Mendoza rejects ‘gates,’ external transfers

By KAREN LANGLEY
Assistant News Editor

As increasing numbers of students have decided to major in business during the past several years, the Mendoza College of Business has chosen to address rising interest by keeping Notre Dame students as its priority. While any Notre Dame student in good standing can choose to pursue a major in business — or any other academic area — at any time, the College of Business is no longer accepting transfers from other universities.

Notre Dame students have always been able to transfer freely between the colleges, and that is not about to change. But during the past five years, the college has been cutting back on admitting transfer students from outside the University — and in the fall of 2005, the college admitted zero external transfers.

The College of Business should definitely not grow larger, Woo said. At one point, the College graduated 30 percent of University students, though peer universities typically have 8 to 12 percent of their under-graduates enrolled in business, she said.

"There are so many majors in the University," she said. "There is no reason all the students should be in business." In the fall of 2005 there were 1,543 sophomores, juniors and seniors enrolled in business, down from 1,806 in the fall of 2001.

Two years ago, then-University Provost Nathan Hutch met with Woo to discuss the possibility of enacting a plan to admission in the College, requiring a rising sophomore to have a 3.0 GPA to enter, said see BUSINESS/page 3

Dorms interview RA candidates

Current resident assistants, rectors talk to applicants about issues, faith, ambitions

By KAITLYNN RIELEY
News Writer

When Paul Hagan was applying to be a resident assistant (RA) in Zahl Hall last year, he knew part of his job would be encouraging — or discouraging — the dorm’s notorious traditions.

Now, Hagan is interviewing prospective Zahl RAs, and the issue of upholding Zahl’s identity is a question he and the other RAs are posing to the applicants.

"We ask questions about how they feel about our dorm culture, because obviously Zahl has a very unique or opaque culture, so we talk about how they would want to change it or nurture it," Hagan said.

see SELECTION/page 6

Stretch of Douglas Road to close

By KATIE PERRY
Assistant News Editor

With plans set and a vision established, the University is ready to continue its quest for development with the campus roads project — a procedure that will force the closure of some heavily trafficked routes on and around campus next week.

A portion of Douglas Road between Juniper and Ivy roads will be closed from Monday until early May. University spokesman Dennis Brown said in a statement Wednesday that "a portion of Douglas Road between Juniper and Ivy roads will be closed from Monday until early May. University spokesman Dennis Brown said in a statement Wednesday.

Part of Balla Road, east of campus, and part of Ivy Road, north of Vanier Street, will also be closed to motorists

see DOUGLAS/page 6

Slow Webmail access investigated by OIT

By MAUREEN MULLEN
News Writer

While rushing is a way of life at Notre Dame, slower-than-usual Webmail service is frustrating students, faculty and administrators who rely daily on the Notre Dame e-mail system.

The slowed performance arose during the past two to three weeks, said Paul Russell, Senior Systems Administrator for the Office of Information Technologies Messaging Services team. Russell said OIT is working to address the situation.

"We are paying attention to the issue," Russell said. "We are painfully aware of the problem." OIT has discussed and implemented both short- and long-term solutions, Russell said. There are a number of factors that affect server performance, and OIT is investigating the best way to proceed in addressing complaints, he said.

Russell said the Webmail problem is a complex issue that doesn’t have a simple or straightforward solution. Though Webmail problems have been the most prevalent, Russell said that all e-mail users have been affected by slower speeds, including those using Outlook Express and Eudora Mail. The difficulties seen E-MAIL/page 8

Graduate keeps ties with SMC

Alumna returns to campus, shares book

By MEGAN O’NEIL
Saint Mary’s Editor


"As of eight o’clock tomorrow morning [your parents] would like you to leave them alone. Your mothers have asked me to tell you that their homes are not storage bins. Please, when you move on, take your junk with you," Trigiani joked. The New York Times best-seller exemplified the warm relationship Trigiani has maintained with her alma mater since graduating in 1981 and moving on to a distinguished writing career.

"Adri has just been very, very generous with Saint Mary’s students and I think she is with her readers too," English department chair Max Westler said.

After relocating from South Bend to New York City, Trigiani founded an all-female comedy troupe, "The Outcasts", and later worked as a writer and producer for television shows such as "The Cosby Show," "A Different World" and "Gypsy Kids." Her 1996 doc-

see TRIGIANI/page 4
INSIDE COLUMN

Miracle workers

Arthur Ochs Sulzberger wasn't exaggerating when he called it the daily miracle. The former New York Times publisher wasn't talking about college newspapers, of course. But his famous remark sums up perfectly how The Observer manages to appear on the Notre Dame and Saint Mary's campuses five days a week.

The Observer

Beats me. Even after leaving the newspaper for a year, I still don't understand how we did this 140 times, or why nearly 200 students sacrifice chunks of their GPAs, sleep and social lives for the sake of creating a campus newspaper.

Me, I can't really pinpoint one moment when or one reason why I decided The Observer would dominate my Notre Dame life — that I'd blow off classes for reporting assignments, sicken my editor by sauntering in for story ideas, spend more St. Patrick’s Days typing in Glory and Monk Moves On, between saying no to the London Program and yes to the Editorial Board, I fell in love with journalism, added the news to my extensive list of addictions and resolved to make The Observer shine.

Of course, some just called it selling my soul. And they have a point — I'm not so naive as to think everyone commits to this newspaper to the same extremes or does it for the money (Nick and Sam), or because of their boss’s various bribes and guilt-trips (you know who you are). There are those who, frankly, I don't understand. There are those - that isn't exactly to think everyone commits to this newspaper to the same extremes or does it for the money (Nick and Sam), or because of their boss’s various bribes and guilt-trips (you know who you are). There are those who, frankly, I don't understand.

There are those who, after our final home game of the 2005-2006 season, tipped off at 4 p.m. at the Joyce Center.

The 2nd annual Holy Cross Mission Lecture, “The Word of God is not Chained: Images for Mission in Cultures,” will be presented Sunday at 7:15 p.m. in the Moreau Seminary Auditorium.

