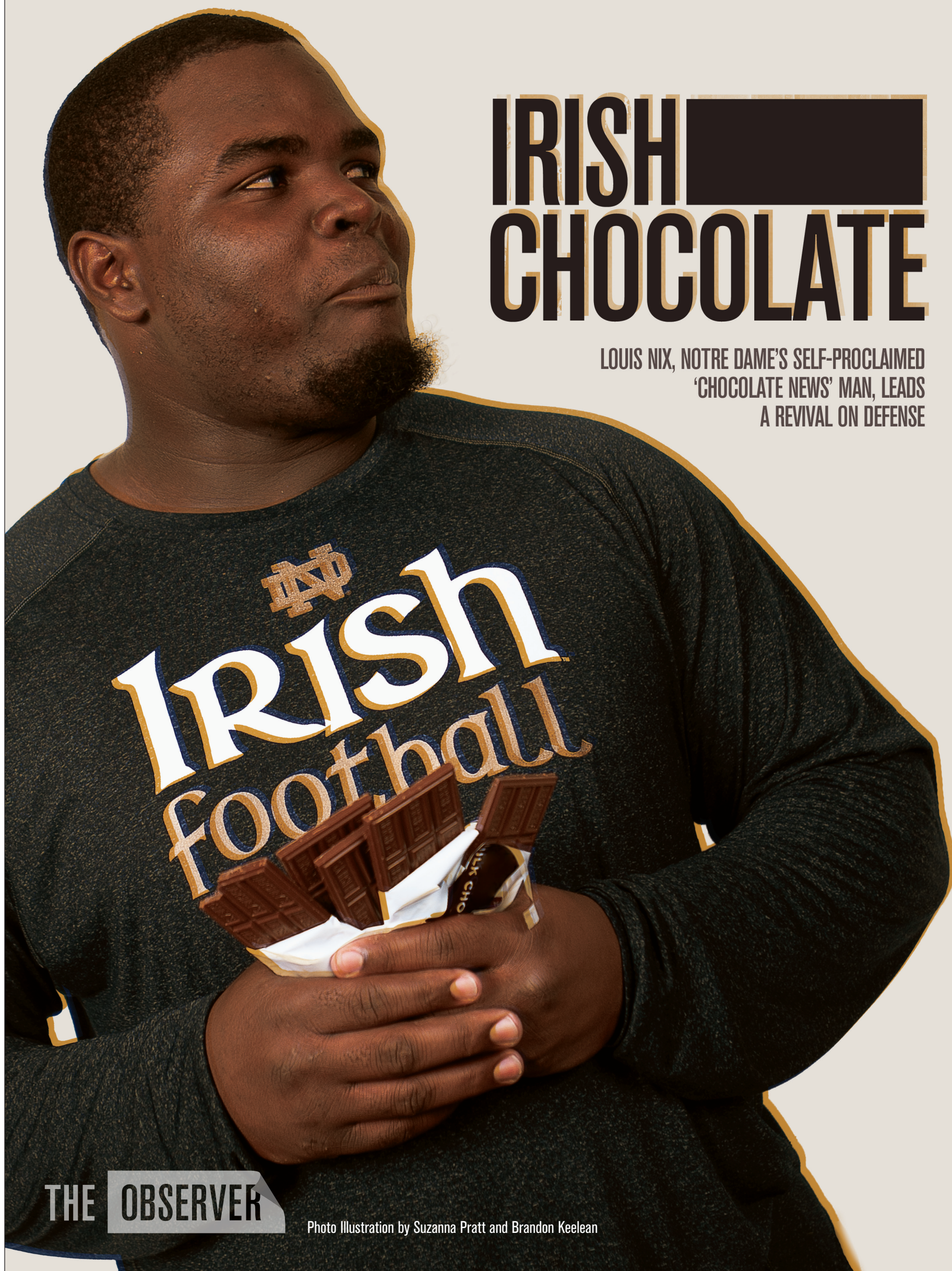


IRISH INSIDER

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2012

IRISH CHOCOLATE

LOUIS NIX, NOTRE DAME'S SELF-PROCLAIMED
'CHOCOLATE NEWS' MAN, LEADS
A REVIVAL ON DEFENSE



THE OBSERVER

Photo Illustration by Suzanna Pratt and Brandon Keelean

COMMENTARY

Offensive output must improve



Chris Allen
Sports Editor

The Irish fan base is smiling, and with good reason.

Notre Dame will take the field Saturday night outlined against a blue-gray October sky in Chicago with a 4-0 record, a top-10 ranking and the third-best scoring defense in the nation. After disposing of longtime foe Denard Robinson — and with multiple teams on the Irish schedule suffering from injuries and early-season losses — Notre Dame fans are thinking ahead, calculating win totals in the double-digits and looking up plane tickets to BCS bowls.

The reality is simple, however: If the Irish offense cannot rev into gear and figure out a formula to put up points, this team may miss out on a golden chance.

