

# IRISH INSIDER

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2013

## BROTHERS IN ARMS

LOUIS NIX AND STEPHON TUITT  
ANCHOR AN IRISH DEFENSIVE LINE  
HITTING ITS STRIDE



THE OBSERVER

Photo Illustration by Zach Llorens and Steph Wulz



## RECRUITING

# Irish prepare for biggest recruiting weekend

By MIKE MONACO  
Sports Editor

USC. Under the lights, part two.

With the stage set, the Irish are expected to welcome upwards of 25 prospects — including 10 commitments in the class of 2014 and 12 other class members holding Notre Dame offers — to campus for the rivalry weekend, which has been shaping up as the major game for Irish recruiting all season.

“These are really, I would say, the vast majority of the elite guys they have left on their list are all pretty much coming in this weekend,” said Notre Dame recruiting expert Mike Frank, who runs the ESPN-affiliated Irish Sports Daily. “There’s a couple others that may visit later but right now this is kind of the big group of the elite guys coming in. If they can finish out their class with this group of guys, then they’ve done a pretty good job.”

In order to begin to close out the class by securing commitments from some of those 2014 offer-holding visitors, Irish coach Brian Kelly said the best recruiting tool is a ‘W.’

“As I told our guys [regarding handling recruits], this is pretty simple, right?” Kelly said Tuesday. “The atmosphere, the game, the people around will take care of the environment. And then just win the damn game. Win the game. That’s what you need to do.”

Irish class of 2014 commitment Justin Brent, a receiver from Speedway, Ind., who was the second pledge of the current 14-member group, has attended the three other home games at Notre Dame Stadium this season. Nonetheless, Brent said he is looking forward to Saturday in particular.

“It’s very exciting,” he said. “I’ve been committed for two years now and last year we would rain out on Fridays and play the same time as ND on Saturdays, so I would have to miss some games. So I’m excited to witness my first full night game.”

“With 80,000 packing it out like usual, it will be very exciting. I know a lot of people are looking forward to it, so I can expect it to be very loud. It will be a great time.”

Brent committed to Notre Dame on July 9, 2012. He and the eight other 2014 pledges visiting this weekend will have a chance to spend time with the uncommitted recruits.

“Well I’ve met most of them at some of the top camps, like the Rivals 100 or The Nike Opening in Oregon,” Brent said. “So I’ve seen a lot of them before and I’ll just tell them that if your goals are to be successful in not only just football, then this is the place for you.”

The following 2014 prospects are part of the many recruits expected to visit:

## Defensive tackle Matt Elam

The 6-foot-6, 350-pound Kentucky native is ranked as the No. 2 player in the Bluegrass State, according to ESPN. Elam, who Frank called “one of the top nose guards in the country,” is also reportedly strongly considering Alabama and Kentucky.

“He’s a big body, somebody you don’t have to put much weight on that’s for sure,” Frank said. “You want to get some good weight on him and he should be a dominating nose guard in the future.”

## Receiver Allen Lazard

The 6-foot-5 Iowa native committed to Iowa State on Dec. 3, 2012 and ranks as ESPN’s No. 20 receiver. Notre

see RECRUITING PAGE 15

## Class of 2014 Commits:

QB DeShone Kizer	DE Grant Blankenship
WR Justin Brent	DE Matt Dickerson
WR Corey Holmes	DE Jay Hayes
TE Nic Weishar	LB Jonathan Bonner
OL Alex Bars	LB Greer Martini
OL Jimmy Byrne	DE Andrew Trumbetti
OL Sam Mustipher	LB Richard Yeargin III
OL Quenton Nelson	K Tyler Newsome

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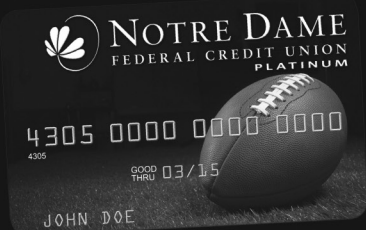
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## COMMENTARY

## Tommy Rees is a new breed of Irish quarterback



WEI LIN | The Observer

Irish senior quarterback Tommy Rees turns to hand off during Notre Dame's victory over Michigan State on Sept. 21 at Notre Dame Stadium.



Andrew Gastelum  
Editor-in-Chief

*"If you're too big for the little things, then you're too little for the big things" - @t\_rees11's Twitter bio*

He is one of a kind, that @t\_rees11.

No quarterback in Notre Dame history has dealt with this kind of pass rush before. Not Montana, nor Theismann, certainly not Bertelli nor Hanratty and not even Quinn or Clausen.

Tommy Rees is an original of the species, a hybrid of the Notre Dame quarterback. Because never before has a Notre Dame quarterback had to deal with the all-out, weak-side social media blitz.

The 12th man in his case is

Twitter and the boos sometimes come louder than ever, one mention at a time:

"@t\_rees11 you are literally the worst thing that has ever happened to Notre Dame"

"@t\_rees11 you are a poor excuse for an athlete and don't deserve to wear an ND jersey"

"Break both his legs pls [sic] @t\_rees11"

After one Oklahoma loss and three interceptions, these were just a sample of the few we could print without going to confession.

However, this hit can't really be considered one from the blind side. By signing up for Twitter and keeping his profile public, it's more like Rees told his linemen to let the defense through like he's Sunshine in "Remember the Titans." It's both the beauty and drawback of social media; anyone

can express his or her freedom of speech behind the curtain of a computer screen or smart phone.

"Being a quarterback at Notre Dame, it's one of the things that you kind of sign up for," Rees said after defeating Arizona State. "But for me, I rely on my teammates first, coaches, family, the people that I care about, and I care about what they think. For me, it's just staying focused and staying with-in the people that matter."

But here is where his wall of 6-foot-5, 300-plus-pound linemen, go-to targets and third-down backs can't bail him out. In fact, Rees goes into this game with a zero percent chance to win, which many on Twitter say he has every Saturday anyway.

Delete his Twitter or change his profile to private and it looks like Rees is running away from pressure, which many on Twitter say he cannot do anyway. Yet if Rees or any of his teammates respond, they are publicly vilified for talking back to fans who are only trying to draw a response.

In this area though, Rees has no mentor to turn to for advice. Surely every Notre Dame quarterback has made his enemies, but they have been able to block out the critics when they shut off their lights for the night. For Rees, the criticism sits in his pocket and is just a touch away at any point during the day.

"I think Tommy chose to not pay attention to a lot of the criticism he was held to," senior captain TJ Jones said after playing Arizona State. "He put that to the side and brush it off and we all supported him. We just believed in him and just went back to work."