John Carr, Director of the Department of Social Development at World Peace, will speak on “Political Responsibility and Religion: Faithful Citizenship in the 2006 Elections” on Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Eck Visitors Center Auditorium.

The Jazz Clinic with the Clayton Brothers will perform Saturday at 2 p.m in the Notre Dame Band Building. The event is part of the Collegiate Jazz Festival and is free and open to the public.

A conference titled “Reading Between the Lines: Scripture and Community in the Dead Sea Scrolls” will take place at 10:30 a.m. Monday in McKenna Hall auditorium.

To submit information to be included in this section of The Observer, e-mail detailed information about an event to obsnews@nd.edu.

IN BRIEF

Saint Mary’s senior Ashley Pellier will present her senior comprehensive play “Angels: A Nightmare in Two Acts” today at 7:30 p.m. in the Little Theater in Moreau Hall. The play is free and open to the public.

The Irish men’s basketball team will bid farewell to seniors Saturday, when the team squares off with DePaul in its final home game of the 2005-2006 season. Tip-off is at 4 p.m. at the Joyce Center.

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OFFBEAT

And a little-litty thimble of popcorn, please.

OTTAWA — Budding Canadian film makers looking for a big break may want to think small — about 2 inches by 2 inches to be exact — organizers of Canada’s first mobile film festival said Wednesday.

Mobifest producers are looking for bite-sized films that are up to 60 seconds long and produced for viewing on cellphones and other handheld devices.

“The big picture is that there’s a billion (mobile) phones worldwide and an increasing percentage of them are playing back video,” said Duncan Kennedy, president of Nownow Corp., which is producing the contest. “It’s a new distribution channel for independent film making.”

Boy sticks gum on valuable painting.

DETROIT — Painter Helen Frankenthaler’s landmark abstract work “The Bay” just got a little more abstract — to the tune of $1.5 million, the Detroit Free Press said.

The barely chewed Wrigley’s Extra Polar Ice gum left a residue stain about the size of a quarter in the lower left-hand corner of the painting, the newspaper said.

The boy was suspended from Holly Academy, a Detroit-area charter school where he attends, the newspaper reported.

Information compiled from the Associated Press.

Law student Matt Perez-Stable registers for Heward Hall’s sixth annual bone marrow drive. Thursday, Perez-Stable’s name will be entered in a computerized registry maintained by the National Marrow Donor Program.

QUESTION OF THE DAY: HOW HAS THE CONSTRUCTION ON DOUGLAS ROAD AFFECTED YOU?

Joey Brown

freshman

Pat Ennis

sophomore

Patrick Esseln

sophomore

Molly Phister

sophomore

Maggie Jespersen

sophomore

"It's really frustrating when I drive to work."

"It's really frustrating when I drive to work."

"Not really, too much responsibility."

"I don't have a care. So, no."

"It made it difficult to get to my student observing."

Law student Matt Perez-Stable registers for Heward Hall’s sixth annual bone marrow drive. Thursday, Perez-Stable’s name will be entered in a computerized registry maintained by the National Marrow Donor Program.

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Business

continued from page 1

Assistant Provost for Admissions Dan Saracino.

"That goes against the culture at Notre Dame," Saracino said.

For now at least, it was decided that gates both in and out should be avoided.

Woo echoed Saracino’s analysis, adding that this stance made Notre Dame unique.

"Almost all schools I know have gates in the business program," she said. "If [Notre Dame] accepts students, they should have access to any major they want."

Assistant Dean of the College of Business Samuel Gaglio agreed with Woo’s sentiments, saying there are "no ongoing discussions" as gates are "not appropriate for Notre Dame."

"If you’re here at Notre Dame, the option to study business is yours," Gaglio said.

Even if the University were willing to install gates, there would be no practical way to screen applicants for their majors without changing the structure of the First Year of Studies program—a well-established system that allows freshmen to explore various academic options.

"There are many subjects at Notre Dame that [incoming] students aren’t familiar with—like engineering and business," Saracino said.

Applicants do notify the Office of Undergraduate Admissions of what they plan to major in, Saracino said, but 15-20 percent of students change their major between when they apply and when they register for class the summer before freshman year. More than two of every three undergraduates at Notre Dame change their major between application and graduation, with many changing two or three times, he said.

This is as true for business majors as for students in the other colleges, Gaglio said.

"We have a lot of students move into and out of the College," he said.

The statement of intended major serves therefore as an aid to departments that might send information to incoming students, but plays no role in applicants’ chances of acceptance, Saracino said.

"An undergraduate education doesn’t teach you to be something, but to be someone," Saracino said.

Saracino said career-oriented students who would like to explore other academic areas before pursuing a business career may still gain some business knowledge with extra courses in their schedules.

"Students can take business classes as electives," Saracino said. "There are other ways than actually majoring in business."

While the College will always try to fill any openings in courses, Gaglio said students from other colleges may not always be able to take business electives, due to the already-maximized enrollment by business majors.

"We have to give priority to business students, as the courses are necessary to their degrees," he said.

"Any seats we have available, but that is a limited number."

Class sizes cannot be increased, he said.

"There is a pedagogical limit to the size of any class on campus," he said. "It hurts the quality of the class if you go beyond that. We’ve put all our limits at that number."

Gaglio said high enrollment in any courses stems from student interest in the material.

"Students should study what they love," he said, quoting psychology specialist Anne Waterer. "The courses we offer appeal to students."

For those students in whom business appeals, there are many places to pursuing a business major at Notre Dame, Woo said.

"Business training is very broadly applicable," she said. "All organizations, in order to be effective, require a certain organizational intelligence."

And Notre Dame students will continue to have the option to choose Business, just as they may study Arts & Letters, Science, Engineering or Architecture, without admissions gates.

"We couldn’t be more convinced that what we have is the best system," Saracino said.

Contact Karen Langley at klanglel@nd.edu

Eurydice caught decorating Arlstaes’ cottage!

INSIDE:
Orpheus’ “instrument” drives Eurydice to distraction!

