

## Boilermaker blowout

Notre Dame improves to 3-2 with decisive 38-10 victory over Purdue in Ross-Ade Stadium

By ANDREW OWENS  
Associate Sports Editor

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — For the first time this season, Notre Dame did not commit any turnovers, allowing the Irish to roll to a 38-10 win over Purdue. “I don’t know that it’s a sign of relief as much as we have a way we need to play the game if we’re going to be successful and we said that since day one — making good decisions and bringing it hard,” Irish coach Brian Kelly said.

The Irish (3-2) did not waste any time shifting momentum to their advantage after senior cornerback Gary Gray intercepted a pass on the first play from scrimmage. On Notre Dame’s second play, sophomore quarterback Tommy Rees connected with senior receiver Michael Floyd for a 35-yard touchdown and a 7-0 Irish advantage.

“Obviously on the road against a Big Ten team ... getting Michael Floyd the ball early on really gave us a lot of confidence offensively,” Kelly said.

Only a week earlier in Notre Dame’s 15-12 win over Pittsburgh on Sept. 24, the Panthers held Floyd to four catches and 27 yards, forcing Rees to distribute the ball to other receivers.

“I think more of a concerted effort to make sure [Floyd] got his touches and making it part of our gameplan,” Kelly said. “He has to touch the ball. Mike’s going to get the ball.”

Floyd finished the game with 137 receiving yards on 12 receptions and the first-quarter touchdown that put Purdue (2-2) in a hole from which it would not recover.

“It’s just what the defense gives us,” Floyd said. “We watched some film and thought we could take advantage of some things they do on the field and we exploited it ... You just have to stay the course and whenever the big play comes, you have to make it.”

Rees finished the game 24-of-40 through the air, with 254 passing yards and three touchdowns in the blowout victory.

“The offense was really clicking tonight,” Rees said. “We had limited turnovers. We were fundamentally sound, but there



TOM YOUNG/The Observer

**Notre Dame running back Cierre Wood runs past a Purdue defender on his way to a 55-yard touchdown run in the second quarter. Wood had a career-high 191 rushing yards on just 20 carries, earning an average of 9.6 yards per carry.**

is still work to be done. Everyone was on the same page.”

Kelly said he noticed some improvements from his sophomore signal-caller besides simply not turning the ball over.

“I saw some really good things [from Rees],” he said. “On the last touchdown he threw where he started his progression with Mike Floyd on an individual route and worked his way back to his fourth receiver. I told him ... those are the signs I’m looking for.”

Yet, the development is a work in progress.

“Then he goes and misses a wide open receiver in the end zone and we have the conversation that we need to be consistent,” Kelly said.

Notre Dame’s running back

tandem of junior Cierre Wood and senior Jonas Gray powered an Irish rushing attack that gashed the Boilermaker defense for 287 yards, the most for the program in eight years.

“Our running game setup everything we did today,” Kelly said. “I thought physically our backs, Jonas Gray and Cierre Wood, really asserted their will on Purdue today. Playing that way gives them a confidence that there’s no reason the ball should be on the ground.”

Irish freshman defensive end Stephon Tuitt did not travel with the team due to a violation of the team’s policy on class attendance, and the defensive line depth was further challenged when senior defensive end Ethan Johnson sprained his ankle early in the contest. He missed the remainder of the game and will be evaluated mid-week before the team makes a decision on his status for Saturday’s home game against Air Force.

“We were shorthanded, so consequently we needed [sophomore defensive end] Kona [Schwenke] to come in and play with us and he did a nice job

with very little rep work,” Kelly said.

“I told our defense that it’s not pity time when you go in there. It’s not acceptable to go in there and not play good defense. You’re getting coached, you’re getting reps, it’s one area when those guys get in there they played at a level that I believe all of our defensive players can play to.”

The Irish defense held Purdue to 84 rushing yards in another stifling performance.

“Defensively it’s been very similar week after week, making it difficult for teams to run the football,” Kelly said. “The keys were that we had to match their intensity. I said earlier in the week this was the game they obviously circled on their calendar. They had a couple weeks off to prepare for us. I liked the way we matched their intensity.”

With the blowout win secured, Irish senior quarterback Dayne Crist replaced Rees with 6:31 remaining in the fourth quarter. It was his first action since being pulled at halftime of the 23-20 loss to South Florida on Sept. 3. Kelly

said he offered the opportunity to the senior before making the change.

“Dayne wanted to get in ... [he] wanted to go out and play and get in there and I have a lot of respect for Dayne,” he said. “I’m not going to throw him out there in meaningless situations but he wanted to get in the game, so it’s always going to be his first shot.”

