I still remember his first press conference. It was yesterday. No line stuck that day more than "We're going to have a hard-working, intelligent, nasty football team." Did new Bead Football Coach Charlie Weis really say that? Some university administrators were on the brink of a brain hemorrhage when he used the word. But Weis was right. Notre Dame was sadly losing the toughness and mystique that once made its opponents tremble. Be seemed determined to rectify that. Perhaps he was the "one" who would bring balance to the force.

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I remember watching the Blue-Gold game on a freakishly cold day in April and leaving thinking the following: Brady Quinn will one day be a legitimate Heisman Trophy candidate, and Jeff Samardzija will have a breakout 2005 season. My friends scoffed at me. There was no way a struggling Quinn could win the Heisman, they said. They didn't even know the guy with a last name they continually crucified was even on the team. Fortunately Quinn, with his 2005 numbers, will probably need to reserve a ticket to New York in 2006, and Samardzija became an All-American almost overnight. But not even I could foresee that the Irish would break 47 team and individual records this season. Nor did I think Notre Dame would come within six points of a magical undefeated regular season. Watching the offensive renaissance being painted by Weis was quite a sight. Yet the 2005 season is simply a portion of a masterpiece he still has to finish. Be has yet to add strokes of speed and experience. Rome wasn't built in a day, was it?

The media that doomed Notre Dame to mediocrity suddenly began praising the old aches once again. The 9-3 record was unexpected, but Weis will be the first to tell you he's disappointed. Be wants to win every game and anything else is unacceptable. Some think that's arrogance, but I think it's excellence. Excellence is Notre Dame, and she deserves nothing less. And lucky for me, I got to see it all happen traveling throughout the country and watching all twelve games of Weis' first season in person. What a wild ride.

Sincerely,

Michael Kim
Football Review Editor
FROM THE EDITOR...

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Notre Dame Head Football Coach Charlie Weis ranked 53rd in The Sporting News “Power 100” list of the most powerful people in sports today. Weis was the highest-ranked individual associated with college athletics, beating NCAA President Myles Brand (No. 63).

The Notre Dame football team finished No. 9 in the Final 2005 Associated Press Top 25 College Football Poll, marking the Irish’s first appearance in the top 10 since 1993. It marked the 35th time that the Irish have finished in the final AP top 10 since the poll began in 1936.

The total attendance for the six 2005 Notre Dame home games was 484,770.

11 of 15 true freshmen from the 2005 recruiting class played this year. During the three years of former Irish Head Coach Tyrone Willingham’s tenure, only 11 total played as true freshmen.

During the 2005 Notre Dame home football season, 352,113 beverages were sold at Notre Dame Stadium.

Notre Dame scored 440 total points during the 2005 season, more than any team in the history of ND football. The previous record was 426.

Football expenses for the 2005 season will exceed $15,000,000, an amount which includes such costs as equipment, travel, salaries and recruiting expenses. Expenses for the 2004 season totaled $15,092,475.

A brutal schedule? Notre Dame started the 2005 season with what looked like one of the toughest schedules in the country, as 5 Irish opponents were ranked, with three of them falling in the preseason top 10. But Notre Dame ended up having one of the easiest schedules — on paper, at least. Only three Irish opponents finished with winning records (Michigan, USC, Navy).

According to the NCAA, Notre Dame ranked No. 2 in graduating football players at 96 percent. Notre Dame’s 2005 opponents had the following rates: Navy, 98 percent; Stanford, 92 percent; Washington, 75 percent; Syracuse, 75 percent; Purdue, 70 percent; Michigan, 68 percent; USC, 55 percent; Ohio State, 54 percent; Pittsburgh, 48 percent; Michigan State, 41 percent; and BYU, 40 percent.

The 2006 Fiesta Bowl Telecast on ABC produced a 12.9 Nielsen television rating, the highest for a Notre Dame game during the 2005 season. The Notre Dame-USC game on Oct. 15, 2005, garnered a 6.7, but peaked at 14.2 in the final few minutes.

45,589 ticket requests were made for the 2006 Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, the most requests ever received for any postseason game in Irish football history. It took 20 staff members in the Notre Dame ticket office more than 100 hours to process and input every order.
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THE GREEN JERSEYS

They were the right tint of green this time around, unlike the looks like the ticket office staff has too much faith kelly green jerseys worn in 2002. If only we can find a way in the student body. How could they not foresee that to win in these things ... students were going to try to get multiple lottery numbers? They're not all holy.

HIGH-DEFINITION FOR HOME FOOTBALL GAMES

ON NBC FIESTA BOWL TELECAST ON ABC

Finally, the telecast doesn't look like it was prepared by, Laura Quinn actually managed to get more air time kindergartners. Alumni and fans get to see the gold helmets than her brother. shine the way they need to on television.

THE GUGLIELMINO COMPLEX

THE SHIRT 2005

Widescreen plasma televisions and video game consoles, Although the highest selling Shirt, it ruined student in the locker room? Is this an athletic facility or a high-class unity. But worst of all, it made us look like Michigan bachelor pad? fans.

www.nd.edu/~vocation
THE WALK  Tradition is one of Notre Dame’s greatest strengths. Approximately two hours before kickoff, Irish players and coaches convene in the Lady Chapel at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart for Mass. Afterwards, players like safety Tom Zbikowski, running back Darius Walker and cornerback Ambrose Wooden are greeted by thousands of cheering fans who create a path from Main Quad all the way to the Notre Dame Stadium gate.

(Inset: Players get a glimpse of the Golden Dome as they walk towards Notre Dame Stadium)

Photos by Michael Kim
REAWAKENING THE ECHOES  Tied 14-14 in the second quarter against USC, safety Tom Zbikowski received a 41-yard punt from Trojan punter Tom Malone. From his own 40-yard line, Zbikowski, who Notre Dame defensive coordinator Rick Minter once said had the look of "a kamikaze pilot," fought off a pack of USC defenders for a 60-yard punt return touchdown to give Notre Dame a 21-14 lead. Notre Dame Stadium erupted as Irish fans shook down the thunder and woke up the old echoes of Notre Dame lore. (Inset: sequence of Zbikowski punt)

Photos by Brenna Mannion
IN THE SPOTLIGHT: The glory of wearing the gold and blue at Notre Dame also has its burdens, as players are under constant scrutiny and the media pressure is relentless. Quarterback Brady Quinn answers questions after the USC game. (Inset: wide receiver Jeff Samardzija is interviewed after the Purdue game and linebacker Brandon Hoyte after the Michigan game) Photos by Michael Kim
ROAD GLORY Linebacker and defensive team captain Brandon Hoyte prepares his Notre Dame teammates at the tunnel of Heinz Field to open the 2005 season on the road against Pittsburgh. The Irish went undefeated on the road during the regular season, the first time that has happened since the 1993 season. (Inset: on the road at Husky Field against Washington) Photos by Brenna Mannion and Michael Kim
The Weis Era Begins

Notre Dame 42  Pittsburgh 21

Disgusted with the way his defense was playing, Weis went over to defensive coordinator Rick Minter and said angrily, "[They] better start playing better or I will put in the second string." His stern message resonated among the Notre Dame bench. The Irish responded to Weis' threat by scoring on their own opening drive, with running back Darius Walker taking a screen pass from quarterback Brady Quinn 51 yards to the end zone. It was the longest reception of Walker's young career.

While the Panthers closed out the first quarter with a field goal, putting them ahead of the Irish by three, the second quarter saw a Notre Dame offensive outburst with the Irish scoring 28 unanswered points. Walker led the offensive barrage with a 2-yard touch-
The Weis Era Begins

Notre Dame 42
Pittsburgh 21

In his last visit to Pittsburgh, Penn., on Jan. 23, 2005, Charlie Weis, then-offensive coordinator of the Patriots, masterfully orchestrated a potent New England offense to beat the Pittsburgh Steelers in the AFC Championship, 41-27. And while the pressure of a potential Super Bowl berth was not hanging in the balance on Weis' next visit to Heinz Field eight months later on Sept. 3, 2005, he faced the weight of debuting as Notre Dame's 28th head coach against the then-No. 23 Pittsburgh Panthers.

Many Irish fans were optimistic about Weis' hire, but at the outset of the Notre Dame-Pittsburgh game, the Weis era did not look so promising. Only four minutes into the first quarter, Pittsburgh quarterback Tyler Palko connected with wide receiver Greg Lee to give the Panthers an early 7-0 lead.

Disgusted with the way his defense was playing, Weis went over to defensive coordinator Rick Minter and said angrily, "[They] better start playing better or I will put in the second string." His stern message resonated among the Notre Dame bench. The Irish responded to Weis' threat by scoring on their own opening drive, with running back Darius Walker taking a screen pass from quarterback Brady Quinn 51 yards to the end zone. It was the longest reception of Walker's young career.

While the Panthers closed out the first quarter with a field goal, putting them ahead of the Irish by three, the second quarter saw a Notre Dame offensive outburst with the Irish scoring 28 unanswered points. Walker led the offensive barrage with a 2-yard touchdown run, followed by a spectacular, acrobatic, 19-yard catch by wide receiver Jeff Samardzija, the first of his career. Running back Rashon Powers-Neal also added two powerful touchdown runs.

Pittsburgh and Notre Dame fans were stunned - the former by their home team being pummeled after such high expectations and the latter by seeing the beginnings of a long-awaited offensive renaissance. Weis recalled at halftime that his "players started to realize they're better than they thought they were," and the scoreboard certainly proved it, with Notre Dame dominating 35-13 at the half. The Irish tallied 319 total offensive yards in the first half, enough to surpass the total of five full games from the 2004 season.

In the third quarter Notre Dame continued its newfound mastery of ball-possession offense — reminiscent of Weis' former Patriots teams — with a 20-play drive that milked seven minutes off the clock. Powers-Neal capped off the marathon drive with his third touchdown run of the night. In the fourth quarter, Pittsburgh added a touchdown with a two-point conversion, but this did little to change the game. Notre Dame won impressively with a final score of 42-21. Quinn, leading the new Weis-installed offense for the first time, went 18-27 for 227 yards with two touchdown throws and one interception. Walker finished with 20 rushes for 100 yards.