PLUS:
The surprise in the shepherd’s cornfield

FIND OUT ON APRIL 7 AND 8
IN WASHINGTON HALL!
Trigiani continued from page 1

umentary "Queens of the Big Time" won the Audience Award at the Hamptons Film Festival and toured interna-

tionally.

It was a screenplay called "Big Stone Gap," however, that gave rise to Trigiani's career as a well known novelist and made her a dorm room name at Saint Mary's. In 2000 she published her first book, "Big Stone Gap," about a 20-something-year-old woman of Italian descent living in a Virginia mining town. Two more books based on the same characters, "Big Cherry Holler" and "Milk Glass Moon," followed, rounding out what is now known as the Big Stone Gap Trilogy. Her three most recent titles, "Lucia, Lucia," "The Queen of the Big Time" and "Rococo" all made the New York Times bestsellers list and have been popular selections for book clubs across the country.

"It's a big deal when you make the New York Times list because authors know it's an impossible list to crack... It was very exciting to be familiar with the three-year-old daughter of a mother sobered me to see people like her trying to turn it around," Westler said.

"When I think about Adri, I think as bad as some things are in the world, there are people like her trying to turn it around," Westler said.

Contact Megan O'Neil at one9907@smu.edu.

"I was surprised by how very much they enjoyed reading her." Laura Haligwood
English professor

Trigiani's books are a favorite at the Saint Mary's bookstore, said bookkeeper Bob Dezeno, with "Big Stone Gap" at the top of the list. Sales are particularly strong during alumnae weekends, Dezeno said.

"I do a lot of touring and I meet a Saint Mary's girl, or three or four, at every stop," Trigiani said. "The Saint Mary's-Notre Dame community of Igduates has been very kind to me, as well as their children."

Trigiani's novels. The novelist's speech was so powerful, Campe said, that her grandmother ordered a copy of the graduation video when she finally caught the audience," she said. "She did such a good job of connecting with not only the students, but with parents, grandparents and siblings."

Campe promptly went out and purchased a copy of Trigiani's "Big Stone Gap" and said she understands why the writer has been so successful.

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English professor

Adriana Trigiani
Saint Mary's graduate

"I was surprised by how very much they enjoyed reading her." Laura Haligwood
English professor

"I am very grateful to hear that my books are being read at my beloved College," Trigiani said. "I am at the beginning of what I hope will be a long career in books so when I hear that my books are being used in the classroom, I want to holler. No, wait, I'm getting better at this—promote!"

"My personal assistant in Manhattan," Westler said.

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Trigiani lives in Greenwich Village with her husband, Tim Stephenson, an Emmy award winning lighting direc-
tor for The Late Show—and three-year-old daughter, Lucia.

"Being a mother sobered me up," she said. "I never worried about anything—really, I'm one of those people who is not afraid of anything."

Westler, who described his for-
er student as "the funniest women on the planet," said any Saint Mary's woman who con-
tacts Trigiani can expect a timely response. He has no shame in dropping her name in class and said the College has a dependable friend in New York.

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President George Bush and First Lady Laura Bush stand for the United States national anthem during their visit to India Thursday.

Bush acknowledged that Washington and New Delhi were estranged during the Cold War, when India declared itself a nonaligned nation but tilted toward Moscow. "Now the relationship is changing dramatically," he said.

India has more than 1 billion people, and its booming economy has created millions of jobs and consumer demands that have attracted American businesses. Its middle class has swelled to 300 million — more than the population of the United States. Still, 80 percent of Indians live on less than $2 a day.

The U.S.-India nuclear deal was seen as the centerpiece of better relations between the world's oldest and most powerful democracy and the world's largest and fastest-growing one.
The RA selection process is either underway or completed in all 27 residence halls. Students interested in applying for an RA spot, which includes the privilege of being respected by other residents and being a leader in the dorm, makes the job one Hagan recommends.

"It helps you grow up and mature ... (and to) be in a leadership position as opposed to (being) the person the RAs are trying to control," Hagan said.

Contact Kaitlynn Riedy at kriely@nd.edu

**News benefactors to be recognized**

Special to The Observer

More than 250 University of Notre Dame benefactors from 28 states will be honored on campus Friday as part of Notre Dame’s 2004-2005 academic year.”

The weekend also will include a panel discussion, titled " Fulfilling the Promise: The Undergraduate Education Experience and Teaching." Speakers will include "Thomas G. Burish, Notre Dame’s provost, and Dennis Jacobs, the president, associate provost and professor of chemistry, who was named the U.S. Professor of the Year in 2002.

The Observer in an article published Sept. 27, 2004. "It will be a better road and a faster road." This spring’s roadwork is part of a larger campus roads project, which Lyphout said is estimated to cost $32 million. Primarily launched in response to safety concerns arising from a predicted increase in pedestrian traffic — due to construction of the northern area of campus — the project is also part of a master plan to decide how far the campus will ultimately expand. "We have a blue line that tells us how far we can sprawl outside of campus," Lyphout said. "We don’t want a sprawling, non-walkable campus," Lyphout told The Observer in the Sept. 27, 2004 article.

Lyphout said all new construction will rest within the blue line — a decision that necessitates the closure of Juniper Road once all alternative routes are in place.

The section of Juniper Road that bisects campus will close in August, Brown said. The University’s local government officials and the general public negotiated for three years about the campus roads project until it was finally approved by the Saint Joseph County Council on June 8, 2004.

Brown said one concession made by the University during this procedure was its agreement to build a new north-south roadway on the northern edge of campus — from the east on Douglas — should use Clevland Road to Juniper on the north and Edison Road to Eddy on the south for the duration of the road closing.

Additional closings will occur in May due to construction on another portion of Douglas and on Saint Joseph’s Drive, Brown said.