While the 28-point victory gives the Irish some momentum heading into three consecutive home games, with a bye week mixed in, Kelly said the Irish are not a complete product yet.

“We haven’t arrived,” he said. “I don’t like the fact we had 30-something first downs and didn’t match it in points. We missed some opportunities in close games, missing an easy field goal and not being able to score seven. Those concern me a little bit, but we played well today and I’m not going to sound like sour milk. We have to put more points on the board.”

Contact Andrew Owens at aowens2@nd.edu

### player of the game

**Cierre Wood**  
Notre Dame running back

With his offensive line opening up gaping holes, Wood galloped to a career-high 191 rushing yards on just 20 carries.

### stat of the game

**7.2 yards per rush**

Notre Dame averaged 7.2 yards per carry, highlighted by Wood’s 9.6 yards per rush and Jonas Gray’s 6.3 yards per carry.

### play of the game

**Michael Floyd’s 35-yard touchdown catch in the first quarter**

The Irish set the tone for the game early when, following a Gary Gray interception, Floyd scored on the game’s third play from scrimmage.

### quote of the game

“[Coach Kelly] told us we had to be good in all three phases of the game, and that’s what we did today.”

**Jonas Gray**  
Notre Dame running back



report card

B+

quarterbacks: In a positive step, Tommy Rees avoided turning the ball over and threw three touchdowns. Rees still struggled to be consistently accurate, missing a number of open receivers.

A

running backs: Cierre Wood reeled off a monster 191-yard performance, and Jonas Gray quietly added 94 yards of his own. Notre Dame completely dominated Purdue on the ground.

A-

receivers: It's a testament to Michael Floyd that his 12-catch, 137-yard effort felt just average. Theo Riddick struggled mightily against double coverage, failing to catch even one pass

A

offensive line: The offensive line completely dominated Purdue's defensive front. Anytime a team gives up zero sacks and rolls up 287 yards on the ground, the line has done its job.

A-

defensive line: Kona Schwenke did a good job filling in for an injured Ethan Johnson, and the Irish controlled the line of scrimmage. Without Stephon Tuitt, the line was not quite dominant.

A-

linebackers: Manti Te'o had a field day against the less-talented Boilermakers, and Carlo Calabrese played his best game. Darius Fleming and Prince Shembo were fairly quiet, though.

A-

defensive backs: Gary Gray's opening-play interception opened the floodgates at Ross-Ade Stadium, but the late Purdue touchdown left a sour aftertaste at the end of the game.

D+

special teams: Ben Turk had two good punts, but the rest was ugly. David Ruffer hit just one of his three field goals, and the Irish still have no clue how to return punts.

B+

coaching: The Irish dominated both schematically and athletically on both sides of the ball and didn't let Purdue up for air. The special-teams struggles are reason for concern.

3.41

overall: The Irish beat up on a vastly inferior Purdue team, but the status quo on special teams will come back to hurt the Irish if they don't fix it.

adding up the numbers

For the first time in five games, the normally turnover-prone Irish did not turn the ball over even once.

0

9.6

Running back Cierre Wood averaged 9.6 yards per carry on his way to 191 yards on the night.

Despite kicking the ball off to start the game, it took Notre Dame just 24 seconds to record its first points.

