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Notre Dame 40, Washington State 14

A welcome change

Irish roll over Cougars in first off-site home game in San Antonio

By MICHAEL BRYAN
Associate Sports Editor

SAN ANTONIO — Halloween featured very few scary moments for the Irish, who rolled to a 40-14 victory over Washington State in the Alamodome.

Notre Dame dominated the Cougars from start to finish, the first time in months that the Irish weren't holding their breath in the closing minutes.

"It was a relief," Irish junior quarterback Jimmy Clausen said. "Close games all the time, it kind of gets old."

Clausen and the Notre Dame offense put up 30 points in the first half to put the game out of reach early, highlighted by a 50-yard catch by Golden Tate on a Clausen Hail Mary to end the half. Tate leaped over three Washington State defenders to make the catch and held on for the score.

"It was probably one of the most phenomenal catches I've seen anyone make, ever," Irish coach Charlie Weis said.

After a three-and-out on Washington State's first possession, Notre Dame drove down the field before stalling in the red zone. Freshman kicker Nick Tausch converted the field goal to put the Irish on the board 3-0

While the Irish defense stifled the struggling Cougar offense, Clausen drove the Irish to their first touchdown late in the first quarter, converting on a 7-yard pass to junior Duval Kamara in the back of the endzone.

The next Notre Dame drive had a similar result, as the Wildcat formation and running game overwhelmed the Cougar defense. Tate finished the drive with a spectacular 16-yard run, spinning out of the arms of two Washington State defenders before finding the edge and the touchdown.

Junior Robert Hughes starred on the next drive for the Irish, wearing down the Washington State defense and punching in the score from a yard out. Hughes had a career-high 131 yards in the



VANESSA GEMPIS/The Observer

Irish junior wide receiver Golden Tate escapes a tackler during Notre Dame's 40-14 victory over Washington State Saturday in San Antonio. Tate led the Irish with 80 yards receiving and a touchdown, and he added 61 rushing yards and a score.

game and helped Notre Dame control the time of possession. The Irish had the ball for 40:54 in the game.

The Cougars finally got on the board with 1:16 left in the half, scoring on a pass from Tuel to wide receiver Jared Karstetter. The time was enough for the Irish, however, as Tate made the touchdown grab as time expired.

"I've seen them before, it's not the only one I've ever seen. But I don't know how many times you see one guy with three guys around him go up," Weis said of Tate's leaping catch. "He's not 6-feet tall, it's not like he's 6-5 going up there, he's like 5-11 going up there. I thought it was phenomenal."

The Notre Dame offense slowed its torrid pace in the second half, with injuries and

the scoreboard playing a consideration. After punting on their first possession, the Irish were rolling down the field again when Clausen was tripped up near the Washington State endzone.

Weis then removed Clausen, who only slightly aggravated his ongoing turf toe injury, for sophomore Dayne Crist. After an incomplete, Tausch converted his 14th-straight field goal, a Notre Dame record.

The Irish put their final points on the board on a long pass down the middle from Crist to classmate John Goodman, who outraced a Cougar defender 64 yards for the score.

Crist later suffered an injury while scrambling, hurting his left knee. Weis said he would have an MRI this week

but was "cautiously optimistic."

The Notre Dame defense did its part in the blowout as well, holding the Cougars to 206 yards of total offense and only 104 through the air. Cornerback Robert Blanton and defensive tackle Ian Williams each intercepted freshman Washington State quarterback Jeff Tuel, who was sacked five times.

"[Tuel threw for] a little over 100 yards and got sacked a bunch of times, he was under pressure," Weis said. "They were getting after him today, there was no doubt they were getting after him."

The Cougars managed 102 yards on the ground, but many of those came long after the Irish starters had left the game.

"I just felt like getting upfield and getting penetration was the key thing, and to stay low and be more athletic than them."

Kapron Lewis-Moore
Irish defensive end

"[Six] three and outs in the game the first defense gave up 100 yards offense the whole game. The defense gave up only 200 yards for the whole game," Weis said at his Sunday press conference. "But when the first guys are in there, they gave up 109 yards. That was pretty impressive. With sacks, pressures, you know, playing the game behind the line of scrimmage. No explosives in the passing game. When is the last time we've been able to say that?"