There are no shortage of superlatives to describe what Bob Diaco and the Notre Dame defense have been this year, and there is little reason to expect that Stephon Tuitt, Manti Te'o and the rest of the unit will level off anytime soon. But a dominant defense can only take a team so far — the game is won by putting points on the scoreboard. Until Everett Golson, or Tommy Rees for that matter, can do that on a consistent basis, there is no game in which Notre Dame is not at least somewhat vulnerable, and that begins this week with Miami.

If you need an example, look no further than two weeks ago under the lights against Michigan. The Irish intercepted five straight Michigan passes, forced a Robinson fumble, and did not allow a touchdown for the second straight game, yet they still needed a late third-down conversion to ice away the victory. The 13-6 victory was a blowout disguised as a one-score game, and the stagnant Irish offense was the only culprit. Were it not for Michigan's ill-advised running back pass that resulted in a Nicky Baratti interception in the end zone, or Denard Robinson's lack of ball security on a crucial fumble, the game could have been very different.

The burden to take this Notre Dame team to the next level

falls on the offense's shoulders. Preseason predictions are largely a fool's exercise, but the consensus of what was written about Notre Dame's offense has proven to be true. The Irish are still struggling to replace Michael Floyd at wide receiver, and the lack of a marquee option at wideout has bottled up tight end Tyler Eifert. Eifert has been battling through double-teams and defenses designed to stop him, and has recorded one catch in the past two games. Matched up against a spotty Miami secondary, the receivers finally have a chance to break out. The emergence of DaVaris Daniels or T.J. Jones could take pressure off Eifert, opening the All-American up down the field and vitally transforming the offense. Of course, another down week at the position will have everyone asking the same questions next week.

The quarterback position is yet another area where there have been more questions than answers. For weeks, Irish coach Brian Kelly has been emphatically declaring his support of Everett Golson as the Irish starter. However, if wins were assigned in football the same way they were in baseball, both Golson and Tommy Rees would be 2-0. It is still unclear who 'the guy' is under center, or if the Irish even have one.

It's tough to imagine Notre Dame in a BCS bowl unless these questions get answered. Opponents of this view will point to Alabama as a team that's won two BCS titles recently without a dominant quarterback, but the Crimson Tide's signal-callers made plays when they needed to on those title runs, and also had a stable of elite All-American running backs to balance the attack. Golson has no such luxury. He must get better, and the offense must get better around him.

Irish fans are right to see the opportunity that lies ahead in the weakening 2012 schedule, but if Notre Dame is to realize the opportunity, they must get offensive.

Contact Chris Allen at callen10@nd.edu

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

Check out the "Waking the Echoes" series online at ndsmcobserver.com.

This week's installment features **Pat Terrell**.

RECRUITING

Son of MLB outfielder adds to Irish class at wideout

By **CHRIS ALLEN**
Sports Editor

Less than 24 hours after its Sept. 22 win over Michigan, Notre Dame added yet another famous name to its list of 2013 commitments. ESPN 150 wide receiver Torii Hunter Jr., son of current Los Angeles Angels outfielder and former MLB All-Star Torii Hunter, became the fourth wide receiver to commit to the 2013 Irish recruiting class.

Hunter, the No. 8-ranked wide receiver in the country according to ESPN, chose Notre Dame after receiving offers from marquee programs Alabama, Oklahoma and West Virginia, among others. Irish recruiting analyst Mike Frank said Hunter Jr. is a player who surprises many despite his small 6-foot, 172-pound frame.

"I love Torii Hunter as a prospect," said Frank, who runs the ESPN-affiliated Irish Sports Daily. "He's one of those guys where you look at his size and he's not [6-foot-3], and you look at his frame and see he's not 210 pounds, and you look at his speed and he's not running a 4.3 40-yard time, but this kid just makes a ton of plays. Absolutely a ton of plays."

"He's just got the ability to

get behind defenders and make plays, and he's got enough speed to stretch the field and get deep at this next level. I'm excited about his potential. He's a big, big plus to the already impressive wide receiver class."

Hunter Jr., whose father is a four-time MLB All-Star and a nine-time Gold Glove winner spanning a career with the Minnesota Twins and the Angels, has also expressed intent to play baseball at the collegiate level. Frank said the desire to be a dual-sport athlete played a big part in the recruitment of Hunter Jr.

"He's quite the baseball

player as well," Frank said. "But I think he really likes football a lot, and I think football is probably his best sport right now. Football is where he's getting looks from pretty big programs right now. But he's pretty good in baseball too, and that's a big part of it."

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

Email Mike at mikefrank18@sbcglobal.net and tell him The Observer sent you.

Contact Chris Allen at callen10@nd.edu

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Man in the middle

Irish nose guard Louis Nix evolves on the field and inspires a movement off it

By **ANDREW GASTELUM**

Associate Sports Editor

He's a man who goes by many names: No. 9, Nasty Dawg, Big Lou. But to more than 4,000 Facebook friends, 179,000 YouTube viewers and 8,000 Twitter followers, junior nose guard Louis Nix is known by one name and one name only.