Although the victory was a tremendous success for Notre Dame, some growing pains were evident throughout the game. The Irish committed 10 penalties for a loss of 94 yards, and at one point in the game, Samardzija forgot his holding duties for an extra point, forcing the Irish to burn a time-out and infuriating Weis. Defensive end Ronald Talley made a foolish late hit on one of the Pittsburgh players, and Weis gave Talley a mouthful of unpleasant words on national television. Even Weis had some trouble adjusting to being the head coach, especially with the headphones that allowed him to speak to his assistants in the coaches' booth. "I'm hammering someone on offense, and they'll say 'You're [talking] to the defense, coach.'"
Hail to the Irish Victors

Notre Dame 17  Michigan 10

Hail to the Victors

Though it had been almost two years since the Irish’s last visit to Michigan Stadium in 2003 — which resulted in a 38-0 loss — and a hefty 12 years since they had topped the Wolverines in the “Big House,” Notre Dame was fueled by still fresh memories of past defeats when the Irish arrived in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Sept. 10, 2005, for their second game of the season. Conversely, Michigan was looking to avenge something to prove and the Irish were hungry to beat the then third-ranked Wolverines.

Notre Dame came out on its opening drive using a no-huddle offense to throw the Michigan defense off-balance. The Irish marched 76 yards down the field with relative ease, never facing a third down, and ended the impressive drive with a 5-yard pass from quarterback Brady Quinn to wide receiver Rhema McKnight for his first touchdown reception of the season.

The game proved to be a fierce defensive grind. Injuries plagued both sides, with Irish linebacker Corey Mays making a booming hit on Michigan running back Michael Hart that resulted in a game-ending hamstring injury for Hart. Notre Dame, on the other hand, lost McKnight, who severely twisted his knee when he was sandwiched between two Michigan defenders.

The stagnant Wolverine offense showed signs of life late in the first quarter when wide receiver Steve Breaston gained 30 yards on a reverse that made the Irish defense look flat-footed, but Michigan only gained a field goal from the effort.

Notre Dame struck back by earning every grueling yard against an inspired Michigan defense. The Irish capitalized on a 5-yard play-action pass from Quinn, who threw into a swarm of Michigan defenders. The ball was tipped but caught by wide receiver Jeff Samardzija for a touchdown, putting Notre Dame up 14-3 at halftime.

Michigan attempted to dismantle the Irish in the second half, especially with a third quarter drive that put the Wolverines on the Irish 12-yard line. But the Irish defense stepped up, as safety Tom Zbikowski intercepted the ensuing pass on the 1-yard line to avert any danger.

The Wolverines kept pressing but con-
Running back Darius Walker runs by Michigan linebacker Shawn Crable. Walker had 104 rushing yards against the Wolverines.

Notre Dame came out on its opening visit to Michigan since the Irish's last upset by the Irish at Notre Dame, on the other hand, lost two games. Let's come back and revisit that in about 10 years.
For Head Coach Charlie Weis, it was his first loss at the collegiate level. Weis voiced his disappointment during the post-game press conference. “I told them that they don’t give out medals for trying,” Weis said. “They shouldn’t feel good about themselves for coming back.”

While the loss was disheartening for the Notre Dame faithful, several Irish players demonstrated their potential for improvement during the loss. Quinn arrived on the Heisman radar following his 487-yard, five-touchdown performance. Quinn’s target, wide receiver Jeff Samardzija, also made his case for being the best wide receiver in the nation with his three touchdowns and near 100-yard performance. Meanwhile, wide receiver Maurice Stovall made eight receptions for 178 yards.

The first half was riddled with momentum swings. After both teams failed to capitalize on their opening drives, the offensive showdown got underway, and Notre Dame and Michigan State exchanged scoring drives until late in the second quarter.

Then, with the game knotted at 17 apiece and halftime approaching, Michigan State took control of the game. Teague rushed for 18 yards on the opening play of the drive, leaving less than a minute on the clock. Michigan State Head Coach John L. Smith called a timeout and gave Stanton the go-ahead to throw the ball deep. After missing on his first throw and being forced out of the pocket on second down, Stanton came up strong, throwing 45 yards to wide receiver Terry Love, who was forced out of bounds at the Notre Dame 2-yard line.
A BIT OF A STRETCH

Wide receiver Maurice Stovall scores a touchdown in Notre Dame's unsuccessful bid for a comeback ...

SO CLOSE, BUT YET SO FAR

Notre Dame defense tackles Michigan State running back Jason Teague and almost ended the game in regulation with a safety.

...Wide receiver Maurice Stovall scores a touchdown in Notre Dame's unsuccessful bid for a comeback ...

by Irish safety Tom Zbikowski. Stanton then carried the ball into the end zone to put the Spartans up 24-17 going into the locker room.

With momentum on their side, the Spartans continued to bombard the Irish in the second half. On the opening drive for the Irish, Quinn threw two ill-advised passes, one resulting in an interception, which was returned 30 yards for a touchdown by Michigan State defensive back Sirdean Adams. The turnover gave the Spartans a comfortable 14-point lead.

The Spartans continued to play tenacious defense throughout the third quarter, forcing the Irish to punt on their next two possessions. With six minutes remaining in the third quarter, Stanton once again went to the air with a pair of passes to wide receiver Matt Trannon for 27 and 65 yards and another touchdown.

With limited time and a substantial deficit mounted against the Irish, Quinn took the reigns of the offense. Quinn would throw the ball on the next nine downs, completing eight passes in a row for a late third-quarter touchdown. The Irish entered the last quarter of play down 38-24.

As the Notre Dame defense held strong, Quinn continued to open up the field on offense with a pair of passes to Stovall, the first for 50 yards and the second for seven yards and a touchdown that put the Irish within seven of the Spartans. Quinn would lead another miraculous drive later in the fourth quarter, hitting Samardzija for a 4-yard touchdown pass to tie the game at 38-38.

With time winding down, Michigan State was pinned deep in their own territory. Beginning from their own 4-yard line, the Spartans were pushed back 3 yards by the Notre Dame defense. Stuck in his own end zone and unable to kneel out the clock, Stanton needed to kill the time without yielding a safety. With Irish linemen Derek Landri and Trevor Laws bearing down on Stanton, the Spartan quarterback managed to scramble out for a 1-yard gain and a chance at overtime — a chance that Michigan State would capitalize on.

With Teague's 18-yard touchdown run in overtime, Notre Dame's hopes of an undefeated season came crashing to the ground. In postgame celebration, the Spartans planted their flag at midfield, much to the ire of the Irish faithful. With five straight wins at Notre Dame Stadium including this overtime thriller, the Spartans certainly have claimed their territory.
FLIPSIDE Quarterback Brady Quinn lines up against a Washington team led by his former coach Tyrone Willingham.

A Ty Bowl Victory
Notre Dame 36 Washington 17

Media members circled Sept. 24, 2005, on their calendars when they heard that former Notre Dame Head Coach Tyrone Willingham was hired by the University of Washington. On that day, Willingham would lead his Huskies against the Irish less than 10 months after his dismissal from Notre Dame as head coach. Head Coach Charlie Weis knew the distraction this presented for his players, who were still dealing with the fallout of Willingham’s controversial firing. Weis refused to comment on Willingham’s firing since the day the former New England Patriots offensive coordinator was hired and continued to do so leading up to the game he coined the “Ty Bowl.” Weis and his team focused solely on football, leaving emotion at home as they headed to Seattle, Wash., to play the struggling Washington Huskies.

Washington came out fast and furious on its opening drive; it was evident that they had the urgency to win one for Willingham. However, their opening drive quickly unraveled when wide receiver Craig Chambers fumbled the ball to the Irish on the Notre Dame 1-yard line. The play foreshadowed the rest of the day for the Huskies, as they committed costly turnovers at inopportune moments.

Although Chambers’ fumble forced the Irish to begin their first offensive drive on their own 1-yard line, on the first offensive play of the game for Notre Dame, quarterback Brady Quinn questionably rolled to the right in his own end zone and connected with tight end Anthony Fasano, who then acrobatically leapt over a Washington defender for a gain of 13 yards and a first down. However, as Irish fans would later discover, Weis’ first call of the game was deliberate; he had promised Montana Mazurkiewicz, a 10-year-old boy who was dying of an inoperable brain tumor, to call the “pass right” play as the first play of the game. Mazurkiewicz sadly died before he could see the play that he asked Weis to call.
Husky Stadium  
Attendance: 71,473  
All-Time Series: 6-0-0

**KEY STATS**  
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**KEY PERFORMANCES:**  
- Darius Walker: 21 Carries, 128 Yards, 1 TD  
- Travis Thomas: 2 Carries, 50 Yards, 1 TD  
- Brady Quinn: 25-37-327 Yards, 1 TD  
- Jeff Samardzija: 8 Receptions, 155 Yards, 1 TD  
- Ambrose Wooden: 2 tackles, 1 INT

FROM THE PRESS BOX

Head Coach Charlie Weis visited 10-year-old Montana Mazurkiewicz in his Mishawaka, Ind., home days before the Washington game. Weis, who recruited Montana, begged him to ‘call pass right’ on their opening drive of the game. Montana offered words of encouragement to the Irish before the game.

Keeping his promise to Montana, Weis called ‘pass right’ on Notre Dame’s first play against the Huskies. Montana moved Notre Dame from their own 1-yard line and resulted in an Irish first down. It’s almost like Montana was willing him to be a great quarterback and achieve his goal,” Weis said.

After the 36-17 win, Weis delivered the game ball signed by the entire team to the Mazurkiewicz household. Montana’s mother, Cathy, said, “I just thanked him for using that play no matter the circumstances.”

Despite the effectiveness of Mazurkiewicz’s “pass right” play, the Notre Dame offense started off sluggish, and the only bright spot for the Irish in the first half was a 17-yard touchdown run by running back Darius Walker, who would finish the game with 128 rushing yards, making him the first Notre Dame running back to rush for 100 yards in four consecutive games. Kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick added two field goals for the Irish in the first half, and the Irish went into the locker room at halftime ahead 12-3.

Washington had its chance to take control of the game in the third quarter when Huskies quarterback Isaiah Stanback threw a career-long pass of 69 yards to wide receiver Marlon Wood. But the Huskies wasted the effort when, two plays later, Stanback carelessly threw into the end zone and Irish cornerback Ambrose Wooden intercepted the pass.

Notre Dame began to surge late in the third quarter when fullback Rashon Powers-Neal bulldozed his way into the end zone for a 2-yard touchdown run. The Irish put the game out of reach when Quinn threw a 52-yard bomb to wide receiver Jeff Samardzija, who waltzed in for a touchdown, providing his team with a 29-3 lead. Running back Travis Thomas later added an 11-yard run in the fourth quarter for his first touchdown of the season. Despite the two touchdowns scored by Washington in the fourth quarter to make the score closer, ultimately, Notre Dame easily defeated Washington 36-17. There would be no last laugh for Willingham.