The sad thing is, the criticism will always be there. It's as simple as a mention and the send button, providing yet another form for the masses to attempt to break down Rees and every other quarterback after him.

Everett Golson chose to remain oblivious to it, as he refused to sign up for Twitter. Regardless, someone fabricated one for him to serve as lightning rod, for both good and bad. But with Rees, much of the comments shed a negative light, and Irish coach Brian Kelly doesn't think that will end even after a solid performance against Arizona State.

"No. No. They will still be there," Kelly said.

The key will be for T. Rees, No. 11, to separate himself from @t\_rees11 and do as he has done throughout the last four years: play, lead and leave the talking, typing and tweeting to the rest.

He's one of a kind, that Tommy Rees. But maybe, there is just one little thing he should make sure he is too big to sack him.

Contact Andrew Gastelum at [agastel1@nd.edu](mailto:agastel1@nd.edu)

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

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# Saturdays with the Saints

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"A Shepherd Cannot Abandon His People"

Fr. Virgilio P. Elizondo, Professor of Pastoral and Hispanic Theology;  
classmate of Fr. Stanley

October 19  
10:30-11:30 am  
Andrews Auditorium  
Lower Level, Geddes Hall



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### TROJANS PASSING

USC's passing game is the biggest question heading into Saturday's game, as junior receiver Marqise Lee is listed as questionable with a knee injury that sidelined him for the Trojans' win over Arizona last week.

With Lee, USC is an entirely different animal. The preseason Heisman hopeful had twice as many catches as the next Trojan receiver in his first five games, and has proven to be one of the nation's premier deep threats. Playing without Lee last week though, USC still put up an impressive showing against the Wildcats. Sophomore quarterback Cody Kessler opened up the game with two early touchdown throws of over 60 yards. The first of those tosses went to sophomore receiver Nelson Agholor, who emerged in Lee's absence with seven catches and 161 yards.

Defensively, the Irish secondary has been susceptible all year, and allowed Arizona State to complete over 70 percent of its passes for 362 yards last week to continue that trend. However, two timely interceptions — including graduate student linebacker Dan Fox's game-winning pick-six — bailed Notre Dame out once again. The Irish will hope to limit the Trojans aerial attack with their potent pass rush, which had its best showing of the season last time out. The Irish defense contributed six sacks against the Sun Devils, including three from senior outside linebacker Prince Shembo.

Lee could shift the balance in this category, but even with his status in doubt the Trojans should give the Irish all they can handle in the air.

**EDGE: USC**

### TROJANS RUSHING

With a recent lineage of quarterbacks like Matt Leinart, Mark Sanchez and Matt Barkley, USC has fit in with the Pac-12's pass-happy style. However, that focused has shifted this year, with the Trojans operating a much more balanced attack. USC has attempted more runs than passes this year, and is averaging roughly 200 yards per game in both phases.

The rushing attack has been powered by versatile sophomore Tre Madden, who has three touchdowns on the ground and four receiving. Freshman Justin Davis has contributed six touchdowns in his first six games for the Trojans. The youngsters welcomed back the presence of senior Silas Redd last week,

who had missed all of spring practice and September after offseason knee surgery. Redd showed no signs of rust in his return, rushing for 80 yards on 19 carries, and will bring experience and another weapon to the USC backfield.

The Irish front seven looked better stopping the run against the Sun Devils, allowing just 65 yards on 25 carries after allowing over 200 yards on the ground to Oklahoma the week prior. Notre Dame will be without junior linebacker and leading tackler Jarrett Grace for the rest of the season, but regain junior defensive end Sheldon Day to the line after missing three games.

**EDGE: NOTRE DAME**

### TROJANS OFFENSIVE COACHING

Trojans interim head coach Ed Orgeron has shaken up things at USC, and his team looked solid despite second half struggles against Arizona. The Trojans have no seniors in their starting lineup, which poses its own challenges.

Bob Diaco and the Irish defense have struggled at times this year, allowing 30 points their last two times out. Still, the Irish defense looks to be coming into its own, and it will fall to Diaco to gameplan again against Lee, who they held to 75 yards last year.

**EDGE: NOTRE DAME**

### TROJANS SPECIAL TEAMS

Junior Andre Heidari handles the kicking duties for USC. Heidari has a long field goal from 52 yards this year, but is just 1-for-4 in the 30-50 yard range. Explosive junior George Atkinson should get a chance to break open a kickoff return for the Irish, as Heidari has just seven touchbacks on 30 kickoffs this year.

**EDGE: NOTRE DAME**

### TROJANS SCHEDULE (4-2)

Aug. 29	@ Hawai'i	W	30-13
Sept. 7	Washington State	L	10-7
Sept. 14	Boston College	W	35-7
Sept. 21	Utah State	W	17-14
Sept. 28	@ Arizona State	L	62-41
Oct. 10	Arizona	W	38-31
Oct. 19	@ Notre Dame		
Oct. 26	Utah		
Nov. 1	@ Oregon State		
Nov. 9	@ California		
Nov. 16	Stanford		
Nov. 23	@ Colorado		
Nov. 30	UCLA		

# HEAD T

7:30 P.M.