"Irish Chocolate ... It came from Facebook. I normally chat all my friends on Facebook, and I wanted a nice classic name," Nix said. "A name of greatness, better than all the greats. Better than the Black Mamba, better than the Bus and the Fridge. I wanted it to be Irish Chocolate. My people came up with a nice name, and that's what I settled with."

After the long-winding journey of searching for a nickname, Nix said he finally came across something that fit him to the core.

"Since it's a name, I need something that I am going to live up to. I'm a sweet guy, like I am covered with chocolate," he said between laughs. "I am just like a Hershey's bar. On the outside it looks delicious and really good. But on the inside there is just this splash of 'Wow!' And it can hit you in the mouth if you're not careful about it. Got it?"

Gaining a following

The 6-foot-3, 326-pound lineman is as jolly as they come, usually equipped with his trademark smile and never one to pass up a guaranteed-to-make-you-smile wisecrack. Nix is a social-media triple threat, maintaining a presence on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. But when compared to the best of the best in the social world, Nix said he has the upper hand.

"I don't think Justin Bieber is as handsome as I am. But I could say that I am up there with him," Nix said. "I just need more people to get with the Irish Chocolate movement. Yeah, it's a movement. It's a way of life."

"Some people just can't experience this chocolate movement. I want everyone to get it, that's why I put it out. That's why I am on Twitter, that's why I talk about it on Facebook. Because once this Irish Chocolate hits you, it makes your life just a little bit better."

With his 8,086-and-counting Twitter followers, Nix trails only senior linebacker Manti Te'o's 33,647 followers for the lead on the Irish defense. But the Jacksonville, Fla., native said his social media blueprint is hardly in its beginning stages.

"I just want as many followers as I can. I'm thinking 200,000," he said. "I like to entertain. I like to make people laugh. I want everybody to get a little laugh here and there. But I can be emotional too. That's just the type of guy I am."

Nix said the response to his Irish Chocolate movement the past two seasons has been so enormous that Facebook banned him from adding friends once he crossed the 5,000 threshold, causing him to cut back. The lineman also said he tries to respond to each of his fans' messages, even the occasional relationship request.

"I think [responding to fans]

means a lot," he said. "I get a lot of random responses though. I've gotten responses about how Irish Chocolate could help relationships, about how I could help people be a better football player, about how to go to Notre Dame. I get 'I like you' responses too, but there are not too many of those left because I have a girlfriend."

The Film, Television, and Theatre major revels in his starring role in a YouTube web-series he calls "Chocolate News," which averages upwards of 20,000 viewers per episode. The series showcases the life of a Notre Dame football player, from team shopping to Notre Dame's trip to Ireland.

"What's 'Chocolate News'? It's just my everyday life, just a behind-the-scenes look at what people don't see that often," Nix said. "I'm not [a superstar] yet. I'm just a regular guy. But people just want to see me. They want to see the life of a Notre Dame player. I try to give them my point of view on things, as much as I can. The fact that so many people watch is just so funny to me. I enjoy it a lot."

Sophomore defensive end Stephon Tuitt often plays a role in Nix's documentary-style filming, as Nix almost always carries his camcorder with him.

"'Chocolate News' is his little thing," Tuitt said. "Watching it, to me, is funny. He's a funny guy and an emotional guy, not an ordinary type of guy, but he's Louis Nix."

Despite all the attention, Nix said his extracurricular activities don't take away from football or school. Rather, they help the junior relax.

"It never is a distraction because it is just me," Nix said. "All that stuff is just me. I just enjoy it. It will never get in the way of my books or my plays because that is really what helps me stay focused. I need that type of stuff to keep me in order."

Trending

Coming out of Raines High School in Jacksonville, Nix played in the Under Armour All-American Game after an outstanding senior season in which he totaled 50 tackles and 10 sacks. As a four-star recruit, he originally committed to Miami, his favorite team as a child, before switching to Notre Dame and Irish coach Brian Kelly.

"Yeah, I sure can [remember my first impression of Nix]. It's probably what your first impressions were," Kelly said. "This big mammoth of a man who had a kid-like personality. He continues to have that. He's just added a lot of maturity to that kid-like personality."

Since coming into his first preseason camp overweight in 2010, Nix has learned to mix business with pleasure and became a comedic outlet for the veterans while remaining a steady example for younger players.

"He just knows when to be serious and when it's the time to play," freshman defensive end Sheldon Day said.

Nix credits this gradual transformation for his improved performance in 2012.

"This year I feel like I am more mature, but I am the same me," he said. "I feel like I can deal with different situations in a more mature way."

Despite not seeing any playing time in 2010, Nix started 11 games in the 2011 season and recorded 45 tackles, including 4.5 for a loss. Kelly said he too has noticed the improvements in Nix's mentality and approach to the game.

