

IRISH INSIDER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2012

MAN BEHIND THE MASK

MEET NOTRE DAME'S
BIGGEST DEFENSIVE MENACE

THE OBSERVER

Photo Illustration by Suzanna Pratt and Brandon Keelean

COMMENTARY

Kelly needs to stick with Golson



Matthew DeFranks
Associate Sports Editor

Imagine this.

You just finished your one-year internship and received your first full-time job at the same company. Your boss continues to laud your development as the future of this company. In your second week on the job, you perform very well, even earning employee of the week honors. But your boss takes you off the project you had been working on and puts someone else on it at the last second.

How do you feel?

If I am sophomore quarterback Everett Golson after being yanked in the closing minutes of Notre Dame's 20-17 win over Purdue on Saturday, I feel angry and frustrated, betrayed and abandoned. After all, Golson threw for 289 yards on 21-for-31 passing despite not having the benefit of a running game.

Junior quarterback Tommy Rees may have led the game-winning drive, but Golson led the Irish by a pesky Purdue team. He rushed for a touchdown, threw for a touchdown and was one untimely fumble away from a near-perfect Notre Dame Stadium debut. He did everything asked of him, with the exception of his one turnover.

Maybe Golson was not quite ready to man the two-minute offense yet. But is there a better time to learn than a tied game in the fourth quarter of a home game? The Irish would not have lost if they didn't score, they simply would have moved to overtime. There was no pressure on Golson for the final drive.

Irish coach Brian Kelly has repeatedly said he will be patient with Golson and that the young quarterback will make mistakes and that Golson still needs to learn a lot. But Kelly robbed him

of a prime learning opportunity last week, instead trusting the offense to a signal caller who threw 14 interceptions a year ago.

Confidence is a very fragile thing in sports and Kelly has toyed with it several times over the past two seasons. First, it was Dayne Crist losing his job after one half of football. Then it was Rees looking over his shoulder after the Stanford game in 2011. Now, it will be Golson checking his rearview mirror.

This week, Golson will head into raucous Spartan Stadium in his first true road game for what should be another tight game between the rivals. If the Irish need a drive late in the game, who do they turn to?

Kelly has said throughout the week he wants his starter to finish the game as well but that nothing is off the table. Golson — and Rees — deserve better than that. Kelly must decide on one quarterback before he loses both of them. Golson still has three years of eligibility after this season and has all the physical tools needed to succeed at Notre Dame. He just needs the opportunity.

Two-quarterback systems simply do not work. The last one to succeed was at Florida and they had some guy named Tim Tebow. They have not been used by Alabama or USC or even Michigan State. So why should Kelly and the Irish implement one?

This is not baseball. There is no closer. Every game should be a complete game.

Kelly needs to trust that Golson can hit it out of the park.

Contact Matthew DeFranks at mdefrank@nd.edu

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

RECRUITING

Ties to ACC impact football recruiting

By **CHRIS ALLEN**
Sports Editor

Notre Dame's announcement of a move to the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) may have been nominally in all sports except football, but the commitment to play five games per year against ACC opponents has sweeping effects, Irish recruiting analyst Mike Frank said.

The move gives Notre Dame increased exposure in the talent-rich states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. The current Irish roster boasts 23 players from the nine other states that will make up the ACC when the Irish join in non-football sports.

"If Notre Dame was going to make a move, this move to the ACC is by far, and I want to stress, by far, the best move that they could have made when it comes to Notre Dame football and Notre Dame recruiting in football," said Frank, who runs the ESPN-affiliated Irish Sports Daily. "There are a lot of reasons for that. The recruiting potential Notre Dame will have in the south, southeast and mid-Atlantic regions is huge. All those high schools up

and down the East Coast have been very good to Notre Dame over the years and really recently, when you have players like [junior linebacker] Prince Shembo, [freshman linebacker] Romeo Okwara, [former cornerback] Robert Blanton, [sophomore quarterback] Everett Golson and [freshman wide receiver] Chris Brown.

"Even the [Washington] D.C. area is somewhere where Notre Dame has done pretty well in the past but could do a lot better. This move opens that area up for the Irish."

The promise of an increased presence in Florida against ACC teams Florida State and Miami gives Notre Dame a foothold in one of the nation's premier hotbeds of talent. 30 of the top 150 players in the 2013 recruiting class — according to ESPN — hail from Florida.

