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Mendoza earns No. 1 ranking once again

Bloomberg Businessweek names College of Business top undergraduate program for third consecutive year

By KRISTEN DURBIN
News Editor

Move over, Notre Dame football. There's a new Fighting Irish dynasty in town.

For the third consecutive year, Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business was named the top undergraduate business school in the country by Bloomberg Businessweek magazine.

University President Fr. John Jenkins commended the College for its focus on academic excellence and social responsibility.

"To achieve the No. 1 ranking even once is outstanding, but three straight years is truly re-

markable," he said. "The high academic standards of our faculty and students in combination with our particular focus on using business to impact the greater good is what makes Mendoza stand out."

Roger Huang, interim dean of Mendoza, said he attributes the school's continued excellence to the unique "Notre Dame spirit."

"I think [the Notre Dame spirit] is the 'secret sauce' we have here," he said. "It's the spirit that faculty has for helping students, the spirit of career services and student services at the University level and

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ELISA DE CASTRO | Observer Graphic

Students to travel to Uganda to promote youth sports



Photo courtesy of Kevin Dugan

Children from Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in the Masaka District, Uganda attend school. Notre Dame students will visit the African country this summer to promote children's athletics.

By MARISA IATI
Associate News Editor

Twelve Notre Dame students will travel to Uganda for two weeks in May to share their athletic passion and talents with the country's youth.

Kevin Dugan, manager of youth and community programs for the athletic department, said the trip, co-sponsored by the Institute for Educational Initiatives and the athletic department, is focused both on educational research and promotion of youth athletics.

"The purpose of the whole effort is to work with the Catholic Church and the [Ugandan] Ministry of Education and Sports to share ideas on how sport can be used as a platform for positive social impact," Dugan said.

Students will visit the towns of Fort Portal, Masaka, Jinja and Kampala to promote physical education and youth sports ministry programs, run a sports camp and discuss potential research of sports' impact on children, Dugan said.

The effort comes in the wake of advocacy organization Invisible Children's "Kony 2012" campaign. The movement calls for the arrest of Joseph Kony, the head of a Ugandan rebel group who ruthlessly recruits child soldiers.

The film that accompanies the campaign, which went viral this month, received international backlash from critics who publicly claimed the video oversimplifies a complex issue.

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Event promotes dialogue of inclusion

By ANNA BOARINI
News Writer

Howard Hall sponsored the Tunnel of Love event Wednesday to promote discussion about diversity and inclusion in light of the alleged hate crimes against two black student organizations that occurred before spring break.

Assistant rector Bridget Nugent said Howard Hall wanted to create a way to promote a different dialogue about diversity on campus.

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Photo Courtesy of Bridget Nugent

Students participate in Howard Hall's Tunnel of Love event Wednesday to promote campus diversity and inclusion.

Lecture to discuss autism awareness

By LEILA GREEN
News Writer

Alison Singer, founder and president of the Autism Science Foundation, will give a lecture at the third annual Autism Conference tonight on current scientific research regarding autism.

Junior Brooke Conti, president of the Special Friends Club, which co-sponsors the event, said she hopes this event will help dispel com-

mon myths about autism.

"It is not a very well characterized disorder," she said. "Hearing a professional would be helpful to clarify any misconceptions."

Conti said Singer will present current developments within the scientific research community, as well as the importance of autism awareness. She said Singer will also discuss the relationship

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The Observer regards itself as a professional publication and strives for the highest standards of journalism at all times. We do, however, recognize that we will make mistakes. If we have made a mistake, please contact us at (574) 631-4541 so we can correct our error.

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SENATE

Group discusses bike shop, discrimination

By MARISA IATI
Associate News Editor

Student Senate discussed both the potential reopening of the Notre Dame Bike Shop and the March 5 town hall meeting that addressed discrimination at its Wednesday meeting.

John Sanders, residence life director for student government, said Notre Dame Security Police (NDSP) provided free bicycle repair services at the shop for at least 10 years. He said five to seven mechanics fixed approximately 331 bikes each year.

“They didn’t advertise because they were a little bit afraid that if they advertised, they wouldn’t be able to meet the demand,” he said. “The biggest problem that we’re facing is primarily space.”

Another obstacle to reopening the shop is lack of funding, Sanders said.

“While NDSP is willing to continue salvaging bikes for parts and reusing them and collecting bikes for people, they aren’t willing to fund the operation in the way that they were,” he said. “So in order to do that, we’re probably going to have to come up with some sort of collaborative fund with other departments on campus in order to resurrect the bike shop.”

Sanders said the bike shop

could potentially reopen in a currently flooded restroom in Stepan Center. Student body vice president and president-elect Brett Rocheleau said the shop previously existed in the garages of the Telecommunications Building.

Student body president Pat McCormick said student government plans to introduce a concurrent resolution between Campus Life Council and Senate to express support for reopening the bike shop.

Senate also discussed reactions to the March 5 town hall meeting that addressed recent acts of discriminatory harassment.

Freshman class president Tim Scanlan said some students he spoke with were shocked that many of the stories of discrimination shared at the town hall meeting involved rectors and NDSP officers. In one case, a student complained of a discriminatory comment from an officer. Another student said her rector failed to discipline a roommate for prejudiced behavior.

“They said one of the most surprising things was how many of the stories involved authority,” Scanlan said.

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SGA

Association prepares for upcoming change

By KRISTEN RICE
News Writer

Saint Mary’s Student Government Association (SGA) discussed last week’s election and prepared for the upcoming student government turnover, which will take place April 1.

SGA chief of staff Emily Skirtich said she was pleased with this year’s election turnout.

“There was a lot of participation,” she said. “Elections went really [well] and just the physical presence was good.”

Skirtich said 86 percent of the student body voted in the elections for Student Activities Board, Student Diversity Board and the Residence Hall Association.

The election for the class of 2015 presidents resulted in a tie, and the tiebreaker vote will take place next week. Campaigning is allowed to continue until the election.

Skirtich said students should “continue to encourage voting” in next week’s runoff election.

SGA also discussed the association’s new constitution. Student body vice president Jacquelyn Zupancic said the constitution should get approved next week.

The constitution is 12 pag-

es long, and all members of SGA are instructed to read it to propose changes before next week.

Zupancic said this final overview is crucial.

“It’s important that we get this constitution approved and accurate because we have a new structure,” she said.

SGA also proposed holding an event to introduce the College’s new leaders, including Michael Boehm, the new chief information officer.

SGA technology commissioner Maureen Parsons will coordinate the event, which will take place later in the semester.

Parsons said the event would be a good forum to “explain the timeline of initiatives that students are interested in.”

Student body president Nicole Gans said she expects the event to be successful.

“There is a lot of potential,” Gans said. “This is great for students to get their voices out there and being able to understand the changes.”

Next week will be the current members’ last meeting and they will turnover their duties to the new students in their positions.

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Uganda

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Dugan said Notre Dame’s trip will expose students to a different side of Uganda than that portrayed in “Kony 2012.”

“I think our students will be really encouraged by the talents and gifts of the Ugandan youth,” he said. “The course will be about celebrating the incredible human potential of the country.”

The trip will count as an Education, Schooling and Society course for one credit, Dugan said. He said participants will also take two separate one-credit courses beforehand to prepare them for their experiences in Uganda.

Dugan said the trip coordinators consulted with the Ministry of Education and Sports, the National Council of Sports and the Uganda Catholic Secretariat to discuss how the Notre Dame group could best collaborate with them.

“We don’t want this to be a neo-colonial effort and have been very thoughtful about engaging people in Uganda about how we can complement what they are already doing on the ground there to improve physical education in schools and providing more outlets for personal and moral development through sport,” Dugan said.

Dugan said the group will work with the Uganda Catholic Secretariat to develop the sports component of the Secretariat’s youth ministry programs.

“The student group, which includes several student-athletes, will be running a Notre Dame sports camp in the village [of Masaka] to complement the Church’s athletic ministry,” he said.

Dugan said professor Clark Power of Notre Dame’s Insti-



Photo courtesy of Kevin Dugan

A child stands in front of the school at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Masaka District, Uganda.

tute for Educational Initiatives, who also coordinated the trip will share his “Play Like a Champion Today” educational series that uses sports to promote moral development. He said Power had the Notre Dame player handbook adapted for young Ugandan athletes.

“Power will also be spending time running a two-day workshop with the education faculty at Uganda Martyrs University, where he is working on a joint research project to study the impact of sport on child development,” Dugan said.

The Catholic Church and the Ministry of Education and Sports welcomed the group’s initiative, Dugan said.

“The Church sees sport as a way to engage young people in healthy activities,” he said. “The government sees it as a form of human and community development that will also

lead to national and economic development.”

Dugan said he wants the group to approach their work humbly.

“If we walk humbly and serve passionately, then our presence can help support the work of the government and the Church to use sport as a form of growth and development for children in Uganda,” he said.

Dugan said he hoped the trip to Uganda would become an annual effort.

“[The Congregation of] Holy Cross and Notre Dame have been committed to Uganda for years,” he said. “Let’s hope that this is just the beginning for ND Athletics and the Institute for Educational Initiatives.”

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KEELEY VATICAN LECTURE

The Terrence R. Keeley Vatican Lecture, an annual lecture sponsored by the Nanovic Institute for European Studies, provides students and faculty the opportunity to explore questions involving Notre Dame’s Catholic mission with distinguished representatives from the Holy See.



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Howard

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“Notre Dame is more diverse than some appreciate and we wanted to see all the different forms of diversity we have on campus,” she said, “We wanted to show not just the obvious differences but also the different world-views and perspectives.”

To show these different perspectives, students covered the Howard Hall tunnel in pictures and images representing diversity on campus.

Nugent asked campus groups such as the Asian American Association, the Black Student Association and CORE council to submit artwork and photos as a way to showcase the differences the campus holds.

“People have different ideas of what diversity is,” she said. “Some people think that Notre Dame is not a very diverse campus. The pictures can help show how diverse and vibrant campus really is.”

Nugent said some of the photos came from the Real Me Project, a photo project celebrating diversity on campus.

“We asked groups to send pictures they thought would symbolize the different types of diversity on campus,” she said.

Nugent said 750 students signed a banner that read, “We are fighting for inclusion” and 600 participants



Photo courtesy of Bridget Nugent

Students signed a banner in support of inclusion at the Howard Hall Tunnel of Love event Wednesday.

received a bandana to commemorate the event.

Nugent said signing the banner showed solidarity with diverse groups on campus and promoted a spirit of inclusion.

“We have minorities on campus that have beautiful things they contribute and we want there to be a sense of inclusion,” she said.

Nugent said after the event the banner will be used as a backdrop for the opening night of Race Monologues and then will be donated to a multicultural campus group.

“We really want the banner to be a way to give back to the community,” she said.

Nugent said the event was a success and hopes the creativity of the event can help promote discourse.

“We need the recognition that we can rely on discourse to engage that tension and work towards finding a solution,” she said. “The more we rely on discourse, then we can move toward resolution and ultimately inclusion.”

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Autism

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between autism advocacy and science.

The Autism Science Foundation, which Singer founded in 2009, provides funding to scientists conducting research to discover the causes of autism and develop better treatments, according to the organization’s website.

Singer, a mother of an autistic child, has appeared on Oprah, NBC Nightly News, CNN and Good Morning

America to advocate for research of the disorder, according to the Autism Science Foundation website.

Conti said part of the Special Friends Club’s mission is to educate campus about autism research and support.

Students involved in the Special Friends club work with people with autism from the South Bend and surrounding communities and form close bonds with them, Conti said.

Throughout the year, Conti said students spend time socializing, doing homework or assisting with therapy with

the people they are paired with once a week.

Conti said the time students put into helping their “special friends” makes a big difference in their lives.

“[Autism is] a social disorder,” she said. “The more that you interact with a person really helps them. Even if they’re different, they’re not that different.”

The conference will take place Thursday in Jordan Hall of Science room 105 at 7 p.m.

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Mendoza

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ways they go out of their way to help students, the spirit of Mendoza students to work hard and the spirit of alumni and friends of Notre Dame for the College.”

These intangible qualities of the College’s undergraduate business program do not directly factor into Businessweek’s ranking system, which includes surveys of senior business majors and employers, median starting salaries for graduates, the number of alumni sent to top MBA programs from each school and a calculation of academic quality.

Of the 142 undergraduate business programs included in Businessweek’s 2012 rankings, Mendoza ranked No. 1 based on student surveys and No. 2 according to recruiter surveys.

Huang said he believes that “secret sauce,” combined with the mission statements of both Mendoza and Notre Dame, provides the real key to the success of the undergraduate business program.

“Our mission statement is to educate students to be good academically, prepare them for professions and hold them accountable for what they do,” Huang said. “Since the school was founded, we have been teaching students not only what they need to know how to do but also how to go about doing that in the right way.”

This consistency in the College’s teaching mission also applies to its emphasis on promoting ethical business practices among its students, Huang said.

“The focus on how to do [business] in the right way comes through in courses in business

ethics, corporate social responsibility, sustainability and social entrepreneurship,” he said. “We’ve been teaching that forever as part of our mission and our views of our position here.”

Although the College appreciates being recognized for its excellence, Huang said maintaining the No. 1 ranking comes second to doing the “right thing.”

“We’ll keep doing whatever it is that we believe is the right thing to do for our students, the College and the University, even if it has a negative impact on our ranking,” he said.

With increased national attention on Mendoza’s undergraduate

business program comes increased student interest and enrollment, but Huang said the College is equipped to handle short-term spikes in those areas.

“In the short run, I think we’ll be able to accommodate the increased enrollment demands set by the ranking,” he said. “But if enrollment increases unabated, we might need to address more

permanent long-term solutions by working together with the University as a whole.”

At the same time, national recognition of Mendoza’s standard of

excellence also places a sense of responsibility on the College, Huang said.

“Being No. 1 is a responsibility because we are in the limelight,” he said. “It’s an opportunity to show the world who we are and what we stand for, which is that you can be good professionally and academically while being true to your values and traditions at the same time.”

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“Our mission statement is to educate students to be good academically, prepare them for professions and hold them accountable for what they do.”

Roger Huang
interim dean

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“Being No. 1 is a responsibility because we are in the limelight.”

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Media-savvy lawyer humanizes clients



AP
Attorney John Henry Browne defends Colton Moore, the "Barefoot Bandit," during his Dec. 16 trial. Browne now represents soldier Robert Bales.

Associated Press

SEATTLE — A day before the public learned the name of the soldier accused of methodically slaughtering 16 civilians in Afghanistan, his lawyer called a news conference and sketched a different portrait of Robert Bales: that of a loving father and devoted husband who had been traumatized by a comrade's injury and sent into combat one too many times.

The move was classic John Henry Browne. The charming, sometimes brash, media-savvy defense attorney had yet to even meet his client and was already attempting to shape public perceptions.

"His best work is not in a court of law but really in a court of public opinion. He's a master at humanizing his client, and that's an important role," said Dan Satterberg, chief prosecutor in Seattle's King County, where Browne is based. "He is accessible and quotable. And he loves to talk to the media. He doesn't waste any time getting a positive portrayal of his client."

Six-foot-six and seven times married, with a penchant for long, white scarves, Browne cuts a flamboyant figure in Seattle legal circles and has represented some notorious criminals, including serial killer Ted Bundy and the teenage Barefoot Bandit.