"He's just continued to grow as a player," Kelly said. "He gives us more and more preparation, a more purposeful approach every single day. He's on the trend, if you

will. He's trending, that's a Twitter kind of deal, right? Trending. He's definitely doing all of those things to get better every day."

This season, the junior has seen multiple double-teams at the critical nose guard position in defensive coordinator Bob Diaco's 3-4 defensive scheme, leading to more opportunities for his teammates. With Nix plugging up the middle, Notre Dame held potential Heisman candidates in Michigan State running back Le'Veon Bell and Michigan quarterback Denard Robinson to 77 and 90 yards rushing, respectively. Notre Dame remains the only team in the country who has yet to yield a rushing touchdown and is third in the nation in scoring defense, allowing nine points per game. Nix and his 16 tackles (three for loss) are a big reason why.

"I think people are starting to notice me," Nix said. "My name is starting to come up and people know me as a nice guy. If you are a trending topic on Twitter [or] in football, people will start to notice you."

The Irish defense hasn't given up a touchdown in the last two games — both against top-25 teams — and Nix said it comes down to dissipating the pressure across the entire defense and simply having fun.

"I like to talk to the other team, have some conversations," Nix said half-jokingly. "I hug them all of the time. The Michigan linemen were really nice. I had a conversation with them the whole game."

"But [the defensive line] has come together really close in the last year. We are really loose and enjoy it and just like to have fun. Last year we were maybe being too serious. Now we have more fun. We hang out more. It's just like a family atmosphere."

Although he embraces Twitter, Nix found himself in a thorny situation last year after tweeting, "Hopping on the Delta and might never come back" following the departure of former Irish defensive end Aaron Lynch.

"It wasn't anything. It was hard times, getting a little homesick," Nix said. "But that's over. That was last year and now I'm focused. I have everything in order that needs to be in order. I'm on time to graduate. I have almost a 3.0 GPA. I'm just trying to stay focused. Last year there was a lot of stuff going on in my life, but that's changed now and I just want to keep pushing it."

Following football, Nix said he has his sights set on the television business as the perfect outlet for his engaging personality.

"I'm thinking sports broadcasting or something like that," he said. "Maybe I could do 'Louis.0' and kick Daniel Tosh out of there. Or I could be something like [Michael Strahan]. Or maybe kick Jack [Nolan] out and get Louis Nix in there."

Graduate student captain and defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore said Nix's attitude refreshes the entire team and keeps things upbeat at all times.

"You have to have the kid love of the game. He has fun with it," Lewis-Moore said. "Everybody knows Louis is a character. He keeps the game fun, he keeps you laughing and kind of loosens things up."

When asked about the one thing he wants the Notre Dame student body to know about him more than anything, the team funnyman responded in less time than it takes him to fill up on his gameday-standard five bowls of Cinnamon Toast Crunch.

"I love my momma," Nix said. "Tell them I love my momma."

Welcome to the Irish Chocolate Show, where characters are always welcome.

Contact Andrew Gastelum at agastell1@nd.edu



Suzanna Pratt | THE OBSERVER

Notre Dame junior nose guard Louis Nix has recorded 16 tackles in starting duty.



Observer File Photo



Observer File Photo

HURRICANES PASSING

The Irish have seen junior quarterback Stephen Morris before. That time was on a cold winter’s day in El Paso, Texas on Dec. 31, 2010 and Morris was just a freshman then. Morris relieved former starter Jacory Harris and his three interceptions and threw for 282 yards with two touchdowns and an interception in the Hurricanes 33-17 loss in the Sun Bowl.

Now, he’ll get a real shot at the Irish fresh off a record-setting performance. In last week’s 44-37 win over NC State, Morris set an ACC record with 566 passing yards and five touchdowns, including 271 passing yards in the first quarter alone. The junior already has 1,635 passing yards and nine touchdowns this season and averages 21.77 yards per completion. Morris leads an offense that has recorded over 400 total yards of offense in the last three games, including 651 yards against the Wolfpack.

Sophomore receiver Phillip Dorsett poses the biggest threat to the young Irish secondary. Dorsett is the only receiver in the country with at least two games of at least 180 receiving yards and has 16 receptions for 375 yards in the last two games. Against NC State, the sophomore wideout set a career high with 191 receiving yards and two touchdowns on seven catches.

Only three schools average more interceptions per game than Notre Dame, which has already equaled its total from all of last year with eight.

Junior cornerback Bennett Jackson and senior linebacker Manti Te’o each have three, good enough for sixth-best in the nation. Freshman safety Elijah Shumate and sophomore safety Matthias Farley continue to impress as they gain more reps with the first team. The Irish are also ninth in the country in sacks with 3.5 per game.

But the Miami passing attack comes into the Shamrock Series with a lot of momentum and confidence as the main reason behind this three-game winning streak.