NOTRE DAME STADIUM

USC



(So.) Nelson Agholor **15** WR  
(Sr.) De'Von Flournoy 80

(Fr.) Chad Wheeler **72** LT  
(Jr.) Nathan Guertler 76

(So.) Tre Madden **23** RB  
(Sr.) Silas Redd 25

(So.) Max Tuerk **75** LG  
(Fr.) Jordan Simmons 68

(So.) Cody Kessler **6** QB  
(Sr.) Max Wittke 13

(Jr.) Marcus Martin **66** C  
(Sr.) Abe Markowitz 50

(So.) Jahleel Pinner **38** FB  
(So.) Soma Vainuku 31

(Jr.) Aundrey Walker **70** RG  
(Sr.) John Martinez 59

(Sr.) Kevin Graf **77** RT  
(Jr.) Nathan Guertler 76

(Jr.) Xavier Grumble **86** TE  
(Jr.) Randall Telfer 82

(Jr.) Marqise Lee **9** WR  
(Fr.) Darreus Rogers 84



(So.) Kevon Seymour **13** CB  
(Sr.) Torin Harris 4

(Sr.) Devon Kennard **42** OLB  
(Sr.) Marquis Simmons 53

(Jr.) Dion Bailey **18** S  
(Sr.) Demetrius Wright 24

(So.) Leonard Williams **94** DE  
(Jr.) J.R. Tavai 58

(Jr.) Lamar Dawson **14** WLB  
(So.) Anthony Sarao 56

(So.) Antwaun Woods **99** NT  
(So.) Cody Temple 98

(Jr.) Hayes Pullard **10** MLB  
(Fr.) Michael Hutchings 19

(Jr.) George Uko **90** DE  
(Jr.) J.R. Tavai 58

(Fr.) Su'a Cravens **21** S  
(Sr.) Gerald Bowman 27

(Sr.) Morgan Breslin **91** OLB  
(Fr.) Jabari Ruffin 40

(Jr.) Josh Shaw **6** CB  
(Sr.) Torin Harris 4



(Jr.) Andre Heidari **48** PK  
(So.) Alex Wood 39

(Jr.) Andre Heidari **48** KO  
(Sr.) Craig McMahon 46

(So.) Kris Albarado **35** P  
(Jr.) Andre Heidari 48

(Jr.) Marqise Lee **9** KR  
(So.) Nelson Agholor 15

(Jr.) Marqise Lee **9** PR  
(Fr.) Su'a Cravens 21

(Fr.) Zach Smith **60** LS  
(So.) Peter McBride 61



**Andrew Gastelum**  
Editor-in-Chief



**Matthew DeFranks**  
Assistant Managing Editor



**Mike Monaco**  
Sports Editor

In the Lane Kiffin era, USC has usually emerged as an enigma coming into its annual showdown with the Irish. Now that Kiffin is gone, what can really be expected from the Trojans?

Nothing, outside of the fact that they will be ready for this under-the-lights showdown against a team they would love to beat and turn around their season.

Notre Dame has been an enigma in itself this season. But coming off a bye week, many are pointing to Notre Dame's shootout win over Arizona State as the turning point of the season. If the Irish can continue to put up those crooked numbers on the scoreboard, their defense will take care of the rest.

It's been quite some time since Notre Dame beat USC in South Bend, but expect that streak to end this week.

**FINAL SCORE:** Notre Dame 34, USC 27

In the Brian Kelly era at Notre Dame, this rivalry game has been close. How close? In three games, the combined score is 60-59, USC.

This season should be no different. The Trojans enter the game with a new pep in their step following a win over Arizona in Ed Orgeron's USC debut while the Irish are well-rested after a bye week. Orgeron's presence seemed to reenergize the Trojan offense as they posted 38 points without their best player (Marqise Lee). Their defense is another story, though. In the past two games, they have surrendered 1,120 yards and 93 points.

The Irish looked to come along on offense against Arizona State and should be able to put some points up on the Trojans. The senior class becomes the first one in more than a decade to go 3-1 against Troy with a win.

**FINAL SCORE:** Notre Dame 31, USC 27

A 4-2 team versus a 4-2 team. In a rivalry game.

Pick your stat or anecdote to describe USC's struggles, but this game will be much closer than some think. USC has a stable of talented playmakers on offense and a defense that — though it struggled in each of the past two weeks — allowed an average of 11 points through the first four games.

Say what you want about the coaching change, but Brian Kelly is preparing for the Trojans as if they're still coached by Lane Kiffin. And in order to top Troy, Kelly's Irish will need to ride the opportunistic and playmaking defense that showed up in the second half against Arizona State. I still don't think Notre Dame's offense is strong enough to carry the team to a victory against an opponent like this. So the defense will need to rise to the occasion and force the sacks, fumbles and interceptions that spurred the win over the Sun Devils.

**FINAL SCORE:** Notre Dame 28, USC 20



# O HEAD

ON NBC



KEVIN SONG | The Observer



KEVIN SONG | The Observer



NOTRE DAME


**CB 6 KeiVarae Russell** (So.)  
23 Lo Wood (Sr.)

**OLB 9 Jaylon Smith** (Fr.)  
30 Ben Councell (Jr.)

**DE 91 Sheldon Day** (So.)  
90 Isaac Rochell (Fr.)

**NG 1 Louis Nix** (Sr.)  
96 Kona Schwenke (Sr.)

**DE 7 Stephon Tuitt** (Jr.)  
94 Jarron Jones (So.)

**OLB 55 Prince Shembo** (Sr.)  
11 Ishaq Williams (Jr.)

**CB 2 Bennett Jackson** (Sr.)  
3 Cole Luke (Fr.)

**WR 7 TJ Jones** (Sr.)  
88 Corey Robinson (Fr.)

**WR 10 DaVaris Daniels** (Jr.)  
20 C.J. Prosisie (So.)

**RT 78 Ronnie Stanley** (So.)  
79 Steve Elmer (Fr.)

**RG 74 Christian Lombard** (Sr.)  
65 Conor Hanratty (Jr.)

**C 72 Nick Martin** (Jr.)  
77 Matt Hegarty (Jr.)

**LG 66 Chris Watt** (Gr.)  
75 Mark Harrell (So.)

**LT 70 Zack Martin** (Gr.)  
57 Hunter Bivin (Fr.)

**TE 85 Troy Niklas** (Jr.)  
18 Ben Kodyack (Jr.)

**WR 2 Chris Brown** (So.)  
17 James Onwuah (Fr.)

**KO 27 Kyle Brindza** (Jr.)

**KR 4 George Atkinson** (Jr.)  
33 Cam McDaniel (Jr.)

**LS 61 Scott Daly** (So.)

**PK 27 Kyle Brindza** (Jr.)  
40 Nick Tausch (Gr.)

**P 27 Kyle Brindza** (Jr.)  
98 Alex Wulfeck (Gr.)

**PR 7 TJ Jones** (Sr.)  
3 Amir Carlisle (Jr.)


## IRISH PASSING

Quarterback Tommy Rees is throwing just over 50 percent on the year and averages 250 yards per game, but Notre Dame's success is still tied to how the senior plays. Rees has five interceptions in the two games the Irish have lost, and just one in their four wins.

Senior receiver TJ Jones has played like a captain this fall, and carried the team with eight catches for 135 yards and a score in its win over Arizona State. Jones, junior receiver DaVaris Daniels and junior tight end Troy Niklas have been the Big Three for Notre Dame's passing game, with each hauling down four touchdowns apiece to account for all but one of the unit's scores through the air.

The Trojan defense has held its opponents to a respectable average of 233 passing yards per game. But the last two outings represent a significant dropoff: USC gave up 363 yards to Arizona State and 351 yards to Arizona in back-to-back weeks.

If Notre Dame can protect Rees from USC's pressure (the team has 19 sacks this year), the Irish will be able to move the ball through the air.

**EDGE: NOTRE DAME**

## IRISH RUSHING

USC's defense has been more stout against the ground game, surrendering only 107.2 yards per game. Notre Dame, meanwhile, enters the game averaging a modest 130 yards per game on the ground. But the Irish have put together two of their most successful efforts running the football in recent weeks. After exploding for 220 rushing yards against Oklahoma, Notre Dame ran for 145 yards in a balanced attack against Arizona State.