As the clock wound down, dozens of photographers raced to the center of the field to get a shot of Weis and Willingham shaking hands. Many of the Notre Dame players that Willingham recruited greeted him warmly, wishing him luck. Weis was relieved that the game was over. “I think, psychologically for the players, this will be a good thing to have behind them and move on to the next game,” he said.
When former Notre Dame Head Coach Tyrone Willingham was fired by the university on Nov. 30, 2004 — just three years into his six-year contract — after compiling a 21-15 overall record, it caused a seismic uproar in the college football world. Willingham became the first non-interim head coach in 70 years to be released from Notre Dame before the allotted time on his contract. Controversy engulfed Notre Dame; vocal media members accused the school of being racist and selling out its high standards to become just another football factory. A media firestorm was brewing, and it would only gather strength when Willingham, as the new head coach at Washington, would face his former team just 10 months after his dismissal.

Willingham deflected questions about his tenure at Notre Dame in the days leading up to Washington's game against the Irish. He gave eloquent but empty answers to media members that were trying to sensationalize the story into one of personal vengeance. Refusing to budge, Willingham continually said that the game would be just “two teams competing.” However, his own Washington players sensed their coach's unflappable image was merely a facade for the emotions that were driving this game.

“There was a difference at practice [that] week,” Washington cornerback Josh Okoebor said. “We knew he wanted this game bad. He’s intense every week, but you could tell he had that extra oomph for this one.” Perhaps that extra “oomph” was demonstrated when Willingham looked more fiery and vocal on the Washington sideline, getting into the faces of his players for every wrong move. It was different than what Notre Dame fans grew accustomed to when he used to roam the Irish sideline with his calm demeanor, crossed arms and steely-eyed stare.

The Huskies surely had their chances to upset the Irish, but costly turnovers would prove to be their downfall. The inconsistency was eerily similar to the West Coast offense Willingham tried to install at Notre Dame — one with flashes of brilliance, but one with head-scratching unproductiveness. When the final seconds ticked away, Willingham would not get the last laugh, as Notre Dame handed him a 36-17 loss.

Willingham put his disappointment aside for the time being and greeted his former players, whose homes he visited when he recruited them. “It’s still the same; I have a great respect for the [Notre Dame] program,” Willingham said. “I have great respect for the young men left in the program, great respect for many of the administrators there.” After the game, Notre Dame Head Coach Charlie Weis was relieved that the game was over and downplayed the media circus. “Our coaching staff and our players have the utmost respect for Willingham, his staff, his players and the University of Washington,” Weis said. “At this point, the game is over. I’ll move on, and I hope they move on.”

Notre Dame could finally distance itself from the backlash it faced during the Willingham affair. Coaches have come to and gone from Notre Dame, and it was finally time for Willingham to fade into the history books. He can move on with his life as he tries to rebuild a once-proud Washington program, while Notre Dame can try to recapture its glory days.
SPORTING NEW COLORS
Tyrone Willingham roams the sideline in his new Washington purple while facing his former team.

When former Notre Dame Head Coach Tyrone Willingham was fired by the university on Nov. 30, 2004—just three years into his six-year contract—after compiling a 21-15 overall record, it caused a seismic uproar in the college football world. Willingham became the first non-interim head coach in 70 years to be released from Notre Dame before the allotted time on his contract. Controversy engulfed Notre Dame; vocal media members accused the school of being racist and selling out its high standards to become just another football factory. A media firestorm was brewing, and it would only gather strength when Willingham, as the new head coach at Washington, would face his former team just 10 months after his dismissal.

Willingham deflected questions about his tenure at Notre Dame in the days leading up to Washington's game against the Irish. He gave eloquent but empty answers to media members that were trying to sensationalize the story into one of personal vengeance. Refusing to budge, Willingham continually said that the game would be just "two teams competing." However, his own Washington players sensed their coach's unflappable image was merely a facade for the emotions that were driving this game. "There was a difference at practice that week," Washington cornerback Josh Okoebor said. "We knew he wanted this game bad. He's intense every week, but you could tell he had that extra oomph for this one." Perhaps that extra "oomph" was demonstrated when Willingham looked more fiery and vocal on the Washington sideline, getting into the faces of his players for every wrong move. It was different than what Notre Dame fans grew accustomed to when he used to roam the Irish sideline with his calm demeanor, crossed arms and steely-eyed stare.

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Irish Bury Boilermakers

Notre Dame 49 Purdue 28

Wide receiver Jeff Samardzija makes a one-handed grab to set up the first touchdown for Notre Dame.

After a Darius Walker touchdown put Notre Dame up 28-0 over Purdue with just under three minutes remaining in the first half, ESPN's cameras caught Purdue defensive coordinator Brock Spack throwing a hand up in disgust with a look of bewilderment across his face. The Purdue defense had no answer for a Notre Dame offense that came out firing on all cylinders at Ross-Ade Stadium on Oct. 1, 2005.

The Irish scored touchdowns on five of their first seven possessions. Quarterback Brady Quinn was near perfect in the first half, completing 20 of his 23 pass attempts for 283 yards and one touchdown. He finished the game 29-36 with 440 yards and three touchdowns, and the Irish won 49-28.

The result was better than Quinn's previous game at Ross-Ade Stadium two years prior, where he made his first collegiate start as a freshman in 2003. In that game, Quinn threw four interceptions and was battered by the Purdue defense in a 23-10 loss. "I wasn't thinking about revenge coming into this game," Quinn said. "What enabled us to win was the execution of our game plan." Head Coach Charlie Weis praised his quarterback following the game. "Brady is performing like the leader we need him to be, and I look for him to continue to progress in upcoming games," he said. Weis was particularly pleased with Quinn's ability to complete short, quick throws to receivers and allow them to gain yards after the catch. "Brady picked them apart," Weis said. "We were taking 3-yard passes and turning them into 15-, 20-yard gains."

Wide receiver Jeff Samardzija was the recipient of several of these quick passes, and after most of them was able to use his size and speed to beat Purdue's iso-
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Wide receiver Jeff Samardzija was the recipient of several of these quick passes, and after most of them was able to use his size and speed to beat Purdue's isolated cornerbacks for long gains. But Samardzija's best reception — and the most impressive play of the game — came on a deep ball. Early in the first quarter, Samardzija took off down the middle of the field and made a diving, one-handed grab at the Purdue 1-yard line. The 41-yard reception set up Notre Dame's first score, a 1-yard run by running back Rashon Powers-Neal, who had two touchdowns on the game.

Other Irish scorers included Samardzija, who also had two touchdowns, running backs Walker and Travis Thomas and tight end John Carlson, who scored his first collegiate touchdown. And though he did not find the end zone, wide receiver Maurice Stovall finished the game with eight receptions and 134 yards.

The defense and special teams made big plays as well. On Purdue's second possession of the game, running back Jerod Void looked to be headed for the end zone on a long run, but cornerback Ambrose Wooden saved a touchdown by knocking Void out of bounds at the 1-yard line. On the next play, linebacker Brandon Hoyte forced a Void fumble that was recovered by cornerback Mike Richardson. Then, in the second quarter, defensive tackle Trevor Laws blocked a Purdue field goal attempt.

The loss was the second in a row for the Boilermakers, who many predicted would win the Big Ten Conference and who entered the game ranked No. 22. Their defense, which returned 11 starters from 2004, seemed nonexistent against the Irish, and their offense did not get going until the second half, during which they moved the ball well and scored 28 points. But with Notre Dame's sizeable lead, it was too little, too late.

Weis was happy with his team's performance after the game. "Sooner or later we were going to play a complete game, which this was," he said.
WHERE THE GREEN GRASS GROWS The Notre Dame Stadium grass was left extra-long to negate USC's speed on offense.

Game of the Year
USC 34 Notre Dame 31

in 1988, a newly regilded Golden Dome welcomed the No. 1 Miami Hurricanes as they rolled onto campus boasting a 36-game regular season winning streak. The Irish ended up beating Miami 31-30 on that glorious October day. Seventeen years later and with a Dome that had been regilded once again the summer prior, Notre Dame's campus saw a similarly unstoppable No. 1 USC team with a 27-game winning streak step onto its grounds. Notre Dame looked to repeat history.

In the most hyped game in recent Irish history, Notre Dame looked as if it had a chance against the Trojans, unlike in their previous three meetings, in each of which the Irish lost by 31 points. But with a rejuvenated confidence and a 4-1 record, Head Coach Charlie Weis sensed the opportunity to make history.

His team warmed up in their traditional blue home jerseys, but Weis surprised the crowd when the Irish burst out of the tunnel sporting green jerseys. Weis was a student in the stands when he saw the first "Green Jersey" game in 1977, when Notre Dame crushed USC 49-19, and he hoped to bring back the magic of the jerseys to inspire not only his players but also the Notre Dame crowd.

The Irish ran into some bad luck early in the game when quarterback Brady Quinn's flea flicker pass in the first quarter was deflected and intercepted by USC linebacker Keith Rivers. The Trojans capitalized on the turnover in only 34 seconds, as running back Reggie Bush broke through Irish defenders, storming 36 yards for a touchdown. But even the purposefully uncut, five-inch grass on
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Not even the, purposefully uncut, five-inch grass on the field was enough to negate the speed of the Trojans.

The Irish remained undeterred and converted on a risky fourth-and-one play to keep their second drive of the game alive. With the help of USC penalties that moved the chains on multiple plays, running back Travis Thomas broke key tackles and sprinted 16 yards into the end zone to tie the game, 7-7. The Trojans, however immediately would answer the Irish drive when they marched down the field in just over a minute to score a 2-yard rushing touchdown by running back LenDale White. The Trojan drive that put the Irish behind by seven was exactly what Weis had warned his Irish defense about; he knew that Notre Dame would have to keep the ball away from the potent Trojan offense as long as possible and play a ball-possession game for the Irish to come out on top. He hoped to "shorten the game" by relying heavily on running the ball and slowly but surely moving the chains. But even Weis' offensive strategy was not enough to defeat the mighty Trojans; while Notre Dame won the possession battle convincingly, holding the ball for over 38 minutes compared to USC's 21 minutes, the Irish eventually would fall to the Trojans.

The second quarter was a turning point for Notre Dame. Quinn looked down the field and connected with wide receiver Jeff Samardzija for a 32-yard touchdown to tie the game, 14-14. The Irish then delivered the biggest blow to the Trojans when safety Tom Zbikowski returned a punt 60 yards for a touchdown, sending the crowd into a frenzy. It was the first punt return for a touchdown by Notre Dame since 2002 when Vontez Duff returned the ball against Maryland for an Irish score. USC looked to answer again, but quarterback Matt Leinart's pass was deflected and intercepted by safety Chinedum Ndukwe in the end zone for a touchback. Notre Dame players and Weis went into the locker room up 21-14, knowing they had a chance to pull the upset. Yet they were well-aware that USC was notorious as a second-half team having a knack for overcoming deficits.

