the game.

508 yards in total offense. 254 yards given up by the Irish defense. A 100-yard rusher and a 100-yard receiver. It was for all of these reasons that Notre Dame dominated South Florida in virtually every aspect of the game.

The question now becomes, which is more characteristic of this Irish squad? The mistakes or the strengths?

Notre Dame was the better team on the field against South Florida, and they will be the better team on the field against Michigan. Now they just need to execute.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 31, Michigan 28

FINAL SCORE: Michigan 34, Notre Dame 24

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 31, Michigan 27

Head-to

Notre Dame Offense

WR	7	TJ Jones	So.
	16	DaVaris Daniels	Fr.
WR	6	Theo Riddick	Jr.
	9	Robby Toma	Jr.

LT	70	Zack Martin	Jr.
	72	Nick Martin	Fr.
LG	66	Chris Watt	Jr.
	76	Andrew Nuss	Sr.
C	52	Braxton Cave	Sr.
	57	Mike Golic Jr.	Sr.
RG	78	Trevor Robinson	Sr.
	65	Conor Hanratty	Fr.
RT	75	Taylor Dever	Sr.
	74	Christian Lombard	So.
TE	80	Tyler Eifert	Jr.
	83	Mike Ragone	Sr.

WR	3	Michael Floyd	Sr.
	81	John Goodman	Sr.

Notre Dame Defense



# o-Head

## Michigan Defense

CB	8	J.T. Floyd	Sr.
	5	Courtney Avery	So.
OLB		4	Cam Gordon
		90	Jake Ryan
			Jr. So.
DE	88	Craig Roh	Jr.
	55	Jibreel Black	So.
DT	68	Mike Martin	Sr.
	73	Will Campbell	Jr.
DT	53	Ryan Van Bergen	Sr.
	76	Quinton Washington	Jr.
DE	39	Will Heininger	Sr.
	67	Nathan Brink	Jr.
OLB		27	Mike Jones
		58	Brandon Herron
			Jr. Sr.
CB	29	Troy Woolfolk	Sr.
	18	Blake Countess	Fr.

**UM OFFENSIVE COACHING**  
Saturday will be the first test in Michigan coach Brady Hoke's inaugural season. With 111,000 fans, a rival in town and the first night game in Michigan Stadium history, there is sure to be pressure on Hoke, but he can alleviate some of that pressure early with a strong offensive effort. The challenge will be letting Denard Robinson loose while still sticking to the new offensive system.

EDGE: MICHIGAN

**UM RUSHING**  
Michigan has several talented rushers on its team, the most explosive of which also happens to be their quarterback. Junior Denard Robinson gashed the Irish for 258 yards on 28 carries in last year's 28-24 Wolverine victory. His 87-yard touchdown run with 1:51 remaining in the first half was the longest run in Notre Dame Stadium history, and his two-yard score with 27 seconds remaining sealed the Michigan victory. Senior running back Michael Shaw scored nine touchdowns last season, but this year he is sharing time in the backfield with sophomore Fitzgerald Toussaint, who rushed 11 times for 80 yards and two touchdowns in Michigan's 34-10 win over Western Michigan.  
The Irish defense held speedy South Florida quarterback B.J. Daniels and running back Demetris Murray in check Saturday, which is especially impressive considering the Bulls led most of the day and were trying to chew the clock. Irish junior linebacker Manti Te'o led Notre Dame with nine tackles, including one for loss. Senior linebacker Darius Fleming and senior defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore contained the edges with eight tackles each and a combined two for loss.

**UM PASSING**  
Michigan suffered a blow to their receiving corps when Darryl Stonum was suspended for the season for his second DUI arrest, but the Wolverines return plenty of playmakers in the receiving game. Junior receiver Roy Roundtree led the Wolverines in receiving last year, hauling in 72 passes for 935 yards and seven touchdowns, and the playmaker is expected to lead the way for Michigan again in 2011. He is complemented by senior receiver Junior Hemingway, who caught 32 passes for 593 yards and four touchdowns to lead the way in 2010.  
Junior quarterback Denard Robinson threw for 244 yards and a touchdown in last year's 28-24 win at Notre Dame Stadium, but he is learning a new offense in Wolverines coach Brady Hoke's first season. He threw for only 98 yards and no touchdowns in Michigan's 34-10 rain-shortened victory over Western Michigan.  
The Irish will depend on their safeties to keep Roundtree from making many plays in the vertical passing game. The secondary as a whole will have their hands full with a talented Michigan aerial attack.

