

IRISH INSIDER

NOTRE DAME 21, BOSTON COLLEGE 6 | **MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2012** | NDSMCOBSERVER.COM

Staying perfect

Irish use long drives to build lead, hold on to beat Eagles on same day No. 1 Alabama falls



MACKENZIE SAIN | The Observer

Sophomore quarterback Everett Golson throws a pass under heavy pressure from Eagles junior linebacker Steele Divitto during Notre Dame's 21-6 win over Boston College at Alumni Stadium on Saturday.

By **MATTHEW DeFRANKS**
Associate Sports Editor

CHESTNUT HILL, Mass. — An early 95-yard touchdown drive was all No. 4 Notre Dame needed as it beat Boston College 21-6 in front of 44,500 people at Alumni Stadium on Saturday.

Irish sophomore quarterback Everett Golson engineered the 13-play, 95-yard march on Notre Dame's first possession of the game, going 3-for-5 and scoring on a 2-yard touchdown plunge on third-and-goal.

The Irish (10-0) were 3-for-3 on third downs on the opening drive and converted their first 10 attempts on third down for the game. Golson picked up six first downs on the ground.

"We did a nice job on third down," Irish coach Brian Kelly said. "Our quarterback play was really good, picked up one of the best plays I think he had when he ran it on third down, put his foot in the ground and ran north and south and showed some real toughness. We were effective because our quarterback was effective tonight."

Golson finished the game 39 rushing yards on 11 carries.

"We got a great push up front and I was able to run for the first downs," Golson said. "I like to think that's what makes me, me. ... It also takes the other guys around you to complement you and can finish the play off."

Dating back to the Pittsburgh game, Notre Dame converted on 12 consecutive third downs before an incompletion in the third quarter.

"It's something we harped on, a lot of repetition," senior running back Theo Riddick said. "Everyone was very detail-oriented in what they were doing. Everyone was on the same page and it worked out tonight."

Notre Dame entered the game scoring touchdowns on less than half of its red zone chances but converted all three red zone trips into touchdowns Saturday, including scoring passes to sophomore tight end Troy Niklas and graduate student receiver John Goodman.

"Everett Golson played the way he needs to play, especially

in the red zone," Kelly said. "Once he starts playing at the level we need him in the red zone, we'll start scoring touchdowns and not just field goals."

Two series after Boston College (2-8) cut the Notre Dame lead to 7-3 with junior kicker Nate Freese's 36-yard field goal, Notre Dame scored again on a long drive.

This time, the Irish went 87 yards in 16 plays, taking up 8:30 of the second quarter. Notre Dame went 4-for-4 on third down on a drive capped by a 7-yard touchdown pass to Niklas. The grab was Niklas' first touchdown of his career.

Riddick, who ran for 104 yards on 18 attempts, said Golson was the key to the long drives.

"Long drives are going to tire out the defense and [Golson] made perfect checks and he knew what he was doing and it was a result of his play," Riddick said.

Senior tight end Tyler Eifert continued to develop a rapport with Golson, grabbing six catches for 67 yards.

"I think they're feeling more

comfortable with each other," Kelly said. "Getting the ball to Eifert is very important and putting the ball in a good position where he can go up and use his size. That's what I liked tonight. The little nuances of [Golson's] game tonight is he put the ball in areas where Tyler can play [6-foot-5] because if he can play at that size, he's hard to defend."

Notre Dame turned the ball over twice on fumbles by Riddick and sophomore running back George Atkinson. The Irish now have five turnovers in the past two games.

"The only thing I'm not happy with is the turnovers, we've got to take better care of the football. They played hard and they played physical for four quarters," Kelly said. "These are guys that have carried the ball a lot, they've got to do a better job."

The Irish defense allowed just 300 total yards of offense, including only 53 rushing yards. The Eagles were creative on offense, calling screens and reverses to try and catch Notre Dame off guard.

"There were some plays where you thought you were at Disney World, there was Mickey Mouse plays everywhere," senior linebacker Manti Te'o said. "There were reverses, screens, that was the most screens I've ever defended in one game. Our guys came out and everyone flew to the ball. When something happened, was somebody there."

Eagles junior quarterback Chase Rettig was 27-for-43 for 247 yards and an interception. He was also sacked five times.