In the third quarter, the Trojans lived up to their billing as a second-half team when Bush struck with a 45-yard run for his second touchdown to tie the game, 21-21. The Trojans looked to do more damage until Leinart threw another rare
The USC Pep Rally

After thousands of fans were turned away from the Michigan State pep rally, the Joyce Center earlier in the year, Head Coach Charlie Weis decided to move the pep rally to the USC game to Notre Dame Stadium. Thinking the fans want to be going to the pep rally, they should have a venue to be able to go. Weis said, "We just felt it was the best thing for the fans was to give them the opportunity to get a part of the experience." The last time the pep rally was moved to the stadium was in 2000 for the Nebraska game.

An excess of 50,000 fans came to the pep rally to cheer on the Irish. Fans were greeted by a large wooden Trojan horse similar to the one in the 1977 USC pep rally before the famous "Green Jersey" game when Notre Dame upset the Trojans, 49-10. Weis invited former legendary Notre Dame players to speak and help motivate his players and the crowd. Joe Montana, Brian "Redy" Rudiger, Chris Zorich, and Tim Brown were all in attendance. Weis challenged the fans to be loud for the game and create a hostile atmosphere for the Trojans to take off.

The home-field advantage, Irish fans did indeed follow. With requests and although Notre Dame did not come out victorious, the hyped-up fans contributed to making the game go down as one of the best in college football history.

completed three passes and then capped off the drive by lunging into the end zone for his first rushing touchdown of the season. Notre Dame claimed a 31-28 lead with 2:02 left. Irish fans could feel the upset, especially when defensive tackle Trevor Laws interception right into the hands of cornerback Mike Richardson.

In the fourth quarter, kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick gave the Irish back the lead with a 32-yard field goal. However, Bush, making a case for the 2005 Heisman Trophy on this national stage, eluded Irish defenders and scored his third touchdown of the game. With just over five minutes left, the Irish found themselves with one last scoring opportunity. They marched down the field with authority as Quinn

a fourth-and-nine where one defensive stop would seal the game for the Irish. However, Leinart, the 2004 Heisman Trophy winner, lived up to his reputation by changing the play at the line of scrimmage amidst a screaming Notre Dame student section and connecting with wide receiver Dwayne Jarrett for a 61-yard gain that brought the ball to the Irish 13-yard line.

The Irish crowd was stunned, but the Trojans still had to score. Leinart tried to run the ball to the corner of the end zone, but after a hard hit the ball came loose and flew out of bounds. The clock kept ticking. Weis and the crowd thought the game was over; Notre Dame had won. Students charged the field, but it proved to be a premature celebration as the officials put seven seconds back on the clock and spotted the ball at the 1-yard line. USC Head Coach Pete Carroll looked like he was signaling Leinart to spike the ball so they could stop the clock and kick a field goal to go to overtime. Instead, Leinart went for the quarterback sneak. Although initially denied, he scored after being aided by Bush, who pushed him into the end zone for the touchdown. USC was up 34-31 after missing the extra point with three seconds left. Notre Dame hoped they could return the kickoff, but all hopes were squashed when Zbikowski was tackled. The game was over, and USC kept their national championship hopes alive.

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AIR RAID Wide receiver Maurice Stovall overpowers BYU cornerback Dustin Gabriel for his record-breaking fourth touchdown in one game.

An Aerial Assault

Notre Dame 49  BYU 23

To help his players get over their emotional loss to USC at home on Oct. 15, 2005, Head Coach Charlie Weis said that the Irish’s slate was wiped clean and that the BYU game would be the start of their “second season.” But this “second season” presented a challenge to the Irish, who had not won a home game since Oct. 9, 2004, when they defeated Stanford 23-15. The Irish offensive would have to adapt to BYU’s unique 3-3-5 defense, which had confused the Irish the previous year in a surprising 20-17 loss to the Cougars in Provo, Utah. But Notre Dame was determined to rid itself of its woes in front of a home crowd missing students still on fall break. For students who were in attendance, they witnessed an aerial assault show never seen before at Notre Dame Stadium.

Despite falling behind by three points only five minutes into the first quarter after a BYU field goal, Notre Dame gained offensive momentum when quarterback Brady Quinn fought off a sack and hit wide receiver Maurice Stovall in the back of the end zone for a 10-yard touchdown. BYU answered with an end-of-quarter touchdown, putting the Cougars ahead 10-7. However, the Irish were able to continue their trend of aerial dominance in the second quarter, racking up touchdowns when Quinn delivered a 14-yard pass to wide receiver Jeff Samardzija and then again to Stovall with a 15-yard strike. Samardzija became the first Notre Dame receiver to have touchdown receptions in seven consecutive games, breaking the record set by Malcolm Johnson in 1998.

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The game seemed out of reach for BYU in the third quarter when Samardzija grabbed his second touchdown reception of the game — a 21-yard pass from Quinn. However, BYU continued to grind with two touchdowns of their own, cutting the Notre Dame lead to five points, 28-23. Notre Dame distanced themselves when Quinn pump-faked a screen pass, fooling the BYU defense and leaving Stovall wide open in the end zone for his third touchdown reception of the game. Weis later called the pump fake “a thing of beauty.” Stovall would add a fourth touchdown when he took a screen pass from Quinn and used his six-foot-five-inch frame to overpower a smaller BYU defender. Stovall became the first Notre Dame receiver to have four touchdown receptions in a game. He teamed with Samardzija to become the first Irish receiving tandem to both have at least 10 catches in one game.

In the fourth quarter, the game was put away when safety Tom Zbikowski intercepted BYU quarterback John Beck’s pass and ran 83 yards for a touchdown. The final seconds ticked away, and Notre Dame finally claimed a home win with a 49-23 rout. “It feels so good to see the clock run out and have a winning score,” Quinn said.

Quinn went 32-41 for 467 yards, giving him three 400-yard passing games on the season. He also threw an Irish record of six touchdown passes in one game against the Cougars, breaking his own record set earlier in the year against Michigan State. The game was also significant for Weis, as it was his first win at Notre Dame Stadium.
In Nov. 5, 2005, Notre Dame and Tennessee entered Notre Dame Stadium with their programs heading in different directions. One team was BCS-bound while the other was undergoing a rebuilding season — but which team was which was a surprise. The Volunteers, ranked No. 3 in the preseason, were the ones who suffered a horrendous start, while the Fighting Irish, unranked in the preseason, had their eyes on a coveted BCS game. In this topsy-turvy season for these two storied football programs, nothing could be predicted or taken for granted. There was a chill in the air on that Saturday morning when both sides knew that the game could redefine the season for either team.

Earlier in the week prior to the Notre Dame-Tennessee game, Head Coach Charlie Weis identified Tennessee's defense as a possible roadblock to an Irish victory. The Notre Dame offense, however, simply overpowered the Volunteer defense early. The Irish scored two touchdowns within a minute of each other in the first quarter. The first came after a string of completed passes by quarterback Brady Quinn, including the 43-yard pass to tight end Anthony Fasano for the score. On the ensuing kickoff, Irish cornerback Mike Richardson forced the ball out of the hands of Tennessee's Lucas Taylor for a fumble, which was recovered by the Irish. Beginning deep in Volunteer territory, Quinn completed a pass to wide receiver Maurice Stovall for another touchdown. With the bat of an eye, Notre Dame went up 14-0 on the highly touted, yet seemingly hapless Tennessee defense.

Although Volunteer kicker James Wilhoit tacked on a field goal before the first quarter expired, the Tennessee offense continued to struggle in the game. On its first possession of the second quarter, Tennessee was forced to punt. Safety Tom Zbikowski returned the ball 78 yards for a touchdown. Notre Dame fans were becoming comfortable with the Irish lead over the Volunteers, Tennessee's defense started to own up to the reputation that Weis had cited earlier in the week. Notre Dame's highly potent offense was shut out for the next 25 minutes of play. Meanwhile, the Tennessee offense gained momentum following a fumble recovery by wide receiver Jeff Samardzija. Tennessee quarterback Erik Ainge and running back Adrian Foster managed three successful drives against the Irish, resulting in a field goal, two touchdowns, and a two-point conversion. The Tennessee offense had posted 18 unanswered points to even the game, 21-21.

Once again, the Irish found themselves in need of a big fourth quarter in order to secure a victory. Opening the last quarter of play on the Tennessee 2-yard line, the Irish seemed to be in a perfect position to take the lead back. Quinn managed to give the Irish nation a good scare, fumbling the ball on the 4-yard line, only to have it recovered by Notre Dame lineman Dan Santucci. Following the near-turnover, Quinn hit Samardzija, who carried the ball into the end zone for the tie-breaking touchdown. The Irish never looked back. The defense held tight, shutting the Volunteers out in the fourth quarter, while kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick tacked on a pair of field goals. Down 34-21 with only three minutes remaining in the game, Ainge threw into tight coverage and was picked off by Zbikowski, who returned the ball 33 yards for the score — the final nail in the coffin for the Volunteers. After one more unsuccessful drive by Tennessee, Notre Dame was able to kneel out the clock and celebrate its victory over one of the biggest obstacles on its schedule.

After losing to the Irish for the second time in as many years, Tennessee Head Coach Philip Fulmer could only congratulate Notre Dame on its win. "They really have improved in a year," he said. "Our hats go off to them for how they played against us."
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Before the game, the Volunteers' offensive coordinator Randy Sanders resigned due to pressure from impatient Tennessee fans critical of their underachieving Volunteers. Rumored replacements included former Notre Dame quarterback's coach David Cutcliffe and David Cutcliffe's coach, Brady Quinn.

OFFENSIVELY DEFENSIVE Safety Tom Zbikowski returned a 78-yard punt and a 33-yard interception for touchdowns.

IT'S A CELEBRATION Wide receiver Jeff Samardzija gives fellow receiver Maurice Stovall a high-five after Stovall's first quarter touchdown catch.
A NAUTICAL TRAVIS-TY Running back Travis Thomas stretches the Navy defense for his fourth rushing touchdown of the season.