Junior cornerback Bennett Jackson and senior linebacker Manti Te’o each have three, good enough for sixth-best in the nation. Freshman safety Elijah Shumate and sophomore safety Matthias Farley continue to impress as they gain more reps with the first team. The Irish are also ninth in the country in sacks with 3.5 per game.

EDGE: MIAMI

HURRICANES RUSHING

The Hurricanes boast a dual-threat rushing attack with senior running back

Mike James and freshman running back and kick returner Duke Johnson. In the Sun Bowl, Notre Dame held James to only 14 yards rushing and receiving. So far this season, James has accumulated 278 yards and three touchdowns on 60 carries.

Johnson provides the Hurricanes with a big-play threat, averaging 6.9 yards per carry with a season-long run of 56 yards. Johnson has 359 yards on 52 carries and provides a nice change-up to James’ rushing style. The two-time ACC Rookie of the Week ranks first in the ACC in all-purpose yards with 184 per game and leads the Hurricanes with seven touchdowns in his first season.

Notre Dame is the only team in the country to have not given up a rushing touchdown on the season. The Irish are especially tough in the red zone, only giving up two touchdowns in 10 red zone trips.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

HURRICANES OFFENSIVE COACHING

Defensive coordinator Bob Diaco has shown week after week that his defense will be prepared for anything. The defense hasn’t given up a touchdown in its last two games, both against top-25 teams with legitimate Heisman candidates.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

HURRICANES SPECIAL TEAMS

Johnson leads the Miami return games, and already has a 95-yard kickoff return for a touchdown. But redshirt senior kicker Jake Wieclaw has missed on both of his field-goal attempts of 40-plus yards and has a season high of 38 yards.

EDGE: EVEN

HURRICANES SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	@ Boston College	W 41-32
Sept. 8	@ Kansas State	L 52-13
Sept. 15	Bethune-Cookman	W 38-10
Sept. 22	@ Georgia Tech	W 42-36 (OT)
Sept. 29	NC State	W 44-37
Oct. 6	Notre Dame	
Oct. 13	North Carolina	
Oct. 20	Florida State	
Nov. 1	Virginia Tech	
Nov. 10	@ Virginia	
Nov. 17	USF	
Nov. 24	@ Duke	

HEAD T

MIAMI



(So.) **Rashawn Scott** **80** WR
(Fr.) Herb Waters 86

(R-So.) **Malcolm Bunche** **79** LT
(R-Fr.) Hunter Wells 64

(Sr.) **Mike James** **5** RB (Fr.) Duke Johnson 8 (R-So.) **Jonathan Feliciano** **70** LG
(R-Sr.) Jeremy Lewis 68

(Jr.) **Stephen Morris** **17** QB (R-So.) **Shane McDermott** **62** C
(R-So.) Ryan Williams 11 (R-Jr.) Jared Wheeler 75

(Jr.) **Maurice Higgins** **33** FB (R-So.) Sean Harvey 43 (Jr.) **Brandon Linder** **65** RG
(Fr.) Daniel Isidora 63

(Fr.) **Ereck Flowers** **74** RT
(Jr.) Seantrel Henderson 77

(R-Jr.) **Dyron Dye** **49** TE
(R-So.) Clive Walford 46

(So.) **Phillip Dorsett** **4** WR
(R-Sr.) Kendal Thompkins 83

(So.) **Thomas Finnie** **20** CB
(Jr.) Ladarius Gunter 37

(R-Fr.) **Eddie Johnson** **44** OLB
(So.) Thurston Armbrister 34

(Fr.) **Deon Bush** **2** S (Jr.) Kacy Rodgers II 22 (So.) **Anthony Chickillo** **71** DE
(Fr.) Jelani Hamilton 99

(Sr.) **Darius Smith** **98** DT
(Fr.) Earl Moore 72

(So.) **Olsen Pierre** **91** DT
(R-Fr.) Corey King 67

(R-Jr.) **Shayon Green** **51** DE
(So.) Kelvin Cain 94

(Jr.) **Tyrone Cornelius** **31** OLB
(So) Gianni Paul 36

(Sr.) **Brandon McGee** **21** CB
(Fr.) Antonio Crawford 39

(R-Sr.) **Jake Wieclaw** **40** PK (R-Fr.) Matt Goudis 18 (R-Sr.) **Jake Wieclaw** **40** KO
(R-Fr.) Matt Goudis 18

(Sr.) **Dalton Botts** **13** P (R-Sr.) Jake Wieclaw 40 (So.) **Phillip Dorsett** **4** KR
(Fr.) Duke Johnson 8

(So.) **Phillip Dorsett** **4** PR (Fr.) Duke Johnson 8 (R-Sr.) **Paul Kelly** **61** LS



Allan Joseph
Editor-in-Chief



Andrew Owens
Assistant Managing Editor



Chris Allen
Sports Editor

The venue is pretty cool. The uniforms are very much not. The Irish offense is somewhere in between, but no one is sure quite where. If the running backs can get out to a fast start against an athletic but sloppy Miami defense, Everett Golson will have some breathing room and might just be able to find his stride. If that happens — and with the bye week, it should — Notre Dame will have a decisive upper hand.