"You want to be very strong in Florida. You're going to play Florida State and you're going to play Miami, which will get you in that area quite a bit," Frank said. "In Georgia, you'll have Georgia Tech who's sticking around in the ACC also. Atlanta is a hotbed of talent. It just gives Notre Dame a lot of exposure."

Though the tie-in to the

ACC increased Notre Dame's potential on the East Coast, Frank said built-in scheduling flexibility gives the Irish the ability to continue recruiting nationally.

"Because they're not full-time members, they still have the ability to play some games out on the West Coast, and if you can play a game against a Texas school, that would help in the Big 12 area," he said. "The Big 12 and the Big Ten never really made sense to me in terms of a move, because Notre Dame already has a physical presence in the Big Ten due to being in that region, and they've never really had that much success recruiting in the Big 12 area."

"[Notre Dame Director of Athletics] Jack Swarbrick did an absolutely masterful job with this move, in checking out all of the landscape and coming up with what the best possible scenario is."

For more on Notre Dame recruiting, check out Mike Frank's irishsportsdaily.com
Email Mike at mikefrank18@sbcglobal.net and tell him The Observer sent you.

Contact Chris Allen at callen10@nd.edu

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This week's
installment features
Pat Dillingham.

THE TWO SIDES OF STEPHON TUITT

By **ANDREW OWENS**
Assistant Managing Editor

When observing Stephon Tuitt on a football field, it's easy to be struck by his supreme physical attributes or the unique facemask he requested to wear this season. But beneath the 6-foot-6, 303-pound frame is a soft-spoken, fun-loving college sophomore who loves his mother — and the hobby she taught him.

"I love to cook," said the stand-out defensive end, who became engulfed in his culinary hobby at age 13. "If I feel like I can create it, I cook it. I learned to cook from my mom and also just always having a little knack about me to go to the stove and cook."

"I cook for a good amount of people on the team. They admire my ribs. I cook for a couple other people too and they love everything I cook."

Long before Tuitt dabbled in the kitchen or picked up a football, his mother, Tamara Bartlett, raised the future five-star prospect from Monroe, Ga., to always set aside time for family.

"My mom is a special woman," said Tuitt of Bartlett, who travels to four or five home games each season. "She's strict, but at the same time she's funny and loves to cook and watch movies and do the things we can as a family. We can't do a lot because we're not in a financial point to do everything we want to do, but we always have great family times."

Masked man

This season, Tuitt looks different on the field, and not only because of his play. After watching former Irish and current New York Giants defensive end Justin Tuck — the school's single-season leader in sacks with 13.5 — wear a facemask that resembles Optimus Prime during Super Bowl XLVI, Tuitt was enamored by it.

"It was really tight so I thought I'd bring it out and change it up a bit and have fun," said Tuitt, who is on pace to record 24 sacks during the regular season. "There's been a lot of [positive reaction] so far after the things I did in the first two games. I've been playing really well. People started to notice the facemask is different."

But the facemask isn't the only part of Tuck's game Tuitt appreciates.

"I love the things he does," Tuitt said. "[Tuck and Houston Texans defensive end Mario Williams] are a special thing for me to be like and go on the field and play like absolute beasts. It's a great feeling to have those two to look up to."

When Tuck was on campus for April's Blue-Gold Game, Tuitt said the NFL star attended a defensive meeting and chatted with the sophomore briefly before being pulled away on a tight schedule.

away from everyone while I was running."

Tuitt said the voice message he most anticipated when returning to the country was from his mother, though he couldn't decipher what she was saying.

"Screaming," he said. "You couldn't hear her."

Tuitt is fast enough that he asked Irish coach Brian Kelly to run sprints with the defensive backs during a summer workout.

"I tried to run with the [defensive backs] to maybe get fast," Tuitt said. "I know they're faster than me — they're way faster. But if I keep running with them everyday and catch up with them, I know I'm getting faster myself. I just wanted to be a faster player."

Although the race wasn't even

close, he said he needed to prove to himself that the defensive backs could actually outrun him.

Irish junior offensive tackle Christian Lombard said he was amazed by a play Tuitt made during fall camp when the defensive end dropped back to cover senior running back Cierre Wood on a flare route.

"Tuitt was with him every step. He's fast. He's a freak, plain and simple," Lombard said. "He's very fast. He's not just one type of player. He's not fast or powerful — he's both."

"You have to be ready for both and kind of play according to that."