EDGE: EVEN

## Michigan Offense

WR	12	Roy Roundtree	Sr.
	19	Kelvin Grady	Sr.
TE	86	Kevin Koger	Sr.
	89	Brandon Moore	Sr.
RT	72	Mark Huyge	Sr.
	75	Michael Schofield	Jr.
RG	65	Patrick Onameh	Sr.
	57	Elliott Mealer	Sr.
C	50	David Molk	Sr.
	63	Rocko Khoury	Sr.
LG	52	Ricky Barnum	Sr.
	57	Elliott Mealer	Sr.
LT	77	Taylor Lewan	Jr.
	75	Michael Schofield	Jr.
WR	21	Junior Hemingway	Sr.
	10	Jeremy Gallon	Jr.

**UM SPECIAL TEAMS**  
Kicker Brendan Gibbons converted 1-of-5 field goals in five games last season. Punter Matt Wile was rated very highly coming out of high school, but this will be his first test on a grand stage.  
Kick returner Kelvin Grady has strong speed and is a threat to return a kick for a touchdown, but overall Michigan's special teams are underwhelming and are unlikely to make a positive impact for the Wolverines.

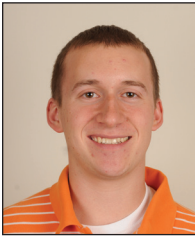
EDGE: NOTRE DAME

<b>UM SCHEDULE</b>	
Sept. 3	Western Michigan (W, 34-10)
Sept. 10	Notre Dame
Sept. 17	Eastern Michigan
Sept. 24	San Diego State
Oct. 1	Minnesota
Oct. 8	@Northwestern
Oct. 15	@Michigan State
Oct. 29	Purdue
Nov. 5	@Iowa
Nov. 12	@Illinois
Nov. 19	Nebraska
Nov. 26	Ohio State

## Michigan Specialists

PK	34	Brendan Gibbons	Jr.
P	45	Matt Wile	Fr.
LS	91	Tom Pomarico	Sr.
PR	10	Jeremy Gallon	Jr.
KR	19	Kelvin Grady	Sr.
KO	45	Matt Wile	Fr.

**Andrew Owens**  
Associate Sports Editor



It's safe to say nobody saw last week's performance coming. Five turnovers — three inside the 5-yard line — doomed the Irish in the opener.  
Under past coaching regimes, Notre Dame would follow up a performance like Saturday's with another mediocre effort, but it won't happen with this coach or this

team.  
Tommy Rees will play with poise, manage the game and make some key throws when needed — and that is all the team will need him to do. Cierre Wood will approach 200 rushing yards against an improving defense that lacks speed and talent and Theo Riddick will bounce back to help the Irish top the Wolverines in Ann Arbor for the first time since 2005.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 31, Michigan 21

**Chris Masoud**  
Assistant Managing Editor



Following last year's defeat to the Wolverines, Michigan quarterback Denard Robinson emerged as a leading contender for the Heisman trophy, former head coach Rich Rodriguez earned the trust of boosters for one more week and nobody really knew who Tommy Rees was. A year later, Robinson remains one of the top athletes in college football, Rodriguez is out of coaching, and Rees is Notre Dame's starting quarterback.  
Amidst the enormous buildup and throwback jerseys, the first night game at the Big House should be a spectacle for all but those on the field. Notre Dame is motivated to pick up its first win of the season. If the Irish can contain an explosive quarterback for the second consecutive week and Rees brings his usual precision and efficiency, Notre Dame earns a victory under the lights.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 35, Michigan 17

“Wolverines are known by drivers to have poor night vision.”

**Jeff Jackson**  
Irish Hockey Coach



FINAL SCORE:  
Notre Dame 28,  
Michigan 17



# Robinson adjusts to new offense under Brady Hoke

By ANDREW OWENS  
Associate Sports Editor

In his inaugural season as Michigan coach, Brady Hoke is relying on junior quarterback Denard Robinson to display some of the explosiveness that transformed the undersized quarterback into a Heisman candidate last September, due in large part to his performance at Notre Dame Stadium in a 28-24 Michigan victory.

*“You kind of feel like they have 12 [players].”*

**Bob Diaco**  
Irish defensive coordinator

“They have another player detached,” Irish defensive coordinator Bob Diaco said. “You have to respect that. It’s not like Wildcat — there is a loose player who can throw the ball ... You kind of feel like they have 12 [players].”