0:24

80

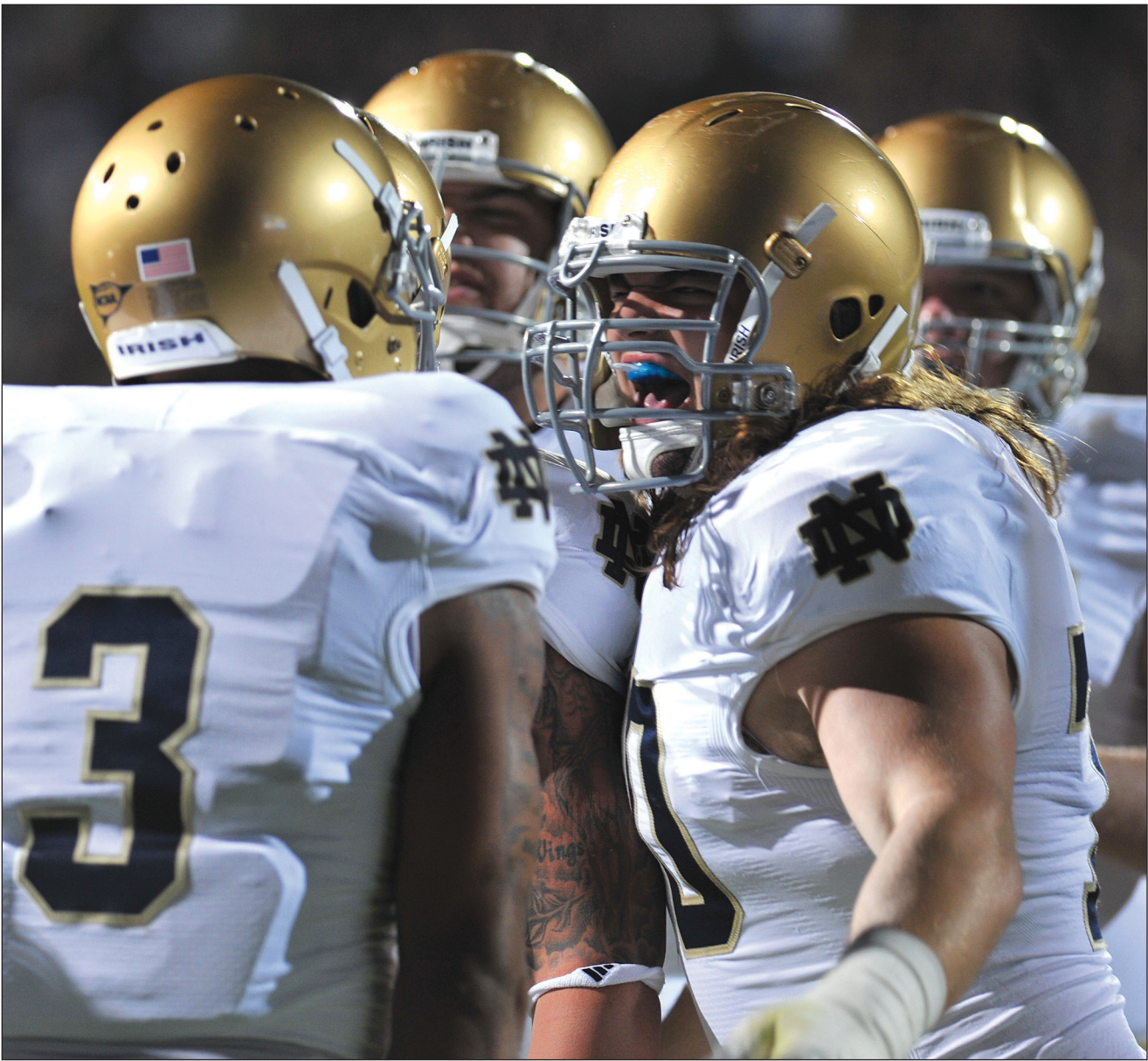
The Irish scored on 80 percent of their red-zone trips, a welcome change from the struggles in the first four games.

The Notre Dame defense has still only allowed one rushing touchdown all year, a fumble recovery at Michigan.

1

185

The Irish rolled up 185 yards in the first quarter, the highest opening-quarter total since 2006.



Junior offensive tackle Zack Martin, right, congratulates receiver Michael Floyd after Floyd's 35-yard touchdown catch put the Irish up 7-0. Floyd finished with 12 catches and 137 receiving yards.

# For once, Irish play to their potential

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Through five games so far this season, the Irish have experienced an entire season's worth of parody.

They lost to an inferior South Florida team simply because they could not execute in the red zone and made error after error, which cost them the win.

They lost in heartbreaking fashion to Michigan, giving up a touchdown drive in the last 30 seconds of the game.

The defeated a solid Michigan State team handily despite too many mistakes.

They proved they could win in a close game against Pittsburgh even though they played their worst overall game of the season.

And Saturday, against a team that did not even belong on the same field as them, the Irish dominated Purdue in every facet of the game, and finally earned a decisive victory.

But now, it's time to stop the parody and start doing what this team should have been doing all year — winning games consistently.

Notre Dame is a good football team. It may not be one of the best teams in the country, but it is a solid football team with more talent than most of the teams remaining on the schedule. It is time to stop the parody and get down to business — the business of winning games.

The Purdue game showed just how dominant the Irish can be when they execute and avoid turnovers (despite their best efforts). Granted, Purdue is a terrible team that had no clue how to stop Notre Dame from doing exactly what it wanted. But the Irish did what they needed to do and dominated a game that they certainly should have dominated.

Brian Kelly knew exactly what was at stake against Purdue. He never let his team take its foot off the gas and tried to move the ball even when the game was out of reach. He knew that consistency against Purdue means consistency as the season moves forward.

Not only that, but the win over Purdue provided a solid recipe for success for the rest of the season. Tommy Rees is not going to win games on his own for Notre Dame, so the offense needs to start with the running game. Cierre Wood and Jonas Gray are running hard and seeing the field incredibly well — they have to be a main focus of the Irish offense moving forward.