Lombard said Tuitt has developed quite a bit since reaching campus, though he wasn't exactly a pushover as a freshman.

"I remember he was pretty impressive when he

came in," Lombard said. "You could tell he was strong naturally. He's a beast in the weight room and has only gotten better. You have to give him credit. He's worked hard."

Adjusting to college life

The transition from high school in Georgia to college in Indiana was a difficult one at times for Tuitt. He was suspended for last year's win at Purdue after skipping a class, but he learned from the experience and has since settled into academic life at Notre Dame.

"The classroom's steady. They're hard like every other school, but if you just work and read and do the things you're supposed to do in the classroom, it's actually pretty easy," said Tuitt, who earned a 3.5 grade-point average during the summer. "It boosted my confidence even higher."

With Tuitt mastering his craft academically and athletically, there's one obstacle with which he said he continues to struggle.

"Eating right," he said.

Tuitt said the adjustment to college is a process in which even the most gifted athletes and students need time to work out the kinks.

"You can tell me every freshman can go out there and be an All-American and I won't believe you," he said. "It's different ... If you don't come in early and you come and are expected to play like you've been there for a year, it's hard work ... You have to get adjusted to classrooms and all the work and put it into times that you can finish all of it and manage your time."

Kelly said he has noticed the maturation of his young defensive end.

"The only word I remember him using was 'dominate,'" Kelly said. "Dominate in the classroom, which he did in the summer. Everything he did, he wanted to be very dominant."

Although Tuitt is starting to realize his potential in many different aspects at Notre Dame and has improved his diet, there's one complication he hasn't faced yet: a true South Bend winter.

"I haven't experienced a real winter here yet," he said. "Last year was kind of like the South weather, so I can't really answer that. I've heard about how bad it's supposed to get and me being paranoid. I thought it was a joke."

"I'm worried about it this year. I heard what happened two years ago. I don't want that to happen, so I'm wishing for it to be like last year."

For Tuitt, new facemask or not, intimidation is not something that can be forced.

"The intimidation factor goes off me doing my assignment and making plays," he said. "If you make plays, the offense will notice you and try to do stuff to get away from you. It's not intimidation, it's just me knowing the offense comes on the field and if it runs on my side it will be hard. If they do, they better send more than one guy."



SUZANNA PRATT | The Observer

In the wake of fellow defensive end Aaron Lynch's transfer to South Florida, sophomore Stephon Tuitt has enjoyed a breakout season in 2012. Tuitt leads the Irish with four sacks through two games.

Contact **Andrew Owens** at aowens2@nd.edu



Observer File Photo



Observer File Photo

SPARTANS PASSING

Gone are the Kirk Cousins days for the Spartans. Now, Michigan State will turn to junior quarterback Andrew Maxwell to lead the offense through the air. And already, Maxwell has done something Cousins didn't do: win his first two starts. Maxwell made his starting debut against Boise State in the season opener two weeks ago with mixed results. He completed 22 of 38 passes for 248 yards but threw three interceptions. Maxwell responded last week when Central Michigan stacked the box to stop junior running back Le'Veon Bell by throwing two touchdowns in the 41-7 Spartan victory.

Also departed for the Spartans is B.J. Cunningham, who torched the Irish last season for 12 catches and 158 yards through the air. Michigan State has replaced Cunningham with junior receiver Bennie Fowler and junior tight end Dion Sims. Fowler has recorded 135 yards receiving this year, while Sims has hauled in 113 yards through the air.

For the Irish, their maligned secondary made a huge leap from the first week to the second. Against Navy, the secondary was burned for 197 yards passing against a triple option team. Against Purdue and its two veteran quarterbacks, however, the Notre Dame defense surrendered just 198 yards. Junior cornerback Bennett Jackson picked off two passes while freshman KeiVarae Russell added 0.5 sacks for the Irish.

Don't look for the Spartans to pass much, though. Instead, expect them to run the ball every opportunity they can.

EDGE: EVEN

SPARTANS RUSHING

If you haven't heard, Michigan State likes to run the ball — and it has a workhorse to do it. Junior running back Le'Veon Bell, who ranks sixth in the country with 140 rushing yards per game, will carry the load for the Spartans. In the season opener against Boise State, Bell ran wild for 210 yards and two touchdowns on 44 carries. In that game, Bell outgained the entire Broncos by himself. Last season against Notre Dame, however, Bell was held to just 27 yards on seven carries. This time around, look for the early Heisman

Trophy candidate to get more than seven carries.