Boston College became the fifth team to not score a touchdown against Notre Dame.

"I think they ran every play imaginable," Kelly said. "Our guys defensively saw so many different plays tonight but they kept fighting and kept them out of the end zone."

Junior linebacker Prince Shembo said the Irish were prepared for the various plays.

"We knew this was like their Super Bowl so we knew there was going to be a lot of trick plays and stuff like that. Everyone was ready and prepared," Shembo said.

Junior cornerback Bennett Jackson led the Irish defense with a team-high eight tackles, including seven solo stops and one tackle for loss. Shembo recorded three sacks in the win.

"I wasn't doing anything special, just chasing quarterbacks," Shembo said. "In the past weeks, I would get to the quarterback and he would throw the ball every time, throw it out of bounds. This guy wanted to hold it so I was like 'All right, cool, it's about time.'"

Graduate student defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore and sophomore defensive end Stephon Tuitt each added sacks of their own.

Te'o bolstered his Heisman Trophy candidacy with five tackles an interception in the fourth quarter. It was his sixth of the season, the most in a single year by an Irish linebacker. Te'o leads the country in turnovers forced, with two fumble recoveries in addition to his six picks.

"When you need a big play, he's going to be around the football," Kelly said.

Te'o said the Irish can still be better.

"We can do better with our effort," he said. "We can do better executing. We'll come back on Sunday and Monday and correct the mistakes and get ready for Wake Forest."

The Irish will welcome the Demon Deacons to Notre Dame Stadium on Saturday at 3:30 p.m.

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PLAYER OF THE GAME

EVERETT GOLSON
NOTRE DAME QUARTERBACK

Golson only threw for 200 yards but completed 16 of his 24 passes and did not turn the ball over. He continuously converted third-down runs into first downs and accounted for all three Notre Dame touchdowns. The sophomore signal caller also ran for 39 yards on 11 carries, making him Notre Dame's second-leading rusher for the game.

REPORT CARD

A-

QUARTERBACKS

Everett Golson had another solid performance as a game manager and avoided any turnovers. He made plays with his legs as well while Tommy Rees was perfect in his one play of action.

B-

RUNNING BACKS

Theo Riddick topped 100 yards again but the Irish backs were marred by turnovers. Riddick lost a fumble and George Atkinson also coughed the ball up. Cierre Wood was almost a non-factor, getting only six carries.

B

RECEIVERS

Tyler Eifert had another nice game as Golson continues to look for him on offense. He had six catches for 67 yards. TJ Jones had key catches on third down while John Goodman and Troy Niklas each made their only reception count, scoring touchdowns.

A-

OFFENSIVE LINE

The offensive line continued their quiet dominance of opponent, this time opening holes and allowing the Irish to average 4.6 yards per carry. The unit also did not allow the Eagles to sack Golson.

A

DEFENSIVE LINE

Every game, the defensive line seems to get better. They continuously pressured Chase Rettig and did not allow the Eagles to establish any rushing game. Boston College managed just 2.3 yards per carry as Stephon Tuitt and Kapron Lewis-Moore tallied sacks.

A-

LINEBACKERS

Prince Shembo was the star of the linebacking corps, outshining Manti Te'o with three sacks. Te'o recorded five tackles while also intercepting a Boston College pass. Ishaq Williams also had a solid game with three tackles.

B

DEFENSIVE BACKS

The secondary allowed Rettig to throw for 247 yards but he did so on 43 attempts. Bennett Jackson had a team-high eight tackles but dropped an interception. Zeke Motta continued his solid season with seven stops.

B+

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kyle Brindza made all three of his extra points and the kickoff coverage team held Spiffy Evans to 56 return yards on three attempts. Ben Turk also landed two punts inside the 20-yard line.

B

COACHING

At some point, the Irish should dominate the inferior teams they face instead of producing underwhelming efforts in victories.

OVERALL GPA: 3.33

The game was never in doubt and the Irish dominated Boston College even if the score did not show it. Notre Dame played down to the 2-8 Eagles but still found a way to win. For the first time since 1993, Notre Dame is 10-0, but they still find themselves on the outside looking in, sitting at No. 3 in the latest BCS rankings.