The Irish held a significant edge in talent on both sides of the ball, and Notre Dame used that to its advantage to build, and then hold, the big lead over the course of the entire game.

"I just felt like getting upfield and getting penetration was the key thing, and to stay low and be more athletic than them," said Irish sophomore defensive end and Texas native Kapron Lewis-Moore.

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player of the game

Golden Tate
Irish wide receiver

Tate caught four passes for 80 yards and a touchdown and added 61 rushing yards and a score.

stat of the game

40:54

Notre Dame's time of possession, compared to 19:06 for Washington State, in a game the Irish thoroughly dominated.

play of the game

Golden Tate's leaping 50-yard touchdown grab at the end of the first half.

The Hail Mary from Jimmy Clausen made the score 30-7 at the half and helped bury the Cougars.

quote of the game

"It was a relief. Close games all the time, it kind of gets old."

Jimmy Clausen
Irish quarterback

report card

- B+

quarterbacks: Jimmy Clausen played like he has all season, and his Heisman stock continues to rise. Dayne Crist looked shaky but threw a nice touch-down before leaving with an injury.
- A-

running backs: Robert Hughes excelled with Armando Allen held out of the game, and Theo Riddick showed flashes with the game in hand.
- A

receivers: Golden Tate was unstoppable as both a receiver and a runner; and Duval Kamara had another solid effort that included Notre Dame's first touchdown.
- B+

offensive line: Clausen was sacked twice but the line made time for all three quar-terbacks and opened up holes to pave the way for a big day on the ground.
- A-

defensive line: The front four continues to improve, as six defensive linemen combined to make nine tackles for loss. Ian Williams added an intercep-tion of a screen pass.
- B+

linebackers: Manti Te'o continues to show why he was Notre Dame's most prized recruit as he adds speed to a linebacking corps made faster with the addition of converted safety Harrison Smith.
- B

defensive backs: Robert Blanton picked off Jeff Tuel and the secondary limited him to 104 yards passing. But the corners looked silly on the Cougars two touch-down passes.
- C

special teams: Nick Tausch made his 14th straight field goal, but he had an extra point blocked and punter Ben Turk was inconsistent again. Tate made a mental error trying to pick up a bouncing punt.
- A-

coaching: The so-called Leprecat forma-tion was very successful, and Charlie Weis did what he wanted — jumped out to an early lead and held on without too much trouble.
- 3.33

overall: Finally an easy victory. The Irish weren't dominant from the get-go, but showed why they were such heavy favorites heading in.

adding up the numbers

- Number of first downs by Notre Dame in a game the Irish dominated. Washington State had 12 first downs and had the ball for just 19:06.

32
- 5

Number of Cougars possessions ending with punts to begin the game. Washington State punted eight times in all.
- Yards gained out of the Leprecat forma-tion on the six play, 80-yard drive that ended with the first Irish touchdown.

59
- 9

Number of touchdown receptions by junior wide receiver Golden Tate. Only Oklahoma's Ryan Broyles (10) has more.
- Number of Irish players who previously partici-pated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl prep high school all-star game at the Alamodome.

35
- 14

Number of consecutive successful field goal attempts by freshman kicker Nick Tausch, who has hit on all but one attempt — his first.
- Number of consecutive passes Jimmy Clausen has thrown without an interception, dating back to the Washington game.

124
- 0

Number of turnovers Clausen has committed when the Irish have been either tied or trailing this sea-son.



ANDREW WEBER/The Observer

Notre Dame's matchup with Washington State in San Antonio's Alamodome wasn't a sellout, but Irish coach Charlie Weis compared the atmosphere at the off-site home game to that of a bowl game.

Off-site home game a success

When you mentioned to someone that Notre Dame was playing Washington State in San Antonio, the most common response was “why?”

I'll even admit that I was skeptical of the first “off-site home game” that was part of Notre Dame's new 7-4-1 scheduling model.