Contact Katie Perry at kperry@nd.edu

**WOMEN’S LACROSSE**

**PHYCHEDELIC SUNDAY**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 5**

**VS. CORNELL AT 12 NOON**

Free tie-dye shirts for the first 200 fans sponsored by

**TRACK & FIELD**

**ALEX WILSON INVITATIONAL**

Friday, March 3, 2006

**FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2006**

**5:00pm**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2006**

**10:00am**

All events will be held at the Loftus Sports Center

The Observer • CAMPUS NEWS

Friday, March 3, 2006

**Selection**

continued from page 1

The RA selection process is either underway or completed in all 27 residence halls. Students interested in applying for the position submitted an application and three letters of recommendation to the Office of Student Affairs in mid-February. Though dorms differ slightly in how they conduct their selection process — the rectors, assistant rectors and current resident assistants usually hold a series of interviews, and then the rectors make the final decisions.

Anne-Marie Rick of Welsh Family was awarded an RA spot last week. She found the application process — which included three separate interviews in one hour — to be fairly easy.

"The interviews go over everything from how would you handle it if you were aware of one of the girls in your section being bulimic to what do you think is the highest you're going to have to give up," Rick said.

In some dorms, competition for an RA spot, which includes free room and board, can be tougher. Candidates for six spots are interviewed for their past seven years for seven spots. Other dorms, like Morrissey Hall, usually conduct an interview. Matthew Schultheis is one of nine Morrissey juniors applying for an RA position as opposed to three separate interviews, and then the rectors will also try to pick a group that will work well together.

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Contact Katie Perry at kperry@nd.edu

**Douglas continued from page 1**

... during this period.

The purpose of the closings is to allow construction to begin on a roundabout at the Douglas-Ivy intersection and is "necessary to widen Douglas Road," vice president for Business Operations Jim Lyphout said.

The road closures will also permit the completion of a new four-lane road — North Twyckenham Drive — east of Notre Dame campus.

Brown said once construction is completed in May, the extension of Twyckenham from Edison to Douglas, and on to Juniper, will likely improve the time it takes motorists to travel "in every direction near Notre Dame." This four-lane north-south corridor will be much faster than the current route through campus with stoplights," Lyphout told The Observer in an article published Sept. 27, 2004. "It will be a better road and a faster road." This spring’s roadwork is part of a larger campus roads project, which Lyphout said is estimated to cost $32 million. Primarily launched in response to safety concerns arising from a predicted increase in pedestrian traffic — due to construction of the northern area of campus — the project is also part of a master plan to decide how far the campus will ultimately expand. "We have a blue line that tells us how far we can sprawl outside of campus," Lyphout said. "We don’t want a sprawling, non-walkable campus," Lyphout told The Observer in the Sept. 27, 2004 article.

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### Market Recap

**Dow Jones**

- Stocks
- **Up:** 1,393
- **Down:** 1,832
- **Comprehensive Volume:** 2,544,690,240

**AMEX**
- 1,887.03

**NASDAQ**
- 2,311.11

**NYSE**
- 8,126.58

**S&P 500**
- 1,289.17

**Nikkei (Tokyo)**
- 15,909.76

**FTSE 100 (London)**
- 5,833.00

### Commodities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>46.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silver ($/oz.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crude Oil ($/bbl.)</td>
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<td>Natural Gas ($/Mcf)</td>
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<td>Copper ($/lb.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aluminum ($/lb.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead ($/lb.)</td>
<td>1.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zinc ($/lb.)</td>
<td>3.48</td>
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### Exchange Rates

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<td>Canadian $</td>
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### National debt may increase with vote

WASHINGTON — Republicans in the Senate face a difficult but necessary vote in coming weeks to allow the Treasury borrow to pay the $8.2 trillion national debt by another $781 billion.

The need to increase the legal limit on the debt has been an ongoing debate for more than a year, with the focus on Congress this week to debate plans to pass a bill as President Bush and his GOP allies in Congress for their fiscal stewardship.

“During this election season, America’s debt, that is, the total of the deficits has increased by $781 billion,” said Sen. Max Baucus of Montana, top Democrat on the Finance Committee. “This is a 40 percent increase in the federal debt across the country for its entire history.”

Treasury officials briefed Senate staff aides Thursday and told them that without an increase in the government’s ability to borrow, it would default on obligations for the first time in history sometime during the week of March 20. That is an unthinkable prospect that would ruin financial markets and damage the government’s credit rating.

### Threat keeps pilots in negotiation

**MINNEAPOLIS** — The threat of mutually assured destruction kept Northwest Airlines and its pilots at the bargaining table today.

Though Northwest had the power to impose a cost-cutting contract of its choosing, the pilots feared a strike that could wreck the nation’s fourth-largest airport.

Northwest spokesman Kurt Hendchen has declined to address the issue directly, but has said that Northwest is prepared to keep talking.

“We continue to negotiate, and we are making progress on reaching a consensus agreement with our pilots,” he said.

The company wants $308 million in concessions from pilots, the union said last month. But the union and the company said last week that they had reached a framework for an agreement on who would fly small jets for Northwest, which had been at the heart of the pilots’ strike threat. Pilots are pressing for protection if Eagan, Minn.-based Northwest is sold or split up, and for a share in the company once it emerges from bankruptcy.

Industry watchers and the pilots union both said it was unlikely Northwest would impose its will. But Daniel Pettee, dean of the business college at Embry-Riddle Aeronautural University, said it wasn’t out of the question.

“I don’t think it’s something they would do lightly,” he said, but added, “I doubt they’ve ruled it out.”

The airline has said a strike could put it out of business for good. Pilots would lose even more than most workers if that happened, because their large pensions are cut the most if the government has to bail out Northwest’s pension. And with the industry in hool mode, getting a job at another carrier would be difficult.

“Their pilots who’ve e-mailed me say they’re so fed up they’re willing to fall on their swords,” said Vaughn Carlin, chief analyst at AirlineForecasts, who also flies part-time for a different airline. “Now think about that for a second — that is a silly thing to say, to take it to the point that they’re willing to shut down the airline out of principle!”

### Stocks lower on retail worries

Disappointing sales prompt some new concerns about slowdown in economy

NEW YORK — Nervous investors bid stocks moderately lower Thursday, after disappointing retail sales reports prompted fresh concern about the outlook in the economy and a dropoff in consumer revenues. A surge in oil prices also spurred selling.