Bell and the Spartans will face a tough Notre Dame run defense, though. During the past 20 games, the Irish have allowed just nine touchdowns — and only three have been to opposing running backs. Led by sophomore defensive end Stephon Tuitt and junior nose guard Louis Nix, the big and deep Irish defensive line has been a strength for Notre Dame. Last week, even without senior defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore, the Irish surrendered only 90 rushing yards to Purdue. The Boilermakers averaged three yards per carry.

Michigan State will try to control the clock — and the game — by feeding Bell the ball over and over again. Notre Dame's run defense is good but it may not be good enough to stop Bell.

EDGE: MICHIGAN STATE

SPARTANS OFFENSIVE COACHING

Last year, the Irish forced the Spartans to throw the ball 53 times in holding them to just 13 points. Irish defensive coordinator Bob Diaco is one of the best in the game in getting his team ready for the opposing offense.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

SPARTANS SPECIAL TEAMS

Spartans fifth-year senior kicker Dan Conroy has been hit or miss for Michigan State so far this season, connecting on a 50-yard field goal but only converting three of five attempts. Sophomore running back Nick Hill averages more than 15 yards per punt return.

EDGE: MICHIGAN STATE

SPARTANS SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	Boise State	W 17-13
Sept. 8	@ Central Michigan	W 41-7
Sept. 15	Notre Dame	
Sept. 22	Eastern Michigan	
Sept. 29	Ohio State	
Oct. 6	@ Indiana	
Oct. 13	Iowa	
Oct. 20	@ Michigan	
Oct. 27	@ Wisconsin	
Nov. 3	Nebraska	
Nov. 17	Northwestern	
Nov. 24	@ Minnesota	



HEAD T

NO. 10 MICHIGAN STATE



(So.) **Tony Lippett** **14** **WR**
(So.) Jeremy Langford 33

(Jr.) **Dan France** **59** **LT**
(So.) Michael Dennis 65

(Jr.) **Blake Treadwell** **64** **LG**
(R-Fr.) Jack Allen 66

(Jr.) **Le'Veon Bell** **24** **RB**
(Sr.) Larry Caper 22

(Jr.) **Andrew Maxwell** **10** **QB**
(R-Fr.) Connor Cook 18

(5th) **Chris McDonald** **62** **RG**
(Jr.) Nate Klatt 72

(Sr.) **Fou Fonoti** **51** **RT**
(So.) Skyler Burkland 70

(Jr.) **Dion Sims** **80** **TE**
(So.) Andrew Gleichert 92

(Jr.) **Bennie Fowler** **13** **WR**
(R-Fr.) Andre Sims Jr. 21

(So.) **Keith Mumphery** **25** **WR**
(So.) DeAnthony Arnett 5

(Jr.) **Darqueze Dennard** **31** **CB**
(5th) Mitchell White 32

(Jr.) **Denicos Allen** **28** **OLB**
(R-Fr.) Ed Davis 43

(Jr.) **Jairus Jones** **23** **S**
(So.) Kurtis Drummond 27

(So.) **Marcus Rush** **44** **DE**
(R-Fr.) Shilique Calhoun 89

(Jr.) **Max Bullough** **40** **MLB**
(Jr.) Kyler Elsworth 41

(Jr.) **Micajah Reynolds** **60** **DT**
(5th) Tyler Hoover 91

(Sr.) **Anthony Rashad White** **98** **NT**
(So.) James Kittredge 99

(Jr.) **Isaiah Lewis** **9** **S**
(R-Fr.) RJ Williamson 26

(Jr.) **William Gholston** **2** **DE**
(R-Fr.) Joel Heath 92

(Sr.) **Chris Norman** **10** **OLB**
(So.) Taiwan Jones 34

(5th) **Johnny Adams** **5** **CB**
(R-Fr.) Arjen Colquhoun 36

(5th) **Dan Conroy** **4** **PK**
(Jr.) Kevin Muma 17

(So.) **Mike Sadler** **3** **P**
(Jr.) Kevin Muma 17

(So.) **Nick Hill** **20** **PR**
(R-Fr.) Andre Sims Jr. 21

(Jr.) **Kevin Muma** **17** **KO**
(5th) Dan Conroy 4

(So.) **Nick Hill** **20** **KR**
(Sr.) Larry Caper 22

(Fr.) **Taybor Pepper** **52** **LS**
(So.) Leland Ewing 71



Allan Joseph
Editor-in-Chief

If last week's contest showed Notre Dame is back to winning on off-days, this week will show the Irish aren't yet a top-10 squad. Michigan State is, again under Mark Dantonio, a BCS-quality team with a staunch defense and an effective rushing attack. Notre Dame is a top-25 team with a great defensive front and rushing attack, and lots of weaknesses elsewhere. The game should follow that template.