But the top option has to be Michael Floyd, just as he was against the Boilermakers. He is almost always the best, most athletic and most dangerous player on the field.

Notre Dame is a very talented team, but has trouble using that talent as well as it should. Turnovers have plagued the season and are the only thing standing between the Irish and a perfect record. They clearly have the capability to play like they did against Purdue. That doesn't mean they need to beat every team 38-10, but that level of execution is what should be expected.

It's time to end the parody. It's time to let teams like Pittsburgh hang around; Pittsburgh is talented, but Notre Dame is much better. It's time to play more games like Purdue, and fewer like South Florida. It's time for Notre Dame to play up to its standards and win games its should win — win them handily, like it did against Purdue.

This year's Irish squad is a good one. It's time for them to play like it.

Contact Eric Prister at [epriester@nd.edu](mailto:epriester@nd.edu)  
The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Observer.

Check out more coverage at

ndsmcobserver.com



# Wood runs roughshod over Purdue



GRACE KENESEY/The Observer

Junior running back Cierre Wood had a career day Saturday, accounting for 213 yards of total offense, including 191 rushing yards, highlighted by a 55-yard touchdown run in the second quarter.

By ERIC PRISTER  
Senior Sports Writer

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Irish sophomore running back Cierre Wood did not receive his first carry until the 4:15 mark in the first quarter in Saturday’s 38-10 victory over Purdue. He took the handoff from sophomore quarterback Tommy Rees and scampered 19 yards for the first down. And that was just the beginning. Wood carried the ball 19 more times, finishing the game with 191 yards on 20 carries, most of which he credited to his offensive line. “My line just opened up everything — it was a free-for-all out there,” he said. “We were moving the ball exceptionally well. I just ran off their blocks and it’s just a speed boost after that.” Wood’s 191 rushing yards from scrimmage, a career high, were the most for an Irish back since Julius Jones ran for 218 yards at Stanford in 2003. “It felt great,” Wood said. “We always talk about ‘just another day in the office.’ I need to give a big shout out to my offensive line — it wouldn’t have been possible without them. They opened up the holes, and I just read their blocks perfectly and just got the yardage.” Despite not receiving a touch in the first 10 minutes of the game, Wood ran for 101 yards in the first half, the

best half of his career and his third 100-yard rushing game of the season. “We just got rolling early, and we kept it going from there,” Wood said. “Our momentum was built up, and it never came down. Blocks were being made, our tackle was capping off the edge, and our tight end was capping off the edge, and we just read off our blocks. I just wanted to make an imprint in the game and keep it going in the second half as well.” The Irish offense was clicking on all cylinders, racking up 551 yards in total offense, something Irish coach Brian Kelly said all started with the running game. Wood said Notre Dame came into the game prepared to run the football, especially to the outside edge of the Purdue defense. “[Getting the ball to the outside edges] was the plan coming in, but like I said, it’s all about reading the blocks and taking what the defense gives you,” he said. “I took everything — I was like a kid eating candy out there. Whatever they gave me, that was what I was going to take. It feels good [to see so much open space.] “You just have to work on your

moves, have to make the first person miss. But that’s what we’re here for — we’re football players.” Wood’s longest run of the day came midway through the second quarter, when he took a Rees handoff 55 yards for the score. Rees said it helped the entire offense to have such a productive running game. “It’s been working like that all year, but especially tonight, having them running and the offensive line do a great job and having both backs running hard and the receivers making blocks downfield, it’s awesome to have big chunks coming out of your running game,” Rees said. Wood said he was satisfied with the outcome of the game, but that the Irish now must keep up the intensity for the rest of the season. “We have to be more consistent with it,” he said. “We have to bring that for the rest of our games throughout the rest of the season, and everybody’s eyes will start to open.”

Contact Eric Prister at  
eprister@nd.edu

# Irish dominate Purdue on ground

By ANDREW OWENS  
Associate Sports Editor

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — In its 38-10 win over Purdue, Notre Dame totaled 551 yards of offense, the most since gaining 592 against Washington State on Oct. 31, 2009. Of the 551 yards, 185 came in the first quarter. “I think on the road, it’s really important [to get off to a fast start],” Irish coach Brian Kelly said. “You take the crowd out of it and you want to be the first one on the board and dictate the tempo of the game.” The Irish picked up 34 first downs, two shy of the school record set against Army in 1974. It was the most they garnered since moving the chains 34 times against Michigan State on Sept. 21, 1991.