Irish junior running back Amir Carlisle is a USC transfer, and a big effort against his former team would go a long way toward helping Notre Dame win the battle. Junior outside linebacker J.R. Tavai made his first start of the season for USC against Arizona last week and recorded 10 tackles and 3.5 tackles for loss.

**EDGE: EVEN**

## IRISH OFFENSIVE COACHING

It is tempting to write off USC's coaching staff completely following the recent firing of Lane Kiffin, but interim head coach Ed Orgeron has plenty of experience to guide the Trojans. The defensive-minded Orgeron will likely keep the USC offense functioning as it has for most of the season, according to Irish coach Brian Kelly. Perhaps the biggest change Orgeron will make is the team's mentality entering the game — he has spoken about his desire to encourage his players to have fun and restore the looseness present under former head coach Pete Carroll.

Still, the USC staff is unproven with Orgeron at the helm, and it takes more than one game to show legitimacy. Kelly and the Irish, aided by a bye week, have the upper hand. Balance will be key again for the Irish.

**EDGE: NOTRE DAME**

## IRISH SPECIAL TEAMS

Kyle Brindza continues to look solid covering the field goal duties, having converted eight of 11 attempts. Brindza's punting output has been slightly less impressive, with the junior averaging 41.5 yards per punt. TJ Jones brought a punt return 27 yards against Arizona State after totaling only three yards in Notre Dame's prior three contests. George Atkinson has also looked dangerous at kick return, although the Sun Devils kept the ball away from him on five of six kickoffs. USC has held its opponents to less than 20 yards per return this season.

**EDGE: NOTRE DAME**

## IRISH SCHEDULE (4-2)

Aug. 31	Temple	W 28-6
Sept. 7	@ Michigan	L 41-30
Sept. 14	@ Purdue	W 31-24
Sept. 21	Michigan State	W 17-13
Sept. 26	Oklahoma	L 35-21
Oct. 5	vs. Arizona State	W 37-34
Oct. 19	USC	
Oct. 26	@ Air Force	
Nov. 2	Navy	
Nov. 9	@ Pittsburgh	
Nov. 23	BYU	
Nov. 30	@ Stanford	



**Joseph Monardo**  
Associate Sports Editor



**Jack Hefferon**  
Sports Writer

The national-title implications of this matchup in recent years are absent, but USC ... in Notre Dame Stadium ... under the lights. I mean, come on. Pretty darn exciting.

Beyond that, each team still has plenty to gain Saturday. It feels like USC is in the pits, but the Trojans only have two losses. They have 79 points over the past two contests and will receive a huge boost if star Marquise Lee returns from a knee injury to face the Irish.

But Lee is questionable and the odds don't favor a USC win. Arizona State and Arizona slashed the Trojans for 93 points in consecutive weeks, and the Irish offense seemed to find its groove before the bye week. Maybe it won't be an instant classic, but the Irish will rule the day.

**FINAL SCORE:** Notre Dame 31, USC 20

Notre Dame is at a crossroads in its schedule. On one hand, the Irish have yet to turn in a complete performance through six chances. On the other hand, there doesn't seem to be much standing in the way of them taking a 9-2 record to Palo Alto for Thanksgiving.

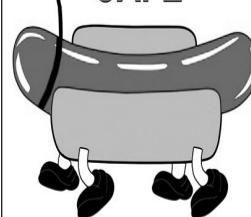
That comes to a head when they welcome back the Trojans this weekend, who haven't lost in South Bend since the Davie administration. Ed Orgeron is still an unknown, but has been described as "the opposite of Lane Kiffin" — something that should scare Irish fans everywhere.

The game's real X-factor is Marquise Lee, who is capable of gashing the Irish if he plays. Regardless though, I think Notre Dame stays true to its form over the last two seasons, doing just enough to grab the win and keep the Jeweled Shillelagh in Indiana for another year.

**FINAL SCORE:** Notre Dame 34, USC 31

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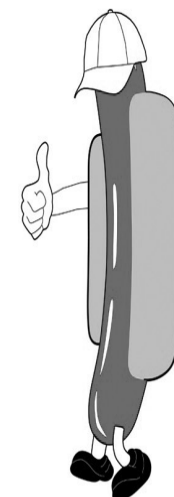
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# Carlisle excited for 'big game' vs. former team

By JACK HEFFERON  
Sports Writer

Two years ago, the USC game was a turning point for Amir Carlisle's season. As a freshman new to South Bend, Carlisle was the only current member of the Irish roster to win that game — as he was still playing for the Trojans at the time.

Flash forward two years, and the primetime game against the Trojans could be just as important to the now Irish junior running back.

Through his last three games, Carlisle has found playing time harder to come by in a crowded Notre Dame backfield. But with the spotlight on Carlisle as he faces his old teammates, Irish coach Brian Kelly has a hunch this week could be the Santa Clara, Calif., native's chance to reestablish himself in the running game.

"I like hunches sometimes ... When you get a sense of a game, you go with it," Kelly said. "My guess is he's going to be excited about the opportunity to play against USC. So we'll be keenly aware of his want to play very well against USC."

Carlisle will not take any chance he gets lightly. After getting 30 carries in Notre Dame's

first three games, he had a costly fumble at the end of the Purdue game and has carried the ball just eight times in the three games since.

Carlisle said while he wants what is best for the team, he hopes to do what it takes to factor into that process.

"As a competitor, I want to play. I do," Carlisle said. "It starts on the practice field, and getting better each and every day. I'm going to continue to do what I do and give 110 percent on every play, and when my number is called, I'll go out there and do what I can to try and make a play for my team."

That opportunity becomes even more important to him when viewed in light of the opponent. Carlisle chose USC out of high school to stay close to his family, and the running back played on offense and special teams as a freshman. But Carlisle's father, Duane, moved to Indiana after Amir's freshman season to become Purdue's Director of Sports Performance, which prompted Amir to transfer schools to remain close to his family.

"I have nothing but respect for USC and my time there," Carlisle said. "I enjoyed myself there. I enjoyed the coaching staff. I

enjoyed my teammates. I don't have one bad thing to say about them. But it's a game, and on the field it's all business, and we've got to take care of business on Saturday."

That makes things somewhat surreal for the junior, as he'll be lining up across from old friends, teammates and roommates. That includes USC star receiver Marqise Lee, who Carlisle named first on a list of Trojans he still keeps up with. Carlisle said, though, that he hasn't talked to anyone on the team this week, as the magnitude of the game has taken precedence.