Notre Dame will keep it close for a while. It's the first opportunity the Irish have to make a statement on a national scale, and they'll come out fired up. But the Spartans are just too complete and consistent to not beat the Irish, who still make bad mistakes at bad times. Barring a major breakout game from Golson, this one won't be as close as the score might seem.

FINAL SCORE: Michigan State 27, Notre Dame 20



Andrew Owens
Assistant Managing Editor

Weeks three and four will tell us everything we need to know about the 2012 Irish, starting with a trip to No. 10 Michigan State, home to a hostile road environment and a Heisman Trophy-caliber running back in Le'Veon Bell. If you think Brian Kelly's offense struggled with communication and time management at the friendly confines of Notre Dame Stadium, just wait until sophomore quarterback Everett Golson experiences Spartan Stadium's night-game atmosphere.

The Irish will hold Bell in check for most of the game, but a couple big plays will doom a Notre Dame squad that will be desperate for points against an excellent Michigan State defense. The Irish simply aren't ready to handle Mark Dantonio's Rose Bowl-bound squad for a full four quarters.

FINAL SCORE: Michigan State 28, Notre Dame 17



Chris Allen
Sports Editor

Two years ago, the Irish traveled to East Lansing and suffered one of the more heartbreaking losses in recent program history on a fake field goal. The final score of that game was 34-31. Don't expect nearly that many points to be scored this week. Le'Veon Bell struggled to get anything going against the Irish run defense last year, and may struggle again.

This game is going to come down to the play of two inexperienced quarterbacks — Andrew Maxwell and Everett Golson. Maxwell played well last week, but struggled with Boise State. In a low-scoring game, a big play is often what wins it, and I like Golson over Maxwell to make the big play — and avoid the big mistake. On the road, I see the Irish defense making a stop late to preserve the narrowest of victories.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 17, Michigan State 16

0 HEAD



NO. 20 NOTRE DAME

CB **6** KeiVarae Russell (Fr.)

43 Josh Atkinson (So.)

OLB **30** Ben Councell (So.)

45 Romeo Okwara (Fr.)

DE **89** Kapron Lewis-Moore (Gr.)

91 Sheldon Day (Fr.)

NG **9** Louis Nix (Jr.)

96 Kona Schwenke (Jr.)

DE **7** Stephon Tuitt (So.)

50 Chase Hounshell (So.)

OLB **55** Prince Shembo (Jr.)

11 Ishaq Williams (So.)

CB **2** Bennett Jackson (Jr.)

21 Jalen Brown (So.)

WR **7** T.J. Jones (Jr.)

16 DaVaris Daniels (So.)

WR **9** Robby Toma (Sr.)

19 Davonte' Neal (Fr.)

RT **74** Christian Lombard (Jr.)

72 Nick Martin (So.)

RG **57** Mike Golic Jr. (Gr.)

65 Conor Hanratty (So.)

C **52** Braxton Cave (Gr.)

57 Mike Golic Jr. (Gr.)

LG **66** Chris Watt (Sr.)

65 Conor Hanratty (So.)

LT **70** Zack Martin (Sr.)

78 Ronnie Stanley (Fr.)

TE **80** Tyler Eifert (Sr.)

18 Beh Koyack (So.)

WR **81** John Goodman (Gr.)

87 Daniel Smith (Jr.)

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

40 Nick Tausch (Sr.)

KR **4** George Atkinson (So.)

6 Theo Riddick (Sr.)

LS **60** Jordan Cowart (Sr.)

61 Scott Daly (Fr.)

S **17** Zeke Motta (Sr.)

29 Nicky Baratti (Fr.)

ILB **48** Dan Fox (Sr.)

59 Carlo Calabrese (Sr.)

ILB **5** Manti Te'o (Sr.)

59 Jarrett Grace (So.)

S **26** Jamoris Slaughter (Gr.)

41 Matthias Farley (So.)

RB **6** Theo Riddick (Sr.)