Browne, 65, has obtained remarkable results for some of his clients, but his aggressive courtroom style can also rub prosecutors and judges the wrong way. In a drug case last summer, a mistrial was declared after he questioned the judge's competence in open court and a juror was overheard saying he wanted to punch the lawyer in the nose.

His new client, Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, a 38-year-old Army sniper from Washington state, could be charged as early as this week in the March 11 shooting rampage, a crime that has strained relations between the U.S. and Afghanistan and threatened to alter the course of the war.

Browne met with Bales for the first time Monday, conferring with him behind bars at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. While any trial is months away, some wonder whether the lawyer's sometimes abrasive manner

will sit well with the more formal culture of a military court, where the jury consists entirely of soldiers.

By his own count, Browne has appeared in military court only three times in a career of more than four decades. He never served in the military, and he protested against the Vietnam War. He initially received a student deferment and later was deemed unfit to serve because of his height, he said Wednesday.

"He pushes prosecutors and judges, and his success is partially due to that," said John Wolfe, a lawyer who worked for Browne in the 1970s. "His zealotness can cause people to make mistakes." But he added: "I fully expect he's going to adapt his style to the decorum required in a military trial."

Allen Ressler, a Seattle attorney who went to American University Law School with Browne and was his law partner years ago, put it this way: "He's not always the most pleasant human being in the world, but he knows what he needs to do to get results."

Browne has been known to turn around in court and roll his eyes if he dislikes what he is hearing from the judge. In the drug case that ended in a mistrial, he simply refused to continue participating because he disagreed with several rulings. He sat down and did the same thing in a 1979 murder case.

"He makes harsh statements sometimes, statements some people feel might be disrespectful," Wolfe said. "If he thinks a judge is out of line, he'll say, 'You're out of line.' He is passionate about his defense work, and when he thinks it's appropriate, he'll call a spade a spade."

Several colleagues say that he clearly enjoys the publicity from big cases but that his real motivation lies deeper, in a belief in his clients and their right to a fair trial.

"John has always had high-profile cases because he's really good," said Anne Bremner, a Seattle lawyer who was Browne's fifth wife. "But often in high-profile cases, they can be a platform for important discussions on broad issues. Being part of that public discussion and potential institutional changes is important to him."

Scientists find heart attack lead

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Too often, people pass a cardiac checkup only to collapse with a heart attack days later. Now scientists have found a clue that one day may help doctors determine if a heart attack is imminent, in hopes of preventing it.

Most heart attacks happen when fatty deposits in an artery burst open, and a blood clot then forms to seal the break. If the clot is too big, it blocks off blood flow.

The problem: Today's best tests can't predict when that's about to happen.

"We don't have a way to get at whether an artery's going to crack, the precursor to a heart attack," said Dr. Eric Topol, director of California's Scripps Translational Science Institute.

Wednesday, Scripps researchers reported a new lead — by searching people's blood for cells that appear to flake off the lining of a severely diseased artery.

Topol's team measured high levels of those cells, deformed ones, floating in the blood of 50 people who'd just had a heart attack. The research is reported in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*.

Next, Topol said his team soon will begin needed studies to learn how early those cells might appear before a heart attack, and if spotting them could allow use of clot-preventing drugs to ward off damage. Some San Diego emergency rooms will study an experimental

blood test with chest-pain sufferers whose standard exams found no evidence of a heart attack, he said.

Don't expect a test to predict heart attacks any time soon — a lot more research is needed, caution heart specialists not involved with the study. But they're intrigued.

"This study is pretty exciting," said Dr. Douglas Zipes of Indiana University and past president of the American College of Cardiology. It suggests those cells are harmed "not just in the minutes prior" to a heart attack, he said, "but probably hours, maybe even days" earlier.

"It's a neat, provocative first step," added Dr. William C. Little, cardiology chief at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. "But it is not a biomarker ready for prime time."

About 935,000 people in the U.S. have a heart attack every year, according to government figures. Doctors can tell who's at risk: People with high blood pressure and cholesterol, who smoke, have diabetes, are overweight or sedentary.

But there's no way to tell when a heart attack is imminent. Tests can spot that an artery is narrowing, or if a heart attack is under way or already has damaged the heart muscle. They can't tell if the plaque inside arteries is poised to rupture.

So it's not that uncommon for someone to suffer a heart attack shortly after passing a stress test or being told that their chest pain was nothing to worry about.

Wednesday's study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, investigated cells shed from the endothelium, or the lining of blood vessels, into the bloodstream. They're called "circulating endothelial cells."

First, Topol's team paired with Veridex LLC, a Johnson & Johnson unit that makes technology used to find cancer cells floating in blood. Could it find these cardiovascular cells, too?

The team took blood samples from 50 heart attack patients — before they had any artery-disturbing tests or treatments — and from 44 healthy volunteers. They counted lots of the endothelial cells floating in the heart attack victims' blood, and very little in the healthy people's blood.

The big surprise: The cells in the heart patients were grossly deformed. "Sick cells," is how Topol describes them.

The study couldn't tell when those abnormal cells first appeared — and that's key, said Wake Forest's Little. It's not clear how many heart attacks happen too suddenly for any warning period.

But Topol theorizes there are plaques that break apart gradually and may shed these cells for up to two weeks before the heart attack. He cites autopsy studies that found people's arteries healed several plaque ruptures before the final one that killed them.

Topol said Scripps and Veridex have filed for a patent for a blood test to detect the abnormal cells.

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Obama, Republicans debate energy policy

Associated Press

MALJAMAR, N.M. — Wooing a nation of increasingly angry motorists, President Barack Obama and his Republican rivals are all plunging into gas-pump politics, seeking the upper hand as energy becomes a driving issue in the election campaign.

The president is defending his energy agenda this week, traveling Wednesday to a solar panel plant in Nevada and oil and gas fields in New Mexico and the site of a future oil pipeline in Oklahoma that the White House is promising to accelerate. At the same time, GOP opponents from front-runner Mitt Romney on down are vigorously accusing him of stifling domestic production and betting on foolhardy alternative energy methods over traditional oil drilling.

With gasoline reaching \$3.86 a gallon in the U.S. and apparently heading higher, the public is impatient for Obama — or someone in his place — to do something about it.

In truth, a president has little direct control over gas prices, which have risen more than 50 cents a gallon since January in response to a standoff over Iran's nuclear program that has threatened to disrupt Middle East oil supplies.

Well aware of Republicans' criticism, Obama's advisers argue that voters take a sophisticated view toward energy and think about it as a problem demanding long-term answers. They know that talk about future solutions may not satisfy people as they endure high prices, but they're betting that voters will side with the candidate they trust the most to deal with the issue — and they're determined that that will be Obama.

"We're drilling all over the place," Obama said in Maljamar, N.M., in a field dotted with oil rigs.

Polls show less certainty about it all. One survey this month by CBS News and The

New York Times found that 54 percent of Americans felt the price of gasoline was something a president could do a lot about while 36 percent said it was beyond his control. And a recent Washington Post/ABC poll found 50 percent thought the Obama administration could reasonably do something to bring down gas prices, while 45 percent felt the recent rapid rise has been beyond White House control.

Obama has repeatedly argued that drilling for new oil alone will not solve the nation's energy woes or reduce gas prices. He accuses Republicans of claiming they can "wave a magic wand" to return to the days of cheap gas, and on Wednesday, he mocked them for having a "lack of imagination" about alternative energy.

"You'd think that everybody would be supportive of solar power," Obama said from the Copper Mountain Solar 1 facility in Nevada, the largest plant of its kind in the country, with nearly 1 million solar panels. "And yet if some politicians had their way, there won't be any more public investment in solar energy. There won't be as many new jobs."

Obama carried three of the four states on this week's itinerary — Oklahoma is one of the safest Republican states in the nation — but all four elected Republican governors in 2010. Two of the governors, Brian Sandoval of Nevada and Susana Martinez of New Mexico, have been floated as potential vice presidential choices this year. Obama was making his first visit to Oklahoma as president.

He has been hurt by his administration's decision to pump millions into California solar company Solyndra before it collapsed. And he's been repeatedly criticized by Republican presidential candidates for blocking the 1,700-mile Keystone XL pipeline, which would carry tar sands oil from western Canada to refineries along the Texas Gulf Coast.

March supports Florida teen



Protestors participate in the Million Hoodie March on Wednesday in Manhattan's Union Square. Participants aimed to raise awareness about the shooting of a Florida youth by a neighborhood watchman.

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The parents of a black teenager shot to death by a Hispanic neighborhood watch captain in Florida told hundreds of people at a march in his memory on Wednesday that they won't stop until they get justice for him.

"My son did not deserve to die," the teenager's father, Tracy Martin, said after thanking the crowd.

Martin's son, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, was killed Feb. 26, in Sanford, Fla. He was returning to a gated community in the city after buying candy at a convenience store. He was unarmed and was wearing a hooded sweat shirt, called a hoodie.

The neighborhood watch captain, George Zimmerman, has not been charged in the shooting. Zimmerman has said the teen attacked him and he shot him in self-defense.

On Wednesday night, demonstrators chanted "we want arrests" during the Million Hoodie March in Manhattan's Union

Square.

The teen's mother, Sybrina Fulton, told the crowd: "My heart is in pain, but to see the support of all of you really makes a difference."

The demonstrators greeted the teen's parents with "God bless you!"

The march splintered into various groups, with some demonstrators heading to Times Square to hold an impromptu rally and dozens of others making their way to downtown Manhattan. At times, it appeared the march had become indistinguishable from an Occupy event, with some protesters climbing atop the Wall Street bull sculpture.

The Florida shooting has ignited a furor against the police department of the Orlando suburb of 53,500 people, prompting rallies and a protest in Gov. Rick Scott's office on Tuesday. The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division said it is sending its community relations service this week to Sanford to "address tension in the community."

Earlier in the week, the federal agency opened a civil rights probe into the shooting, and in Florida, Seminole County State Attorney Norm Wolfinger said a grand jury will meet April 10 to consider evidence in the case.

Tracy Martin said he and his son's mother found out about the march after arriving in New York City, where they have done interviews about the case. They got in touch with the organizers to say they would attend and speak to the crowd.

The timing of the teen's parents being in the city when the march was happening was "incredible," said one of the organizers, Daniel Maree, who heard about the case earlier this week.

"I was outraged and wanted to do something about it," Maree said.

In recent days, information surrounding the teen's death has been coming out, including 911 calls and an account from his family's lawyer of a conversation he had with his girlfriend in the moments before his death.

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Spring allergies arrive early in U.S.

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Allergy season has come early and hit with a wheezing vengeance in parts of the South and Midwest this year, thanks largely to an unusually warm winter. Abundant pollen is causing watery eyes, sniffles and sneezing.

Doctors say the spring misery stretches from Mississippi to Ohio and from Georgia to Texas, where drought conditions have exacerbated the problem. Fore-casters and allergists blame the unseasonably warm weather, and few cold snaps, for causing plants to bloom weeks early and release the allergy-causing particles.

In some areas, allergists say pollen counts this week are as high as they've ever recorded. A clinic at Vanderbilt University in Nashville recorded 11,000 grains of pollen per cubic meter Tuesday, the worst in the 12 years they've tracked the number. The Atlanta Allergy & Asthma

Clinic has measured pollen since the 1980s and says this week's counts have beaten a high mark recorded there in April 1999. Their count for Tuesday was almost 9,400. Fifteen-hundred is considered very high.

The medical director of the Vanderbilt Asthma, Sinus and Allergy Program says he's been seeing more patients — even while feeling puny himself.

"I'm kind of sniffly today," Dr. David Hagaman said Tuesday.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America says more than 40 million Americans have nasal allergies, popularly called hay fever. In severe cases, sufferers have difficulty breathing that can send them to the emergency room.

Stephanie Baxter was wallowed when she returned to Gallatin, Tenn., from a vacation in Florida last week.

"We hit Tennessee and they started," she said. "I have every possible symptom you can have. I'm trying to keep my energy be-

cause I have a 3-month-old and a 3-year-old. There's no time for rest."

For three years, the foundation has ranked Knoxville, Tenn., as the worst city in the country for allergies — based on pollen counts, sales of allergy medications and the presence allergy specialists. The city has been up to 20 degrees warmer than normal the past few weeks. Spring arrived prematurely — along with sales of nose spray.

"It's blooming so early," said Sam Roberts, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Morristown, Tenn. "Grass mowing has started early this year and stirred things up."

Ranee Randby, community relations director for the Knox County Health Department, said Knoxville's scenic location in the Tennessee valley contributes to the problem.

"We're surrounded by mountains and whatever gets in here stays in here. It's like a bowl," she said.

Romney gathers support among GOP establishment

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Republican establishment started to coalesce around Mitt Romney in earnest on Wednesday, with Jeb Bush and other leading Republicans pressuring Rick Santorum to leave the race after a thumping in the Illinois primary.

But, on what should have been a triumphant day, Romney found himself having to defend his conservative credentials anew after one of his own top advisers, Eric Fehrnstrom, remarked that “everything changes” for the fall campaign. “It’s almost like an Etch A Sketch,” he said. “You can kind of shake it up and we start all over again.”

The remark fueled criticism that Romney molds his principles to fit with political goals. Democrats pounced, and by day’s end his GOP opponents were waving the draw, shake and erase toys at campaign events in Louisiana.

“The issues I’m running on will be exactly the same,” the former Massachusetts governor said in Arbutus, Md., as Republicans and Democrats alike mocked him. “I’m running as a conservative Republican. I was a conservative governor. I will be running as a conservative Republican nominee — hopefully, nominee at that point. The policies and the positions are the same.”

It all nearly overshadowed the endorsement from Bush, the son of one president and the brother of another. He had stayed out of the race for months, and some party elders publicly had urged him to become a candidate as Romney struggled to close the deal with the conservative base

of the party.

Bush refused, and on Wednesday he made his preference in the race known after Romney’s double-digit Illinois victory.

“Now is the time for Republicans to unite behind Gov. Romney and take our message of fiscal conservatism and job creation to all voters this fall,” Bush said in a written statement. He congratulated the other Republican candidates “for a hard-fought, thoughtful debate and primary season.”

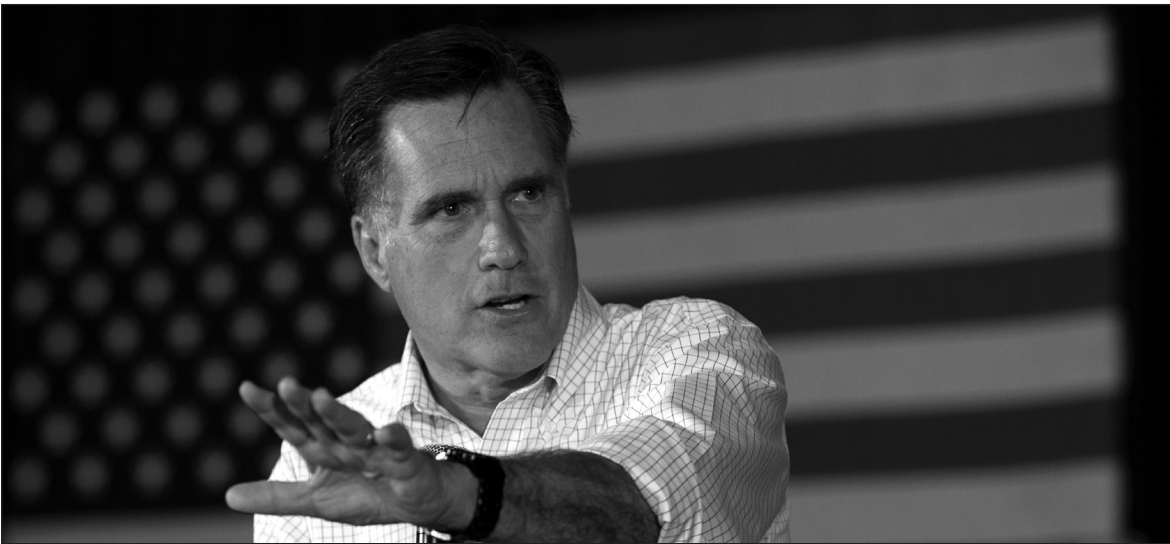
His backing comes amid fresh signs that big GOP donors and other party figures will follow Bush’s lead after sitting on the sidelines for much of the primary season. Romney is on pace to win the nomination in June. He has 563 delegates in the overall count maintained by The Associated Press, out of 1,144 needed to win the party nod. Santorum has 263 delegates, Newt Gingrich 135 and Ron Paul 50.