"It's a big game for the team, first and foremost," he said. "For me, it is a big game playing against my old team. It's a little weird, to be honest. But I'm excited, and we have to approach it like any other game. It's a must-win for us, and we have to go out and execute."

Carlisle said the atmosphere in South Bend two years ago was the "most live" environment the Trojans played in all season, as the music echoed through the bowl and the lights shined down. This time around, Carlisle may be lined up on the opposite sideline, but Kelly nonetheless believes Carlisle will once again have the chance to shine in South Bend.



KEVIN SONG | The Observer

*Irish junior running back Amir Carlisle cuts upfield during Notre Dame's 41-30 loss to Michigan on Sept. 7 at Michigan Stadium.*

"If we look back early in the season, he started off really well, and then we just had some other guys that have played well," Kelly said. "He was at USC. I think you can see he's pretty focused this

week. ... We really like Amir. We've just got to get him in the flow of the game."

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# Orgeron replaces Kiffin, leads the Trojans

By **JOSEPH MONARDO**  
Associate Sports Editor

The unceremonious firing of former USC head coach Lane Kiffin in the early morning hours following the Trojans' lopsided loss to Arizona State on Sept. 28 concluded what had been a high-profile, high-controversy regime at Los Angeles' premier football program.

The man who steps in atop the Trojan staff has a lower profile than the embattled Kiffin, but he brings 28 years of coaching experience and is in his 11th season overall at USC (4-2, 1-2 Pac-12). Defensive line coach and recruiting coordinator Ed Orgeron has added the role of interim head coach to his resume in relief of Kiffin.

"Coach O brings an incredible passion and we think he can do a great job under these circumstances," USC athletic director Pat Haden said in his press conference announcing the coaching change Sept. 29.

Orgeron, a 1984 graduate and four-year starter on the defensive line at Northwestern (La.) State, began his coaching career as a graduate assistant at his alma mater in the same year. After stops at McNeese State and Arkansas, Orgeron coached

the defensive line at Miami from 1989-1992 before spending a year in private business in 1993. He first joined USC as the defensive line coach in 1998 following stints at Nicholls State and Syracuse, and Orgeron added the roles of recruiting coordinator and assistant head coach in 2001 and 2003, respectively. Orgeron left USC in 2005 to become the head coach at Ole Miss, a role he filled until 2008, when he jumped to the NFL as the defensive line coach of the New Orleans Saints. Orgeron then joined Kiffin's staff at Tennessee in 2009 as the assistant head coach and followed Kiffin to USC the following year.

"Coach Orgeron has been around," Irish coach Brian Kelly said. "He's a veteran college football coach."

Recruiting has been one of Orgeron's biggest hallmarks at Southern California. For three consecutive years from 2002-2004, USC brought in top-five recruiting classes with Orgeron at the helm of the efforts. In 2004 he earned recognition from Rivals.com and "The Sporting News" as National Recruiter of the Year.

Following NCAA-imposed sanctions from violations involving former Trojan stars

Reggie Bush and O.J. Mayo in 2010, USC is in the second of a three-year, 10-scholarship disadvantage. Regardless, Orgeron earned recognition from multiple outlets in 2011 and 2012 as one of the nation's top recruiters.

Now past the season's halfway point, Orgeron is tasked with leading the Trojans out of their disappointing start and through a schedule that still includes No. 9 UCLA and No. 13 Stanford.

"We have a lot of big games ahead of us," Haden said. "We have a lot to play for this season. The season is not over. Ed will bring the fun and joy back into the game."

At the time of the change, USC was 3-2 and coming off a 62-41 loss to the Sun Devils. The following week, Orgeron led the Trojans to a 38-31 home victory over Arizona in his debut Oct. 10. In the win, USC posted a season-high 546 yards of total offense, but Kelly said he does not expect the Trojans to look much different from what they have shown through six games when they battle Notre Dame (4-2).

"He's not going to go in there and scuttle the offense and defense and special teams," Kelly said.

"His personality is coming

## ED ORGERON: USC INTERIM HEAD COACH

YEAR	TEAM	POSITION
1984	Northwestern State	Graduate Assistant
1985	McNeese State	Graduate Assistant
1986	Arkansas	Assistant Strength
1987	Arkansas	Assistant Strength
1988	Miami	Graduate Assistant
1989	Miami	Defensive Line
1990	Miami	Defensive Line
1991	Miami	Defensive Line
1992	Miami	Defensive Line
1994	Nicholls State	Linebackers
1995	Syracuse	Defensive Line
1996	Syracuse	Defensive Line
1997	Syracuse	Defensive Line
1998	USC	Defensive Line
1999	USC	Defensive Line
2000	USC	Defensive Line
2001	USC	Defensive Line/Recruiting Coordinator
2002	USC	Defensive Line/Recruiting Coordinator
2003	USC	Asst. HC/Def. Line/Recruiting Coord.
2004	USC	Asst. HC/Def. Line/Recruiting Coord.
2005	Mississippi	Head Coach
2006	Mississippi	Head Coach
2007	Mississippi	Head Coach
2008	New Orleans Saints	Defensive Line
2009	Tennessee	Asst. HC/Def. Line/Recruiting Coord.
2010	USC	Def. Coord/Def. Line/Recruit. Coord.
2011	USC	Def. Coord/Def. Line/Recruit. Coord.
2012	USC	Asst. HC/Def. Line/Recruit. Coord.

STEPH WULZ | The Observer

out in this football team, but he knows all of his players. There's an offensive coordinator and a defensive coordinator for a reason. There will be some slight variations, and we'll have to be prepared for that. Again, they're going to be who they are six, seven weeks into the season."

Orgeron said as much during the Sept. 29 press conference, although he did allude

to changes in the atmosphere within the USC program.

"I want our guys to believe and have a little fun," he said. "One of the things we can do as a staff is get really close to our players, circle the wagons, have fun and let the chips fall where they may."

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# BASH BROTHERS

## NIX & TUITT

By **MATTHEW DeFRANKS**  
Assistant Managing Editor

Louis Nix and Stephon Tuitt know how to play off each other.

They take each other's antics and turn them into jokes. They take each other's friendly teasing and turn it into lighthearted ribbing. And in the past two years, they have been taking each other's lead and meeting at the ball carrier.

And for almost two minutes on Wednesday, the defensive linemen put on an improv performance of sorts, pretending not to be friends as they shot quips back and forth at their fellow All-American.

"We're not good friends at all," Tuitt said.

"We just play with each other,"

Nix said. "We're doing this but that's about it."

"It's not hate, we just don't get along."

"He's too far away. He's from a different part of the neighborhood," Tuitt replied.

But the act did not end there as both Irish stars credited the other for his success.