20 Cierre Wood (Sr.)

QB **5** Everett Golson (So.)

11 Tommy Rees (Jr.)

PK **40** Nick Tausch (Sr.)

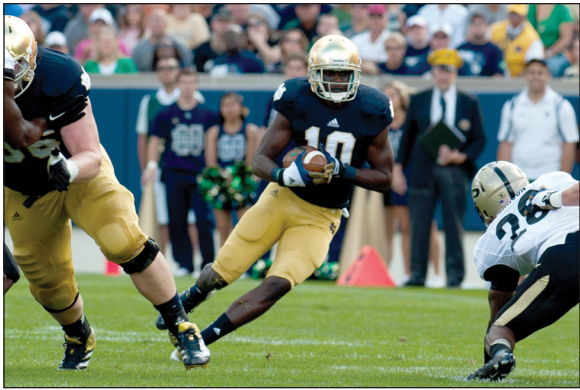
27 Kyle Brindza (So.)

P **35** Ben Turk (Sr.)

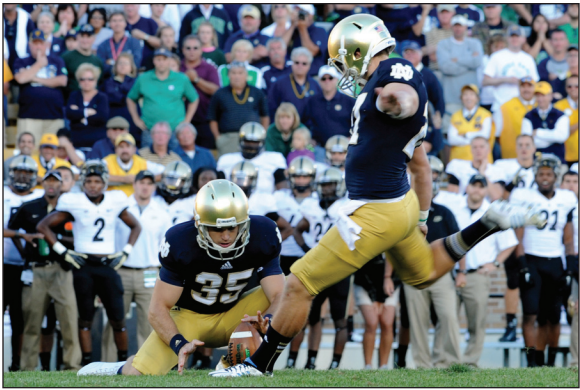
27 Kyle Brindza (So.)

PR **19** Davonte' Neal (Fr.)

81 John Goodman (Gr.)



KEVIN SONG | The Observer



KIRBY MCKENNA | The Observer

IRISH PASSING

Just when Irish fans thought the quarterback controversy was behind them, Irish coach Brian Kelly called upon junior Tommy Rees to lead Notre Dame's final drive against Purdue. Rees, a 12-game starter from last season, replaced sophomore starter Everett Golson in a move that surprised most of Notre Dame Stadium. Rees got the Irish in field goal position and sophomore kicker Kyle Brindza did the rest. But what does that quarterback flip mean for the Michigan State game?

Kelly said immediately after the game Golson remains his starter and has reiterated this week he wants the starter to finish the game as well. Golson will face a talented Spartan secondary that includes senior cornerback Johnny Adams and junior safety Isaiah Lewis. Adams has nine career interceptions and is considered one of the top draft-eligible cornerbacks in the nation, while Lewis, a preseason all-Big Ten selection, had an interception last week against Central Michigan.

Golson and the Irish will continue to lean on senior tight end Tyler Eifert for big catches over undersized defenders. Despite being sidelined for much of the second half, Eifert still led Notre Dame with four receptions for 98 yards. Eifert will again cause matchup problems for the Spartans no matter where he is lined up — on the line, out wide or in the slot.

EDGE: EVEN

IRISH RUSHING

What looked like Notre Dame's strength against Navy turned into a mystery during the win over Purdue. The Irish, behind senior Theo Riddick and sophomore George Atkinson, compiled nearly 300 yards on the ground in the season opener, but could muster just more than 50 yards against a stout Purdue front.

Notre Dame will face another tough Big Ten defensive line this week when they try to contain junior defensive end William Gholston. Gholston, a likely first-round pick in next year's NFL Draft, racked up 16 tackles for loss for the Spartans in 2011. Last week, the Irish had trouble with Purdue defensive tackle Kawann Short and weren't able to run the ball consistently.

This week, Notre Dame will welcome back senior running back Cierre Wood to the lineup after his two-game suspension for violating team rules. Last season, Wood rushed for 1,102 yards and nine touchdowns while splitting time with former running back Jonas Gray. Wood will assume the role of backup to Riddick after being penciled in as the starter before his suspension.

Despite Wood's return, the Irish will struggle to run the ball against a talented defense that ranks second in the nation against the run. Plus, Purdue gave Michigan State the blueprint for shutting down Notre Dame.