Hours after Bush weighed in, Bob Dole, the former Senate majority leader and a longtime Romney supporter, suggested that Santorum must decide soon whether to stay in or surrender his bid for the nomination.

“Rick, I think, he’s got a real problem,” Dole, who became the GOP nominee in 1996 on his third try, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. “It’s getting close to the point where he’s got to take a hard look at it.”

At the same time, campaign finance reports released Tuesday showed that big donors to a GOP political organization founded by political strategist Karl Rove have boosted their financial support for Romney in recent weeks.

Bush’s support came as a sur-



Republican presidential candidate and former Massachusetts gov. Mitt Romney addresses an audience during a campaign stop at an American Legion Post in Arbutus, Md. on Wednesday.

prise to the Romney campaign. The former Florida governor personally contacted Romney Wednesday morning to say he planned to make the endorsement.

Romney made one quick public appearance in Maryland on Wednesday ahead of the April 3 primary there. He planned to spend much of Thursday personally courting members of Congress and other officials in Washington.

But the Etch A Sketch remark threatened to dog him.

It happened early Wednesday on CNN when Fehrnstrom was asked if the extended primary fight “might force the governor to tack so far to the right it would hurt him with moderate voters in the general election.”

Fehrnstrom responded: “I think you hit a reset button for the fall campaign. Everything changes. It’s almost like an

Etch A Sketch. You can kind of shake it up and we start all over again.” The aide didn’t back away from the comment when asked to clarify it. He said only that the general election is “a different race, with different candidates, and the main issue now becomes” exclusively President Barack Obama.

It didn’t take long for the Democratic National Committee and Romney’s Republican rivals to seize on the remark.

In Louisiana, Santorum brandished an Etch A Sketch and told voters he is a candidate who stands “firmly on the rocks of freedom, not on the sands of an Etch A Sketch toy.”

Gingrich stood on stage elsewhere in the state and explained to his audience just what the toys were. “Gov. Romney’s staff, they don’t even have the decency to wait until they get the nomination to explain

to us how they’ll sell us out,” he said. “I think having an Etch A Sketch as your campaign model raises every doubt about where we’re going.”

Louisiana holds its primary Saturday. Santorum is favored in the state, though Romney’s allies are airing TV ads there even though the South has proven less hospitable to Romney.

Beyond Saturday, polls show Romney has the advantage heading toward Maryland’s April 3 primary.

For his part, Obama on Wednesday headed to Nevada, New Mexico and Oklahoma on a trip aimed at answering critics of his energy policies, sure to be a key issue in the fall campaign. His first stop was a plant in Nevada that uses solar panels to power homes, part of an effort to highlight his programs to expand renewable energy sources.

U.S. markets change little in slow day

Associated Press

WALL STREET — U.S. stocks closed mixed Wednesday after a quiet trading day that left the indexes little changed.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed down 45.57 points, or 0.3 percent, to 13,124.62. It had been up 20 shortly after the opening bell. The Dow had its biggest loss in two weeks on Tuesday, falling 68.94 points.

The Standard & Poor’s 500 index closed down 2.63 points, or 0.2 percent, at 1,402.89. The Nasdaq composite average closed up 1.17 at 3,075.32.

Hewlett-Packard led the Dow lower, sliding 2.2 percent after saying it would combine its printer and PC divisions to save money and improve efficiency. H-P is coping with declining sales of PCs and printer ink as smartphones, tablets and electronic document-sharing gain popularity.

Earlier Wednesday, the National Association of Realtors released a mixed report about the state of the housing market. Sales of previously occupied homes dipped last month, but the sales pace for the winter was the best in five years, NAR said. Housing has been dragging on the economic recovery; an oversupply of homes has decimated construction and other trades in

many parts of the country.


Without strongly positive or negative news to move the market, stocks meandered sideways for most of the day. John Manley, chief equity strategist for Wells Fargo Advantage Funds, said the lack of market-moving events is generally good for stocks. Traders are increasingly confident that the risks hanging over the market from Europe, oil prices and China will blow over, he said.


“If it hasn’t happened today, that means it might not happen tomorrow,” Manley said. “My guess is, no news means a slight upward bias to the market.”

Stocks closed lower on Tuesday after two reports signaled an economic slowdown in China. Supercharged growth in China over the past three years has helped sustain the global economic recovery. The Dow had its biggest loss since March 6.

In a research report Wednesday, Goldman Sachs analysts urged investors to dump bonds and put money into stocks. The report argues that the weak economic growth in the United States and Europe is not universal, and that the 2010s could be the strongest period for world growth between 1980 and 2050.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE





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SYRIA

Additional rebels swear allegiance to uprising

Associated Press

BEIRUT — The gunmen in eastern Syria, wielding grenade launchers and assault rifles, announced on the Internet they were forming the “God is Great” Brigade and joining the country’s rebellion. They swore allegiance to the Free Syrian Army and vowed to topple President Bashar Assad.

But unlike many other rebel bands, they wrapped their proclamation in hard-line Islamic language, declaring their fight to be a “jihad,” or holy war, and urging others to do the same.

“To our fellow revolutionaries, don’t be afraid to declare jihad in the path of God. Seek victory from the One God. God is the greatest champion,” the brigade’s spokesman said in the January video. “Instead of fighting for a faction, fight for your nation, and instead of fighting for your nation, fight for God.”

As Syria’s uprising evolves into an armed insurgency, parts of the movement are taking on overt religious overtones. Islamic movements in and out of the country are vying to gain influence over the revolt in hopes of gathering power if Assad falls.

The Islamists’ role complicates choices for the United States and other nations who say they want to help the opposition without empowering radicals; a string of anti-regime suicide bombings have raised fears of al-Qaida involvement.

The groups diverge from violent jihadi movements to political moderates like the Muslim Brotherhood, which has already used the Arab Spring revolutions to vault to power in Tunisia and Egypt elections.

Their growing influence is seeding divisions within an already fractured opposition. A week ago, several prominent figures quit the Syrian National Council, the body of exiles that has tried to emerge as the opposition’s political leadership. They complained the fundamentalist Brotherhood dominates the group.

The council is “a liberal front for the Muslim Brotherhood,” said Kamal Labwani, a veteran secular dissident, who broke away. He said the Brotherhood was trying to build allegiances on the ground in Syria.

“One day we will wake up to find an armed militia ... controlling the country through their weapons,” Labwani said.

The U.S. has rejected sending arms to rebels, fearing a sectarian civil war. U.S. officials also warn that al-Qaida’s militants in Iraq are infiltrating Syria — worries heightened by attacks in Damascus and Aleppo using al-Qaida’s signature tactic, suicide bombings.

An Islamic militant group, the Al-Nusra Front, on Tuesday claimed responsibility for a double suicide bombing that



Syrian security guards gather in front of a damaged building in Damascus on March 17. More gunmen vowed to join the Free Syrian Army rebel forces this week.

killed 27 people in Damascus over the weekend. The group appears to be a front for al-Qaida’s Iraq branch, said a U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss matters of intelligence.

Judging the extent of Islamist influence in Syria’s uprising is difficult, in part because Syria has largely prevented journalists from reporting on the conflict.

Opposition activists are reluctant to talk about any Islamist role because Assad’s regime depicts their movement as solely a campaign by terrorists and Islamic radicals. Such rhetoric is highly effective in scaring religious minorities and moderate Sunnis away from supporting the uprising.

But activists acknowledge Islamists could have appeal for an opposition bloodied by Assad’s brutal campaign against the uprising, which the U.N. says has left more than 8,000 dead.

“Repression breeds extremism,” said Omar, a student activist in Damascus. “People left on their own will resort to anything and anyone to help them.” He gave only his first name for fear of reprisals.”

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Chao-Shin Liu

Prof. Liu’s research interest is in market reactions to public information. He has published articles in the *Contemporary Accounting Research*, *Journal of Accounting Research*, *The Accounting Review*, *Review of Accounting Studies*, the *FASB Research Supplement*, and other accounting and finance journals.

ACCT 30100: Corporate Financial Reporting (CRN 4100)

June 18-August 3 This course covers financial statement preparation and analyses with a focus on understanding financial accounting information from a user perspective.



A. Eugene Livingston

Prof. Livingston’s interests include precision spectroscopic measurements of relativistic and quantum electrodynamic contributions in the atomic structures of few-electron ions and time-resolved measurements of relativistic effects.

PHYS 30210: Physics I (CRN 1264)

May 29-June 29 Learn the basic principles of mechanics, fluid mechanics, thermal physics, wave motion, and sound.

PHYS 30220: Physics II (CRN 1263)

July 2-August 3 Learn the basic principles of electricity, magnetism, optics, and modern physics.



Candida Moss

Prof. Moss’ interest is interpretation of the New Testament and the history of early Christianity, with particular interests in early Christian martyrdom, disease and suffering in the New Testament, and the construction of heaven in the early church.

THEO 60102: New Testament Introduction (CRN 4085)

June 18-July 6 Examine the New Testament in their ancient literary, historical, theological, and cultural contexts. Discover why these books were written, the problems faced by followers of Jesus, and the development of key theological ideas in the early church.



Joseph Stanfiel

Prof. Stanfiel’s intellectual interests are numerous and varied, including the relationship between Greek philosophy and the development of Christianity, Plato, and some Greek and Latin literature.

CLGR 20103/60103: Intermediate Greek (CRN 2560/4120)

June 18-August 3 This course is taught as a beginning reading class using the first book of Plato’s *Republic*.

INSIDE COLUMN

It's baseball season

Last Friday, I witnessed the basketball team lose early in the NCAA tournament in a disappointing last minute loss. After the game, one of the sports writers summed it up best: "Well, it's baseball season." I could not agree more. It's finally baseball season!

Sarah O'Connor

Multimedia Editor

It's the time of year when people on the quads trade their footballs for their mitts and baseballs, when SportsCenter's Top 10 features diving catches, double plays, and homeruns and when movies like "The Rookie," "A League of Their Own," "Field of Dreams" and, my personal favorite, "The Sandlot" seem less ridiculous as choices to watch.

Ever since I can remember, baseball has been a constant in my house. From the early days of T-ball and Little League, my springs and summers were spent at softball games and practices watching my brothers play weekend double headers and night games. We went to morning swim team practice and hung around for hours afterwards to play beach Wiffle ball with over 30 of the neighborhood kids. Afternoons were spent outside playing catch or having homerun derbies in the backyard with tennis balls. Our television seemed to be stuck on WGN and the Chicago Cubs baseball games.

Although I come from Omaha, which has no major league team, I never felt deprived; we had something better, the College World Series. It's an entire week-and-a-half of baseball at its purest. I have made it to at least one game each year (averaging five or six games a year as I grew older) except for last year since I was more than 4,000 miles away in London. Some of my London friends will even vouch the only downside I had with studying abroad was missing the College World Series, and although I was kidding about that being a reason not to go to London, it does go to show how much love I have for that week and the sport.

From the upper decks of Wrigley to behind home plate at the Metrodome, in 21 years, I have yet to find a bad seat. I love everything about the atmosphere at a baseball game. It has its own sense of excitement stretched out over nine innings, where the crowd can still come together and cheer just as loudly as a football game, but settle down enough for you to actually enjoy the company of those you came with. And despite my love for the sport, more often than not the best moments frequently don't even include the actual game. There's the beach balls thrown around between innings, the different variations of team rally caps, the rain delay antics, the celebrity seventh inning stretch and the postgame fireworks. It's an atmosphere you don't get at any other sporting event.

This is why, in the middle of class today, my day was made when I realized that I would be working in a city with a professional team this summer. The thought of sitting in the stands, drinking a lemon ice while getting an awesome farmer's sunburn and watching an actual professional game thrilled me. And although I will be in Cincinnati for the summer, I am already preparing to book my flights home for the weekend of the College World Series so I don't have to completely miss it again.

As much as I love college football and watching the drama of March Madness... It's baseball season.

Contact Sarah O'Connor at soconno6@nd.edu

The views expressed in the Inside Column are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Observer.

A random walk to the Final Four

The stock market can seem so erratic. One day it's up and analysts are screaming "buy, buy, buy!" The next day it's down and the only "bye-rs" left are the washed up members of N*Sync.

There's a theory in finance that stock prices follow a "random walk," which means that changes in price have the same distributions for every stock and all changes are independent of one another. Basically, this means we cannot predict a stock's future movement based on the fact that it was up or down in the past. If the random walk hypothesis was true, a portfolio of stocks chosen by monkeys throwing darts at stock names would perform just as well as a portfolio painstakingly crafted by the finest analysts on Wall Street.

Besides stocks, there are other things that seem to follow a random walk: the movement of molecules in gases, the spread of certain genes through populations, some Notre Dame students coming home from the Backer on a Saturday night or maybe even the NCAA basketball tournament.

The upsets in the tournament last weekend got me thinking: What if the games follow a random walk? If they do, then filling out a bracket by flipping a coin should produce the same results as carefully picking each winner.

So, I set up a highly unscientific

Grace Concelman

Options and Futures

experiment to compare how a bracket constructed by coin flips would fare against the aggregated national bracket in the first round. For the national bracket, which reflects the consensus from a wide variety of people submitting brackets, I advanced whichever team had a higher percentage of people choosing it to win. For the random bracket, I flipped a coin and advanced the first team on heads and the second team on tails. I replicated the random bracket five times and averaged the results.

The random bracket correctly picked an average of 17.2 winners out of 32 winners in the first round whereas the national bracket picked 22 first round winners. So, according to my experiment, the tournament is not completely random.

But, the stock market isn't completely random either. If it was, it would be impossible to make money consistently by only buying stocks. Critics of the random walk theory believe that stock prices do maintain trends over time. These critics believe the market is not totally efficient and that it is possible to outperform the market by buying and selling at the right time.

There are three different levels of market efficiency: strong, semi-strong, and weak. The example of the random bracket is a test for strong form market efficiency, which states that all information in a market (including insider information) is accounted for in a stock price. Semi-strong form states

that all public information is accounted for, and weak form only states that past prices are included in the present stock price, so past performance cannot be used to predict future prices.