"The person across from me, I just imagine it's him and just hit him," Nix said.

"I imagine everybody is Lou and I just try to hit them as hard as I can," Tuitt said.

For nearly 120 seconds, the pair traded their football helmets for drama masks as they seamlessly rattled off comeback after comeback as if no one else was listening.

While people may not have seen this side of Nix and Tuitt's friendship, they hardly keep their friendship a secret.

It's on Twitter. On May 17, Tuitt tweeted, "Did stairs at the stadium today at noon. Where the sun is at its peak working my fundamentals and mental toughness. Passion for the game". Nix's response? A succinct and good-natured "shut up".

It's on YouTube. In February of 2012, Nix posted a video of Tuitt attempting the "Salt Challenge," in which Tuitt tried to swallow a spoonful of salt. Tuitt failed the challenge miserably while Nix's high-pitched laugh echoed in the background.

But the jokes ended and the tone changed once the topic shifted to the football field and away from the

comedy club. Nix and Tuitt started to resemble the fearsome forces they are on the field and not the jokesters they are off of it.

### On the field

While the two players line up at different positions — the senior Nix inside at nose tackle and the junior Tuitt outside at end — the duo said their friendship boosts them on the field.

"We get into it sometimes but we realize that we're brothers basically and we gotta [sic] get along to be successful," Nix said. "So it helps."

Nix, who has 20 tackles and one tackle for loss this season, said he sometimes gets frustrated with Tuitt when he goes too far up the field and loses contain on the quarterback.



KEVIN SONG | The Observer

Irish junior defensive end Stephon Tuitt closes in on the quarterback against Arizona State.



EMILY KRUSE | The Observer

Irish senior defensive tackle Louis Nix rushes the passer against Michigan State.





JOHN NING | The Observer

"The quarterback ran for a first down and I almost wanted to fight him but not quite," Nix said.

Nix, who stands at 6-foot-2.5 and 342 pounds, is a role model of sorts for Tuitt, who in 2012 fell 1.5 sacks short of Justin Tuck's school record of 13.5 sacks.

"I look up to him because he's been there longer and he has more knowledge and understanding of the game," Tuitt said.

Tuitt, who has 18 tackles, 4.5 tackles for loss and three sacks, said having a talented player like Nix next to him makes his job easier.

"I know he's going to do his job and he knows I'm going to do my job," Tuitt said. "It just makes it so much easier on the field. We don't have to try to do each other's job."

It seems, though, like both of them have one job in common: mentor the rest of the defensive line, most notably sophomore defensive end Sheldon Day.

Day is next in the line of skilled defensive linemen for the Irish, one year behind Tuitt and two behind Nix. The Indianapolis native said playing with Nix and Tuitt has made him a better player.

"It's great playing with those guys," Day said. "They really showed me how to master my craft and to do the things that they do to make them as good as they are."

Early this season, the Irish defense struggled to get pressure on the quarterback, but the unit broke through against Arizona State to notch six sacks. In the previous five games combined, Notre Dame had just four.

Irish coach Brian Kelly said Notre Dame was unable to rush the passer

successfully, in part, because quarterbacks were getting rid of the ball quickly. Tuitt said the effort against Arizona State was what he expected this season but also acknowledged that offenses have played differently than last season.

"Offenses are going to play us differently because they know we can have an impact on the game," Tuitt said.

#### In the NFL?

This past offseason, Nix passed up the opportunity to enter the NFL Draft and returned for his senior season at Notre Dame. Tuitt would follow in his teammates footsteps if he decides to come back in 2014.

Nix said he does not think about the NFL until after the season is over.

"We don't think about it at all until the last game," he said. "That's when we make decisions about the NFL. The NFL is not relevant."

That is when Tuitt stepped in and told The Observer he would pass up the NFL and come back for his senior year.

"I'm coming back next year," Tuitt said. "I'm a junior. I still have one year."

When asked later to confirm if he would be back next season, Tuitt replied "Yes."

On Wednesday night, however, Tuitt tweeted, "Can't Believe everything you read. Goodnight," before the tweet

was deleted shortly after. Tamara Tuitt-Bartlett, Stephon's mother, said Tuitt had not decided what he was going to do, the Chicago Tribune reported.

Kelly addressed the situation on Thursday evening, saying Tuitt did not mean to declare either way. Kelly said Tuitt's ultimate decision would be centered around his family and his degree.

Nix, who still has one more year of eligibility also, is listed as Scouts, Inc.'s No. 6 overall prospect and

ESPN's Mel Kiper Jr.'s No. 3 prospect. Tuitt, meanwhile, is ranked No. 14 and No. 11 on those lists, respectively.

Both players are projected to be first-round picks in the 2014 NFL Draft.

But right now, they still play with each other and will continue to play off each other.

Contact Matthew DeFranks at [mdefrank@nd.edu](mailto:mdefrank@nd.edu)





# Elmer, Onwualu benefit from early enrollment



JOHN NING | The Observer

Irish freshman receiver James Onwualu, 17, celebrates a tackle on special teams during Notre Dame's season-opening 28-6 victory over Temple on Aug. 31 at Notre Dame Stadium.

By **JOSEPH MONARDO**  
Associate Sports Editor

Midway through their freshman campaigns, Irish receiver James Onwualu and offensive lineman Steve Elmer already seem like veterans. After enrolling early in the spring, both players have thrived in the transition to Notre Dame and onto the field.

Onwualu, a four-star recruit rated as the top player coming out of his home state of Minnesota by ESPN, has recorded three special-teams tackles for the Irish this season. Irish coach Brian Kelly has spoken about Onwualu's significant improvements since the beginning of camp, an improvement that has encompassed both physical and mental aspects. Having never lifted weights before, Onwualu relied on senior receivers TJ Jones and Daniel Smith for direction in the weight room during his first weeks on campus.

Even more significant than his physical gains thus far has been his improved understanding of the game, Onwualu said.

"I definitely think that comes through film and being around some of the other guys," Onwualu said. "Being around TJ Jones and some of those guys that know the offense to the 'T,' almost as well as some of the coaches, and listening to them every day and the conversations that go on in our meeting room with [Irish outside wide receivers] coach [Mike] Denbrock between the older guys, just picking up on that and taking notes and just trying to pick up as much as I can, that's helpful."

Onwualu has looked beyond the current Irish roster, as well, for advice. A product of Cretin-Derham Hall High School in Saint Paul, Onwualu has been in touch with another former Irish receiver who went to Cretin-Derham Hall: current Arizona Cardinals receiver Michael Floyd.

"I mean, he just continues to tell me to work hard, just do what I can every day to get better and continuing to play my best," Onwualu said.