PLAY OF THE GAME

TE'O SEALS THE GAME WITH HIS SIXTH INTERCEPTION

With Boston College driving and the game still within reach, Manti Te'o made a diving catch on a tipped Chase Rettig pass to steal possession and seal the game. Notre Dame was able to run the clock down before punting the ball back to the Eagles.



EILEEN VEIHMEYER | The Observer

Notre Dame captains, from left to right, linebacker Manti Te'o, defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore, offensive tackle Zack Martin and tight end Tyler Eifert walk out together for the coin toss Saturday.

Notre Dame continues to tune out noise, history



Chris Allen
Sports Editor

CHESTNUT HILL, Mass. — All week they heard the noise, even if they did not listen.

There was the cautionary tale of David Gordon, the heartbreak of the 1993 bunch, who scored the big win against Florida State and let it slip away to Boston College. There was the 2002 group, who fell to the very same fate against the Eagles.

But from the opening whistle, this 2012 incarnation of the Irish seemed unburdened by history. Every college football team will say it is unaffected by outside noise, it does not look at history or trends or hype. But it is becoming evident that this Irish bunch actually means it.

Under a microscope more powerful and more magnifying than they have been in decades, the Irish are currently the subject of unprecedented national attention as they sit two games from finishing a once-unthinkable undefeated 2012 season. The closer the Irish get to that goal, the louder the “noise,” as Irish coach Brian Kelly calls it, will get. On Saturday night in Boston, the Notre Dame team that took the field was deaf to the hype being tossed around in the stands around it.

The Irish quickly ensured that Boston College would stage no upset bid by aggressively running the football and passing the football on

the edge, exploiting a huge talent advantage in the trenches and at the skill positions. Those 1993 and 2002 squads let upset-minded Boston College teams stick around — a recipe for disaster, as opponents smell a monumental late-season upset to highlight their seasons. These 2012 Irish shut the door early with two long, thorough scoring drives in the first half and solid, opportunistic defense. A team that was concerned with a haunting history of upsets would not have come out to such a start. Kelly and his bunch don't just talk about ignoring the noise. They displayed it on the field Saturday night. It wasn't the prettiest victory Kelly will bask in all season, but the Eagles never got close to the upset they so desperately wanted.

The Irish do not listen to the outside hype. Which is good, because it's about to get a lot louder, still.

Just minutes before Notre Dame kicked off against the Eagles, clear-No. 1 Alabama fell 29-24 to Texas A&M in a thrilling game that will thrust the Irish even closer to the top of the BCS rankings. After the game, a handful of Irish players spoke about the different ways they found out about Alabama's loss. But the players all shared the same sentiment: The loss did not affect them. The game did not affect what happened between the white lines at Alumni Stadium between the Irish and the

Eagles. The players knew that and did what they needed to do to get the win.

That ability to block out the outside world will be crucial in the coming weeks. Sure, many will agree that Notre Dame needs a loss by either Oregon or Kansas State to ensure a chance to play for the BCS title. But the play of the Ducks and the Wildcats will not affect what happens against Wake Forest or at USC. The Irish now play with a large, inviting target on their backs. Wake Forest will give Notre Dame its best game — and everyone knows how much USC would love to add a loss to Notre Dame's resume. If the Irish are caught watching the scoreboard or thinking of BCS scenarios in their heads for even a second, they will get beat. The leadership of Notre Dame, Kelly and Manti Te'o, has done a great job instilling a week-to-week mentality. Just as they did for each of the previous nine wins this season, Notre Dame will celebrate for 24 hours. Then, with BCS winds swirling, with media attention and magazine covers and awards lists rolling in daily, with hype coming in from every direction, they will go back to work.

And they won't hear a word of what is said.

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

Notre Dame stays focused after No. 1 Alabama's loss



MACKENZIE SAIN | The Observer

Irish coach Brian Kelly addresses the media following Notre Dame's 21-6 win over Boston College on Saturday. Notre Dame moved up to No. 3 in the BCS rankings after Alabama's loss to Texas A&M.

By **MATTHEW DeFRANKS**
Associate Sports Editor

CHESTNUT HILL, Mass. — Everett Golson was watching it. Bennett Jackson found out before the game. Theo Riddick said no one knew about it. But Irish coach Brian Kelly and the Notre Dame coaching staff did. No. 1 Alabama had lost.