While many big-name retailers reported solid, if uninspiring, sales for February, the majority of monthly retail sales were below Wall Street’s expecttions — a disturbing sign for investors who hope consumer spending will remain robust in the face of the expected interest rate increases from the Federal Reserve.

“The economy is slowing, not to the point where anybody’s really worried, but if corporate America isn’t out there with it, you’re going to want to see the Fed finish up with rate hikes,” said Russ Koesterich, senior portfolio manager at Barclays Global Investors in San Francisco. “But the Fed is going to err on the side of inflation. So the one catalyst that could move the markets out of this trading range doesn’t seem to be there right now.”

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 28.02, or 0.25 percent, to 11,025.51.

Broader stock indicators also fell. The Standard & Poor’s 500 index lost 2.10, or 0.16 percent, to 1,289.14, and the Nasdaq composite index dropped 18.20, or 0.15 percent, to 1,211.11.

Bonds fell for a second straight session, with the yield on the 10-year Treasury note rising to 4.64 percent from 4.59 percent late Wednesday. The dollar fell to a five-week low against major currencies, while gold prices rose.

Unrest in oil-producing regions as well as higher natural gas prices helped boost crude futures. A barrel of light crude settled at $63.36, up $1.39 on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

The retail worries over­shadowed another sign of strength in the labor mar­ket. First-time jobless claims rose by 15,000 last week to 294,000, according to the Labor Department. The small increase left claims below 300,000 for the seventh straight week.

The claims data, how­ever, did not provide any additional clarity on the overall economy. The week’s economic data, while plentiful, has been mixed, leaving investors with their uncertainties about economic growth and prompting what Arthur Hogan, chief market analyst at Jefferies & Co., called a knee-jerk reaction to each new bit of data.

“You look at the past three days, we’re down, up and down again,” said Arthur Hogan, chief market analyst at Jefferies & Co. “Without any real catalyst, and really, without knowing what the Fed will do, we’re going to bounce around here for a while.”

The Fed meets March 28, and is likely to raise the nation’s benchmark inter­est rate to 4.75 percent.

Wall Street will be watch­ing closely for signs whether the March rate hike will be the last in the recent string of increases, or whether the Fed sees more signs of inflation to come.

Against a backdrop of slowing consumer spending and falling retail sales, more rate hikes could fur­ther slow economic growth, which is why investors punished retail sector stocks. Among those reporting retail sales, dis­count merchants and department stores fared best.

How industrial Wal-Mart Stores Inc. narrowly beat Wall Street’s expecta­tions with a 3.2 percent increase in sales at stores open at least a year, while rival Target Corp. saw a 3.6 per­cent jump in same-store sales, also beating analysts’ forecasts. Wal-Mart slipped 9 cents to $45.06, while Target fell 46 cents to $53.71.
Animal activists convicted in NJ

Extremists found guilty of using Website to incite threats, vandalism

**Associated Press**

TRENTO, N.J. — An ani­mal-rights group and six members were convicted Thursday of using a com­pany that posts drugs and household products on ani­mals.

The group, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, maintained its innocence but was protected under the First Amendment.

The federal govern­ment charged that SHAC killed hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to wage an assault on all our constitutional rights.

**Pamela Ferdin**

former child star

J.N. killer of 22 people gets 11 life sentences

Former male nursing home worker murdered patients with hard-to-detect drug injections

**Associated Press**

SOMERVILLE, N.J. — A for­mer male nursing home worker convicted to the consecutive life terms for the murders of 22 people in New Jersey was sentenced Tuesday to 11 life sentences for their victims hurt once again.

During an emotional senten­cing hearing Tuesday, Charles Cullen refused to ex­plain his actions even tell a judge why he did not want to talk after relatives of his victims were there for the first time, calling him a "monster" and "vermin.

"After today, we will finally rest our name and face, like the earth he did," said Emily Stoecker, whose mother, Eleanor, was murdered.

Cullen — one of the worst serial killers ever discovered within the U.S. health care system — escaped the death penalty after making a deal with prosecutors to plead guilty to the murders and three attempted murders in Pennsylvania.

Cullen claimed to have killed up to 40 people during a career that spanned 14 years, including five homes and hospitals.

Shaken by the ancient foundations of the healing pro­fessions," Superior Court Judge F. Jeffery Caulfield told Cullen stood motionless, his eyes closed, and "vermin.

Cullen was fired from five nursing jobs and resigned from tw­o others amid questions about his practices. But he was always convicted to find another job, in part because hospi­tals do not hire people with his convictions for fear of being sued.

New Jersey and Pennsylvania prosecutors have since passed legislation protecting nursing homes and hospitals from malpractice suits when reporting disciplinary actions taken against employ­ees.

About 60 relatives of the vic­tims attended the sentencing. Cullen, wearing a sweater over his shirt, sat quietly dur­ing much of the hearing. As the family members spoke, he kept his eyes closed, fusi­ng some of the relatives.

Cullen said he had "nothing to say," disagreeing, including those who had hoped to hear him explain why he committed the crimes.

Some family members said they wished Cullen and his wife to hear as his victims did, by lethal injection.

"I want you to die tomorrow so that you can meet God and look my father in the eye," said John Shanagher, whose father was murdered, told Cullen, "I want you to look in the eye of your father, Kevin Kjonaas and six of its members were charged with animal-enter­prise terrorism, stalking and other offenses.

They face three to seven years in prison and fines up to $250,000.

Caulfield, Huntingdon's general man­ager, said the verdict was a victory for democracy, research and patients.

"The government and this jury have sent a strong mes­sage to those who would ignore the democratic process and resort to criminal activity to advance their political views," Caulfield said in a statement.

The jury deliberated over three days after a three-week trial.

In defense rested after just one day, and used test­imony from the group's presi­dent, Patricia Rich­ardson child star who was the voice of Lasy in the "Peanuts" movies and played Felix Unger's daughter Edna on TV's "The Odd Couple." She was not charged.

Ferdin said Thursday that the jury was fooled by the govern­ment's case and that a judge's order to remove vic­tims' names and home addresses from its Web site reeked of fiction.