Elmer has also relied on his older counterparts for guidance

and instruction during his time on campus, both to learn the playbook and to adjust to the

physical differences from high school.

"We are doing a lot more stuff

now, just playbook-wise, obviously from high school," the Midland, Mich., native said. "And then physically, there's no [Irish defensive lineman] Stephon Tuitts in Midland, so it's a little bit different from that aspect, as well."

Coming out of high school, the 6-foot-5.5, 317-pound Elmer was the 26th-best offensive tackle in the country, according to ESPN. In an Irish uniform, however, Elmer has seen time at multiple positions along the line.

"I've been bouncing around a little bit, but it's been great for learning the playbook and learning what everyone needs to do to adjust," Elmer said.

"It's good to get to know both [the tackle and guard] positions, because then you kind of know where everyone else is on the football field. I find that really is helpful to understanding the

offense, just getting experience on both sides of the ball, the right and the left, the tackle and the guard."

Elmer has played in four games this season and, against Arizona State on Oct. 5, spelled senior offensive lineman Christian Lombard at right guard against Sun Devils defensive lineman Will Sutton, a highly-touted NFL prospect.

Elmer stressed the benefit of enrolling in the spring and added the players and staff around him have made his first half-season a successful one.

"I wouldn't say it's easy, but we've got great coaches, we've got great leadership from older guys, other guys on the line," he said. "It's a real team effort getting guys caught up to speed."

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WAKING THE ECHOES | CHRIS STEWART

# Former OL Stewart returns to law school

By **MATTHEW DeFRANKS**  
Assistant Managing Editor

Most people just want another year of college. Chris Stewart knows the feeling.

The former Irish offensive lineman is back on campus to finish law school after a hiatus to pursue a professional football career. By the time he graduates law school in 2015, Stewart would have spent nearly two college careers at Notre Dame after enrolling in January of 2006.

"I came here early in 2006 and by the time I'm done in 2015, take off time for those years I did football away, you're still looking at about a decade of being affiliated with the University when most people get four, five

tops," Stewart said. "It's kind of strange."

Stewart played his final season with the Irish in 2010, when Notre Dame went 8-5 in Irish coach Brian Kelly's first season, capped by a season-ending, four-game win streak.

In that win streak, the Irish knocked off rival USC in the final game of the regular season after the Trojans had beaten Notre Dame eight straight times. The Irish were without their starting quarterback, running back and tight end when they beat the Trojans 20-16 in Los Angeles.

"Anytime you play in the [Los Angeles Memorial] Coliseum, it's almost like a mind-boggling experience," Stewart said. "It's not something you readily

forget."

The Irish offense, directed by then-freshman quarterback Tommy Rees, had trouble moving the ball and committed four turnovers before coming alive on its final drive. Down 16-13 with 6:18 left, Notre Dame took over at its own 23-yard line.

But running back Robert Hughes and Cierre Wood made the drive count. They combined to carry five times for 62 yards, punctuated by Hughes' five-yard plunge into the end zone with 2:23 left in the game.

Stewart said the way the Irish won — by running the ball successfully — was "icing on the cake."

"It's not only that you get the win at the end, but the fashion

that you win it in," Stewart said. "To be able to run the ball down the field and know that you're in total control of the game, imposing your will on the other team for the win, that's something special. That's something that every offensive lineman looks forward to."

The win was one of two for the Irish in their last three meetings with the Trojans.

A month later, Stewart finished his Notre Dame career with a 33-17 throttling of Miami in the Sun Bowl. He said the four-game winning streak was a good ending for both the up-and-down 2010 season and his up-and-down Irish career.

"I always tell people that we may have gone through some of

the hardest times in Notre Dame [history]," Stewart said. "But it was so gratifying for me to start it on a high coming in during [Brady Quinn's] era and then going through the deep valley of 3-9 [in 2007] and all this other crazy stuff, a coaching change and ending, beating USC, having a four-game win streak, destroying Miami and then, all of a sudden, you set the base, the foundation for a team going to the national championship a few years later. That was a cool way to go out."

Stewart's last year of college football was also his first — of law school. He was the only player in the FBS to also be enrolled in law school. He said attempting to balance his school work and football was "terrible."

"I always tell people 'If reincarnation is real and I can come back and do it again, I probably wouldn't because it was that terrible,'" he said. "One of the hardest things I've ever done in my life. But now, being on the other side of it and having a chance to really make something of my legal career, it's something that I carry personally that's unique and it's pretty special to have that, no one else has ever done it before."

After a brief stint in the NFL with the New York Jets and the Arizona Cardinals, Stewart returned to law school at Notre Dame in the spring of this year. Before coming back to South Bend, Stewart also worked at law firms in Houston and Chicago.

Stewart said getting back in the swing of things at law school was difficult at first but that he has now readjusted.

"There's a certain way law-school work is done versus working in the real world," he said. "They're a lot different in the way law school tests for grades versus how you actually do work in the real world. I really struggled coming back, not so much with the material but remembering how to actually take certain tests and be successful in the grading scales. They're just very, very different."

Stewart, 26, also has some administrative duties with the athletic department.

"Seeing that stuff now, it's different, it's weird," he said. "It's like I'm actually a grown-up."

He said he was blessed to be involved with Notre Dame in so many ways and for such a long time.

"Coming to this school and seeing it in so many ways and the doors that it has opened and continues to open, is such a blessing and mind-boggling," Stewart said. "When people say it's a special place, it really, truly is, especially if you take the tools you learned from it and apply it to life."

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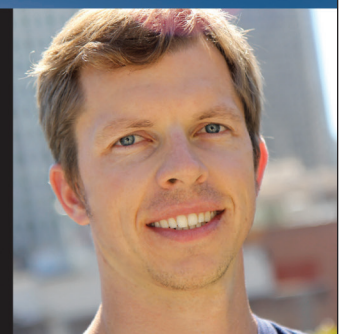


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# Rochell, Butler enter defensive rotation

By **JOSEPH MONARDO**  
Associate Sports Editor

Two pieces of Notre Dame's highly-touted freshman class, defensive lineman Isaac Rochell and cornerback Devin Butler, have gotten off to some fast starts in their careers.

Both players have seen significant game action during the first half of their rookie seasons on a defense finding its form.

Rochell, a four-star recruit rated as the 139th-best player in the country by ESPN, hails from McDonough, Ga., and has bolstered a defensive line thinned by injury. After joining what seemed to be a crowded rotation on the defensive front, the newcomer has played in all six contests and has recorded three tackles.