The top-ranked and previously undefeated Crimson Tide dropped their first game to 29-24 to Texas A&M on Saturday. The upset happened before No. 4 Notre Dame took the field for its game against Boston College, but Kelly said the coaches did not share the news with the players.

“Absolutely not,” the Irish coach said. “We didn’t talk about Alabama.”

With a 21-6 win over Boston College, coupled with Alabama’s loss, the Irish moved up to No. 3 in the BCS rankings Sunday night.

Jackson said the result of the game did not impact Notre Dame’s game plan.

“We had our minds focused on what we wanted to get done. We really weren’t too

concerned about it,” the junior cornerback said. “You can’t come out and be happy that a team lost when you still have a game to compete in.”

Prior to its win over Boston College, the Irish (10-0) were part of a logjam of four undefeated squads at the top of the rankings. While Alabama fell, No. 2 Kansas State beat TCU and No. 3 Oregon topped California.

Notre Dame is now one of three teams vying for just two spots in the BCS National Championship game in Miami on Jan. 7.

With the Irish unbeaten through 10 games, senior line-backer Manti Te’o said the national championship picture is in sight, but Notre Dame cannot get too far ahead of itself.

“It’s only as real as Wake Forest,” Te’o said. “We have to deal with them and play one game at a time, that’s college football. Anyone can beat anyone at any time.”

The Irish have been unimpressive in wins over BYU, Pittsburgh and Boston College, but have found ways to pull out wins and stay undefeated.

“A win is a win, and a win is not easy,” Jackson said. “Style points are style points. We’re going to come out and give it our all and try to come up with a victory.”

Te’o, who had five tackles and an interception in the win, said Notre Dame does not focus on style points.

“It’s always about the win, that’s all that matters to us,” he said.

Kelly said the Irish have their sights set on Wake Forest, their next opponent, and not on how many points they win by.

“We’re going to work on winning against Wake Forest and take care of what we can take care of and then when it’s all said and done, we’ll see where we are,” Kelly said. “We really can’t waste any of our energy. You see how hard it is to win in college football. We can’t worry about those things.

“We have to focus on what we can do and that is win it on the field. If people don’t like us winning, I don’t know what else to tell you.”

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Irish start with long drive

By **CHRIS ALLEN**
Sports Editor

CHESTNUT HILL, Mass. — The Irish initiated the scoring in their 21-6 victory over Boston College on Saturday with a 95-yard touchdown drive in the opening half of the first quarter. The drive, which lasted 13 plays and spanned 5:39, was the longest Notre Dame touchdown drive of the season. The Irish last recorded a touchdown drive of over 95 yards in the 2011 season opener against South Florida, when they drove 99 yards for a touchdown in the waning seconds of a 23-20 loss.

The Irish followed up that drive with an 87-yard drive in

the final minutes of the second quarter. The drive culminated in a seven-yard touchdown pass from sophomore quarterback Everett Golson to sophomore tight end Troy Niklas. In total, Notre Dame possessed the ball for 12:27 of the second quarter and extended its lead to 14-3 in the period. Spanning the Pittsburgh game and the first half of Saturday’s win, Notre Dame had five out of six scoring drives take 11 plays or more.

Moving the chains



Notre Dame senior tight end Tyler Eifert helped Golson move the chains throughout Notre Dame’s win. Five of Eifert’s six catches against

the Eagles resulted in a first down. On the season, Eifert has either converted a first down or scored a touchdown on 24 of his 34 total receptions. Notre Dame started the night converting its first 10 third-down conversions and finished 11-of-14 on third down. The Eagles converted 8-of-15 third-down conversions by comparison.

“Some of it was our execution. Some of it was their execution. Some of it was their improvisation,” Eagles coach Frank Spaziani said. “When you’re losing, you’re not making your share of plays.”