"This is a scary path for all of us," Ferdin said. "There's a govern­ment, a feeble federal government, who spent millions of taxpay­er dollars to wage an assault on all our constitutional rights.

Ferdin became leader of the group in 1999, after his former president, Kevin Kjonaas and the others were indicted in 2004.

New Jersey's state General Assembly will be watching the case, said Kathryn Taylor, the University of Georgia's peach specialist.

In middle Georgia, where the bulk of the crop is grown, beds are being watered on some trees.

"Another week of warm weather and we're going to see some color out there with the early varieties," she said.

Despite an unusually warm winter, peach trees have sprouted leaves about 100 chill hours in middle Georgia and more than 600 hours in southern Georgia.

Frost is a concern to some Georgia growers until Easter. Having the $50 million to $65 million crop will begin to fall to late in fall in southern Georgia and about a month later in Middle Georgia, said Patricia Ferdin, a for­mer state's 15,000 acres of peach­es are grown.

California, the nation's No. 1 peach producer, has about 20,000 acres that supplies about 45 percent of the domestic crop. South Carolina ranks second with 17,000 acres and Georgia, third.
McCartney, wife make statement with seals

Former Beatles heartthrob travels to Canada with members of animal rights organizations

Associated Press

ON THE ICE FLOES IN THE GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE — Paul McCartney and his wife took to the frigid ice floes off the Atlantic Ocean on Thursday in a bid to halt Canada’s annual slaughter of weeks-old seal pups.

Animal rights activists contend the killing of the downy baby seals, who are often clubbed to death, pierced with beat hooks or skinned alive, is cruel and unnecessary, but fishermen say they badly need the income.

The McCartneys, dressed in orange thermal jumpsuits, traveled in helicopters with a dozen journalists, and members of the Humane Society of the United States and the British-based Respect for Animals.

Hundreds of seals and their fluffy white pups, only days old, were lolling on the ice in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the mothers taking breaks from nursing to bob in the water to fish. The pups will shed their white fur within two weeks, when they become game for fishermen, who club and skin each for their pelts and blubber.

The former Beatle acknowledged residents have hunted seals for hundreds of years.

"Well, in our view, that doesn’t make it justifiable," he said. "Plenty of things have been going on for a long time, like slavery. Just because it’s been going on for a long time doesn’t make it right.

The McCartneys rolled on the ice with one pup, which promptly nipped at Heather Mills McCartney and mewed for its mother. She expressed sadness it and others would likely be killed in a few weeks, their pelts going mostly to Norway, China and Russia.

“They sell the baby seal skins for fashions and fur — that’s what’s so horrific about it,” said Mills McCartney.

The former Beatle implored fishermen to turn instead to ecotourism like whale watching, as communities have done along the Atlantic Coast.

“This is one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on Earth,” he said. “It’s very rare that you can come to a beautiful, wild place like this. In our view, it would make more sense to look at ecotourism.”

Sealers say the hunt has kept their communities afloat for centuries.

“He’ll go out there and cuddle up to a whitecoat and they look beautiful, you can’t get away from that and it is cruel, you can’t get away from that other, but it’s something we’ve done for 500 years,” said Jack Touake, a 70-year-old sealer.

“It’s helped to sustain us. It go to bed with a full stomach, there’s a tight roof over our head, it’s part of our culture, our history.”

The United States has banned Canadian seal products since 1972 and the European Union banned white baby seal pelts in 1983.

The British government is also considering banning seal goods. Respect for Animals and the Humane Society of the United States, which coordinated the McCartneys’ visit, are encouraging a boycott of Canadian seal products.

“I think the McCartneys are two of the most visible people in the world, and with them drawing attention to the fact that this hunt is still going on, this is going to get that message out,” said Rebecca Aldworth, a Newfoundland who is observing her seventh seal hunt for the Humane Society of the United States.

Aldworth has documented on video the gruesome nature of the hunt, in which the wailing pups are bludgeoned or shot dead, their blood spilling over the ice.

She said the McCartneys quizzed her about the slaughter, including the economic benefits for fishermen, whose livelihoods were devastated when the Atlantic Ocean cod stocks dried up in the mid-1990s.

Canada’s Department of Fisheries and Oceans insists the seals are not killed before they shed their white fur — typically two to three weeks after they are born.

“All these animal rights groups take people out there to pose with these cute little ones. To suggest that they’re out there clubbing these little white furry ones is just wrong. That’s completely banned,” said Phil Jenkins, a department spokesman.

The government endorses the hunt as a cultural right and announced a management plan in 2003 with a quota of 750,000 seals over three years.

About 325,000 seal pups were killed last year, bringing local fishermen $14.5 million, which they say their families badly need. The start of this spring’s hunt has yet to be announced as mild temperatures have made the ice thin.

Bill faces opposition in Senate

Proposal calls for new immigrant rights

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Efforts to allow illegal immigrants to eventually become legal U.S. residents were given little chance of winning congressional approval as the Senate began work on an election-year immigration bill.

The legislation pits several Republican constituencies against each other. Social conservatives and governors say the tide of illegal immigrants is overwhelming their state budgets, but businesses say they want to keep them as a source of labor.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter, R-Pa., said he does not object to helping illegal immigrants to earn legal permanent residency after several years of work, as proposed by Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass.

“The political reality is that is going to be very, very difficult to do and to get a bill, if these two are not able to pay for coming into this country illegally,” Specter said.

Specter’s committee held its first meeting aimed at trying to complete a bill by the end of March that accommodates all sides in the most contentious domestic issue before Congress this year.

“I have seen virtually no agreement on this, Specter said.

President Bush has been hoping to deliver a temporary worker program that would allow illegal aliens to keep their jobs in hotels, restaurants, nurseries, agriculture and other businesses that rely on low-wage laborers.

ECDC 2006-07 Registration

The Early Childhood Development Center at Saint Mary’s and Notre Dame (ECDC) is currently registering for the 2006 Summer program and the 2006-07 School Year.