"When I got here, my perspective on the whole thing was just work out, get better, and it was such a day-by-day thing with classes and stuff," Rochell said. "So I never really thought about [playing time]. And when the season came, with camp it's just the same thing. You are just worrying about today, because it's one of those things. It's a grind. ... You have to focus on your job on and off the field."

Rochell said the workout and nutritional plans set up by the Irish staff have been helpful in making the transition to the college game.

"When you get here and they get you in the dining hall this summer, the dining hall is great," he said. "And then you are just on that lifting program where you are constantly lifting, you just gain weight. All the guys, all the freshmen gained five or 10 pounds when we first got here. It just happens."

If Rochell continues to receive time on the defensive line when sophomore Sheldon Day returns from an ankle injury, Rochell might have the opportunity to face off against his older brother Matt, a sophomore offensive lineman for Air Force. Notre Dame travels to Colorado Springs, Colo., for a matchup with the Falcons on Oct. 26.

"I talk to him after [my] game, he talks to me after every one of his games, so we are pretty close," Rochell said.

Butler also shares a special bond with his older brother

Darius, who was paralyzed after being shot five times while walking home one night as a freshman at Howard University in 2008. Darius, five years Devin's senior, has benefited from Devin's care in recent years but has also served as an inspiration to his younger brother.

"It gives me a lot of motivation," Devin said. "I mean, he's someone that is my biggest supporter, and through everything he's always telling me how proud of me he is."

"He definitely tells me how he misses his little brother. He moved out before I left, so I was always spending a lot of time over at his new apartment, so [me coming to college] was just really cutting the cord I guess."

Darius has already made the trip from the family's home city of Washington, D.C., to Notre Dame to see his younger brother play several times this year and was most recently in Arlington, Texas to watch the Irish take on Arizona State.

Rated as the 188th-best player in the country by ESPN coming out of high school, Devin has played in five games this season and has made two tackles while learning from sophomore cornerback KeiVarae Russell and senior cornerback Bennett Jackson.

"I guess [the most important thing I have learned] would just be to have a short-term memory," Butler said. "To not let the little things eat at you, but to take the little things seriously, to really focus on everything that I need to do and focus on my craft and become a master of my craft."

Butler and Rochelle are two of the Irish freshmen giving Notre Dame's defense an injection of youth, along with cornerback Cole Luke and starting outside linebacker Jaylon Smith also seeing considerable time.

"I think it's cool," Rochell said of the freshmen contributions. "I think especially this summer, working out and stuff, I think we gelled. So it's kind of this common thing that, 'We are ready, we are going to work hard.' And I think it's been cool to see guys develop. And when they go in they are making plays."

Contact Joseph Monardo at [jmonardo@nd.edu](mailto:jmonardo@nd.edu)

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## Recruiting

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Dame's two receiver commitments in the class of 2014

— Brent and Corey Holmes — are both expected to visit this weekend.

“He’s one of the top players in the country and he certainly

would fit in with them at wide receiver,” Frank said.

### Athlete Michiah Quick

The 170-pound California

speedster checks in as the 4th-best athlete in the class of 2014, per ESPN. Quick visited Oklahoma at the beginning of the month and is also scheduled to be at Alabama for the LSU game. Frank described Quick as an inside-slot receiver who is quick with “excellent explosion.”

### Tight end Tyler Luatua

ESPN rates the La Mirada, Calif., native as the best H-type tight end in the class of 2014 and the 68th-best player overall. Luatua visited Ole Miss last weekend and has November visits scheduled with Alabama and Wisconsin, per ESPN.

“He’s probably more of a stretch-the-field tight end like [2014 tight end commit Nic] Weishar, guys who can get deep, excellent athletic ability,” Frank said.

### Offensive lineman Damien Mama

The massive Mama, who is listed at 6-foot-4, 370 pounds, is the No. 3 guard in the class and the No. 56 player overall. Mama visited Wisconsin last weekend and is scheduled to visit Alabama for the LSU game in early November.

“Damien Mama would kind of be the crown jewel to an already unbelievable offensive-line class,” Frank said. “He’s the kind of guy you just run the ball behind. He’s just an absolutely dominating blocker and plays with incredible attitude and nastiness even though he’s kind of a real happy-go-lucky type of guy.”

### Linebacker Nyles Morgan

ESPN’s No. 4 inside linebacker attends Crete-Monee High School, less than two hours away. The 6-foot-2, 225-pounder tweeted his top six schools Sept. 1, and Notre Dame did not make the cut. Two days later, Morgan said it was, in fact, too early to start narrowing down his recruitment.

“Obviously with [graduate student inside linebackers] Carlo [Calabrese] and Dan Fox graduating, somebody’s got to start,” Frank said. “It is wide open right now next year for inside linebacker, and Nyles Morgan has the kind of ability and size to step in right away

and start. He’s really that kind of tremendous talent.”

### Athlete Bo Scarbrough

Scarbrough, ESPN’s No. 2 athlete and No. 20 player overall, committed to Alabama on Sept. 7, 2012. Scarbrough, who lived previously in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and transferred this season to the IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., could play running back at the next level.

“You want to talk about an amazing talent, that guy has crazy amounts of talent,” Frank said. “He’s, I would say, Notre Dame’s No. 1 choice even before [former Irish commit Elijah] Hood was committed, he would have been the guy they would have wanted more than anybody.”

### Linebacker/safety Drue Tranquill

The Fort Wayne, Ind., native and Purdue commitment visited Notre Dame for the Michigan State game. Tranquill pledged to the Boilermakers on July 23rd and received an offer from Notre Dame soon thereafter. Tranquill likely profiles as either a linebacker or safety.

“He knows there’s a number of Irish commitments coming in,” Frank said. “So I think he wants to see how he fits in with that group. I think if he does, chances are Notre Dame is going to have a good chance to get him in the end.”

### Cornerback Nick Watkins

A top-10 cornerback, according to ESPN, Watkins has already visited Notre Dame unofficially and also took in Notre Dame’s victory over Arizona State on Oct. 5. The Irish do not have any pledges in the 2014 secondary.

“He’s one of the few corners that Notre Dame has targeted this year and they really like him,” Frank said. “I know he could be the No. 1 guy on their board [overall].”

*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 Mike Monaco at jmonaco@nd.edu*

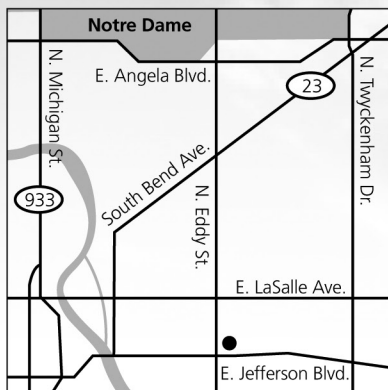
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