EDGE: MICHIGAN STATE

IRISH OFFENSIVE COACHING

Spartans coach Mark Dantonio is a defensive genius who has molded Michigan State's defense into one that has not allowed an offensive touchdown yet this season. Irish coach Brian Kelly, meanwhile, struggled to adjust to the stacked fronts Purdue showed the Irish offense last week.

EDGE: MICHIGAN STATE

IRISH SPECIAL TEAMS

Michigan State knows just how explosive sophomore George Atkinson is on kick returns after he took one to the house last year against the Spartans. The touchdown helped turn the game around for Notre Dame and spurred the Irish to an 18-point win. Sophomore kicker Kyle Brindza stepped up last week in nailing the game-winning kick, and freshman receiver Davonte' Neal has been solid on punt returns.

EDGE: NOTRE DAME

IRISH SCHEDULE

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



Andrew Gastelum
Associate Sports Editor



Matthew DeFranks
Associate Sports Editor

There is a little something called momentum on the Irish sidelines. It's been gone for quite some time, and looks like a stranger on the Notre Dame sidelines. But it's there. And this Irish team remembers what happened the last time it stepped off the field in East Lansing.

Now with both teams in the top 20, a primetime game under the lights and a chance to go 3-0, this will be a game to remember. The two teams are so even on both sides of the ball, and return solid defenses while starting new quarterbacks.

I can honestly say this game could come down to special teams and intangibles. If the Irish take advantage of their rare red-zone opportunities, they steal this one in the latest chapter of this recently-heated rivalry.

FINAL SCORE: Notre Dame 19, Michigan State 14

Pulling out a win at raucous Spartan Stadium during a night game is tough. It's tougher when it's your first true road game of the season. It's even tougher when the Michigan State team you are facing in ranked 10th in the nation. That is what Everett Golson is facing.

He is also facing William Gholston and the rest of the Michigan State defense that hasn't allowed an offensive touchdown yet this season. If the Irish can contain Gholston, they have a shot at pulling out a win.

Meanwhile, the Notre Dame defense will have to contain Heisman Trophy candidate Le'Veon Bell and the physical ground-and-pound offense of the Spartans. Michigan State just needs to avoid turning the ball over and they can grind out a victory.

FINAL SCORE: Michigan State 20, Notre Dame 13

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Injured players return from Purdue setbacks



KIRBY MCKENNA | The Observer

Irish senior captain and tight end Tyler Eifert makes a move in the open field during Notre Dame's 20-17 win over Purdue on Sept. 8. Eifert left the contest in the second half due to a mild concussion but will be available for Saturday's game at Michigan State. Eifert's replacement, sophomore Troy Niklas, caught one pass for 30 yards in extended action.

By **ALLAN JOSEPH**
Editor-in-Chief

Just two games into a grueling schedule many consider the toughest in the nation, the Irish are already fighting a spate of injuries, most of which occurred in last week's 20-17 win over Purdue.

Safety Jamoris Slaughter, tight end Tyler Eifert, quarterback Everett Golson, defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore, receiver DaVaris Daniels, linebacker Manti Te'o, linebacker Ishaq Williams, kicker Nick Tausch and defensive lineman Sheldon Day all suffered injuries in the home opener. With Notre Dame's "Next Man In" philosophy, however, the Irish were able to improve to 2-0.

"You have got to be ready in case anything happens," said sophomore defensive back Matthias Farley, who replaced Slaughter. "In practice, you cannot just sit there and goof around because anybody can go down at any time on any play.

"You have to be locked into your assignments and learn as you watch and just have the confidence in practice built up."

Sophomore kicker Kyle Brindza, who made the game-winning field goal against the Boilermakers, said "Next Man In" has been drilled into him since day one.

"People have been talking

about it ever since I got here," he said. "It's something we all live up to and something we expect out of each other ... We are all able to trust one another."

"You build your program in terms of when you get the chance and you get that opportunity; you have high expectations."

Brian Kelly
Irish coach

That philosophy, in turn, helped Brindza center himself for the game-winner.

"Every time we break down we say 'count on me' and I was able to count on my team to get down there," Brindza said. "It was just my turn to pay it back to them. It was just about me being able to count on myself and them to be able to count on me and have the trust in me to be able to do this."

All injured players are expected to compete against Michigan State, one of many teams on the slate known to play a physical brand of football. Farley, however, said the schedule had little to do with injuries and everything to do

with the team's fitness.