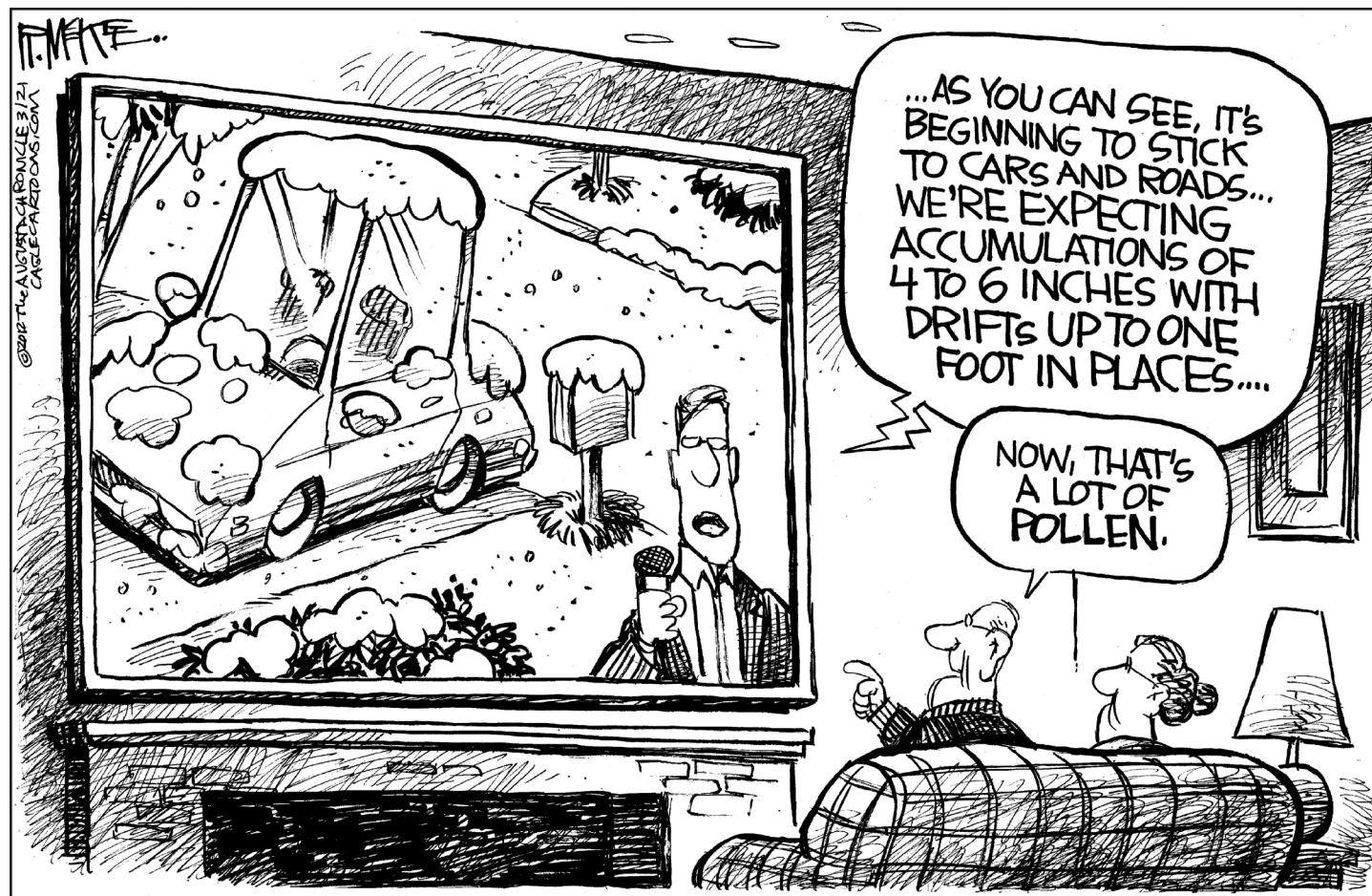
Since the totally random strong form bracket didn't outperform the national bracket, I decided to test a weak form bracket. Weak form efficiency says that analysis of information publicly available about a company could be helpful in predicting the future movement of the company's stock. I used a team's seed in the tournament as public information that would predict a team's performance in the first round of games, assuming that the seed reflected some sort of fundamental analysis. I automatically advanced the 1, 2, and 3 seeds from each region in the first round and used a coin flip to determine the rest of the games. The weak form brackets picked an average of 21 winners in the first round. Not bad, when compared to the national average of 22.

As it turns out, next year, instead of watching ESPN and trying to outsmart the rest of your bracket pool, you might be better off digging a quarter out of the couch cushions and asking good old George Washington to decide.

Grace Concelman is a senior majoring in finance and philosophy. She can be reached at gconcelm@nd.edu

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

EDITORIAL CARTOON



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush."

Doug Larson
American journalist

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WEEKLY POLL

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‘Game Change’ a wake-up call for voters

Over spring break I watched “Game Change,” HBO’s recently aired political drama based on the 2008 presidential campaign and the selection of Sarah Palin as John McCain’s running mate. It essentially paints Palin as an uninformed and poorly versed politician, to say the least. Picking her as McCain’s running mate was done in an attempt at making a bold move to energize the party and had little to do with her qualifications for the job. The movie even goes so far as to strongly question the former Alaska governor’s mental stability at various points during the campaign (apparently a nutritional plan grounded on Diet Dr. Pepper and thousands of 3x5 information cards do this to a person).

John Sandberg

Columnist

Steve Schmidt, the senior campaign strategist for McCain and a prominent character in the film, has described watching the film as being like an out of body experience. Nicole Wallace, another former senior adviser, said the scenes depicted in the movie were “true enough” to make her “squirm.” As for McCain and Palin, both have said that they have no intentions of watching “Game Change” and claim it is based off

of false reports.

Personally, I’m tempted to believe that the reality of the campaign lied somewhere in between the two sides’ accounts. On the one hand, I don’t see a whole lot of incentive for former McCain-Palin aides to tell embellished tales about their former bosses, making everyone look bad by doing so. With this in mind, one might believe that the events of the film are accurate.

Then again, I also find it hard to believe that an elected official would be so poorly-vetted that her advisors overlooked the fact that she was lacking an elementary understanding of U.S. history, among other things. So I’d guess that the filmmakers took some liberties in exaggerating Palin’s unpreparedness for the situation.

Altogether the film was entertaining. Yet once it was over I felt more embarrassed than anything. No, I couldn’t vote in the 2008 election, but as an American citizen it made me think: Is that what presidential elections have come to? Obviously the McCain-Palin ticket ultimately lost the election, but this conversation remains relevant.

Americans allowed a seemingly ill-equipped individual to come relatively close to being vice president. It’s crazy

to think that we came that close to putting such an overwhelmed person in the second highest position in the executive branch and a heartbeat away from taking over the presidency. Based off the movie’s account, she never should have come that close in the first place.

Again, one is perfectly entitled to accept or reject parts of the movie that seem embellished or outright false. But if the events acted out in the film are even half true, it all amounted to an alarming wake-up call for me as a voter. While the office of the vice presidency is often joked about for its relatively small powers within the greater Washington political landscape, the implications of the office cannot be taken lightly. If “Game Change” showed us anything, it’s that a presidential candidate’s choice for VP should be subjected to more than just a political analysis and instead looked at as someone who could (or could not) lead the country if called upon.

With the potential GOP vice presidential candidate still out there waiting to be selected, this wake-up call comes at a particularly fitting time. The intermittent chatter on cable news about who the GOP candidate’s running mate will be is interesting largely because

many believe that the VP will be a more exciting individual than the presidential candidate himself. Senator Marco Rubio and Governor Chris Christie both make for interesting options, especially since so many Republicans were clamoring for them to enter the race for the White House. Whether you align with them ideologically or not, at least each seems to be well-versed in policy issues and a capable leader if called upon.

So while the VP selection for the Republican candidate this fall may not be the number one issue at hand, it is certainly an important one. “Game Change” effectively points this out to all voters, whether they loved the film or hated it. Perhaps for many the film wasn’t as thought provoking as it was for me. In any case, consider me awake now to the potential powers of the vice presidency and the implications that the position would have for the country in a moment of great need.

John Sandberg is a sophomore political science major from Littleton, Colo. He can be reached at jsandbe1@nd.edu

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Save swing night

I bear grave tidings. Swing Night at Legends has been downgraded to a Thursday and could stand a chance to be eliminated entirely next semester due to last semester’s attendance. I express the opinion that last semester was a fluke. Swing Night has always been an easy free way for the students here to experience swing dancing and has always been a blast since I have been here. A Thursday nightclub event does not do it justice, for it drives away the people who have class and work due Friday. This night is supposed to be available for everyone, not just diehards who will come no matter when it is. We have to get this night back to the weekend, but we can only do that by showing up to this one TONIGHT. I call for the suspension of work and sleep for just one measly hour from 12 to 1. Use this time to come to Legends and show that a weekend Swing Night is necessary, and, furthermore, that it is impossible to be contained on a Thursday. The night is ours for the claiming. Come take it.

Joshua Gaston
junior
Siegfried Hall
Mar. 21

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Why we love the underdog

And the Madness has begun. The tournament is not even a week old and there have already been a slew of historic upsets, including the first-round defeat of two No. 2 seeds by No. 15 seeds and No. 11-seed N.C. State’s unprecedented trip to the Sweet 16. Upsets are a large part of what makes March Madness so exciting—it gives underdog teams the chance to compete against the best programs in the country. Unless you are a Duke or Miz-zou fan, chances are you were ecstatic to see those teams fall. Sure, it probably destroyed your bracket, but c’mon, it destroyed everyone’s bracket. Whether we realize it or not, we gravitate to the underdogs—in March Madness and elsewhere. If being a fan of the Columbia Lions—the quintessential underdogs—has taught me anything, it’s that we should root for the little guys.

Michael Shapiro

Columbia Daily Spectator

Not everyone agrees. Michael Prell’s 2011 book “Underdogma” posits that people irrationally favor underdogs while demonizing favorites. He presents numerous case studies to argue that we should resist our human instinct to succumb to “underdogma,” even when it comes to sports. That also means you should have no qualms about rooting for perennial overdogs like the New York Yankees, the Miami Heat, or the Green Bay Packers. But is rooting for the little guy really such a bad thing?

Well, maybe, at least if you put money on the line. If you’re smart, a majority of your brackets should favor top seeds to last deep into the tournament—these teams are overdogs for a reason. Those who fill out their brackets strictly based on seeding usually finish near the top. This “strategy” may not yield much satisfaction, and it is certainly anathema to devout fans, but nobody can argue with the results.

“You picked three No. 1 seeds to go to the Final Four? Pshhhhhh.” We’ve all been on the receiving end of comments like this—I know I have. Yet seeding, for all intents and purposes, actually tells us more or less who is going to win. The numbers speak for themselves: A No. 1 seed has never lost to a No. 16 or No. 12 seed, no team seeded below No. 8 has ever won the tournament, and No. 1 seeds make the Sweet 16 over 92 percent of the time.

These numbers don’t surprise most of

us, but we still love picking upsets. Pundits spend more time speculating which teams are potential Cinderella stories than considering who will actually win the tournament. Sure, sometimes we pick underdogs because we genuinely think they are underrated and are the true favorites, but in most cases we choose long shots to satiate our craving to see David defeat Goliath. Even if underdogma isn’t reflected in our brackets, we still love when the upsets occur. I didn’t pick Lehigh to beat Duke, but, like most people, I was happy to see the Blue Devils collapse.

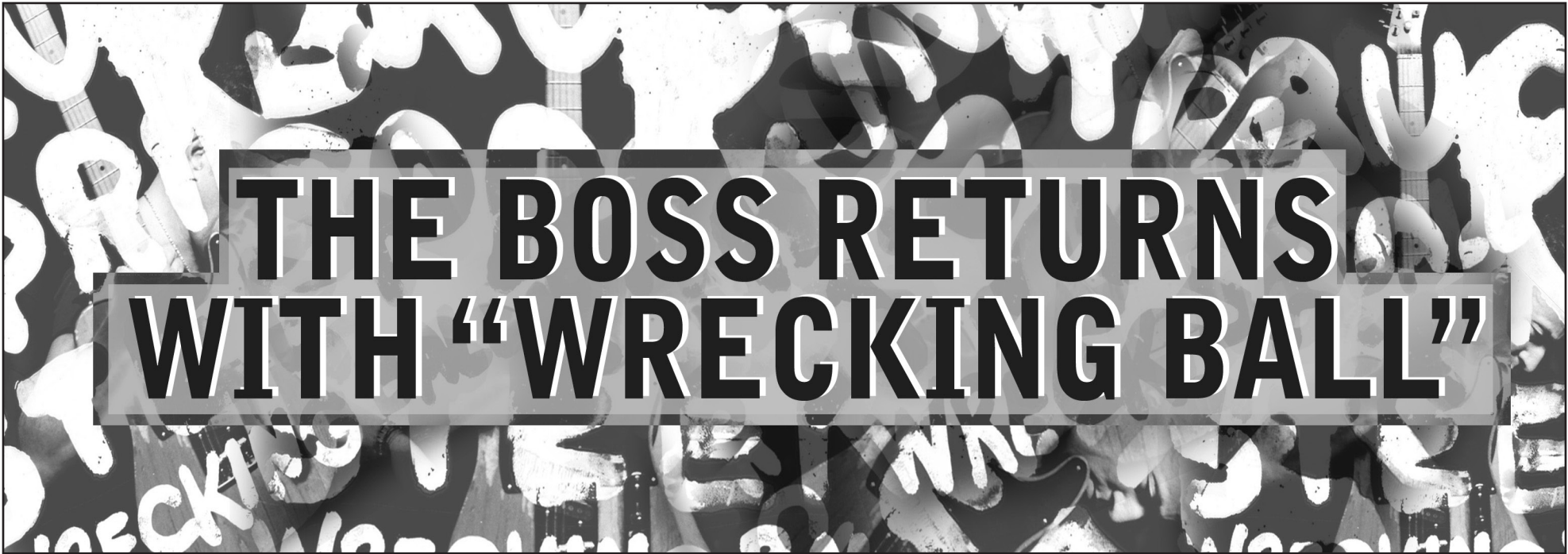
For all the heartbreak and headaches, I love being a Columbia sports fan, and I think underdogma is partially responsible. We attend a college whose athletics teams are at times mocked by students, faculty, newspapers, and even our own marching band. Since we are expected to lose, at least when it comes to sports like football, winning is extra sweet. Watching our humble teams, comprised of student-athletes not on athletic scholarships, compete against much larger sports-oriented schools, is enough to make anyone an underdogmist.

Take, for example, our basketball team’s nationally televised season-opener against fourth-ranked UConn. We were clear underdogs entering the contest—UConn was bigger, faster, and more skilled. They even had home-court advantage. The Lions lost 70-57, but they kept pace with the reigning NCAA champs. Since experts predicted much wider margins, we underdogmists commended the Light Blue for its heart, hustle, and resilience.

Ivy League students should be the biggest proponents of underdogs because we truly understand what it means for a sports team to be at a disadvantage. While it is simplistic to support a team just because it is expected to lose, supporting the underdog should have a special place in our hearts. We should also embrace underdogma for the excitement these matchups yield. Three underdogs—Ohio (No. 13), N.C. State (No. 11), and Xavier (No. 10)—will compete in the Sweet 16 over the next two days for a spot in the Elite Eight. Let the Madness continue.

This article originally ran in the March 20 version of the Columbia Daily Spectator, serving Columbia University.