Diaco learned firsthand just how dangerous a quarterback like Robinson can be when the Irish defense allowed 502 yards of total offense to the Michigan signal-caller in 2010, including the longest run in Notre Dame Stadium history, an 87-yard scamper that gave the Wolverines a 21-7 lead just before half-time.

Robinson’s challenge this season has been adjusting to a new offense — a pro-style system, compared to the spread that Robinson thrived in last year. In Michigan’s rain-shortened 34-10 win over Western Michigan Saturday, Robinson completed 9-of-13 passes for 98 yards and carried the ball eight times for 46 yards, tame numbers compared to what he was regularly posting last year.

Despite the numbers, Hoke said he felt Robinson had a strong grasp of the offense in the win.

“I thought he made good decisions,” Hoke said. “He threw the ball well. It was good to see some vertical runs by [running backs] Fitz [Toussaint] and Michael [Shaw] when he was in there.

“But I thought he felt comfortable. I thought his timing on — I think there was an out to the field to [Jeremy] Gallon that was well-timed and well-thrown.”

Irish coach Brian Kelly said Robinson is just as much of a big-play threat this year as he was in 2010.

“They have kept a lot of similar principles for Denard Robinson to have the ball in his hands,” he said. “So there are some things we can build off from last year and certainly it was the big plays that hurt us. Minimizing the big plays and clearly knowing that he has elite speed, we obviously have to slow him down.”

For Hoke, the game will mark the first true test of his Michigan coaching career. It will not, however, be the first time he has experienced the rivalry, as he served as Michigan’s defensive ends coach and then defensive line coach before taking head coaching jobs at Ball State and San Diego State.

“This is a great rivalry game and one that we’re excited about,” Hoke said. “Obviously, there are some other things that go along with this game this year with playing at night, the first night game, and the throw back uniforms and all those things.”

Diaco said the change in lead-

ership has made preparing for the Wolverines unique in that they have a completely new system to face Saturday.

“There is no commonality [between the two systems],” Diaco said. “Some of these teams, the same staffs will play each other five or 10 years in a row. There is a much higher comfort level there.”

The combination of Robinson’s athletic ability and Hoke’s track record as a coach is a dangerous combination for opponents, Diaco said.

“They’re a dynamic offensive outfit ... His players produced an average of basically 35 points a game and 500 yards,” he said. “They did the same thing at San Diego State.”

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Michigan coach Brady Hoke confers with quarterback Denard Robinson during Michigan’s season-opening 34-10 victory over Western Michigan on Sept. 3.

Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies

## Strategies of Peace after “The War on Terror”

A New Era in Global Politics? A New Role for the U.S.?

September 9 (Friday), 4 p.m.  
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# ND's Opponents Last Week and This Week

Team	Last week	This week
(1-0) South Florida	W 23-20 at Notre Dame	Ball State
(1-0) Michigan	W 34-10 Western Michigan	Notre Dame
(1-0) Michigan State	W 28-6 Youngstown State	Florida Atlantic
(1-0) Pittsburgh	W 35-16 Buffalo	Maine
(1-0) Purdue	W 27-24 vs. Mid Tenn. State	at Rice
(1-0) Air Force	W 37-20 South Dakota	TCU
(1-0) USC	W 19-17 Minnesota	Utah
(1-0) Navy	W 40-17 Delaware	at W. Kentucky
(0-1) Wake Forest	L 36-29 OT at Syracuse	NC State
(1-0) Maryland	W 32-24 Miami	West Virginia
(0-1) Boston College	L 24-17 Northwestern	at UCF

## How long have you had the long hair?

Once I got out of high school, I just stopped cutting it. I had to keep it short in high school, so when I got here, I was like, "I'm not cutting it."

## Does it ever get in the way?

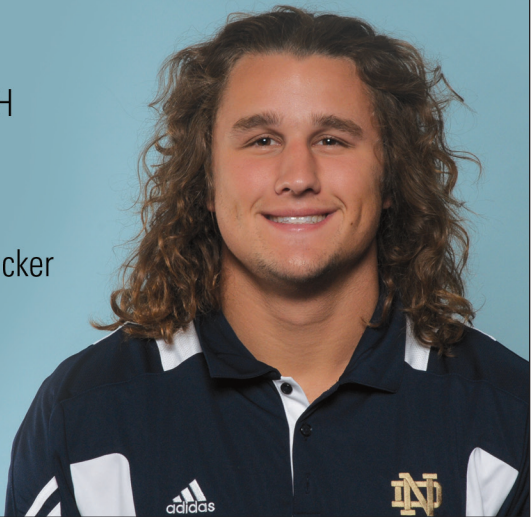
No, not too much. My freshman year against Purdue some dude yanked on it, but that was about it.