On the other side of the ball, the Irish defense will have another test on its hands, but after it shut down both Le’Veon Bell and Denard Robinson, it’s hard to imagine it won’t be another masterful performance from Te’o, Nix and Co.

Notre Dame will pull out a solid victory for a fourth straight Shamrock Series victory. The helmets might be a disaster, but the results of the series certainly are not.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 30, Miami 20

These aren’t your father’s Miami Hurricanes, but that hardly means the Irish are in for a cakewalk this weekend.

Largely considered one of the weakest teams on Notre Dame’s 2012 slate — Miami (4-1) was picked fifth in its six-team ACC division in the preseason — the Canes are 3-0 in conference play. Their only loss is a 52-13 drubbing at Kansas State in week two.

Even with last year’s flat 31-17 home loss to USC, Brian Kelly is 12-2 as a head coach after a bye week. Whether that impressive mark improves will largely hinge on the right arm of Everett Golson. The combination of a bye week and facing Miami’s defense — the Canes have surrendered over 39 points per game against teams that aren’t Bethune-Cookman — might be just what the sophomore needs to ignite the offense.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 26, Miami 21

After a two-week hiatus, it is finally time to see how Notre Dame reacts to a top-10 rating. Three straight games against Big Ten opponents saw the Irish defense shine, but that section of the schedule is over.

If the offensive unit does not figure out a formula to put points on the board, there’s no game in which the Irish are not at least somewhat vulnerable. This week, Miami’s speedy offense and a quarterback coming into his own in Stephen Morris will put the Notre Dame secondary to the test. I don’t think Notre Dame can hold the Hurricanes to single digits.

It’ll be up to Golson and the Irish running backs to have at least an average offensive game. If they can, the Irish will win. I see Riddick having a big day in a one-score Irish triumph.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 24, Miami 16

O HEAD



NO. 9 NOTRE DAME



KIRBY MCKENNA | The Observer



KIRBY MCKENNA | The Observer

CB 6 KeiVarae Russell (Fr.)

43 Josh Atkinson (So.)

OLB 13 Danny Spond (Jr.)

30 Ben Councell (So.)

DE 89 Kapron Lewis-Moore (Gr.)

91 Sheldon Day (Fr.)

NG 9 Louis Nix (Jr.)

96 Kona Schwenke (Jr.)

DE 7 Stephon Tuitt (So.)

50 Chase Hounshell (So.)

OLB 55 Prince Shembo (Jr.)

11 Ishaq Williams (So.)

CB 2 Bennett Jackson (Jr.)

21 Jalen Brown (So.)



WR 7 T.J. Jones (Jr.)

10 DaVaris Daniels (So.)

WR 9 Robby Toma (Sr.)

19 Davonte' Neal (Fr.)

RT 74 Christian Lombard (Jr.)

64 Tate Nichols (Jr.)

RG 57 Mike Golic Jr. (Gr.)

72 Nick Martin (So.)

C 52 Braxton Cave (Gr.)

57 Mike Golic Jr. (Gr.)

LG 66 Chris Watt (Sr.)

65 Conor Hanratty (So.)

LT 70 Zack Martin (Sr.)

78 Ronnie Stanley (Fr.)

TE 80 Tyler Eifert (Sr.)

18 Beh Koyack (So.)

WR 81 John Goodman (Gr.)

87 Daniel Smith (Jr.)



KO 27 Kyle Brindza (So.)

40 Nick Tausch (Sr.)

KR 4 George Atkinson (So.)

6 Theo Riddick (Sr.)

LS 60 Jordan Cowart (Sr.)

61 Scott Daly (Fr.)

PK 27 Kyle Brindza (So.)

40 Nick Tausch (Sr.)

P 35 Ben Turk (Sr.)

27 Kyle Brindza (So.)

PR 19 Davonte' Neal (Fr.)

81 John Goodman (Gr.)



IRISH PASSING

In the 13-6 win over No. 18 Michigan on Sept. 22, Notre Dame accumulated only 239 total yards despite getting six turnovers from its defense. Against the Wolverines, Irish coach Brian Kelly pulled sophomore quarterback Everett Golson after an ill-advised throw in the endzone that resulted in his second interception of the night.

Junior quarterback Tommy Rees managed the game efficiently, but struggled to put up points and put Michigan away early. Rees threw for 115 yards on 8-for-11 passing with no touchdowns, but no turnovers either.

In fact, the Irish only have three passing touchdowns this season, but average 13 yards per catch. Sophomore receiver DaVaris Daniels leads Notre Dame with 159 receiving yards on nine receptions. Senior tight end Tyler Eifert came into the year as one of the top receiving tight ends in the country, but only has one catch in his last two games, which came on a 38-yard reception from Rees on third-down to seal the victory over Michigan. Despite returning to running back before the season started, senior running back Theo Riddick leads the Irish with 14 receptions, mostly from out of the backfield.