Registration Due Dates:
2/15/06 2006-07 Kindergarten Registration
3/1/06 2006 Summer Program
4/3/06 2006-07 School Year

For more information please call ECDC-SMC: 284-4693 or ECDC-ND: 631-3344.

Rebuild lives.
You can help. Find out how.

Spring Break Service Trip to the Gulf Coast - March 13 - March 17
Sponsored by the Alliance for Catholic Education

Applications available in the ACE office, 112 Badin Hall
Changes a step forward for GLBTQ students

One erects a "coming-out closet" on South Quad. The other hosts a coffee hour in LoMo. One brings in a GLBTQ campus with orange T-shirts to draw the public eye. The other consistently has Vice President for Student Affairs Mark Powers in attendance.

Clearly, unrecognized gay and lesbian student group AllianceND and the University Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs — this week renamed the Core Council for Gay and Lesbian Students — have very different approaches to the issue of homophobia at Notre Dame. But they share the same worthy goal of making gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer and questioning (GLBTQ) students feel accepted and comfortable at a Catholic university. That's why — it stops well short of granting a gay and lesbian student group official status — the step of restructuring the Standing Committee is an encouraging one.

Notre Dame has had its chances to grant official recognition to these groups appearing for the first time in nearly two decades. Two years ago — in what was arguably gay and lesbian organizations' best shot at status to date — the unofficial group OutreachND brought to campus the head of a fairer Catholic institution Boston College's official gay-straight alliance. That attempt, an impassioned speech to coincide with Notre Dame's first "Gay? Fine by Me" T-shirt demonstration. Yet OutreachND was still denied official status in 2004, and recent GLBTQ efforts have lost the political and social clout of the orange shirts that once seemed so revolutionary have declined in shock value — which may be both a positive and negative development. And while it's not certain that Notre Dame can continue to accommodate GLBTQ organizations' "club status, the University has thus far held firm, with Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Sister Mary Louise Gierta telling the groups that there is "absolutely no talk" from the administration about officially recognizing AllianceND.

Amidst this challenging atmosphere, AllianceND should be commended for its persistence in the club application process, as well as its ability to distil and disseminate Alliance's functions that an administrative standing committee cannot fulfill. However, AllianceND members — and all Notre Dame students concerned about the University's stance on homosexuality — have reason to cheer the restructuring and increased student membership that has brought the Core Council. Notre Dame has characteristically been hesitant to raise the tense issue of homosexuality on campus. But the changes to the Core Council should serve as a reminder that the University does have a problem that must be addressed.

By acknowledging that gay and lesbian students should be better served at Notre Dame, and by making a genuine effort to seek more student input about how best to accomplish that goal, the University is taking an admirable step forward towards fulfilling the "Spirit of Inclusion" it promises.

**Letter to the Editor**

Basketball correction

I would like to correct two errors that I found in my prior letter to the editor in Viewpoint (March 11). The first error is that Darner has pointed out men's basketball in the Big East for 11 seasons instead of 14, and if the team were to finish this season with 4 wins, it would only equal their worst win total in their conference history. I apologize for the errors, which derive from the fact that what has been written can be incorrectly written. Basketball has seemed like at least as 14 measured by its agonizing nature. But here is a more important point. The team has been 20 years exactly since Notre Dame last finished in the top 10 nationally in this sport, and that has served as point 50. The point remains the same, it has been too long since Notre Dame South Quad in basketball really mattered on the national stage and immediate changes to the roster at all levels (institutional commitment, coaching and facilities) is success to be obtained at the
top. John P. Chute
March 12
Class of 1986

**Observer online**

**The Observer**

**Policy**

The Observer is the independent, daily newspaper published in print and online by the students of the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College. Editorial content, including advertisements, is not governed by policies of the administration of either institution. The Observer reserves the right to refuse advertisements based on content.

The news is reported as accurately and objectively as possible. Usage of the opinions of the majority of the Editor is Chief, Managing Editor, Assistants Managing Editor and editors department.

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Questions regarding Observer policies should be addressed to the Editor in Chief, Claire Heininger.

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Letters to the Editor are available to all readers. The free expression of all opinions through letters is encouraged. Letters to the Editor must be signed and must include contact information.

Dear Reader:

Questions regarding Observer policies should be addressed to

**Chief, Managing Editor**

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Katie Perry
Joe Quinn
Tia Andrews
Rama Gottumukkala
Sports
Chris Khowre
Dan Murphy
Matthew Hudson
Viewpoint
Joey King
Graphics
Chris Kruty
Struan Bovay

date: March 3, 2006

**Observer Poll**

**What do you think about the notion below?**

a. We should abolish it.

b. It's New Notre Dame, so YES.

c. I'm worried about the financial strain.

I want to know more about this and vote on it next week.

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** uwire**

Everybody's fits.

I've long considered the act of writing on the walls of a bathroom stall to be akin to abandoning a shoe on the side of the highway. It is, in fact, a behavior that leads me to believe that plenty of people do.

The trip to the bathroom stall generated another break from thesis research, and it occurred just a few minutes after I learned from my reading that the first "blog" is given to someone named Dave Winer. It was named after his revolutionary web log way back in 1996. Because of this fact, and it had me thinking about blogs as journeys to the common. So there I was, casually glazing at the various meanings that have created the modern day. And then, suddenly, Eureka! I realized I received a form of deconstruct, that easily predates anything found on the internet. The more I thought about it, the more the comparison made sense. Just like web logs, bathroom logs are a forum for a wide breath of content: low brow humor and sexual innuendo, political rants and social commentary. The quality is similar, too. Both types of blogs are mostly crap (cheap pun intended, you know). I found the content of this particular blog particularly noteworthy. Like most stalls, it is home to plenty of commentaries unprintable in any language other than "Hustler," but it also includes numerous quintessentially Princetonian entries, ranging from the dopey to the de­perate — "Who wants to write my thesis? 3/1604" — to the disappointed — "Ah, sophi­cated Princeton intellectualism." My favorite blog entry, though, is the one scrawled in chalk Sharpe Shrigley high on the wall (from the vantage point of a comfortably seated individual, that is). It is William Shakespeare's Sonnet 39, a love poem in which the subject of affection is a muse unraveled in all of his glory. One easily could say that the poem is completely out of place in a bathroom. The cog­nitive dissonance bothered me, in fact, that I began pondering what motivated the blogger.