Honor and Class

Notre Dame 42  Navy 21

Honor. Courage. Commitment. These three words, the motto of the United States Naval Academy, say everything worth knowing about the battle on Nov. 12, 2005, between the Irish and the Navy Midshipmen. While the Midshipmen haven’t always garnered the success of more celebrated Irish opponents, the Mids had a burning desire to break a 42-year-old, NCAA-record losing streak to the Irish. That, combined with Navy’s own five-game winning streak coming into the game and the possibility of overconfidence by the Irish after demolishing Tennessee, caused this showdown to have “upset special” written all over it.

But in his typical fashion, Head Coach Charlie Weis kept his troops focused all week, and the Irish came out sharp. After winning the opening toss, Notre Dame elected to receive. The ensuing drive was a Weis classic that culminated in an eye-popping 31-yard reception by wide receiver Maurice Stovall for the first touchdown.

All signs pointed to a steamrolling of the Mids, but mobile quarterback La­mar Owens rushed eight times in Navy’s opening drive, opting for the pass only once in an attempt that fell incomplete. The Irish defense had no answer for the rushing onslaught brought by the triple option offense of Navy Head Coach Paul Johnson, letting Navy tie the game.

The Mids knew that the best way to conquer the potent Irish offense was to control the clock, much like the Irish did against USC four weeks earlier. Momentum appeared to be swinging the way of the Midshipmen as the Irish lost posses-
Running back Travis Thomas stretches the Navy defense for his fourth rushing touchdown of the season.

Honor and Class
Notre Dame 42
Navy 27

Honor. Courage. Commitment. These three words, the motto of the United States Naval Academy, say everything worth knowing about the battle on Nov. 12, 2005, between the Irish and the Navy Midshipmen. While the Mids haven't always garnered the success of more celebrated Irish opponents, the Mids had a burning desire to break a 42-year-old, NCAA-record losing streak to the Irish. That, combined with Navy’s own five-game winning streak coming into the game and the possibility of overconfidence by the Irish after demolishing Tennessee, caused this showdown to have “upset special” written all over it.

But in his typical fashion, Head Coach Charlie Weis kept his troops focused all week, and the Irish came out sharp. After winning the opening toss, Notre Dame elected to receive. The ensuing drive was a Weis classic that culminated in an eye-popping 31-yard reception by wide receiver Maurice Stovall for the first touchdown. All signs pointed to a steamrolling of the Mids, but mobile quarterback LaMar Owens rushed eight times in Navy’s opening drive, opting for the pass only once in an attempt that fell incomplete. The Irish defense had no answer for the rushing onslaught brought by the triple option offense of Navy Head Coach Paul Johnson, letting Navy tie the game.

The Mids knew that the best way to conquer the potent Irish offense was to control the clock, much like the Irish did against USC four weeks earlier. Momentum appeared to be swinging the way of the Midshipmen as the Irish lost possession on downs, and the subsequent Navy drive featured the first pass completion of the game for Owens, a 14-yard toss that eluded defensive back Mike Richardson. But Owens was stopped short of a first down on four consecutive rushes, and the Mids turned the ball over on downs.

From there, the Irish never looked back with Quinn throwing consecutive 16- and 22-yard passes to Stovall, capping off the drive with a 12-yard touchdown rush by running back Travis Thomas. The next drive, Irish linebacker Corey Mays recovered a fumble by Owens at the Navy 49-yard line. The turnover set up the second Irish touchdown of the quarter. Walker ran the ball 13 yards for the score, and he finished the game with 118 yards, his first 100-yard game since he began the season with four in a row. Navy followed this with a quick turnover on downs, and the Irish responded with tight end Anthony Fasano’s 8-yard touchdown catch. It gave the Irish two touchdowns in 88 seconds and wrapped up the first half at 28-7.

Navy came out hot in the second half, beginning it with a touchdown set up by a 34-yard catch by running back Reggie Campbell. The Irish responded quickly with an 82-yard drive that culminated in Stovall scoring his second touchdown of the game—a 16-yard reception that put the Irish up 35-14.

The Mids and the Irish then traded interceptions. A Navy punt set up Stovall’s third touchdown reception on a fade route. Navy would go on to score one more touchdown against the Irish second string, but the difference was insurmountable. Notre Dame won convincingly, 42-21.

It was a historic game for Quinn, who broke Jarius Jackson's single-season passing mark of 2,753 yards. Quinn also set the school record for most passes without an interception, 130. He finished the day 22-31 for 284 yards with one interception and four touchdowns.

Also of note was a classy gesture by Weis following the game. He led his Irish to the Navy corner to honor Navy by respectfully listening to “Navy Blue and Gold,” their alma mater. It was one of the more memorable moments of the 2005 season.
ORANGE ALERT Wide receiver Jeff Samardzija tries to elude the grasp of three Syracuse defenders.

Crushing Orange on Senior Day

With the Irish ranked No. 6 in the nation with a 7-2 record, the Notre Dame campus was already alive with chatter of the Fiesta Bowl and a new year in Tempe, Ariz. As a result, the tension among the players and the anxiety in the student section was much expected when the Orange took an early 3-0 lead. But Head Coach Charlie Weis stressed the importance of the task at hand — defeating a 1-8 Syracuse team that was looking for a highpoint to their abysmal season — before looking towards the likely BCS berth. Weis realized what expectations were placed on his Fighting Irish and the pressure that accompanied it. His remedy for the early game woes was simply, “Relax, just gain your composure.” With quarterback Brady Quinn at ease, the game unfolded as would be expected — the Irish came out strong in the second quarter and never looked back, winning convincingly, 34-10.

As final home game of the season, the Notre Dame-Syracuse game was the last time the seniors would play at Notre Dame Stadium. During the postgame press conference, lineman Dan Steven­son addressed the win. “We are all proud of each other,” he said. “Syracuse came out and played a great game, but fortunately we were able to send our seniors out the right way.”

While wide receivers Maurice Stovall and Matt Shelton were the most successful seniors on the day, the Notre Dame-Syracuse game was the last time the seniors would play at Notre Dame Stadium. During the postgame press conference, lineman Dan Stevenson addressed the win. “We are all proud of each other,” he said. “Syracuse came out and played a great game, but fortunately we were able to send our seniors out the right way.”

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Notre Dame 34
Syracuse 10

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AHEAD OF THE PACK Wide receiver Maurice Stovall led all receivers with 91 yards.

Although it was the senior game, the underclassmen mostly were responsible for the victory. Sophomore running back Darius Walker had a big game, rushing for 123 yards and a touchdown on 26 carries, while Quinn, a junior, turned in his usual solid performance of 270 yards passing and two touchdowns.

Both of Quinn's touchdowns came in the second quarter, marking the turning point in the game. Stovall was the recipient of the first touchdown pass from 25 yards out, while wide receiver Jeff Samardzija pulled in a 28-yard pass for the second touchdown, putting the Irish up 14-3 heading into the second half.

The Irish gained momentum in the second half, when cornerback Leo Ferrine intercepted Orange quarterback Perry Patterson on the most unlikely of plays. The ball dangled in the air after hitting off a diving receiver's fingers. In the short time that the ball remained airborne, Ferrine came in, scooped it up and returned it for a 16-yard touchdown to give the Irish a 21-3 lead.

With the game well in hand, Fitzpatrick hit a pair of field goals at the end of the third quarter and the beginning of the fourth quarter to give the Irish an additional six points. Later in the fourth quarter, Notre Dame and Syracuse exchanged meaningless touchdowns on two long drives, eating up over nine minutes of clock.

At the end of the game, Weis pulled his starters and gave his seniors a chance to play one last time in front of their classmates. Players like Mooney and O'Hara got a chance to register their first time in blue and gold. Defensive back Rich Whitney also saw some playing time, breaking up passes by Patterson, and running back Jeff Jenkins got four carries on the final drive.

As the clock ran out at Notre Dame Stadium, the seniors' time as members of the Fighting Irish drew to a close. The team jogged around the stadium to the cheering of their faithful fans. They also sang the Notre Dame alma mater with their arms around their fellow teammates on the field with the rest of the student section. And for one last time, the seniors raised their golden helmets to their fellow students in the stands.
A $14 Million Dollar Game

Notre Dame 38  Stanford 31

Seeking to prove its worthiness for a Bowl Championship Series bid and a ninth win to become eligible for selection, Notre Dame traveled to Palo Alto, Calif., on Nov. 26, 2005, to face the last obstacle of its regular season — a motivated Stanford team playing its final game in the 84-year-old Stanford Stadium.

After 15 seconds of play, quarterback Brady Quinn connected with teammate Jeff Samardzija over the middle for an 80-yard touchdown on just the second play of the game. But the Cardinal remained poised under first-year Head Coach Walt Harris, who had defeated Notre Dame 41-38 at Notre Dame Stadium in 2004 when he was the head coach of Pittsburgh. Using a clever passing game to give the Irish secondary difficulty, Stanford tied the game 7-7 when wide receiver Mark Bradford caught a 27-yard pass from quarterback Trent Edwards. The Cardinal, too, had an incentive to play well; they also needed a win to be bowl-eligible.

However, scoring picked up in the fourth quarter, starting with a 29-yard field goal, and claimed his fourth sack of the game. Notre Dame began showing weakness in its offense when Quinn threw two interceptions in the first half, but the Irish still had their chances to score; with 7:48 left in the first quarter, Quinn once again found a wide-open Samardzija in the end zone on a 7-yard play-action pass that gave the Irish a 14-7 lead. But Stanford continued to hurt Notre Dame with the deep pass, and seven minutes into the second quarter Cardinal wide receiver Justin McCullum caught a 38-yard pass from Edwards to tie the game. Neither the Cardinal nor the Irish could put together an effective scoring drive during the remainder of the second quarter, and the teams left the field at halftime knotted up with a score of 14-14.

The third quarter saw little scoring, save for a 10-yard touchdown reception by wide receiver Maurice Stovall, after which kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick uncharacteristically missed the extra point.
Fitzpatrick, who had injured his kicking leg the week before against Syracuse, later missed a 42-yard field goal attempt. However, scoring picked up in the fourth quarter, starting with a 29-yard field goal converted by Irish backup kicker Carl Gioia. On the ensuing kickoff, Stanford gave Notre Dame a devastating blow when cornerback T.J. Rushing took the ball 87 yards for a touchdown to put the Cardinal within two points of the Irish. But running back Travis Thomas would temporarily soothe the jitters of nervous Irish fans on an 8-yard stretch play that was his fifth rushing touchdown of the season and put Notre Dame up 30-21.

The Irish had their chances to put the game away throughout the fourth quarter, but repeatedly came up short on scoring opportunities. Head Coach Charlie Weis decided to put a battle-tested Fitzpatrick back into the game to kick a 29-yard field goal, but his kicking woes continued as he missed again to the left. Stanford capitalized on the blunder, marching down the field and scoring a touchdown with only 1:46 remaining in the game.