## Do you ever get mistaken for a girl?

Actually that happens more than you'd think. Someone actually walked up to my mom and was like, "who's that big, strong woman you were with?" She said, "That was my son."

# DAN FOX

Junior  
Rocky River, OH  
St. Ignatius  
6-3 / 240 lbs  
Outside Linebacker



# Led by the line, defense prepares to contain Robinson

By CHRISTOPHER MASOUD  
Assistant Managing Editor

One of the more closely watched contests within the larger game, the battle of the trenches generally provides an indication of which team has taken control of momentum and, often times, the lead. As such, Irish coach Brian Kelly has maintained that he will be closely monitoring that battle on both sides of the ball.

While sophomore quarterback Tommy Rees' success depends on the protection the offensive line can provide, the outcome of Notre Dame's first road game of the season against Michigan rides largely on the defensive line's ability to contain the Wolverines' premier talent, junior quarterback Denard Robinson.

Anchored by junior nose guard Sean Cwynar and senior defensive ends Kapron Lewis-Moore and Ethan Johnson, the Irish line has prepared extensively for the number of offensive formations, schemes and run-options first-year Michigan coach Brady Hoke could include in his playbook.

"All of those things have to be part of your defensive preparation," Kelly said. "We've been accustomed to having that within our defensive game plan because of last year, but we spent obviously a great deal of time in making sure we have answers to defend the run portion of a quarterback."

Notre Dame faced a number of dual-threat quarterbacks last season, but none were more talented than Robinson, who tallied 258 yards on the ground en route

to 502 yards of total offense in the Wolverines' 28-24 victory.

Despite the limited success against Robinsons last season, Kelly maintains the experience will pay dividends heading into Saturday's game. More importantly, the Irish roster features a number of players capable of filling the void in the trenches, including sophomore nose guard Louis Nix.

"[Nix] has been very consistent in his approach, and we've gotten to know Louis a lot better as a staff," Kelly said. "We know when to push him, we know when to back off. What he's brought to our attention is that he can be that consistent guy day-in and day-out."

Nix recorded seven tackles, in addition to forcing Bulls quarterback B.J. Daniels out of the pocket on a number of occasions, during Saturday's loss to South Florida. Junior linebacker Manti Te'o credits the entire second line of freshmen Aaron Lynch and Stephon Tuitt, and Nix in particular, for providing support in key situations.

"I thought they did pretty well, especially Louis," Te'o said. "Louis did a real good job in there, he was in on a lot of plays and he was the first one to the ball in some cases. He definitely played real hard, and he played real well. The other two did a good job as well. It was definitely nice to see [them] out there getting some reps."

An early enrollee last spring, Lynch tallied seven tackles, five unassisted, in the annual Blue-Gold scrimmage April 16. Lynch



NICOLE TOCZAUER/The Observer

Irish defensive linemen Louis Nix, left, and Ethan Johnson pursue a South Florida ballcarrier during Notre Dame's 23-20 loss to the Bulls on Sept. 3.

recorded one tackle in limited action last Saturday against the Bulls.

"I know I'm ready to play because the coaches have developed me," he said last week. "I don't think I'm 100 percent ready to play yet, but I know I'm ready to help out the team."

Although Tuitt first stepped foot on Notre Dame's campus as a player this summer, he credits the mentorship of Lewis-Moore and Johnson for putting him in a

position to factor into the defensive rotation.

"Right now things are going well," Tuitt said last week. "At first it was kind of rough because we had to adjust to the new system. [Our development] is due to the great coaching staff and the great leadership of the defensive line, and due to that help we're able to move on and become better players on the field and off the field."

Despite the hype surrounding

Saturday's contest as the first night game in Michigan Stadium, the unique atmosphere only adds to the defense's challenge of containing Robinson for 60 minutes.

"It's definitely going to be a great challenge," Te'o said. "Whenever you have an athlete like Denard, it's going to be a good challenge, so I'm definitely looking forward to it."

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# Memorial Mass

## Marking the 10th Anniversary of September 11, 2001

Co-sponsored by the Office of the President, the Office of Campus Ministry,  
Student Government, and the Office of Student Activities

# Hesburgh Library Quadrangle

## Sunday, September 11, 2011

### 7:30 pm

Rain site: Purcell Pavilion,  
Joyce Athletic and Convocation Center



Candlelight procession following to the  
Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes