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



By CHRISTOPHER COLLUM
Scene Writer

Bruce Springsteen is an artist who certainly needs no introduction. Over the course of a 40-year career, he has released 17 studio albums which have sold over 120 million copies worldwide, received 21 Grammy awards and played thousands of shows both with and without his famous “heart-stopping, pants-dropping, house-rocking, earth-quaking, booty-shaking, Viagra-taking, love-makin’, legendary E-Street Band,” as Springsteen has come to refer to the group.

“Wrecking Ball” is the first album Springsteen has put out since the death of saxophonist Clarence Clemons last June. Clemons, known as the ‘Big Man’, a nickname immortalized in crowd favorite “Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out,” was Springsteen’s sidekick and an integral part of not only the band’s live show but their on-record performances as well.

Springsteen addresses Clemons’ death directly in the liner notes for “Wrecking Ball,” which contain an excerpt from the eulogy Springsteen delivered at Clemons’ funeral: “Clarence was big and he made me feel and think and love and dream big. How big was the Big Man? Too [expletive] big to die ... Clarence doesn’t leave the E Street Band when he dies. He leaves when we die.”

“Wrecking Ball” opens with first single “We Take Care of Our Own,” a song ripe for misinterpretation, much like “Born in the USA,” which was used by the 1984 Ronald Reagan campaign as a patriotic anthem until Springsteen threatened a lawsuit, saying that using the song in such a manner was a complete misrepresentation of what it is about.

“We Take Care of Our Own” is centered around the repeated refrain, “Wherever this flag’s flown/We take care of our own.” Rather than operating as an affirmation of the things that are done “wherever this flag’s flown,” however, the lyrics point to such recent missteps as the response to Hurricane Katrina. These lyrics do not point toward sarcasm or irony — tools rarely employed by Springsteen — but they are rather completely sincere. The narrator of the song seems to be wrestling with the idea that the country for which he has so much compassion has failed in some respects to take care of its people.

As the track suggests, “Wrecking Ball” is a very political album—perhaps Springsteen’s most political ever. “Death to My Hometown,” a raucous number reminiscent of the cameo Springsteen did on Boston Celtic punks the Dropkick Murphys’ cover of “Peg o’ My Heart” last year, describes the damage the Great Recession has done to a particular community. “No cannonballs did fly/No rifles cut us down ... but just as sure as the hand of God/They brought death to my hometown,” he sings.

Elsewhere, “Jack of all Trades” depicts a character forced to work multiple working class jobs because of the poor economy; “Rocky Ground” takes the form of a quasi-spiritual albeit excellent song. It includes a rap verse performed by Michelle Moore that falls completely flat. Finally, “We Are Alive,” the closer, takes the form of what Bruce calls an “Irish wake,” while he sings about solidarity and closes the album on a hopeful note.

The highlights of the album, however, are the two songs Springsteen fans have heard in different forms before this release. Title track “Wreck-

ing Ball” is easily one of the best songs Springsteen has recorded since the E-Street Band’s first breakup in 1989. First performed at the series of concerts the band did to close out Giants Stadium in their native New Jersey before it was torn down, the song is a rousing anthem, and the centerpiece of the album.

A song that originally functioned as a semi-humorous ode to life in New Jersey from the stadium’s point of view is transformed in this context into an impassioned plea to all people to “Hold tight on your anger/and don’t fall to your fear” when “All our little victories and glories/have been turned into parking lots,” because “Hard times come, hard times go” — the last line a refrain repeated for almost two minutes on the album, making this song sure to be a highlight of the band’s live shows on their upcoming tour.

“Land of Hope and Dreams,” which originally appeared on “Live in New York City,” features what will be the final two saxophone solos from Clarence Clemons. The song in this form is even more powerful, somehow, than the live version. Featuring electronic drums, a prominent mandolin riff, and one of Springsteen’s best vocal performances in the past two decades, it is similar to the best Springsteen songs: a transcendent experience. This experience is pushed over the top when Clemons’ wailing sax comes in just before the four-minute mark.

Lyrically, “Wrecking Ball” shows Springsteen at the angriest level he has been in quite a while. However, through this anger there is always hope, and he is careful to always point this out. Musically, the album sounds noticeably different than “Working on a Dream,” his last release, in part because he switched producers for

the first time in 10 years — Brendan O’Brien is replaced by Rob Aniello. Aniello’s fresh perspective benefits Springsteen’s sound greatly. Most prominently, he makes greater use of electronic sounds, from the programmed handclaps in “We Take Care of Our Own” to the pulsating electronic drums in “Land of Hope and Dreams.”

“Wrecking Ball” is Springsteen at his finest. While it may not quite stand with such classic albums of his as “Born to Run” and “Born in the USA,” very few albums from any artist’s catalog do. Forty years into his career, Springsteen has created an album that is full of life and as relevant as anything as he has ever done and has managed to push all the emotional buttons from rage to hope and healing along the way. There’s a reason that he will be remembered as one the greatest rock songwriters of all time and “Wrecking Ball” does nothing but further his claim to a piece of that title.

Contact Christopher Collum at
ccollum@nd.edu

Bruce Springsteen

“Wrecking Ball”

Record Label: Columbia Records

Best Tracks: “Land of Hope and Dreams,” “Wrecking Ball,” “We Are Alive”

♣ ♣ ♣ ♣



WEEKEND EVENTS CALENDAR

thursday 22

friday 23

saturday 24

sunday 25



“OSS 117: Cairo, Nest of Spies”
Where: DeBartolo Performing Arts Center
When: 7 p.m.
How Much: \$3 for students

“The Artist” may be the darling of Hollywood after its dominant performance at the Oscars, but before director Michel Hazanavicius and actor Jean Dujardin were Oscar winners, they collaborated to create a series of spoofs of the over-styled spy thrillers of the 60s and 70s, including this critically acclaimed 2006 comedy.

Glee Club Spring Concert
Where: DPAC
When: 8 p.m.
How Much: \$3 for students

The Glee Club brings their unique style and energy to the stage once again in this annual spring concert. The performance will include a wide variety of music, including choral, folk, spiritual and popular pieces. The event will take place at DeBartolo Performing Arts Center and tickets are only \$3 apiece for students. Don’t miss this amazing musical performance!

SUB Concert
Where: Stepan Center
When: Doors open at 7:30 p.m.
How Much: \$15

The 90s pop group Third Eye Blind and underground rapper Hoodie Allen are bringing their talents to South Bend this weekend, in what promises to be a fun show. Tickets went on sale Wednesday morning at the LaFortune box office. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. and the show will begin at 8 p.m. Don’t miss the SUB concert of the year!

Violinist Rachel Lee and pianist Daniel Schlosberg
When: 2 p.m.
Where: Leighton Concert Hall at DPAC
How Much: \$3

Rachel Lee is one of the most celebrated violinists of our time and is only 24 years old. She has already soloed for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and many others. Daniel Scholsberg, the University’s Artist-in-Residence in the Department of Music, will join her on stage. Tickets are \$3 each.

By NEIL MATHIESON
Scene Writer

Houses are scary. They crack, creek and contort our imaginations to believe that something is going bump in the night. In “Silent House,” something really is going bump in the night. This American re-do of a Uruguayan horror film stars the lesser-known Elizabeth Olsen as Sarah, who while helping her father clear out their old summer house is terrorized by some nefarious intruder.

Olsen’s responsibilities as an actress in “Silent House” are daunting to the say the least. The movie moves briskly at an 85-minute run time but it’s edited to look as if it is all happening within one continuous shot.

Therefore, Olsen is on screen for the entirety of the film and spends most of it hushed as a strange intruder stalks her. She is left with only facial expressions, screams and my personal favorite, screams where no noise comes out.

The camera follows her closely while simultaneously being egregiously fixated on her cleavage. Olsen does a commendable job but the film hangs together by such weak threads that it doesn’t do her performance proper justice.

The cinematic decision of using a continuous shot throughout “Silent House” is often a useful gambit that establishes a hair-raising atmosphere of suspense. One of the older and more notable examples includes Alfred Hitchcock’s Rope.

“Silent House” does create this suspense initially, but fails to hold it. Over the course of the film it becomes more of a gimmick than a crescendo to a ca-

thartic and terrifying climax. On the whole, the acting is staler than bread during the revolution and the writing didn’t appear to survive the translation into English.

“Silent House” even gets a little avant-garde in its later stages but causes more confusion than it does intrigue. Most importantly, however, “Silent House” isn’t frightening. In fact, it’s far less frightening than its trailer. There were no screams from the gallery and it appeared that after an hour the viewers’ iPhones became more fascinating than what was on screen.

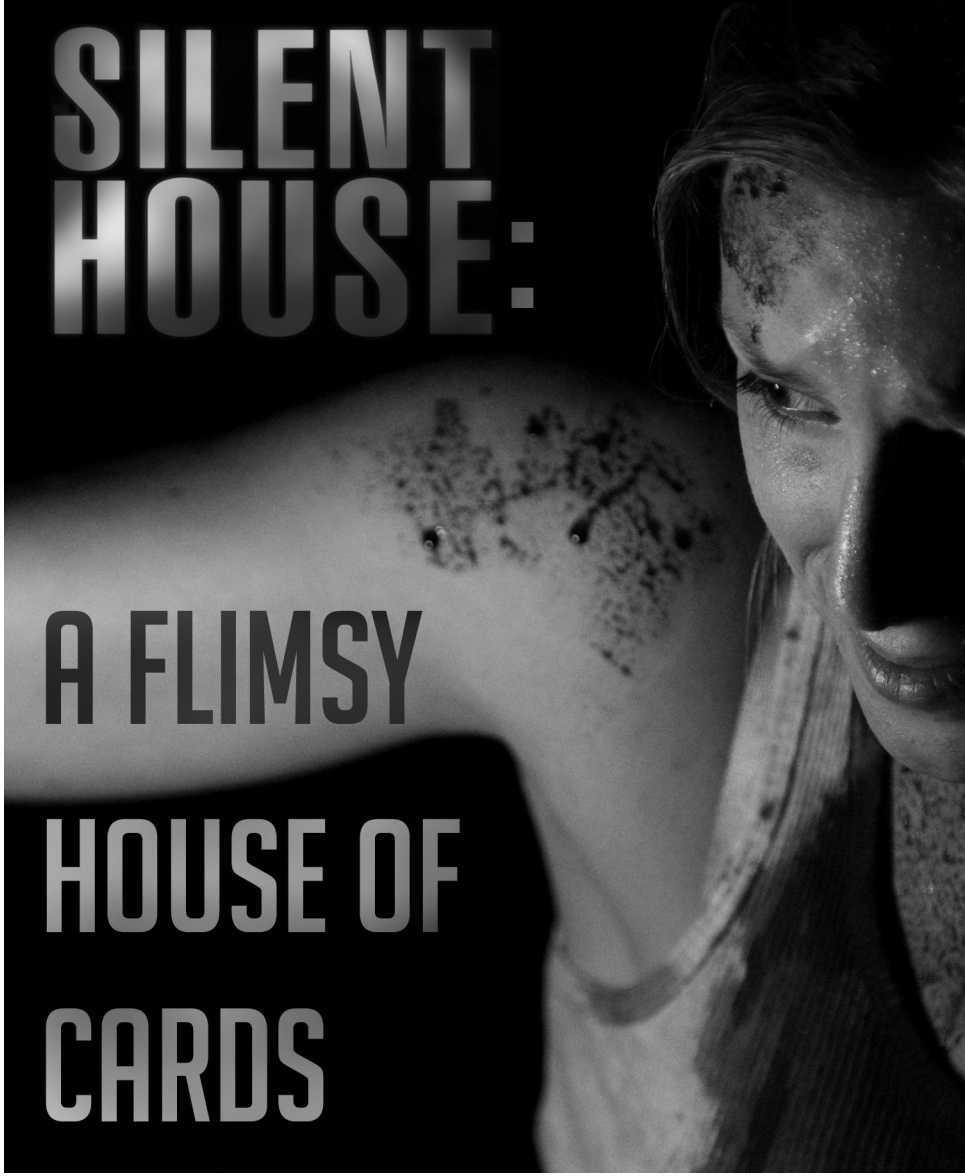
Unfortunately, I cannot disagree with them. In “Silent House” the camera shakes incessantly and the dim lighting causes the audience to strain their eyes in an attempt to make sense of what they are seeing. However, when the image is finally revealed to us the payoff is furiously underwhelming and we feel as if we have been strung along for nothing. In a word we were cheated.

Contact Neil Mathieson at nmathies@nd.edu

“Silent House”

Directed by: Chris Kentis and Laura Lau
Starring: Elizabeth Olsen, Adam Trese, Eric Sheffer Stevens

🍀🍀🍀🍀



ELISA DE CASTRO | Observer Graphic

SPORTS AUTHORITY

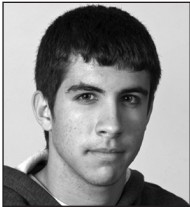
In sports, out with the new and in with the old

Suddenly, everything old is new again in the sports world. Put your talk of rising stars to the side. Forget Blake Griffin, Ricky Rubio and John Wall lighting up the court. Forget about Bryce Harper, Stephen Strasburg and the future stars of the diamond. Let Andrew Luck and Robert Griffin III have their day on the football field — in 2015.

Despite the fact that young stars are popping up all over the place, the sports world is partying like it's 1999. In case you've been living under a rock recently, all-time NFL great Peyton Manning shook up the headlines this week by signing with the Denver Broncos. Manning immediately spoke of the need to win immediately in Denver. Most football fans will take him seriously.

In the Bronx, left-handed pitcher Andy Pettitte came out of a one-year retirement to return to the franchise that made him famous, the New York Yankees. Reports out of Yankees camp say that Pettitte's bullpen sessions have been among the best by any Yankee pitcher this spring. He will almost certainly push a younger, more exciting pitcher out of the rotation. Very few Yankee fans will have a problem with this. In the spring training camp of the Colorado Rockies, 49-year-old pitcher Jamie Moyer is tossing fastballs touching 80 miles per hour for a franchise that did not exist when he broke into the major leagues. For those interested, Moyer debuted for the Chicago Cubs in 1986, the same year Bon Jovi released "Slippery When Wet". Now, Moyer is livin' on a prayer — and a changeup — in hoping to make a roster for the first time since 2010.

Why, with such exciting



Chris Allen
Sports Editor

Simply, sports fans are realizing that they didn't know what they had until it was taken away from them. During a player's career, he is human. We appreciate what he brings, but often he is as good as his last start, his last pass or his last reception.

young prospects on the horizon, are a group of guys nearing membership in AARP competing for roster spots? Simply, sports fans are realizing that they didn't know what they had until it was taken away from them. During a player's career, he is human. We appreciate what he brings, but often he is as good as his last start, his last pass or his last reception. The first season that a player moves away from a game, we naturally begin to form the legend that will accompany his career. We contextualize his accomplishments; we compare him against his peers. Suddenly, those bad starts and inconsistencies fade into the background and the more admirable qualities of a player's career become what we, as fans, remember. This is how the human qualities that define a player's

career become the qualities of a legend. When players leave the game briefly as Manning, Pettitte and Moyer did, the process of evaluating those careers begins. When they return, they return with a bit of that leg-end intact. Bronco fans

are getting more than a quarterback to win them the AFC West and beef up their passing game. They are also getting a player that, because of his absence, has truly earned the 'living legend' status. Yankee fans are getting more than a fifth starter with postseason experience. They are also getting an icon from their past, as if a figure from the history books stepped off of the pages and into the 2012 season. Five years in the future, the names like Harper, Strasburg and Rubio will own the sports world. But we'll only have names like Manning, Pettitte and Moyer for so long. Long live the old guard.