Irish fans were shocked that the team’s BCS hopes were in jeopardy, but panic was nowhere to be found on the Notre Dame sideline. With relative ease, the Irish moved up the field in 51 seconds and capped off the drive when running back Darius Walker barely broke into the end zone to give Notre Dame the lead. Weis decided to go for the two-point conversion with a trick play from his old New England Patriots playbook. The ball was directly snapped to Walker, who went right up the middle of an unsuspecting Stanford defense to put the Irish up 38-31.

With 51 seconds left in the game, Notre Dame ended any chance of a Stanford comeback when defensive end Victor Abiamiri wrapped up backup quarterback T.C. Ostrander for a loss and claimed his fourth sack of the game. The Irish limited Stanford to -11 rushing yards the entire game. Notre Dame breathed a sigh of relief and clinched its all-important ninth win of the season. “I didn’t know if they understood how to win games like this,” Weis said. But the Irish dug deep and learned to pull out a victory in a close game when in the past they have let so many slip away. The win propelled the Irish to a No.6 BCS ranking, which assured them an automatic spot in a BCS bowl.

Notre Dame compiled 663 yards of total offense, their fifth highest total since compiling 720 yards against Navy in 1969. Walker had a career-high 186 yards on 35 carries, while Samardzija and Stovall became the third and fourth receivers to have over 1,000 receiving yards in a single season for Notre Dame.
It was the first drive of the year, and Notre Dame was already in a hole. Pittsburgh quarterback Tyler Palko had just found wide receiver Greg Lee for a 44-yard touchdown pass, executed with a seamless ease that conjured up memories of the last time these teams met and the Panthers snuck by to defeat the Irish at home. But things were different this time around, as less than three minutes later Brady Quinn flipped the ball to Darius Walker in the flat, who found a shield of blockers and ran 51 yards to the end zone. Walker's scamper set the tone for the game and the season, as it quickly became clear that Notre Dame football was back, led by Head Coach Charlie Weis' new-look offense with Quinn at the helm.

After a disappointing 2004 season in which the Irish finished just 81st in the nation in total offense, the 2005 squad put up some of the best offensive numbers in the program's history. Notre Dame set 47 individual and team offensive records while averaging almost 37 points per game, Notre Dame's second-highest average ever.

Quinn led the way in the rewriting of the Irish record books, setting individual season records for touchdown passes (32), passing yardage (3,919) and completion percentage (64.9 percent), among many others.

As the numbers and All-American honors show, the quarterback had no trouble getting used to Weis' offensive system, despite Quinn's two years as starting quarterback under former Irish Head Coach Tyrone Willingham. "Adjusting to the new system wasn't too hard," Quinn said at a Dec. 19, 2005, press conference. "I think once you get game experience, it becomes a little bit easier. You get to work through other situations you go through in practice and finally put them on the field. After having a couple shots at doing that in a game scenario, you feel much more comfortable going into the next week."

Weis was impressed with Quinn's adaptability from the start. "First of all, he had all the inherent traits to already be a great quarterback. He had played for two years and played a lot of football and been hardened. He is tough and smart. All we did was put in this system, which is a quarterback-friendly system. It puts a lot of pressure on the quarterback but you try not to put anything on that the quarterback can handle. Because he has been able to handle a lot, we have been able to do a lot," Weis said at a Dec. 10, 2005, press conference. "I think the success of our offense can be pinpointed to the progress of Brady."

Quinn's great season was made possible in part by a pair of six-foot-five-inch targets who had breakout years of their own in 2005. Wide receivers Jeff Samardzija and Maurice Stovall caught a combined 23 of Quinn's 32 touchdown passes and posted 2,213 yards of receiving between them.

Samardzija, who set the Notre Dame single-season touchdown-reception record with 15, had never seen the end zone before his first two seasons. His most impressive athletic statistic at Notre Dame prior to the 2005 football campaign was arguably his 8-1 record as a pitcher for the baseball team last spring.

After snagging one touchdown catch against Pittsburgh and another against Michigan, Samardzija moved into the starting lineup when Rhema McKnight went down with a season-ending knee injury in Ann Arbor, Mich.

"It really started off with that catch against Pittsburgh, and that really just opened things up," Quinn said of Samardzija during a Dec. 19, 2005, press conference. "He's had a tremendous season. Looking at the plays he's made, he's been such a huge factor in every game. In the Tennessee game, he had that big play on the third down conversion to kind of turn the tide in that game," Quinn said.

SUCCESS IN A SNAP Quarterback Brady Quinn seemed to have little trouble adjusting to Charlie Weis' new offense.
He added, "All season, he's come up with big plays, big blocks, he's done everything the coaches have asked of him. He's truly been the prototype of a team player and what that all includes. Being there to lay a block out for [Walker] or catch a big pass when we need it; he's just made great strides from last season to this season."

Samardzija credits his quarterback for helping him develop so quickly. "You just sort of follow someone who does what Brady has done on the field," Samardzija told the East Valley Tribune (Arizona). "It's a ripple effect. One guy makes a play, and the next guy is going to want to do the same thing. When you feed off each other like that, then maybe that's where the term leadership comes from."

Lining up across the field from Samardzija was Stovall, who had seen a good deal of playing time over his first three seasons, but was coming off a disappointing junior year during which he scored only once.

In a striking turnaround, Stovall scored 11 touchdowns in 2005, more than twice as many as he scored in his previous three seasons. He grabbed the attention of NFL scouts with a full highlight reel of acrobatic, leaping receptions over helpless defensive backs. "[Stovall] has what I call 'pluck-ability,'" Weis said at a Nov. 20, 2005, press conference. "Pluckability is when that ball is up for grabs and they seem to pluck it out of the air." In addition, Weis added, "He blocks, he gets off the line of scrimmage, he runs well. He's really had a really good year for us. He's got a very bright future in this game."

While Stovall will not be returning next season as he enters the NFL Draft, Quinn and Samardzija will both be back, with a new swagger and loftier goals.

"I want to win a national championship," Quinn told the Associated Press, "and I think our team has the ability without a doubt to win it, especially with the people we have coming back on offense and defense."
The vaunted Ohio State defense was too much for the Irish offense in the Fiesta Bowl.

**A Fiesta Gone Awry**

*Ohio State 34 Notre Dame 20*

Making their first Bowl Championship Series appearance since the 2001 Fiesta Bowl, Notre Dame faced an opponent for whom the game was an old hat—the Ohio State Buckeyes, who had played in Tempe, Ariz., three of the past four years. These two storied programs, rich with history and tradition, were only meeting each other for the fifth time. The Irish hoped to end their mediocre bowl run with a win to cap off the season.

Notre Dame moved the chains efficiently on their opening drive. On the sixth play from scrimmage, running back Darius Walker found a hole and ran 20 yards for a touchdown, giving his team a 7-0 lead. It appeared that a month of preparation was paying off for Head Coach Charlie Weis.

But Ohio State Head Coach Jim Tressel also had a month to prepare for the Irish. He said that while studying game films of Notre Dame, he noticed a trend that the Irish were vulnerable with the deep pass. Tressel made it a point-of-emphasis to quarterback Troy Smith not to overthrow the deep ball like so many of Notre Dame’s 2005 opponents had done. Smith took the advice to heart when he completed a 56-yard pass to Ted Ginn to answer the quick Irish score.

On the next drive, Weis went for it on fourth-and-two at the Ohio State 6-yard line instead of kicking a field goal. The call backfired for the Irish, as quarterback Brady Quinn was sacked by linebacker A.J. Hawk, the boyfriend of Quinn’s older sister Laura. Not only did the Irish give up the ball on downs, they also gave up momentum to the Buckeyes.

Although Ohio State made costly turnovers—Smith fumbled the ball twice—the Buckeyes made up for it with their stellar defense, ranked fourth in the country. With the defense holding the potent Irish offense in check, Ginn struck again with his blazing speed. He zig-zagged across the field on a reverse, leaving Notre Dame defensive backs in his wake and giving Ohio State the go-ahead touchdown. Smith added another touchdown when he connected with wide receiver Santonio Holmes for 83 yards to blow the game open, 21-7. Notre Dame went into halftime with its biggest deficit of the season, although they were fortunate to be down only two touchdowns after blocking a field goal attempt by Ohio State.
The pivotal play of the game was when wide receiver Anthony Gonzalez fumbled immediately after appearing to make a catch. Safety Tom Zbikowski recovered the ball and ran 88 yards for an apparent touchdown. An illegal block would have brought the ball back, but the play was reviewed and the pass ruled incomplete, nullifying Zbikowski's fumble recovery. "That was the play," Weis said. "What I said to the official on the field is I hope your guy upstairs was right because that changed the whole complexion of the game." Notre Dame failed to find a spark on offense against a first-class Buckeye defense that sacked Quinn five times. It also held the Notre Dame receiving corps in check as wide receiver Jeff Samardzija looked tentative throughout the game with dropped passes.

With the Irish offense on life support, it received a jolt late in the third quarter when Walker broke through the stern defensive line of the Buckeyes to score his second touchdown of the game with a 10-yard rush. Kicker D.J. Fitzpatrick missed the extra point.

Ohio State kicker Josh Huston added two field goals to put the Buckeyes up 27-13. Time was becoming a nemesis for the Irish, but Walker continued to carry the Irish offense as he ran a 3-yard stretch run to score his third touchdown of the game. Now only down 27-20 with 5:27 left, the Irish still had a chance if they could make a key defensive stop.

But the elusive and versatile Smith consistently avoided the Irish pass rush and demoralized the Notre Dame defense with third-down conversions. Running back Antonio Pittman sealed the deal when he found a seam and ran the ball 60 yards to the end-zone to give Ohio State a healthy two-touchdown lead. Notre Dame failed to mount a comeback, and Ohio State went on to win its third Fiesta Bowl in four years.

Notre Dame continued its bowl skid and fell to 13-14 overall in bowl games. Speed and big plays ended up being the killer for the Irish as the Buckeyes racked up 617 total offensive yards. It was the most Notre Dame had given up in its history. Although Notre Dame was six points away from an undefeated season, this game showed them they still were missing vital pieces to win a major bowl game.

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**Sun Devil Stadium:**

*Attendance: 76,198*

*All-Time Sorfas: 2-3-0*

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**KEY STATS**

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**FROM THE PRESS BOX**

Players of the Notre Dame football team each received a gift package for their participation in the Fiesta Bowl. Team gift packages consisted of a Sony PSP, a Notre Dame-themed football, a pigskin, and a sports-filled duffel bag of Notre Dame products. The estimated value of each gift package was $700.