"No one knows when someone is going to get hurt," he said. "You can get hurt not touching anybody. It's a tough schedule, but you can have everyone 100 percent healthy or you can get hurt at the beginning."

Farley credited head trainer Rob Hunt and his staff with keeping the Irish healthy.

"They always want to stay on top of whatever it is," he said. "If something is nagging or aching, we just go and communicate with them all the time — even if it is just something minor, so they know about it and can monitor it as the season progresses."

In the bigger picture, the mild injuries opened the door for young players to get early game experience in a pressure-packed environment, which could prove to be vital down the stretch.

"Just getting the game experience is obviously a big confidence booster, and just knowing the coaches have trust to put you in is a big deal," Farley said. "Being able to get that game experience and being so young is a huge benefit now and a huge benefit going forward."

Irish coach Brian Kelly said he expected nothing less than the best from the next men in.

"Anytime you get contributions from so many different

players, that's what you try to prepare for," he said. "You build your program in terms of when you get that chance and you get that opportunity; you have high expectations

... Your guys are all committed to being the best they can be."

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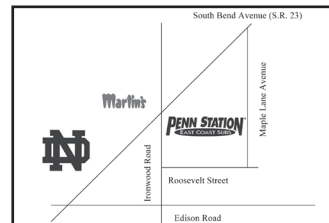


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Bell presents tough test for defense



AP

Michigan State junior running back Le'Veon Bell runs the ball during the Spartans' 17-13 win over Boise State on Aug. 31.

By **ANDREW GASTELUM**
Associate Sports Editor

Before facing the likes of quarterbacks Denard Robinson, Landry Jones and Matt Barkley, the Irish will have to contain yet another Heisman candidate in Michigan State junior running back Le'Veon Bell.

Only two games into the season, Bell is averaging 140 yards and two touchdowns per game, good enough for sixth in the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision. But it is his versatility and durability that has Irish coach Brian Kelly worried.

"The challenge is that [Bell] plays, and he plays every down, and he keeps coming after you," Kelly said. "He's relentless, physical and I don't know if this is fair to him, but he's just a throwback [player]. I mean, he just keeps going. And the more carries he gets, the better he gets."

"But you know, that's typical to the kind of runners that Michigan State has had. They are recruiting those kind of guys that just keep pounding the ball at you. He can catch the ball out of the backfield. He is the complete back."

The Columbus, Ohio, native possesses uncanny athleticism for a 6-foot-2, 244-pound running back, as the Spartans sometimes line him up as a receiver and use him as a pass blocker to pick up blitzes.

"I think Le'Veon, as I've said many times he's a very good football player, is sort of a complete football player in the fact he can run down there, be on the kick-off team, be in the kick return team, return punts. He's a great blocker," Spartans coach Mark Dantonio said. "He's a physical guy and can withstand that physical type of environment he's going to have to go through."

Expectations for the junior rose to Heisman-level proportions following Michigan State's gutty 17-13 win over No. 24 Boise State in its Aug. 31 season opener. Bell rushed for 210 yards and two

touchdowns on an astounding 44 carries and recorded career highs in rushing attempts, rushing yards, receptions (6), receiving yards (55) and all-purpose yards (265).

"I didn't expect to be touching the ball as many times as I did," Bell said. "But the fact that I was in good enough shape and lifting a lot allowed my body to continue through the game."

"We always wanted to run the ball. Now we have the all star lineup to do it and these guys are experienced up front, we want to get back to running the football and help get pressure off of [red-shirt-junior quarterback Andrew] Maxwell."

In 2010, the last time the Irish made the trek to East Lansing, Bell rushed for 114 yards and a touchdown in the Spartans' 34-31 overtime win. But last season, the Irish held the vaunted Michigan State rushing attack to only 29 yards — Bell accounted for 27 of the 29 yards — in a 31-13 upset win Sept. 18.

"You want to be balanced on offense," Bell said. "[Notre Dame] can come out and be physical. They are going to want to stop the run early. We want to run the ball early, so we might get stopped in the beginning of the game, but then we want to wear those guys out over the course of the game. Those four yard runs can turn into eight yard runs near the end of the game and that's what we want to do, just wear guys out and run the ball hard."

Kelly said the Irish rushing defense, which has held opposing teams to 3.4 yards per carry through two games this season, knows exactly what's coming its way.

"We know what kind of game it's going to be," Kelly said. "It's going to be a physical game. You can't win those games unless you play good run defense. There's no chance."

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