Contact Chris Allen at callen10@nd.edu. The views expressed in this Sports Authority column are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Observer.

TENNIS

Williams triumphs in Florida



Venus Williams serves to Kimiko Date-Krumm, of Japan, during their match at the Sony Ericsson Open tennis tournament in Key Biscayne, Florida, on Wednesday. Williams won the match 2-0.

Associated Press

KEY BISCAINE, Fla. — Venus Williams won in her first singles match since August, dispatching Kimiko Date-Krumm 6-0, 6-3 at the Sony Ericsson Open on Wednesday. She beamed wide, raised her arms in victory, then skipped to the net to shake's Date-Krumm's hand before twirling around and pumping her arms in a celebration worthy of winning the title, not just a first match. But other than playing a meaningless doubles match during the United States' Fed Cup first round victory over Belarus in early February, she hadn't played an official match since the U.S. Open first round. The 31-year-old Williams withdrew from her second round match against Sabine Lisicki at the U.S. Open after announcing she was diagnosed with the fatigue-causing, auto-immune disease known as Sjogren's Syndrome. "I mean, just to be in this tournament is a huge win for me. Just to be here is a win," Williams said. "You know, that's what I told myself going in, that this is a win. I have nothing to lose. Just, you know, to gain. Just to get back at this level is a win for me." Asked how she felt during and after the match, Williams said, "I feel like a person that has an au-

toimmune disease. You know, for me, I'm not going to probably feel like everybody else. But for me, my personal best is to give 100 percent" Once a world No. 1 and a seven-time Grand Slam singles champion, Williams is ranked No. 134. She's hoping to be able to play steadily now and to make her third U.S. Olympic team — she won gold in singles and doubles at the 2000 Sydney Games and a doubles gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Games. Williams had five aces and 26 overall winners in the match while taking advantage of five of 10 break point opportunities. In the first set, Williams lost only seven points on serve. She dropped her serve only once in the match, in the first game of the second set. The unseeded Kim Clijsters, a former Sony Ericsson Open champion (2005 and 2010), came through a 4-6, 6-1, 6-0 first-rounder against Jarmila Gajdosova of Australia. Clijsters, a four-time Grand Slam champion, is currently ranked No. 37. This match was Clijsters' first outing on court since she sustained a left ankle injury at the Australian Open. She lost in three sets to eventual champion Victoria Azarenka in the Australian Open semifinals. "My ankle feels — it feels totally fine," Clijsters said. "I don't worry about

it anymore. I'm not able to play without the tape yet. I still need that support." Clijsters clearly struggled to find her form at the outset of the match. She lost the first set to the No. 45 ranked Gajdosova after initially leading 3-1 in that opening set. But once she found her groove, she dominated the final two sets, only losing one of 13 games played. In the first set, Clijsters surrendered her serve on two of nine break points. In the second set, Clijsters saved all four break points she faced. And by the third set she never offered Gajdosova a break opportunity. "When it comes down to my game I just felt like I wasn't just quite going through my shots as well as I should have," Clijsters said. "As I started to feel more comfortable in the conditions and playing matches again, I felt like I was hitting through the ball better, and that showed in the second and third set." Sandwiched between the Clijsters and Williams matches was one between two tour veterans that once ranked in the top 10: James Blake of the U.S. and Nikolay Davydenko of Russia. The 32-year-old Blake opened strong and scored the first set win. But he wilted against the 30-year-old Davydenko who eventually won, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

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PERSONAL

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NBA

Veteran Fisher signs with Oklahoma City

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — After winning five NBA titles with the Los Angeles Lakers, Derek Fisher chose the West-leading Oklahoma City Thunder as the team where he wants to go for No. 6.

Fisher signed with the Thunder for the remainder of the season on Wednesday, not quite a week after he was traded to Houston by the Lakers and subsequently bought out of his contract instead of playing with the Rockets.

He picked jersey No. 37, the same as his age, and hoped to play right away and perhaps be able to maintain his streak of consecutive games played.

More importantly, he wants to continue his run of postseason success.

“Right now, they sit on top of the Western Conference and I’m just hopeful that the things that I do, the things that I’ve always brought to every team I’ve ever played on, can be the right mix to help these guys continue to do whatever it is that they’re already doing,” Fisher said before the game.

The Thunder lost their backup point guard, Eric Maynor, to a season-ending knee injury in January but hadn’t made any moves to address the position. All-Star Russell Westbrook had been taking on extra minutes as the starter, with rookie Reggie Jackson taking over as his backup.

Then Fisher became available when the Lakers decided to acquire Ramon Sessions from Cleveland and promote Steve Blake to the starter. Fisher had won five titles alongside Kobe Bryant in two separate stints with the Lakers, with stops in

Utah and Golden State in between.

He had played 13 of his 16 NBA seasons with Los Angeles before getting dealt away at last week’s trade deadline.

“I think that I was surprised by it, but since then I’ve very much realized that it’s not so much about what went wrong and why it happened but more so where I’m going next and the next chapter of my life,” Fisher said, declining to speak in depth about his divorce with the team until later.

Fisher figures to take over Jackson’s backup minutes, although coach Scott Brooks called the 2011 first-round draft pick one of the Thunder’s “important pieces going forward.” Fisher has averaged 8.7 points and 3.1 assists during his career and has played in 209 playoff games in 13 trips to the postseason.

“He has winner all over his DNA,” Brooks said. “You can never have enough winners in your locker room, and we have a locker room full of them. He just gives us one more winner.”

Fisher played with the Lakers when they knocked Oklahoma City out in the first round of the 2010 playoffs on their way to a second straight championship. He said he’s always respected the team because he’s observed that the players play with energy every single game.

That approach was reinforced when he met with general manager Sam Presti while he was going through the process of clearing waivers and becoming a free agent.

“It’s very clear that there’s one common goal, and that’s to maximize the abilities of every player on the team and try to bring, at



Former Lakers guard Derek Fisher smiles while talking to the media in Oklahoma City after signing with the Thunder on Wednesday. Fisher has played 13 of his 16 seasons with the Lakers.

some point, a championship to Oklahoma City,” Fisher said.

Oklahoma City made room for Fisher by waiving forward Ryan Reid, a second-round pick in 2010 who had played in only five games over the past season and a half.

“He’s got great poise, he’s got a great basketball IQ, great recognition on both ends of the floor,” Presti said of Fisher. “He understands the league, he’s a well-regarded corner shooter and someone that we feel like can settle you down and make plays for you throughout the body of the game.”

Presti praised Jackson and reserve Royal Ivey for filling Maynor’s minutes over the past two months well enough to give Oklahoma City the league’s third-best record, behind Miami and Chicago, heading into Wednesday night’s game against the Los Angeles Clippers.

“We have a lot of confidence in the group that we have in place, obviously, to be where we

are right now,” Presti said. “We know we can improve. ... We feel like Derek’s someone that can help enhance where we are currently.”

Two-time scoring champion Kevin Durant endorsed Fisher’s arrival even before he had officially signed and envisioned him as a mentor to the young team who’s still able to hit clutch shots and defend. He was hesitant to look forward and assess Fisher’s impact on the Thunder’s championship hopes.

NFL

League examines possible rule changes

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Instant replay could undergo some changes when NFL owners meet next week.

The owners will get proposals to eliminate referees from instant replay reviews and expand what the booth official rules on, and also to allow a player to return during the season from the injured reserve list.

The league’s competition committee, prompted by the Buffalo Bills, will propose having the booth official make all decisions on replay reviews. He also would be allowed to review all turnovers just as he now reviews all scoring plays.

“This proposal will definitely spark some discussion,” Rich McKay, president of the Atlanta Falcons and chairman of the committee, said of possibly taking away review responsibilities from the refs. “We developed our system based on the last time we had replay. That’s how we developed the referee to be the decision maker.”

The committee will also propose expanding the overtime rule used in the postseason — both sides must have an offensive possession if the receiving team kicks a field goal to start the ex-

tra period — to the regular season.

That rule, instituted in 2010, has yet to become a factor in the playoffs.

And a player hurt in preseason or early in the schedule could be designated as able to return from injured reserve after six weeks and play after eight weeks rather than sit out the entire season.

That would be a significant change; the previous rule was a player placed on IR must miss four games. In 1993, that was changed to the entire season because teams tended to put promising prospects on the list rather than having to release them.

Until 1990, IR players had to sit out six games.

The Steelers, who proposed the overtime alteration, also suggested making a horse collar tackle on a quarterback inside the pocket a 15-yard penalty. That is the only situation where such a tackle is not penalized.

Expansion of the defenseless player rules to protect defensive players against crackback blocks to the head area or being blocked by an opponent headfirst also is on the agenda for the spring meetings in Palm Beach, Fla., that begin Monday. Now, they are only protected against low crackback blocks.

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APPLICATIONS DUE THIS FRIDAY

NBA

Knicks win fifth-straight game

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Amare Stoudemire had 21 points and nine rebounds to lead the New York Knicks to their fifth straight victory, 82-79 over the Philadelphia 76ers on Wednesday night.

Jeremy Lin scored 18 points and Carmelo Anthony had 10 to help the Knicks pull within three games of the Atlantic Division leaders.

Elton Brand had 12 points and 12 rebounds for the Sixers. Jrue Holiday scored 16.

The game ended with thousands of New York fans chanting, "Let's go Knicks!" They had reason to celebrate after Stoudemire hit a pair of big buckets down the stretch to clinch the win.

Each team was backed by a heavyweight A-list supporter: Co-owner Will Smith rooted on the Sixers and Spike Lee sat adjacent to the Knicks bench.

This could be a crushing week for the Sixers with Boston set to visit on Friday. The Celtics are only a game back for the division lead and an automatic top-four seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

The Sixers shook off a miserable start and a double-digit hole to make a run at the Knicks in the fourth. Lou Williams, perhaps the NBA's best sixth man, nailed a 3 that tied the game at 63-all.

Stoudemire, though, returned the favor with a monster dunk and a loud roar that was gleefully met with cheers by all the Knicks fans. Stoudemire hit a pull-up jumper next time down and the Knicks led by four.

Lin followed with a runner



Knicks guard Jeremy Lin attempts a layup during New York's 82-79 win over the 76ers on Wednesday in Philadelphia.

and Lee, wearing a No. 17 jersey, leapt from his seat and applauded as the Knicks ran his way for a timeout.

Lin delivered from the free throw line, sinking two for an eight-point lead, then feeding Anthony for a 16-footer that gave the Knicks the breathing room they needed. Lin was 10 for 10 from the line.

The Sixers kept coming, and nearly turned the game around in the final 2 minutes. Trailing by three, Brand blocked Lin's shot that led to a fast-break attempt for Andre Iguodala. Iguodala missed the layup, and the empty possession would finish off the Sixers.

For good measure, Iguodala shot an airball in the final minute.

Meanwhile, the orange and blue took over, and chanted for the Knicks, completing a double-dose of defeat for Philadelphia.

The Sixers never led and trailed by as many as 12 points when they finally found a groove in the third. Thaddeus Young's dunk pulled them within two and Iguodala buried a 3-pointer from the corner — only his third basket — for a 49-48 lead.

NBA

Durant leads Thunder past Griffin, Clippers

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Kevin Durant had 32 points and nine rebounds, Russell Westbrook added 19 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder shut down Blake Griffin and beat the Los Angeles Clippers 114-91 on Wednesday night.

Playing in his hometown, Griffin was held to a career-low seven points in the rematch of a Clippers victory perhaps best remembered for his emphatic dunk over Kendrick Perkins.

Griffin didn't have any dunks in this one, settling mostly for long jumpers and hook shots, and went just 3 for 11 from the field.

Randy Foye started in place of Caron Butler and scored 23 points to lead Los Angeles, which hit 37 percent on a miserable shooting night from inside the 3-point line and failed to score 100 points for the eighth straight game.

Kendrick Perkins set the tone for Griffin's rough night with a hard foul that also drew him his league-leading 11th technical foul midway through the first quarter, and the Clippers' All-Star forward never got going.

After Oklahoma City's lead reached its largest point at 20 late in the third quarter, the Clippers reeled off 11 straight points to prompt Thunder coach Scott Brooks to call timeout and put both of his All-Stars back in the game 90 seconds into the fourth quarter.

Westbrook drove for a layup and Derek Fisher — signed just before the game after he bought out of his contract with

Houston — followed a few possessions later with a 3-pointer from the left side for his first basket with the Thunder during a 12-2 response that restored the cushion to 100-81 with 6:13 left.

About 2 minutes later, Clippers coach Vinny Del Negro waved the white flag and sent in his reserves.

Chris Paul finished with 13 points and 10 assists, and Nick Young scored 12 points in his second start with the Clippers after coming over in a trade with Washington. Los Angeles fell to 11-12 on the road this season, having lost six of its last eight.

A night after getting outscored 50-20 in the paint in a loss at Utah, the Thunder used a hefty advantage inside to pull out to a 66-50 lead after a high-scoring first half.

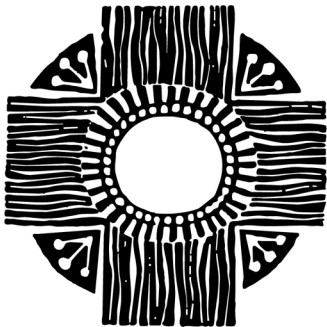
Los Angeles eliminated one double-digit lead before Oklahoma City pulled away again with a 16-4 run midway through the second quarter that featured back-to-back 3-pointers from Lazar Hayward. James Harden's 3-pointer from the left wing made it 52-39 with 6:25 left before halftime.

Durant then converted a nifty reverse layup to start a string of eight straight points to finish the half for Oklahoma City. By that point, the Thunder held a 30-16 scoring edge in the paint.

Los Angeles never did much in the lane, finishing with only 22 points in the paint. At one point late in the third quarter, the Clippers were 10 for 18 from 3-point range but only 10 for 34 from inside the arc.

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NHL

Callahan's overtime goal gives Rangers victory

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ryan Callahan ripped a shot in off a goal post 2:42 into overtime to lift the Eastern Conference-leading New York Rangers over Detroit 2-1 on Wednesday night, sending the injury-riddled Red Wings to their sixth straight loss.

The Rangers turned up the heat in the extra session and finally got a puck past Ty Conklin, who was recalled from the minor leagues earlier Wednesday because of Detroit's injury woes. Callahan fired a shot from the slot for his 27th goal, making the New York captain a winner on his 27th birthday.

Henrik Lundqvist made 26 saves, and Brad Richards scored in the first period for the Rangers, who lead Pittsburgh by three points in the East. Pittsburgh has 10 games left and the Rangers have nine.

Henrik Zetterberg gave Detroit an early 1-0 lead, and Conklin made 32 saves, but the Red Wings had to settle for just one point. Detroit, 0-4-2 in its last six, moved into sole possession of fourth place in the

West, one point ahead of Nashville.

Zetterberg's goal led to the tossing of an octopus onto the Madison Square Garden ice, but that was the only bit of playoff feeling the Red Wings could enjoy on this night.

Detroit is limping toward the end of the season. The Red Wings were without top defenseman Nicklas Lidstrom (ankle), forwards Darren Helm (lower body) and Johan Franzen (back), and goalies Joey MacDonald (back) and Jimmy Howard (groin).