Unlike other institutions where bowl-game revenue funds solely go to the football department, the estimated $4.5 million share Notre Dame earned for its BCS bid went to three academic priorities: undergraduate and graduate financial aid, library acquisitions, and scientific instruments for the Jordan Hall of Science, which will open in the summer of 2016.
Inside the Fiesta Bowl

The Notre Dame football team arrived in Phoenix, Ariz. that after Christmas to begin preparations for the 2005 Fiesta Bowl. Practice was held at Scottsdale Community College in Scottsdale, Ariz. where the fields were painted with diagonal white stripes in the end zone in a manner similar to the end zone design in Notre Dame Stadium. The 70-degree weather and the Arizona mountains in the background made Scottsdale an ideal place for the Irish to prepare for the Ohio State Buckeyes.

The players saw Sun Devil Stadium — where the Fiesta Bowl would be played — for the first time on Media Day. Hundreds of media members from across the country received 30 minutes with each team to ask questions. While waiting for the sundry players of each team to be interviewed, some of the players who were speaking the media sang along to the library in humor themselves. Notre Dame fullback Bob Morton played the role of the impulsive sports reporter and interviewed teammate linebacker Brandon Hoyte for College Sports Television.

The one who stole the show on Media Day, however, was Laura Quinn, the older sister of Irish quarterback Brady Quinn. A student at California State University at Los Angeles and an aspiring sportscaster, Laura took advantage of the television free time to hone her interviewing skills with various media outlets ranging from ESPN to local affiliates. She even managed to interview...
her younger brother. When she asked Brady what his biggest fluctuation of the week was, he simply answered, "You.

Laura also interviewed Ohio State linebacker J.T. Hawk, who happens to be her boyfriend's roommate for four months. When pressed by Laura, Hawk didn't know if he could promise to go easy on Brady during the game simply because he is his girlfriend's little brother. "You want my parents to approve don't you?" Laura joked, much to the chagrin of Hawk.

On New Year's Day, Notre Dame Head Coach Charlie Weis and Ohio State Head Coach Jim Tressel gave their official press conferences at the JW Marriot Camelback Inn in Scottsdale. Media members were on hand to ask their final pre-game questions. Also, they got to see Weis accept the Eddie Robinson Award, which is presented annually to the nation's best college coach as voted on by the Football Writers Association of America.

Media members also were treated to a special VIP tour of the yet-to-be-completed Glendale Stadium in suburban Phoenix, which will host the 2007 Fiesta Bowl as well as the 2005 BCS National Championship game. This state-of-the-art facility even boasts an impressive retractable roof. The entire football field of natural grass will be attached to an elaborate rail system that can be rolled into and out of the stadium for maintenance purposes. If the Irish are fortunate enough to win the title on the completion of next year and finish in the top two of the BCS rankings, they will find themselves in the completed stadium on January 8, 2007 to play for the national championship.
n addition to a new coach and a return to the top 10 of the Associated Press college football poll for the first time since 1993, the Fighting Irish’s 2005 football season also marked another major landmark for the university — the 75th anniversary of the hallowed Notre Dame Stadium. Dedicated on Oct. 11, 1930, before a crowd of 40,593 spectators, the first sets of eyes ever to witness a game in Notre Dame Stadium saw former Head Coach Knute Rockne’s undefeated squad annihilate the Navy Midshipmen by a score of 26-2. And the excitement housed within the stadium has only grown since then, with 139 first team All-Americans, 11 national championship teams, seven Heisman Trophy winners and five national championship coaches calling the house that Rockne built home. Fans and visitors to the stadium this past year were greeted by banners hanging from the stadium’s rafters in commemoration of the storied history of the Irish football program. Notre Dame Stadium has seen its share of legendary pigskin play in its 75 years. There have been so many memorable games on Irish soil, in fact, that the university’s official Web site, www.und.com, asked Irish fans across the country this past August to vote on the top 20 games played at the university. According to the survey, fans deem the period between 1988 and 1993 as the greatest period in the history of the stadium, with seven of the top 10 games coming from this era. The top 10 list also is littered with some of Notre Dame’s fiercest archrivals, including three games against both USC and Michigan, two games against Miami and a game apiece against Florida State and Penn State. Scholastic has its own preferences for the five most exciting games ever to be played in the stadium:

1. No. 1 Miami vs. No. 4 Notre Dame, Oct. 15, 1988
The most heated college football rivalry of the late 1980s, this game saw the Irish snap the hated Hurricanes’ 36-game regular season winning streak. Free safety Pat Terrell batted down a Miami two-point conversion attempt with 45 seconds remaining. ND 31, Miami 30.

2. No. 1 Florida State vs. No. 2 Notre Dame, Nov. 13, 1993
Notre Dame triumphed over Florida State Head Coach Bobby Bowden’s Seminoles with a ground assault against FSU’s staunch run defense. The Irish rushed for 239 yards and four touchdowns against a Seminole team that had given up only four touchdowns on the ground the entire season entering the game. A last-second Hail Mary pass by FSU quarterback and eventual Heisman recipient Charlie Ward fell incomplete. ND 31, FSU 24.

3. No. 1 USC vs. No. 9 Notre Dame, Oct. 15, 2005
Ranked by ESPN.com as the greatest college football game of the last 35 years and, oddly enough, 17 years to the day, after the aforementioned glorious victory over Miami, the Trojans brought a 27-game winning streak to South Bend. USC escaped an upset defeat to the Irish after Trojan quarterback Matt Leinart completed a 61-yard pass to wide receiver Dwayne Jarrett on a fourth and nine and then benefited from the infamous “Bush Push” on the next play to reach the end zone on a quarterback sneak with three seconds remaining. Heartbreaking. USC 34, ND 31.

4. No. 2 Miami vs. No. 6 Notre Dame, Oct. 20, 1990
In the final installment of the Catholics vs. Convicts series, the Irish — aided by kicker Craig Hentrich’s five field goals and a 94-yard kick return by the explosive wide receiver Rocket Ishmail — dashed the Hurricanes’ remaining national championship hopes. The Irish racked up 276 rushing yards against Miami’s No. 2 defense on their way to a nine-point win and a 9-2 regular season record. ND 29, Miami 20.

5. No. 5 USC vs. No. 11 Notre Dame, Oct. 22, 1977
Now deemed the “Green Jersey Game,” this match marked the beginning of a remarkable streak of Irish dominance during the final seven games of the season — games in which Notre Dame outscored its opponents by a margin of 317-80. Although warming up in their traditional home blue jerseys, the Irish returned from the locker rooms sporting bright green jerseys en route to a 30-point routing of the Trojans, their worst loss since falling 51-0 to Notre Dame in 1966. ND 49, USC 19.
In addition to a new coach and a return to the top 10 of the Associated Press college football poll for the first time since 1993, the Fighting Irish's 34-20 victory over Miami in the Oct. 15, 2005 game marked another major landmark for the Notre Dame football program. According to the survey, fans deem the period between 1988 and 1993 as the greatest period in the university's storied history of the Irish explosive game of the last 35 years.

The top five games played at the university-the 75th anniversary of the hallowed Notre Dame Stadium. Dedicate on Oct. 20, 1990, the stadium saw former Head Coach Knute Rockne's undefeated squad annihilate the Navy Midshipmen by a score of 26-2. And the excitement housed within the stadium has only grown since then, with 139 first team All-Americans, 11 national championship teams, seven Heisman Trophy winners and five national championship coaches calling the house that Rockne built home.

The stadium has seen its share of legendary pigskin play in its 75 years. There have been so many exciting games on Irish soil, in fact, that the university's official Web site, www.und.com, asked Irish fans across the country this past August to vote on the top 10 iconic games of Notre Dame football. The top 10 games are:

1. No.1 Miami vs. No.4 Notre Dame, Nov. 13, 1993
2. No.1 Florida State vs. No.2 Notre Dame, Oct. 15, 1988
3. No.2 Miami vs. No.6 Notre Dame, Oct. 22, 1977
4. No.2 Miami vs. No.9 Notre Dame, Oct. 20, 1990
5. No.5 USC vs. No.11 Notre Dame, Nov. 11, 1966

These games are a testament to the rich history of Notre Dame football and the excitement that fans have come to expect from games played on Notre Dame soil. Whether you're a fan of the Fighting Irish or a fan of college football, these games are sure to be memorable for anyone who sees them.
# Season Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NOTRE DAME</strong></th>
<th><strong>OPPONENTS</strong></th>
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<td><strong>SCORING</strong></td>
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<td>Average</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>TIME OF POSSESSION/GAME</strong></td>
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<td>PAT - Attempts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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</table>

## Rushing

- Walker, Darius: 232 attempts, 1196 yards, 4.7 yards per attempt, 38 touchdowns, 9.9 yards per carry
- Thomas, Travis: 63 attempts, 248 yards, 3.9 yards per attempt, 16 touchdowns, 20.7 yards per carry
- Powers-Neal, Rashon: 31 attempts, 100 yards, 3.2 yards per attempt, 10 touchdowns, 20.0 yards per carry
- Quinn, Brady: 70 attempts, 90 yards, 1.3 yards per attempt, 16 touchdowns, 7.5 yards per carry

## Punting

- Schnupp, Asa: 27 punts, 167 yards, 6.0 yards per punt, 7.5 field goals
- Jenkins, Jeff: 19 punts, 56 yards, 2.9 yards per punt, 0 field goals

## Receiving

- Samardzija, Jeff: 9 catches, 131 yards, 14.6 yards per catch, 1 touchdown
- Grimes, David: 8 catches, 40 yards, 5.0 yards per catch, 3 touchdowns
- McConnell, Ashley: 8 receptions, 40 yards, 5.0 yards per catch, 0 touchdowns
- Stovall, Maurice: 6 receptions, 30 yards, 5.0 yards per catch, 0 touchdowns
- Holloway, Justin: 2 receptions, -1 yards, -0.5 yards per catch, 0 touchdowns
- McCrystal, Rhemi: -7 receptions, -7 yards, -1 yards per catch, 0 touchdowns
- TEAM: 10 receptions, -31 yards, -3.1 yards per catch, 0 touchdowns

## Scoring

- Total Points: 1578, 364, 294, 1765, 36.7, 239, 245, 132.3
- Opponents: 403, 1588, 3.9, 17, 68

## Kicking

- Field Goals: 3963, 3175, 1588, 68, 132.3
- Opponents: 126.37, 410, 213, 53.2, 3175