Against NC State last week, junior quarterback Stephen Morris' stellar performance overshadowed a very shaky Miami secondary that gave up 440 passing yards and four touchdowns to senior Wolfpack quarterback John Glennon. Freshman safety Deon Bush leads the Hurricanes secondary with 18 solo tackles.

EDGE: EVEN

IRISH RUSHING

The Notre Dame rushing attack is a major reason why the Irish are the only team in the FBS to have never trailed at any point this season. Riddick leads the way with 242 yards and two touchdowns, and has emerged as a surprising between-the-tackles rushing threat in short-yardage situations.

After a breakout performance (99 yards and two touchdowns on nine carries) in Notre Dame's 50-10 victory over

Navy in Dublin on Sept. 1, sophomore running back George Atkinson has seen limited action, especially since the return of senior running back Cierre Wood from a two-game suspension.

The Hurricane defense has forced 12 turnovers this season, with seven of those being fumbles. Redshirt freshman linebacker Eddie Johnson leads the Hurricanes with three forced fumbles and 31 tackles. But the Miami defense gave up 287 rushing yards in a 42-36 overtime win over Georgia Tech on Sept. 22 and 224 rushing yards to NC State last week. The Hurricane defense has been prone to give up points this year as well, coming into the week ranked 100th in the country with 33.4 points per game allowed.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH OFFENSIVE COACHING

With the exception of Bethune-Cookman, the Miami defense has allowed at least 32 points in every game this season. But Kelly has yet to prove that his offense can consistently put drives together and put points on the board to put teams away.

EDGE: EVEN

IRISH SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomore kicker Kyle Brindza made two more field goals against Michigan two weeks ago to put his season total at six. Freshman receiver Davonte Neal has yet to show his explosive ability on the punt return while Atkinson remains a big threat returning kickoffs for Notre Dame.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	vs. Navy	W 50-10
Sept. 8	Purdue	W 20-17
Sept. 15	@ Michigan St.	W 20-3
Sept. 22	Michigan	W 13-6
Oct. 6	vs. Miami	
Oct. 13	Stanford	
Oct. 20	BYU	
Oct. 27	@ Oklahoma	
Nov. 3	Pittsburgh	
Nov. 10	@ Boston College	
Nov. 17	Wake Forest	
Nov. 24	@ USC	



Andrew Gastelum
Associate Sports Editor



Matthew DeFranks
Associate Sports Editor

There are a few things that should worry the Irish this week. The biggest thing is the September momentum may be lost due to the bye week. It is a completely new month with another set of tough teams, and Miami is no exception.

Miami boasts a strong passing attack that has been relentless in recent weeks led by Stephen Morris. If the Irish defense has a weakness, it is the young secondary that has yet to face a real passing attack yet. Miami's offense brings a balanced attack to Chicago, something that the Irish definitely don't have.

It's hard to say the Irish will score more than 20 points based on their recent performance, and honestly this score could be the other way around if Notre Dame looks ahead to Stanford next week.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 20, Miami 12

Let's get this out there. Miami is not as good as its 4-1 record indicates. They have beat their three FBS opponents by an average of seven points while allowing more than 500 yards in each conference win.

A team that was originally slated to finish fifth in its six-team division has overachieved on its way to the top of the Coastal Division. The 'Canes have relied on the big play and Miami has stopped chunk plays in wins over Michigan and Michigan State.

Everett Golson should find his stride against the very subpar Miami defense and the Hurricanes will struggle against the stringent Irish defense that has yet to allow a rushing touchdown in 2012.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 34, Miami 13

RV/RV

9/10

Miami vs. Notre Dame

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Johnson poses all-around threat



Miami freshman running back Duke Johnson breaks a tackle against Bethune-Cookman on Sept. 15. Johnson has 11 touchdowns this year.

By **MATTHEW DeFRANKS**
Associate Sports Editor

Miami running back Duke Johnson is fifth in the nation in all-purpose yards. He is second in the ACC in kickoff return average. He leads the Hurricanes in touchdowns.

All this, and he's just a freshman.

Johnson came out of Miami Norland Senior High School as the No. 1 running back in the country after gaining nearly 2,000 yards and scoring 29 touchdowns as a senior. He was also named Florida's Mr. Football while his team claimed a state title for the first time in nearly a decade.

In his collegiate debut against Boston College, Johnson ran for 135 yards and two touchdowns on just seven carries. He became the first Miami freshman to top the century mark in rushing yards in his first game since Clinton Portis did it in 1999.

"Everybody's got to get to the ball, especially with Duke," Irish senior linebacker Manti Te'o said. "He'll jump cuts and he'll split defenders, so everyone has to get to the ball and everybody has to do their best and play within our scheme; realizing that Duke has the chance to break it at any time."