It wasn't until noon on Wednesday that the Red Wings knew they would have Conklin in goal after calling him up from Grand Rapids of the AHL on an emergency basis. Conklin had to pass through re-entry waivers, meaning any NHL team could have claimed him before he could rejoin Detroit. He was backed up by Jordan Pearce, who has never played in an NHL game.

The Rangers' power play has shown some renewed life lately, and Richards did all the work on it to get New York even at 1.

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NFL

Goodell suspends Saints' Payton for 2012 season

Associated Press

Meting out unprecedented punishment for a crush-for-cash bounty system that targeted key opposing players, the NFL suspended New Orleans Saints head coach Sean Payton without pay for next season and indefinitely banned the team's former defensive coordinator, Gregg Williams.

Payton is the first head coach suspended by the league for any reason, accused of trying to cover up a system of extra cash payouts that NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell on Wednesday called "particularly unusual and egregious" and "totally unacceptable."

Sending a message by taking a harsh stand, Goodell also banned Saints general manager Mickey Loomis for the first eight regular-season games next season — believed to be the first time a GM was suspended by the NFL — and assistant coach Joe Vitt for the first six games.

In addition, Goodell fined the Saints \$500,000 and took away their second-round draft picks this year and next.

"We are all accountable and responsible for player health and safety and the integrity of the game. We will not tolerate conduct or a culture that undermines those priorities," said Goodell, whose league faces more than 20 concussion-related lawsuits brought by hundreds of former players. "No one is above the game or the rules that govern it."

According to the league, Payton ignored instructions from the NFL and Saints ownership to make sure bounties weren't being paid. The league also chastised him for choosing to "falsely deny that the program existed," and for trying to "encourage the false denials by instructing assistants to 'make sure our ducks are in a row.'"

All in all, Goodell's ruling is a real blow to the Saints, a franchise that Payton and quarterback Drew Brees revived and led to the 2010 Super Bowl title after decades of such futility that fans wore paper bags over their heads at home games.

Brees reacted quickly to the news on Twitter, writing:

"I am speechless. Sean Payton is a great man, coach, and mentor. ... I need to hear an explanation for this punishment."

The Saints now must decide who will coach the team in Payton's place — his suspension takes effect April 1 — and who will make roster moves while Loomis is out. There was no immediate word from the Saints, but two candidates to take over coaching duties are defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo and offensive coordinator Pete Carmichael Jr. Spagnuolo has NFL head coaching experience; Carmichael does not, but has been with the club since 2006.

When the NFL first made its investigation public on March 2, Williams admitted to — and apologized for — running the program while in charge of the Saints' defense. He was hired in January by the St. Louis Rams; head coach Jeff Fisher said Wednesday he'll probably use a committee of coaches to replace Williams in 2012.

Goodell will review Williams' status after the upcoming season and decide whether he can return.

"I accept full responsibility for my actions," Williams said in a statement issued by the Rams. "I will continue to cooperate fully with the league and its investigation and ... I will do everything possible to re-earn the respect of my colleagues, the NFL and its players in hopes of returning to coaching in the future."

After the NFL made clear that punishments were looming, Payton and Loomis took the blame for violations that they acknowledged "happened under our watch" and said Saints owner Tom Benson "had nothing to do" with the bounty pool, which reached as much as \$50,000 during the season the Saints won their championship.

The NFL said the scheme involved 22 to 27 defensive players; targeted opponents included quarterbacks Aaron Rodgers, Cam Newton, Brett Favre and Kurt Warner. "Knockouts" were worth \$1,500 and "cart-offs" \$1,000, with payments doubled or tripled for the playoffs.

"The bounty thing is completely unprofessional. I'm

happy the league has made it known it won't be tolerated," said left tackle Jordan Gross, Newton's teammate on the Carolina Panthers. "To think that something like that would happen — guys trying to hurt someone to make a few extra bucks — is just appalling. I mean we have a lot on the line, every single one of us. ... You don't want to see anyone taken out a game."

According to the league, Saints defensive captain Jonathan Vilma offered \$10,000 to any player who knocked then-Vikings QB Favre out of the 2010 NFC championship game. The Saints were flagged for roughing Favre twice in that game, and the league later said they should have received another penalty for a brutal high-low hit from Remi Ayodele and Bobby McCray that hurt Favre's ankle. He was able to finish the game, but the Saints won in overtime en route to the franchise's only Super Bowl appearance.

All payouts for specific performances in a game, including interceptions or causing fumbles, are against NFL rules. The NFL warns teams against such practices before each season, although in the aftermath of the revelations about the Saints, current and former players from various teams talked about that sort of thing happening frequently — although not on the same scale as was found in New Orleans.

In a memo to the NFL's 32 teams, Goodell ordered owners to make sure their clubs are not offering bounties now. Each club's principal owner and head coach must certify in writing by March 30 that no pay-for-performance system exists.

Punishment for any Saints players involved will be determined later, because the league is still reviewing the case with the NFL Players Association.

"While I will not address player conduct at this time, I am profoundly troubled by the fact that players — including leaders among the defensive players — embraced this program so enthusiastically and participated with what appears to have been a deliberate lack of concern for the well-being of their fellow



AP

Saints coach Sean Payton reacts to a call in a Sept. 18 game against the Bears. Payton was suspended for the 2012 season Wednesday.

players," Goodell said.

The discipline for the Saints' involvement in the bounty scheme is more far-reaching and unforgiving than what Goodell came up with in 2007, when the New England Patriots cheated by videotaping an opponent. Goodell fined the Patriots \$250,000, stripped a first-round draft pick, and docked their coach, Bill Belichick, \$500,000 for what was known as "Spygate."

As recently as this year, Payton said he was entirely unaware of the bounties — "a claim contradicted by others," the league said. And according to the investigation, Payton received an email before the Saints' first game in 2011 that read, "PS Greg Williams put me down for \$5000 on Rogers (sic)." When Payton was shown that email by NFL investigators, he acknowledged it referred to a bounty

on Rodgers, whose Packers beat the Saints in Week 1.

The league said that in addition to contributing money to the bounty fund, Williams oversaw record-keeping, determined payout amounts and recipients, and handed out envelopes with money to players. The NFL said Williams acknowledged he intentionally misled NFL investigators when first questioned in 2010, and didn't try to stop the bounties.

Vitt was aware of the bounties and, according to the league, later admitted he had "fabricated the truth" when interviewed in 2010.

Loomis knew of the bounty allegations at least by February 2010, when he was told by the league to end the practice. But the NFL said he later admitted he didn't do enough to determine if there were bounties or to try to stop them.

PGA

Woods ready to take on field at Arnold Palmer Invite

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — From the fairway on the par-5 sixth hole at Bay Hill, caddie Joe LaCava looked back toward the tee box in time to see Tiger Woods stop suddenly in the middle of his swing.

"What's going on?" LaCava said, peering into the sun.

He could see Woods flexing his right knee as he paced behind the ball, rubbing his lower back and stretching. Standing over the ball again, Woods let go of the driver before finishing his swing, although the ball wound up in the middle of the

fairway.

Was it the left Achilles tendon again? His rebuilt knee? Something else?

The concern didn't last long. Turns out it was a camera click that made Woods flinch.

"I guess one of the so-called professional photographers took a picture right in the middle of my downswing," Woods said. "I stopped it, and then felt a pretty good twinge in my back. Walked it off and then tried to hit one down there. Hit it in the fairway, but didn't feel very good. But after a couple of holes, it loosened up. And I'm good to go now."

That was the message Woods preached Wednesday on the eve of the Arnold Palmer Invitational, his last tournament before the Masters begins on April 5, when he resumes his pursuit of Jack Nicklaus in the majors.

He feels good enough to play golf as many as eight days in a row. Woods revealed that his week started with a trip to Augusta National on Sunday, followed by a two-day exhibition at Lake Nona, the pro-am at Bay Hill and then four days of the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

Even so, his health figures to be a big topic in the two weeks leading to the Masters.

In his last official tournament, Woods played 11 holes in the final round at Doral before he withdrew because of tightness in the left Achilles tendon, the same one that forced him to miss two majors last year.

"I've had tightness before, but not to that extent," Woods said. "But treatment afterwards always get it right back to where it should be. And that's one of the reasons why I wasn't really that concerned about it, that I would come back and play these events."

Could it happen again?

"It could," Woods said. "But hopefully, it won't."

Palmer was happy to see Woods at his tournament — he has never missed Bay Hill except for when he was returning from the crisis in his personal life in 2010. He, too, is curious about the Masters. Both are four-time champions.

"I think that to win, you have to be on top of your game at Augusta, and there's no question about that," Palmer said. "And so Tiger will have to be. Does it make it more likely that he'll win there? Only in that he will probably work very hard to get his game ... in shape to win. There's certainly that possibility. Will he win? I don't know."

MEN’S SWIMMING

Bass, Dyer to compete in championships

Observer Staff Report

Many spring sports have just gotten into the swing of a season, but for one team, the next few days lead to the end. The Irish have spent months preparing for the NCAA championships and now two members of the team will travel to the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center in Federal Way, Wash., to compete among 235 total swimmers. This year marks the first time in program history that Notre Dame sends two swimmers to the championships. Junior Bill Bass will compete in the 200-yard individual medley and 100- and 200-yard butterfly. Sophomore Frank Dyer will compete in the 100-yard freestyle, 200-yard freestyle and 500-yard freestyle. For his first career trip to the NAAs, Bass stands ranked in three events. His qualifying time in the 200-yard individual medley puts him in a tie for 13th place entering the championships at 1:44.81. He also holds the 24th best time in the 200-yard butterfly at 1:45.60 and the 26th best in the 100-yard butterfly at 47.03. Dyer stands ranked third nationally in the 200-yard

freestyle. With only 200 yards of distance, his qualifying time of 1:33.71 is a fraction of a second behind Louisville’s Joao De Lucca’s 1:33.44, the number one swimmer in the event. His qualifying time in the 500-yard freestyle puts him at 16th place with a time of 4:18.50. His two events make him the first Notre Dame swimmer to qualify for multiple races in the NAAs. Dyer also holds a national rank in the 100-yard freestyle, in which he has the 21st best time at 43.22. Bass and Dyer have not competed since Feb. 18, when the Irish won the Big East title. Bass won Most Outstanding Swimmer at the Big East championships as well. The swimmers hope to continue taking high standings, following the lead set by freshman Nick Nemetz, who placed 12th in the NCAA zone diving championships March 9. Competition begins today at 2 p.m. with the 200-yard freestyle trials. The afternoon will also hold trials for the 500-yard freestyle, 200-yard individual medley, 50-yard freestyle and 400-yard medley relay, with finals following later in the evening.

Doyle

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quarter, tying the game. Both teams went on to exchange goals in the final minutes of the quarter. Irish senior attack Sean Rogers put the Irish ahead late in the second quarter with his team-leading eighth goal of the season to send Notre Dame into halftime with a 3-2 lead. Notre Dame started the second half aggressively as senior midfielder and co-captain Max Pfeifer netted two goals in the third quarter. Ohio State answered with two goals, but it could not keep up as Irish junior midfielder Pat Cotter gave the Irish a 6-4 lead with just over one minute remaining in the quarter. Notre Dame extended its lead to 7-4 to open the fourth quarter. Ohio State scored back-to-back goals to cut the Irish lead down to 7-6, but its rally fell short. With 2:15 remaining, Notre Dame sophomore midfielder Liam O’Connor scored after a face-off win to ensure the Irish victory. A final Ohio State goal with 19 seconds remaining in the game was not enough to complete the Buckeye comeback, and the Irish escaped with an 8-7 win in Columbus. “It was a hard-fought [game]. Literally, until a few seconds left in the game, Ohio State did a great job coming back down the stretch, and they definitely made it difficult for us,” Rogers said. “It was a quick turnaround from the weekend, but I’m glad we just played hard for the whole game to get the win.” Cotter’s goal marked his first of the season, while goals from

O’Connor, junior defenseman Tyler Andersen and sophomore midfielder Tyler Brenneman were the first of their careers. Corrigan said several players stepped up against the Buckeyes, helping the Irish keep their winning streak alive. “I think [we figured out that] there are a lot of ways to win,” he said. “We got a goal from a long-stick, a goal from a face-off man [and] three midfielders contributed. It wasn’t our best day, but we found a way to win, and there’s a lot to be said for that.” Notre Dame junior goaltender John Kemp recorded 17 saves. The Irish converted eight of 21 shot attempts, while collecting just seven of 19 face-offs. Corrigan said Notre Dame’s defense deserves credit for keeping control of the game, despite an Irish squad that could not find a rhythm offensively. “Great play by the defense and our goalie John Kemp, who were forced to play good defense because we didn’t have a good day offensively and we didn’t get ground balls,” he said. Corrigan said the Irish will take today off in order to rest before they face Rutgers this weekend. Preparation will consist of watching film and studying the Scarlet Knights’ system. “We need to go back and basically mentally fix stuff and work through the mistakes we’ve made the last few weekends,” Rogers said. The Irish return to action Sunday, when they play host to Rutgers at Arlotta Stadium at 1 p.m. Contact Megan Golden at mgolde01@saintmarys.edu

NFL

Jets finally land Tebow



Jets quarterback and then-Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow walk off the field following a game Nov. 17. The Broncos traded Tebow to the Jets on Wednesday after lengthy negotiations.

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tim Tebow is coming to New York. Really. After a big false start, the New York Jets pulled off a Tebow-like comeback Wednesday night, getting the quarterback who turned the Denver Broncos from an also-ran into a playoff team last season and became the NFL’s most talked-about player — for a fourth- and sixth-round draft pick. Now, Tebowmania is opening on Broadway. Eight hours after initially agreeing to a deal, the teams completed the trade that was hung up when the Jets apparently balked at repaying Denver more than \$5 million for a salary advance due Tebow. ESPN reported that the two sides had agreed to split that cost. Despite ultimately pulling off the deal for Tebow, it’s just another bizarre moment for the Jets, a team that has had its share of them over the years, conjuring memories of Bill Belichick’s hiring as coach and his resignation one day later. Just a few weeks after “Linsanity” swept the area and the rest of the NBA with the Knicks’ sensational Jeremy Lin, “Timsanity” now will take over New York. “You’ve got a tough player on the field, a leader in the locker room and a guy who shares the faith that I share,” Jets defensive end Mike DeVito said. “So, I’m very grateful to have him on our team, and I feel it’s going to really benefit us as a whole.” But not everyone’s a fan. Another teammate, cornerback Antonio Cromartie, took to Twitter on Wednesday to express his confidence in Sanchez and the offense as structured before the deal. “Ybring Tebow in when we need to bring in more Weapons for (at)Mark_Sanchez,” Cromartie tweeted. “Let’s build the team around him. We already signed to 3 year ext.”