But after a weekend in San Antonio, it's clear that the idea is a great one, even if the execution could use a little improvement.

The weekend kicked off Friday night with a pep rally in front of the Alamo, one of America's most iconic venues. Even though the pep rally wasn't the most raucous I've ever seen, the crowd itself was a sight to behold. Notre Dame estimated that close to 8,000 fans attended the rally, and the crowd spilled out onto the adjacent streets.

The speakers included former Notre Dame running back Allen Pinkett and radio broadcaster Don Criqui, and the Band of the Fighting Irish played all the crowd favorites — and threw in a little Lone Star flair by playing “Deep in the Heart of Texas.”

After the pep rally ended, the crowd moved down to San Antonio's famed River Walk. Random “Let's go, Irish” chants started up and down the river. And a few fans rode down the

river back and forth waving a Notre Dame flag and cheering for the Irish.

“I thought that this was a great venue,” Irish coach Charlie Weis said. “I mean, I thought it was awesome. And I think our players thought that. There was so much excitement in the air. I mean, I give credit to our Notre Dame fans.”

On Saturday, San Antonio might as well have been South Bend. Irish fans owned the streets and the River Walk, but there was a surprising amount of Washington State crimson to be seen, too.

As for the game itself, the Alamodome was about as close to Notre Dame Stadium as you could get, minus Touchdown Jesus. Mike Collins, the voice of Notre Dame Stadium, provided the public address and Officer Tim McCarthy even had a fourth quarter mes-sage for the fans.

Numerous people compared the atmosphere of the weekend to that of a bowl game, which is tough to replicate in the middle of the season.

The biggest positive aspect of the weekend, though, was the opportunity it gave to Irish fans in the Lone Star State. For a lot of Notre Dame supporters across the country, it just isn't possible to get out to a game in South Bend. While there may not have been a huge student presence at the game, it's a safe bet that for many of the alumni and subway alumni in Texas, this was their first Irish game in quite a few years, if not ever.

“When you get into an experi-ment like this — and this is an experiment, taking a home game

on the road — you need a great partner,” Notre Dame Athletic Director Jack Swarbrick said at the pep rally. “And we couldn't have a better partner for our first off-site game than San Antonio.”

That being said, the weekend wasn't perfect. Despite the best efforts of Notre Dame and its alumni clubs in Texas, the game did not sell out. If you're counting this as a true home game, it's the non-sellout since the infamous 1973 Thanksgiving game against Air Force. The announced atten-dance was 53,407, about 82 per-cent of the Alamodome's capacity of 65,000.

The poor ticket sales could prob-ably be attributed to the weak opponent. As nice as the Washington State fans were, the Cougars just aren't the type of team Notre Dame should be aim-ing for with these games. Imagine what the atmosphere would have been like if the game had been against a top tier team like Miami or Georgia, to name two.

Hopefully, Swarbrick and the athletic department will learn from this weekend and make improvements for next year's game against Army in Yankee Stadium. In all, though, it was a surprisingly positive experience in San Antonio for fans, coaches and players alike.

“If the rest of them go like this, sign me up,” Weis said. “It really was a great experience.”

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

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Hughes makes most of opportunity



ANDREW WEBER/The Observer

Junior running back Robert Hughes runs through a would-be tackle during Notre Dame's 40-14 victory over Washington State Saturday. Hughes led the Irish in rushing with 131 yards on 24 carries and one touchdown.

By MICHAEL BRYAN
Associate Sports Editor

SAN ANTONIO — Junior running back Robert Hughes hasn't always known when he would play or where he would play. But when given the opportunity with Armando Allen battling nagging injuries, Hughes has stepped up.

"When my number is called, I just want to go out and produce," Hughes said. "I just try to focus on doing my job and making the best of my opportunities."

Hughes rushed for a career-high 131 yards and a touchdown against Washington State in San Antonio, relentlessly pounding a struggling Cougars defense. The junior's bruising runs helped the Irish dominated Washington State

in time of possession, controlling the ball for over two-thirds of the game at 40:54.