Notre Dame’s 289 rushing yards were the most since accumulating 320 at Stanford on Nov. 29, 2003. “Our running game set up everything we did today,” Kelly said. “When you run the ball effectively, you can play well.” **Floyd sets another record** Irish senior receiver Michael Floyd took possession of another Notre Dame career receiving mark with the 16th 100-yard receiving game of his career. Golden Tate held the previous mark with 15. “We made a more concerted effort to make him part of the game plan,” Kelly said. “He has to touch the ball and the offense has to come to him.” **Rees strikes again** Irish sophomore quarterback

Tommy Rees threw a touchdown in his 10th consecutive game, the third-most in Notre Dame history. Brady Quinn holds the all-time mark, dating back to the 2004-05 seasons when he recorded a touchdown pass in 16 consecutive games. The strike came on the second offensive play of the game, a 35-yard touchdown pass to Floyd, silencing the home crowd. “It’s great getting out to an early lead,” Rees said. “Getting the first strike kind of killed some of the momentum they had coming into the game — a lively night game with a home crowd and getting an early strike kind of helps pushing away some of that momentum.”

Contact Andrew Owens at  
aowens2@nd.edu

## scoring summary

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
PU	0	3	0	7	10
ND	14	7	14	3	38

**First quarter**  
Notre Dame 7, Purdue 0  
Michael Floyd 35-yd pass from Tommy Rees (David Ruffer kick) with 14:36 remaining  
Drive: 2 plays, 35 yards, 0:10 elapsed

Notre Dame 14, Purdue 0  
Jonas Gray 2-yd run (David Ruffer kick) with 0:03 remaining  
Drive: 13 plays, 82 yards, 4:12 elapsed

**Second quarter**  
Notre Dame 21, Purdue 0  
Cierre Wood 55-yd run (David Ruffer kick) with 9:06 remaining  
Drive: 3 plays, 79 yards, 1:03 elapsed

Notre Dame 21, Purdue 3  
Carson Wiggs 27-yd field goal with 3:39 remaining  
Drive: 14 plays, 70 yards, 5:27 elapsed

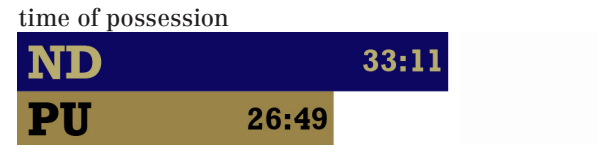
**Third quarter**  
Notre Dame 28, Purdue 3  
Tyler Eifert 6-yd pass from Tommy Rees (David Ruffer kick) with 12:00 remaining  
Drive: 7 plays, 69 yards, 3:00 elapsed

Notre Dame 35, Purdue 3  
T.J. Jones 11-yd pass from Tommy Rees (David Ruffer kick) with 2:07 remaining  
Drive: 12 plays, 87 yards, 4:45 elapsed

**Fourth quarter**  
Notre Dame 38, Purdue 3  
David Ruffer 21-yd field goal with 8:06 remaining  
Drive: 16 plays, 70 yards, 7:34 elapsed

Notre Dame 38, Purdue 10  
Antavian Edison 13-yd pass from Caleb TerBush (Carson Wiggs kick) with 0:21 remaining  
Drive: 11 plays, 95 yards, 3:59 elapsed

## statistics



passing			
Rees	24-40-254	TerBush	10-15-101
rushing			
Wood	20-191	Hunt	3-25
Gray	15-94	Bolden	6-17
receiving			
Floyd	12-137	Edison	7-105
Jones	5-49	Siller	4-26
field goals			
Ruffer	1-3	Harper	1-2





GRACE KENESEY/The Observer



TOM YOUNG/The Observer

# Never in doubt

Gary Gray intercepted a Caleb TerBush pass on the first play from scrimmage, Michael Floyd scored a touchdown two plays later and Notre Dame never looked back in blowing by Purdue 38-10 in Ross-Ade Stadium. Cierre Wood had a career day on the ground, racking up 191 yards on 20 carries, while fellow running back Jonas Gray added 94 yards of his own. While the Irish special teams continued to struggle, it was never a problem, as Purdue simply could not compete with the more talented Irish. Only the Boilermakers' last-minute touchdown kept the score from looking like the blowout it actually was.



TOM YOUNG/The Observer



TOM YOUNG/The Observer



GRACE KENESEY/The Observer

Clockwise from top: guard Trevor Robinson blocks a Purdue defender; running back Jonas Gray fights off a tackle; safety Harrison Smith takes down Purdue receiver Gary Bush; receiver T.J. Jones catches a pass from quarterback Tommy Rees; receiver Michael Floyd attempts to escape a Boilermaker tackle.