The Jets signed Drew Stanton last week to be their No. 2 quarterback, ahead of Greg McElroy, the team’s seventh-round draft pick last year. General manager Mike Tannenbaum said Tuesday that he was confident in the trio, but added: “I’ll give you my standard answer, which is you never know if other opportunities present themselves. We’ll always look at it. That’s the standard line there, but we feel good about Greg, Drew and Mark, and see where we go from there.” And that led them to Tebow. But Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Namath, who led the Jets to their only Super Bowl title in 1969, was also among those unhappy. “I’m just sorry that I can’t agree with this situation. I think it’s just a publicity stunt. I can’t go with it. I think it’s wrong,” Namath told 1050 ESPN Radio on Wednesday. “I don’t think they know what they’re doing over there.” The effect Tebow’s presence will have on Sanchez remains to be seen. The Jets appear to be committed to him financially as their starter for at least the next two years, but a restless fan base that got down on Sanchez as he struggled late last season could call for Tebow to take over at the first sign of trouble. Two minutes after the Jets initially posted the trade on its Facebook page, there were 874 “likes,” 366 comments and 247 shares. Most of the comments ran along the lines of: “I might cry” and “He is not welcome here, another terrible decision.” The Jets certainly will have lots of explaining to do: Where was the misunderstanding? Who didn’t read the fine print? Why did the Jets announce the trade on its site and Facebook page before it was completely done? Sure, they got headlines and were the talk of sports radio — even on a day when the New Orleans Saints re-

ceived unprecedented punishment from the NFL for a bounty system that rocked the football world. Head coach Sean Payton was suspended without pay for next season, and former defensive coordinator Gregg Williams, now with St. Louis, was banned indefinitely. But even all that couldn’t overshadow another embarrassing episode for a franchise that has had to explain away several missteps in recent years. The Jets are hoping Tebow can help change all that. Tebow led the Broncos to the playoffs last season — along the way beating Sanchez and the Jets, who missed the postseason. But Denver executive John Elway believed Manning gave the team a better chance at winning a championship now. For the Jets, Tebow adds a unique dimension to the offense, including running the team’s wildcat package — something new offensive coordinator Tony Sparano enjoys using. He also provides a solid presence in a locker room that was rife with infighting last season — particularly between Sanchez and wide receiver Santonio Holmes. He also brings with him a flock of fervent fans for reasons that have to do as much with his faith as his football skills. A devout Christian, he’s been a role model since his days at Florida, when he led the Gators to two national titles and captured the Heisman Trophy. Denver started shopping Tebow after signing Peyton Manning, and the Jets were considered a long shot as late as Tuesday night. But New York went hard after Tebow, envisioning him as a versatile complement to starter Mark Sanchez, who received a \$40.5 million contract extension, with \$20.5 million guaranteed, earlier this month. The Jets also had pursued Manning, but fell out of that race early when there wasn’t mutual interest.

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Senior Kristy Frilling sets up for a forehand return during Notre Dame's 6-1 loss to Duke on March 3 in the Eck Tennis Center.

Irish

continued from page 24

at No. 6 for freshman Katherine White, but Sanders was able to even the singles count with a 6-2, 7-6 (4) victory at No. 4, giving the Irish a 2-1 lead overall. That was the last time Notre Dame led, as it dropped the next three matches in rapid succession. Louderback attributed the series of straight-set losses to errors.

"It was disappointing that we just made a lot of errors," he said. "Not everyone did, but most of the kids made a lot of errors today. We just weren't really good. It was not a long match. Usually we're really good about finding a lot of balls and usually we can make it a long match but today we just made a lot of errors. We just didn't make the match long enough."

The only three-set match of the day came from No. 49 Mathews, who dropped the first set 6-1 to No. 10 Bektas before coming back with a 6-4 second set win to push the match to a third, in which Bektas prevailed

6-4. Despite the loss, Louderback said Mathews fought a hard battle.

"Mathews lost in the third but played really well," he said. "Sanders also had a good game. But other than that we just didn't compete well or make enough balls."

Going forward, Louderback said, the Irish will try to tighten their play and decrease errors as they return home for a three-game homestand against Marquette, DePaul and Northwestern. With a quick turnaround before Marquette on Sunday, Louderback said he hopes his squad can put up more of a fight against the Golden Eagles.

"We really haven't seen [Marquette] this year so we don't know a whole lot about them. We know they have a lot of new kids from last year," he said. "We'll do okay hopefully and hopefully we'll compete better against them on Sunday."

Notre Dame gets back in action against Marquette on Sunday at noon at the Eck Tennis Pavilion.

Contact Kelsey Manning at kmannin3@nd.edu

DeSico

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the lead in the fourth inning when he hit a two-run RBI single, scoring junior center fielder Charlie Markson and McMurray. In the seventh inning, he added his fourth and fifth RBI of the game, a career-high.

"I thought [DeSico] was big. He got that RBI that put us up and end up putting us up for good—that was a big one," Aoki said. "We had had some opportunities with two outs to get some RBIs, which we hadn't converted, and him punching that through the infield I thought was a really, really big moment in the game."

DeSico attributed his performance to his typical attitude and help from his teammates.

"I just played like I try to play every day," Desico said. "I come out here and I try to do as best I can, give a hundred percent and I have confidence in the guys that they're going to do the same. We've been playing really well, so there's not much more I can say."

Notre Dame also scored in the fifth inning on an error and sophomore third baseman Eric Jagielo and Biggio knocked in runs in the fourth

and seventh innings, respectively. However, the Irish left 12 men on base and hit into four double plays. Aoki said the Irish could have done more to take advantage of the Mastodon pitchers, who issued 10 walks.

"I think to a certain extent we could have done a little bit better job there, but for the most part I think we did [well]," Aoki said. "We put up some quality at-bats, I think we hit some balls hard at people, like the double play that [freshman right fielder] Ryan Bull ran into while we were running on the play."

Aoki said the four double plays turned by IPFW were mostly unavoidable.

"The first one was preventable — Conor [Biggio] shouldn't have been running on that ball that Frank [DeSico] lined out to the third baseman," Aoki said. "But the other ones, you just chalk it up to baseball. If we can start putting balls exactly where we want to off the bat then we're pretty much undefeated at this point."

The Irish will play their first Big East game of the season when they take on Pittsburgh at home at 5:35 p.m. Friday.

Contact Vicky Jacobsen at vjacobse@nd.edu

Spring

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spurned a likely first-round selection in the NFL Draft to return for his senior season. Te'o heads a defense that returns six starters from last season's finale against Florida State, but suffered heavy losses in the secondary, including the graduation of cornerbacks Gary Gray and Robert Blanton and captain and safety Harrison Smith.

With the departure of highly-touted early enrollee Tee Shepard from the university, sophomore cornerbacks Lo Wood and Bennett Jackson took reps with the first team defense, along with freshman defensive ends Stephon Tuitt and Aaron Lynch.

"It's always a confidence issue [with young players]," Te'o said. "You come to college and people are bigger, faster, stronger but at the end of the day, it's still football. I think once they understand that, they'll be fine."

Te'o described the opening practice as intense and com-

petitive from the start, even without fully-padded contact.

"You could do everything but hit," the 2011 second-team All-American said. "Guys were going after the ball, going to pick off the ball. Receivers are going up for the ball. We understand that we can't put our teammates in dangerous situations but everybody was competing out there."

Due to Notre Dame's depth at linebacker, 6-foot-7 freshman Troy Niklas moved from linebacker to tight end to complement athletic junior Tyler Eifert with a physical presence along the line.

Meanwhile, junior Theo Riddick returned to his original running back position amid the absence of freshman transfer Amir Carlisle due to a broken ankle. Riddick, who spent the previous two seasons as a slot receiver, said the move came immediately following the Champs Sports Bowl loss to Florida State, but the lessons learned at the position added an extra skillset to the versatile speedster.

"[Playing running back] is completely natural," Riddick said. "I have been playing it

since I was eight-years-old. I can play it in my sleep. I was trying to enhance my skills and I never felt like me moving to wide receiver ever hindered my skills ... It was just one skill I had to develop."

Kelly spent most of his time developing the four quarterbacks fighting for the starting job. Sophomore Tommy Rees, the incumbent starter, took reps with the first team, while early enrollee Gunner Kiel, wearing a red No. 1 jersey, debuted in his first practice with the Irish.

Kelly said the performance and improvement of freshman receiver DaVaris Daniels impressed him the most.

"He showed up. It's the first day and I am not ready to anoint him as the next Michael Floyd," Kelly said. "He still has a long way to go but he's extremely athletic so we are looking for his ability to translate that and I saw that a little bit today."

The Irish continue their spring schedule with practice 8 a.m. Friday.

Contact Andrew Gastelum at agastel1@nd.edu



ANDREW CHENG/The Observer

Junior James Kaull attacks his opponent during the Midwest Conference championships March 3 in the Joyce Center. The Irish begin their national title defense today in Columbus, Ohio.

Bednarski

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Enzo Catellani and junior epeeist James Kaull bring valuable experience to the squad, as they are making their third appearance in the NCAA championships.

"We'll rely on [Catellani and Kaull] both for their play and for their influence and advice to the other fencers," Bednarski said. "We have a very inexperienced team, but we are confident that they can lead us."

The NCAA championships use a five-touch bout format as opposed to the normal 15-touch format of the regular season, which puts a premium on making adjustments early in bouts, something inexperienced fencers often struggle with.

"This competition is very special because of its format. It's the type of thing where you can get down early and before you have the chance to make an adjustment, you've already lost," Bednarski said. "We're doing everything

we can to prepare our guys. We're in meetings all day talking about it, but a lot of it has to come from them and our team leaders."

Notre Dame was one of five schools to qualify the maximum 12 fencers for the event, joining St. John's, Princeton, Harvard and Ohio State. It is the fifth consecutive year the Irish have qualified the maximum number. However, one of the last times the team failed to do so, it won the 2005 national championship. Bednarski has used this example to show his team that having greater numbers does not guarantee success.

"I think our performance in 2005 really shows that any team can take it, regardless of the number of fencers they qualify," Bednarski said. "This year, I think Penn State really fits in that category, having only qualified 11 [fencers]. They're extremely dangerous though, and it's always a big fight with them. It's a very natural rivalry for us."

Bednarski said Ohio State, while competing at home, is another team that could

spoil Notre Dame's chances to repeat, along with the Ivy League duo of Harvard and Princeton. But the greatest competition may come from the Red Storm, who field an extremely talented and experienced team, Bednarski said.

"There will be many great teams there, but St. John's really stands out," he said. "It's a team that is really built for this type of competition. They'll be tough to beat."

In the end, how far the Irish go will be determined by how fast the squad's young fencers grow up, Bednarski said. The team has spent an entire year maturing, but there is no substitute for the crucible of championship competition.

"It is a very high-pressure environment and it will not be easy," he said. "Not for the coaches and not for the fencers. But if this team can promise anything, it is that we will fight."

The NCAA championships begin Thursday and last through Sunday in Columbus, Ohio.

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FOOTBALL

Springing into action

By ANDREW GASTELUM
Associate Sports Editor

With a steady mixture of familiar faces and position changes that Irish coach Brian Kelly referred to as a blend of “continuity and change,” Notre Dame kicked off its spring practice schedule on a sun-splashed Wednesday morning.

“What I really liked today was the enthusiasm that we had,” Kelly said. “You go into your third year and you try to balance continuity and change because it is important that continuity is part of what you do. But change brings sometimes an energy and an enthusiasm.”

“So in day one of spring, [there was] great effort, great enthusiasm. Veterans looked like veterans, young guys looked like young guys, and now we are off and running where we now can start to build our football team and get everyone looking the same.”

One of those veterans is junior linebacker Manti Te'o, who

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TOM LA/The Observer

Irish coach Brian Kelly speaks to his players before practice in the Loftus Sports Center last spring. Notre Dame kicked off its spring practice schedule Wednesday.

FENCING

Team aims for second straight title

By CONOR KELLY
Sports Writer

After a year of preparation, an inexperienced but determined Irish squad will finally have the chance to defend its 2011 national title when the NCAA championships begin Thursday in Columbus, Ohio.

Notre Dame will send only three fencers with NCAA championship experience to Columbus and will rely on nine first-timers to contribute.

“Our fencers are very good, but it is a very young team,” Irish coach Janusz Bednarski said. “To have nine fencers competing in the NCAA finals for the first time is very difficult. Especially in this event, experience is so key.”

Bednarski said senior foilist

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BASEBALL

Veerkamp allows single run in win over IPFW

By VICKY JACOBSEN
Sports Writer

When Irish junior pitcher Patrick Veerkamp hit visiting IPFW's leadoff man with a pitch, walked the second batter and gave up a single to the Mastodons' third hitter, it looked like Notre Dame was in for a rough night on the mound. But the

right-hander soon regained control of his pitches and the game, putting the Irish back on track for an 8-1 victory.

Veerkamp allowed one more walk and four more hits, but didn't give up another run in five innings of work, which earned him his second win of the season and lowered his ERA to 2.77.

“I think he started to trust his stuff a little bit and get back into the strike zone, pitch a little bit more to contact. I think that was important for him,” Irish coach Mik Aoki said. “Sometimes with Patrick, I think it just takes him a little bit of time to settle into a game, so that's one of the things hopefully we can work on, where

soon as he gets in, he's just comfortable to attack the hitters.”

The Mastodons (4-14) didn't catch a break when Veerkamp left the game, as freshmen Matt Ternowchek and Cristian Torres, senior Joe Spano and sophomore Dan Slania combined to close out the game with four scoreless innings.

The Irish (12-7) tied the game in the second inning when IPFW junior pitcher Daniel Tursell walked freshman shortstop Jason McMurray, then gave up consecutive singles to freshman left fielder Conor Biggio and junior second baseman Frank DeSico. DeSico gave the Irish

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ND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Wolverines end Notre Dame's winning streak

By KELSEY MANNING
Sports Writer

After a successful three-match jaunt in Hawaii featuring a marathon win over then-No. 20 Texas Tech, the No. 17 Irish returned to the mainland Wednesday only to be defeated by the new No. 20 — rival Michigan.

The high point of the contest for Notre Dame (12-5) was its doubles play, with No. 2 sophomores Julie Sabacinski and Britney Sanders and No. 3 sophomore Jennifer Kellner and junior Chrissie McGaffigan both notching 8-6 victories to nab the doubles point for the Irish. Despite the nationally-ranked No. 1 doubles pair of senior captains Kristy Frilling and Shannon Mathews falling to the

No. 7 duo of sophomore Brooke Bolender and freshman Emina Bektas, Irish coach Jay Louderback said the doubles portion of the match got Notre Dame off to a good start against the Wolverines (8-5).

“Both the two and the three got us in a good position for the match,” he said. “Both played really well, served well and the last couple games of both matches we hit a lot of first serves. They played really well, it just boils down to that.”

But once singles play got underway, Louderback said the Irish were for the most part plagued with errors in what turned out to be a very quick contest. Notre Dame began the singles portion with a quick loss

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MEN'S LACROSSE

Irish capture road victory

By MEGAN GOLDEN
Sports Writer

Three days after a triple-overtime victory over Denver, No. 6 Notre Dame extended its winning streak to four games with an 8-7 win at Ohio State on Wednesday.

After opening the season with three consecutive wins, the Buckeyes (3-5) have now lost five straight.

The fatigued Irish (5-1) never found an offensive rhythm Wednesday, relying primarily on the defense for their fifth win.

“This was a really good win because we just gutted this one out,” Irish coach Kevin Corrigan said. “We were a little bit tired physically and mentally, and Ohio State played very well. We gutted this one out and found a way to win.”

Less than five minutes into



GRANT TOBIN/The Observer

Senior midfielder Max Pfeifer looks for a teammate during Notre Dame's 4-3 loss to Penn State on Feb. 26 at Arlotta Stadium.

play, Irish freshman attack Conor Doyle scored his third goal of the season to put Notre Dame on the board.

The Buckeyes responded midway through the first

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