"He did really well, stepping up for us, Armando was down and didn't play, he ran the ball really well for us today," Irish quarterback Jimmy Clausen said.

Entering the season it appeared Hughes would see a decrease in playing time, as Allen was the clearly established starter and sophomore Jonas Gray stood in the second string on the depth chart.

Then Hughes was moved into a part-time role at full-back following an injury to senior James Aldridge against Nevada. As Allen battled injuries, however, Hughes began receiving more time at running back and earning carries.

"I really don't know when

the switch went on, but the switch definitely went on and he decided that this was what he was going to be," said Weis. "Once he made that decision that this is how I am, run with my pads down, leaning forward, not trying to make everyone miss, once he made that decision, I think it's kind of cleaned up for him how he's going to play the game."

Hughes rushed for 68 yards and a touchdown against Purdue while Allen sat out, and then ran for 70 yards and another score against Washington.

In San Antonio, with Allen out again, Hughes received 24 carries, only his second game with over ten this season. Hughes said the repetitions helped him get into the flow of the game and wear down the

Cougars.

"It felt great, I got in a rhythm, coach kept calling my number and I just wanted to keep running the ball well,

"It felt great, I got in a rhythm, coach kept calling my number and I just wanted to keep running the ball well, run the ball hard and keep getting yards."

run the ball hard and keep getting yards," Hughes said.

Hughes also showed off his catching skills in the game, grabbed four receptions for 51 yards. It has been his running style, however,

that's set him apart from the rest of the tailbacks this season.

"[Running backs coach Tony Alford] always felt we've got a lot of little guys that can dance around everyone," Weis said. "We've got Armando, we've got Theo, we've got guys that can dance around. He'd like to have that bruiser."

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scoring summary

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
Boston College	0	7	0	7	14
Notre Dame	9	21	3	7	40

First quarter

Notre Dame 3, Washington State 0
Nick Tausch 29-yd field goal with 9:44 remaining.
Drive: 10 plays, 45 yards, 4:23 elapsed.

Notre Dame 9, Washington State 0
Duval Kamara 7-yd pass from Jimmy Clausen (Tausch kick failed) with :14 remaining.
Drive: 6 plays, 80 yards, 3:04 elapsed.

Second quarter

Notre Dame 16, Washington State 0
Golden Tate 16-yd run (Tausch kick) with 9:29 remaining.
Drive: 8 plays, 71 yards, 4:01 elapsed.

Notre Dame 23, Washington State 0
Robert Hughes 1-yd run (Tausch kick) with 4:05 remaining.
Drive: 8 plays, 80 yards, 4:02 elapsed.

Notre Dame 23, Washington State 7
Jared Karstetter 11-yd pass from Jeff Tuel (Nico Grasu kick) with 1:16 remaining.
Drive: 7 plays, 67 yards, 2:49 elapsed.

Notre Dame 30, Washington State 7
Tate 50-yd pass from Clausen (Tausch kick) with :00 remaining.
Drive: 6 plays, 75 yards, 1:16 elapsed.

Third quarter

Notre Dame 33, Washington State 7
Tausch 23-yd field goal with 3:16 remaining.
Drive: 11 plays, 40 yards, 6:10 elapsed.

Fourth quarter

Notre Dame 40, Washington State 7
John Goodman 64-yd pass from Dayne Crist (Tausch kick) with 10:01 remaining.
Drive: 2 plays, 55 yards, 1:06 elapsed.