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SCORING SUMMARY

	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	TOTAL
	7	7	7	0	21
	0	3	0	3	6

1 NOTRE DAME 7, BOSTON COLLEGE 0
Everett Golson 2-yard run (Brindza kick)
🕒 **7:26** remaining
Drive: 13 plays, 95 yards, 5:39 elapsed

2 NOTRE DAME 7, BOSTON COLLEGE 3
Nate Freese 36-yard field goal
🕒 **14:55** remaining
Drive: 15 plays, 69 yards, 7:31 elapsed

NOTRE DAME 14, BOSTON COLLEGE 3
Troy Niklas 2-yard pass from Everett Golson (Brindza kick)
🕒 **0:26** remaining
Drive: 16 plays, 87 yards, 8:30 elapsed

3 NOTRE DAME 21, BOSTON COLLEGE 3
John Goodman 18-yard from Everett Golson (Brindza kick)
🕒 **10:44** remaining
Drive: 9 plays, 65 yards, 4:16 elapsed

4 NOTRE DAME 21, BOSTON COLLEGE 6
Nate Freese 45-yard field goal
🕒 **13:44** remaining
Drive: 12 plays, 58 yards, 4:56 elapsed

STATISTICS



PASSING			
Golson	16-24-200	Rettig	27-43-247
Rees	1-1-9		

RUSHING			
Riddick	18-104	Finch	7-40
Golson	11-39	Amidon	1-14
Wood	6-33	Swigert	1-9
Atkinson	4-9	Dudeck	4-9

RECEIVING			
Eifert	6-67	Amidon	6-84
Riddick	4-56	Finch	5-25
Jones	3-39	Evans	4-47
Daniels	2-22	Dudeck	4-40
Goodman	1-18	Swigert	3-23
Niklas	1-7	Pantale	3-14

TACKLES			
Jackson	8	Rositano	10
Motta	7	Daniels	8
Te'o	5	Simmons	7
Shembo	5	Sylvia	7
Fox	4	Divitto	6
Calabrese	4	Duggan	6

KICKOFF RETURNS			
Atkinson	3-78	Evans	3-56

SACKS			
Shembo	3		
Tuitt	1		
Lewis-Moore	1		



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Junior cornerback Bennett Jackson, 2, attempts to tackle Eagles junior receiver Alex Amidon as senior linebacker Manti Te'o, center, and freshman safety Nicky Baratti, left, trail the play. Jackson finished the game with a team-high eight tackles during Notre Dame's 21-6 win over Boston College at Alumni Stadium in Chestnut Hill, Mass., on Saturday.

GROUNDING THE EAGLES

Notre Dame opened the game with a 95-yard touchdown drive and never looked back, cruising to a 21-6 win over Boston College. Sophomore quarterback Everett Golson threw for two touchdowns and ran for another as the Irish rolled up 393 total yards on offense. The win pushed Notre Dame to 10-0 for the first time since 1993 and into the No. 3 position in the BCS rankings.



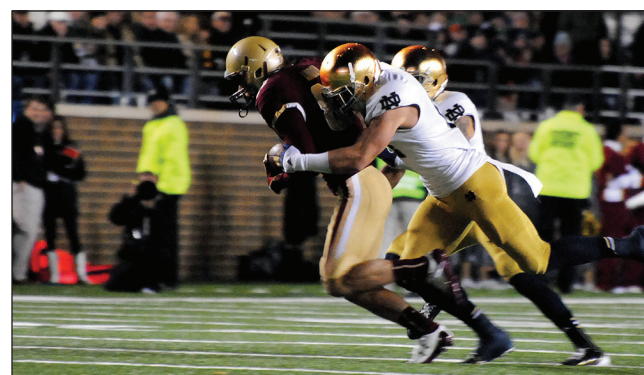
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Eagles junior quarterback Chase Rettig readies to throw a pass as Irish senior linebacker Manti Te'o pursues him.



MACKENZIE SAIN | The Observer

Graduate student defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore tries to corral Eagles junior quarterback Chase Rettig.



JULIE HERDER | The Observer

Senior safety Zeke Motta brings down Eagles junior receiver Alex Amidon during Notre Dame's 21-6 win.



MACKENZIE SAIN | The Observer

Senior running back Theo Riddick tip-toes the sideline as multiple Boston College defenders chase him. Riddick finished with 104 rushing yards in Notre Dame's 21-6 win.



JULIE HERDER | The Observer

Sophomore defensive end Stephon Tuitt, 7, and graduate student defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore, 89, try to block a Boston College field goal during Notre Dame's 21-6 win.