## Interceptions

- Total Interceptions: 103, 100, 94, 73, 72
- Opponents: 61, 58, 54, 48, 44

## Passing

- Total Passes: 556, 462, 397, 328, 274
- Opponents: 440, 379, 315, 274, 243

## Statistics

- QB: 138.40, 450, 292, 132.3, 32, 80
- Opponents: 34.30, 220, 132.3, 32, 80

## Scoring

- Total Points: 1578, 364, 294, 1765, 36.7, 239, 245, 132.3
- Opponents: 126.37, 410, 213, 53.2, 3175

## Receiving

- Total Yards: 3965, 3175, 1588, 68, 132.3
- Opponents: 126.37, 410, 213, 53.2, 3175

## Field Goals

- Total Field Goals: 3963, 3175, 1588, 68, 132.3
- Opponents: 126.37, 410, 213, 53.2, 3175

## Notes

- ***Denotes Record***

---

**Notre Dame Schedule and Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Record</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 18</td>
<td>ARMY</td>
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</table>

**Iona College Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Record</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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---

**Passing**

- Effic: 138.40, 450, 292, 132.3, 32, 80
- Opponents: 34.30, 220, 132.3, 32, 80

---

**Receiving**

- No Yds: 1249, 1149, 576, 351, 329, 28
- Opponents: 19, 9, 28, 28, 16, 12

---

**Field Goals**

- FG: 11, 17, 64.7, 48
- Opponents: 7, 10, 32, 28

---

**Interceptions**

- No Yds: 1249, 1149, 576, 351, 329, 28
- Opponents: 19, 9, 28, 28, 16, 12

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**Kicking**

- Total Field Goals: 3963, 3175, 1588, 68, 132.3
- Opponents: 126.37, 410, 213, 53.2, 3175

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**Statistics**

- Total Passes: 556, 462, 397, 328, 274
- Opponents: 440, 379, 315, 274, 243

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**Notes**

- ***Denotes Record***

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- Opponents: 7, 10, 32, 28

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**Statistics**

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- Opponents: 440, 379, 315, 274, 243

---

**Notes**

- ***Denotes Record***
THE RECORD BREAKERS The Notre Dame football team broke 47 individual and team records in the 2005 season.

TOTAL OFFENSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>G</th>
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<th>Rush</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>520</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>-2.3</td>
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<td>1765</td>
<td>3963</td>
<td>5728</td>
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<td>1388</td>
<td>3175</td>
<td>4763</td>
<td>396.9</td>
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2005 Schedule and Results

- September 3 at Pittsburg
- September 10 at Michigan
- September 17 MICHIGAN STATE
- September 24 at Washington
- October 1 at Purdue
- October 15 USC
- October 22 BYU
- November 5 TENNESSEE
- November 12 NAVY
- November 19 SYRACUSE
- November 26 at Stanford
- January 2 vs Ohio State

2006 Schedule

- September 2 at Georgia Tech
- September 9 at Penn State
- September 16 MICHIGAN
- September 23 at Michigan State
- September 30 PURDUE
- October 7 at Stanford
- October 21 UCLA
- October 28 at Navy (Baltimore, Md.)
- November 4 North Carolina
- November 11 at Air Force
- November 18 Army
- November 25 vs USC
**FINAL WORD**

by John Heisler

Who exactly is this Charlie Weis anyway? That's the question Notre Dame football fans found themselves asking about a year ago when Weis arrived on the campus as good as the new Irish head coach.

Though Weis had been featured in Notre Dame Magazine, the university's alumni magazine, a few years back, he remained something of a comparative unknown to Irish fans, even as a 1978 Notre Dame graduate, simply because he had not played or coached for the Irish.

While Weis may not have been a household name to Irish fans — though his profile was heightened by three Super Bowl wins in four years with the New England Patriots — Notre Dame Athletic Director Kevin White found no lack of respect when he did his homework on the Patriots' offensive coordinator.

A handful of play-calling (Mike Heimerdinger, Mike Mayock, David Giroux, Rich Avella) and coaches (Mike Stoops with Notre Dame connections helped provide a foundation that the Trenton, N.J., product, So did Joe Theismann, who worked with Weis in many times in Washington, then in ESPN analysis.)

The ultimate compliment came from one of the nation's most-terrible adversaries: Indianapolis Colts president Bill Polian, who played with White. "Get him out of here," Polian said.

Irish fans came to see a puzzle of a tough, conscientious, blue-collar jersey guy who had developed something of a mid-Atlantic reputation as player-coach. And without a second thought, Weis, play-calling expertise, manifested itself at Notre Dame, culminating in a few of offensive records by the time the season ended.

Away from the football field, Irish fans found their coach helps fell for how to handle the other aspects of his job.

After spring football ended, Weis journeyed to New York and lunched with NBC Sports chairman Dick Ebersol, whose son had been killed in a plane crash a few months earlier. Ebersol suggested that Weis that the seasons to come would be a lifetime for the Weis family — and that Charlie ought to consider the prospect of having a 12-year-old son with Charlie on the sideline. Weis admitted he took the advice to heart.

After the win at Pittsburg, the two Charlie's left the field side by side, and the other Weis seemed to enjoy seeing his son as one of his tougher critics. The scene lent a human side to the Irish coach who had been portrayed as hard-boiled tough guy.

Eberle's dealt with his own daughter Hannah and her global development. Weis had a special feeling for anyone facing personal obstacles. Irish fans learned that later in the month based on an invitation to meet a Wish week resident battling terminal brain cancer.

Weis visited 10-year-old Montana Mizerek, who was in the hospital when the Wednesday before the Washington game. He asked the boy if he wanted to call the play in the game Saturday, and Montana responded by asking for the pass to the right.

Montana passed away Thursday night, by Saturday, Weis promise took on a new life: Washington's opening possession ended with an Irish touchdown, exactly where the boy said it was going.

Weis said in an interview that the trip to the game Saturday night was a bit of a tearjerker, and said how much fun it was to have a 10-year-old with him, but there were too many for Weis to handle.

Three weeks later, Weis took his son along on a postgame visit to a surprised USC locker room to congratulate the team on their victory. A month later, Weis brought his team postgame to Stanford, respectfully alongside the players, while the Notre Dame band played the school song.

White, on an invitation to the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, a national coach of the year award, and a $25,000 check (including a pair of three-year regular season tickets that went down to the fans' players), instant credibility to the Notre Dame program. Irish fans learned their new head coach could warm — and earn — their hearts in more ways than one.
Chapter 6
Award Winning A Capella Group

Live in Concert
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Saturday, February 4th @ 9PM

"Immensely talented...extremely cool...have a seriously bright future."

-Dave Koz
Grammy Nominated Jazz Saxophonist
A Year of Great Performances at Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center


9/2 A cappella quintet TOXIC AUDIO, described in rave reviews as "the audio equivalent of STOMP!" You won’t believe your ears! 8 pm

9/9 Classical musicians ENSEMBLE GALILEI and NPR’s "Talk of the Nation" Host NEAL CONAN in a multimedia performance that includes images from the Hubble Space Telescope; 8 pm

9/16 An evening with BRUCE HORNSEA, former Grateful Dead band member and versatile rock pianist; 9 pm

9/30 Legendary Irish musician, the "Bard of Armagh" TOMMY MAKEM in concert with his sons, THE MAKEM BROTHERS; 8 pm

9/2 A cappella quintet TOXIC AUDIO, described in rave reviews as “the audio equivalent of STOMP!” You won’t believe your ears! 8 pm

10/6 OPERA VERDI EUROPA GALA NIGHT: An evening of opera’s greatest hits; 7:30 pm

10/13 Traditional jazz with the world-famous PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND; 9 pm

10/14 Academy Award-winning composer and conductor MARVIN HAMLISCH; 9 pm

10/21 A celebration of Gypsy song and traditional Spanish dance with BALLET FLAMENCO JOSE PORCEL; 9 pm

10/27 Atlanta's 7 Stages Theatre performs Athol Fugard's ground-breaking play about apartheid "MASTER HAROLD"... AND THE BOYS; 7:30 pm

10/29 Internationally celebrated mezzo-soprano DAWN UPSHAW and contemporary ensemble EIGHTH BLACKBIRD perform Osvaldo Golijov’s "Ayre"; 8 pm

11/1–11/2 Modern dance with the renowned MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY; 7:30 pm (both nights)

11/6 Grammy Award-winning Senegalese pop musician YOUSSOU N’DOUR—"The Voice of Africa"—in concert; 7 pm

11/8 Contemporary jazz from Mexico with the ETHOS TRIO; 7:30 pm

11/9 Classical pianist KRYSTIAN ZIMERMAN in concert; 7:30 pm

11/27 Austria’s world-famous VIENNA CHOIR BOYS in concert; 3 pm

12/1 The PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by Hans Graf with violinist Sarah Chang; 7:30 pm

12/9 Classical guitar virtuoso CHRISTOPHER PARKENING and bass-baritone JUBILANT SYKES perform a special Christmas show; 8 pm

12/11 Enjoy a traditional Celtic Christmas with award-winning performers CHERISH THE LADIES; 7 pm

2/4 Arab composer, violinst, and oud master SIMON SHAHEEN in concert with QANTARA; 8 pm

2/10 Grammy-winning violinst MARK O’CONNOR'S HOT SWING in concert; 8 pm

2/14 Canadian classical pianist ANGELA HEWITT in concert; 7:30 pm

2/18 THE SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR, world-famous African inspirational musicians, in concert; 8 pm

2/26 Premiere classical flautist SIR JAMES GALWAY, LADY JEANNE GALWAY, and the POLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA in concert; 7 pm

3/2 Ireland’s most recognized name in traditional music THE CHIEFTAINS in concert; 7:30 pm

3/4 Classical guitarist ROBERT BLOSTONE in WOVEN HARMONY, a multimedia concert featuring the textile art of REBECCA BLOSTONE; 8 pm

3/9 Grammy-award winning musician EDGAR MEYER (standup bass) and MIKE MARSHALL (mandolin, guitar) perform bluegrass with classical influences; 7:30 pm

3/21 POMERIUM in concert, performing a cappella sacred music of the Renaissance; 7:30 pm

3/23 One of Russia’s best-known classical ensembles, the KIROV ORCHESTRA, directed by Valery Gergiev; 7:30 pm

3/25 Contemporary Irish instrumental band FLOOK, 8 pm

4/1 Britain’s leading period-instrument orchestra, the ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC; 8 pm

4/21 BILL CHARLAP TRIO in concert, built around the phenomenal jazz piano of Bill Charlap; 8 pm

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