Notre Dame 40, Washington State 14
Karstetter 8-yd pass from Tuel (Grasu kick) with 5:16 remaining.
Drive: 7 plays, 65 yards, 3:06 elapsed.

statistics

total yards

ND	592
WSU	206

rushing yards

ND	255
WSU	102

passing yards

ND	337
WSU	104

time of possession

ND	40:54
WSU	19:06

passing

Clausen	22-27-268	Tuel	12-23-104
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rushing

Hughes	24-131	Tardy	8-72
Tate	4-61	Mitz	5-27
Riddick	9-51	Winston	3-4
Gray	8-29	Tuel	10-(-1)

receiving

Rudolph	6-59	Thompson	3-27
Tate	4-80	Karstetter	2-19
Hughes	4-51	Solomon	2-14
Kamara	3-36	Winston	2-13
Riddick	3-24	Simone	1-15

Notes: Lewis-Moore enjoys homecoming

By SAM WERNER
Associate Sports Editor

◆The game in San Antonio had an extra special meaning for Notre Dame sophomore defensive lineman Kapron Lewis-Moore, who hails from nearby Weatherford, Texas. Lewis-Moore said he received over 20 ticket requests for the game, but was able to accommodate everyone.

"It was good being back to Texas — the hospitality and everything," Lewis-Moore said. "I miss the Texas weather."

◆Freshman kicker Nick Tausch set a Notre Dame record by connecting on his 14th-straight field goal in the third quarter. After missing his

first career attempt at Michigan, Tausch has been perfect on the season. Mike Johnston set the previous record of 13 during the 1982 season.

◆Saturday's game was Notre Dame's first indoor game since a 41-14 loss to LSU in the 2007 Sugar Bowl. It was the Irish's first victory in a dome since beating Florida in the 1992 Sugar Bowl.

◆Three Notre Dame players were injured in the game Saturday night. Sophomore quarterback Dayne Crist hurt his knee, and sophomore offensive lineman Trevor Robinson and sophomore defensive lineman Kapron Lewis-Moore hurt their ankles.

At his press conference Sunday night, Weis said that Crist would receive an MRI Monday to determine the extent of the injury and that Robinson could miss next week's game against Navy with a low ankle sprain. He added, though, that Lewis-Moore's injury was minor and didn't anticipate him missing any time.

◆Senior tight end Mike Ragone, who has played in every game this season for Notre Dame, recorded his first catch of the season Saturday night on a short six-yard completion from Clausen.

◆Former Irish great and 1987 Heisman Trophy winner Tim Brown was scheduled to

speak at the pep rally Friday night, but was replaced by Allen Pinkett at the last minute. Brown, a Dallas native, did represent the Irish for the game's opening coin toss, serving as an honorary team captain.

◆The Irish continued to use the Leprecat offense effectively against the Cougars, at one point running three straight plays with a player other than Clausen taking the snap. The formation worked, though, gaining 59 yards on an 80-yard first quarter touchdown drive. Junior wide receiver Golden Tate also had a touchdown run out of the Leprecat.

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VANESSA GEMPIS/The Observer



VANESSA GEMPIS/The Observer

Taking care of business

Notre Dame imposed its will on a reeling Washington State team in the first in a new series of off-site home games in stadiums across the country. Junior quarterback Jimmy Clausen (22-for-27, 268 yards) was efficient, finding junior receivers Duval Kamara and Golden Tate (80 receiving yards, 61 rushing) for touchdowns before leaving the game in the third quarter. Tate and sophomore running back Robert Hughes (131 rushing yards) each ran for touchdowns. Sophomore backup Dayne Crist connected with sophomore John Goodman for a 64-yard scoring strike but was forced to exit with a leg injury. The Irish defense held the hapless Cougars to just 206 yards offense as Notre Dame built a 30-7 halftime advantage before coasting to a 40-14 victory. Junior defensive tackle Ian Williams and sophomore defensive back Robert Blanton each had interceptions, and Darius Fleming, Zeke Motta, Ethan Johnson, Steve Filer and Paddy Mullen each recorded sacks on Cougars quarterback Jeff Tuel.

For more photos, check out the photo gallery at ndsmcobserver.com



VANESSA GEMPIS/The Observer



VANESSA GEMPIS/The Observer



ANDREW WEBER/The Observer

Clockwise from top: Junior linebacker Brian Smith jumps to defend a Jeff Tuel pass; junior receiver Golden Tate makes a leaping grab on a first-half Hail Mary; sophomore defensive lineman Ethan Johnson makes a tackle; freshman kicker Nick Tausch connects on a kick; sophomore receiver John Goodman breaks away for a score.