The 5-foot-9, 188-pound freshman may not have the size of some other backs but makes up for it with his blazing speed. In high school, Johnson was clocked at 4.47 in the 40-yard dash.

"Oh, my gosh, he's fast," Irish graduate student defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore said. "When that guy touches the ball, he has the ability to take it to the house every single time. He's a smaller back but he's fast and we have to really be on top of our game."

In just five games, the Miami product already has four touchdowns of more than 50 yards, equaling the 2011 total for the Hurricanes. He has 11 total touchdowns

while adding 184 total yards per game.

"Duke Johnson is a very explosive running back," Te'o said. "He's a very dynamic player who he will make plays catching the ball, running the ball and on special teams."

Johnson stars on offense both rushing the ball — averaging almost seven yards per carry — and catching the ball at the rate of nearly 10 yards per reception. But he is also a threat on special teams, averaging 30 yards per return, including a touchdown.

Irish coach Brian Kelly said the Irish have dealt with other multidimensional players so far this season.

"Last week's kid was pretty multidimensional, [Michigan quarterback] Denard Robinson. He's a pretty good football player too. So we've had those players that we've had to prepare for," Kelly said. "He's a very good football player, and a number of player that's we're going to see over the next eight weeks that have similar skill sets."

"Well, I will tell you, we know where he is [on kick-offs]. We're going to have to be quite aware as to where he is, and make sure that we do a great job in our cover teams."

Johnson pairs with senior running back Mike James to provide a couple of options in the Miami backfield. James has 278 yards and three touchdowns this season.

"It's kind of like a lightning-lightning pretty much," Lewis-Moore said. "They're short guys but they're not scared of taking it inside, between the tackles. We have to fundamentally sound across the board."

The Irish are the only team in the Football Bowl Subdivision that has not allowed a rushing touchdown. Notre Dame also has not given up a play of more than 50 yards.

Contact Matthew DeFranks at mdefrank@nd.edu

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Chicago-area players return to home city

By **ANDREW OWENS**
Assistant Managing Editor

On Oct. 28, 2001, Chicago Bears safety Mike Brown intercepted Jeff Garcia’s pass and scampered 33 yards into the end zone to notch a 37-31 overtime victory over the San Francisco 49ers. A young Chris Salvi was in the stands, taking in the thrill of his first NFL game.

After attending nearly 20 Bears games throughout his life, the Lake Forest, Ill., native will fulfill a lifelong dream Saturday when he runs out of the Soldier Field tunnel in this year’s Shamrock Series game. It’s been nearly 11 years since his first Soldier Field experience, but the memory still vividly plays through the senior safety’s mind.

“As a Bears fan, this is going to be great,” Salvi said. “I’ve been there to watch plenty of games; with the Bears playing in Soldier Field, it’s a great experience.”

Salvi is not the only Irish player who might feel out of place on the field instead of in the stands this weekend. Sophomore receiver DaVaris Daniels also lays claim to a

unique connection to the historic field. His father, Phillip Daniels, starred as a Bears defensive end from 2000-2003 and recorded 23 sacks during his four seasons.

“I’m excited to be honest,” Daniels said. “Going back home, playing in front of my whole high school is probably going to be there, so it’s definitely exciting.

“We’re playing on a field my dad used to play on also. That’s a crazy feeling. I can’t wait.”

Despite the excitement of playing in the stadium in which he grew up cheering his heroes, Daniels doesn’t expect to feel any differently at kickoff than he would in any other game.

“It will definitely be special, but I think I’ll be able to handle it pretty well,” he said.

With 10 current players hailing from Illinois, this weekend will be a homecoming of sorts for a portion of the Irish roster. But the players said they will only leave Soldier Field with a sweet taste in their mouths if they can avoid a bitter defeat.

“I want it to be a win,” said senior guard Chris Watt when asked what he wants his

memory of the game to be.

Watt, a Glen Ellyn, Ill., resident, first attended a Bears game with his father and brother in 1998, but never reached the Catholic League Championship, annually held at Soldier Field.

“[The Chicago-area players] are all really excited, too. DaVaris’ dad played there for a number of seasons and [junior quarterback Tommy Rees’] dad worked in the organization,” Watt said. “It’s kind of home for both of them. So they’re looking forward to getting back there. I’ve got coaches coming, lots of friends from the area and my parents and brother as well.”

Watt said the allure of playing in high-profile games helped attract him to Notre Dame when he was weighing his options in high school.

“It’s awesome,” he said. “Coming here as a recruit, seeing that I was playing in Dublin and at Soldier Field my senior year was nice. It’s been something I’ve been looking forward to since I came here.”

Contact Andrew Owens at aowens2@nd.edu



KIRBY MCKENNA | The Observer

Irish sophomore wide receiver DaVaris Daniels runs with the ball against Purdue on Sept. 8. Daniels leads the Irish with 159 receiving yards.

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