Perhaps the semen was spread in a moment of inspiration — plenty of people do their best thinking on the john, after all. If John Nash made a habit of solving equations and proofs on library window panes, it is certainly possible that a similarly affected English professor uses library bathroom stalls as a small medium of inspiration. Some blogs are written by people that do not qualify as academic in nature. Perhaps, I thought, humans have something in common with wild animals: the instinct to mark their territory when entering their bedrooms. Maybe, I thought. My point is quite certain that the instinct to blog — in one form or another — is one shared by all of humanity, and it's not nearly as revolutionary or novel as it might seem. Long before awkward adolescentsforwarded their teen angst with their key­boards, their ancient peers did the same with quill and ink. Perhaps web bachelor's more public than their historical predecessors were, but man's desire to express him­self remains constant.

Everybody writes — that much is clear. Similarly, as children's author Taro Gomi told Body Poores: "One day I think, that bathroom logs are simply a product of convenience. This column first appeared in the March 2, 2006 edition of the Daily Princetonian, the daily publication of Princeton University.

"More than print and ink, a newspaper is a collection of fierce individual voices who somehow manage to perform the astonishing daily miracle of energizing their own personalities under the discipline of deadline and the flavor of their own minds in print.

Arthur Ochs Sulzberger
former New York Times publisher

**Quote of the Day**
Envisioning March sadness’ without Coach Brey

The Observer

Friday, March 3, 2006

Envisioning March sadness’ without Coach Brey

Most of the Big East’s basketball teams received a piece of good news last week: Notre Dame is once more drifting in mediocrity. As the basketball season winds down, Notre Dame is in the middle of the pack, with the lowest tournament seed. Head basketball coach Mike Brey has become the University’s basketball coach, a title that no longer drags in any semblance of respect. At the same time, it may not be the best move for Notre Dame. The team is getting better, and Brey has done a good job of bringing the team together. Nevertheless, it seems that Brey is not the right choice for the position. The team’s chemistry is better with someone else in charge. With Brey at the helm, the team will continue to improve, but not as much as it could have if someone else were in charge. It is time for a change, and the University should not delay any further. Notre Dame deserves a better coach than Brey, and it is time for the University to take action. The team is ready to be lifted to a higher level, and Brey is not the right man to do that. The team needs a coach who can guide them to victory, not just a coach who is content with mediocrity. It is time for the University to make a decision and move on. Notre Dame deserves better.
Bogart, Cagney headline film noir festival

By ANALISE LIPARI
Scene Writer

Names like James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart, images of dark detectives’ offices and back-end New York alleyways, are indissociable from the term film noir — all are hallmarks of a particular brand of Hollywood cinema known most widely by its French name, “film noir.”

This weekend the DeBartolo Center for the Performing Arts (DPAC) plays host to a number of acclaimed film noir classics in the latest of its film festivals.

The diverse selection of films, both French and American, reflects the best and most famous characteristics of the genre. Each has put a distinct stamp on a type of film conventions.

The first of the two French films, the 1957 classic “Pepe le Moko,” is the story of a French gangster living in the Algiers crime circle, but with French police closing in, he struggles to elude them while falling in love with Gaby, a Parisian tourist.

Featuring the view “Pepe” as a corner-stone for its time, it was remade nearly frame-for-frame a few years later in the American film noir “Algiers.”

“Julien Duvivier’s flawlessly entertaining 1957 film single-handedly introduced a new generation to the film noir genre,” the routine story of “Pepe.”

“The film’s focus on Pepe, a goofy tune about a young Cloris Leachman (as a beautiful and insignificant on “Casablanca” and “The Big Sleep.”

“Ludovicus’s flawless entertaining 1957 film single-handedly introduced a novel genre to the film noir genre,” the article said.

The story of Pepe, the American General, falling in love with his daughter Maggie, established a new generation of fans for the genre.

“Audrey, I might know me all around the world but baby I’m a real good woman.”

With a new tour that is quickly selling out venues around the country, and many blocks of tickets for the “Souls2Soul II Tour,” Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, arguably one of country music’s most famous couples, will be combining their musical talents again on the “Souls2Soul II Tour.”

The festival’s final film, “Knock Me Dead,” is a curious combination of film noir and science fiction. Opening with a near accident and closing with an explosion, the film chronicles the tail of private eye Mike Hammer (Dallas Keefe), specifically after he picks up a femme fatale hitchhiker is young Clark Gableman.

“Deadly” is one of film noir’s most unique and poignant examples and is acknowledged as a significant inspiration for the French New Wave in the 1950s. The film features a manic search for the “great whatzit.”

Since the album was released on Aug. 2, the sequel to his country lilt creates the perfect tone for the subject of the song. The music video for “Let He Never Love At All” portrays Tim and Faith as 1960s performers — complete with amazing sets, lighting and costumes.

On his own time, Tim McGraw has been preparing for the release of his second Greatest Hits album. "Tim McGraw Greatest Hits, Vol 2: Reflectected." Although this CD will not be released in stores until March 28, the album is sure to please McGraw’s loyal fans, as it includes all of his latest and greatest hits.

With a new tour that is quickly selling out venues around the country, and many blocks of tickets for the “Souls2Soul II Tour,” Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, arguably one of country music’s most famous couples, will be combining their musical talents again on the “Souls2Soul II Tour.”

Contact Analise Lipari at alipari@nd.edu

By LIZ BYRUM
Assistant Scene Editor

With a collection of multi-platinum albums, a successful marriage, three beautiful children and a new joint tour about to kick off, there might not be a luckier duo than Tim McGraw and Faith Hill.

The country couple, who live on a large estate outside Nashville, Tenn., with their daughters Maggie, Gracie and Audrey, just keep climbing the country ladder.

Over the past year, Hill released her first new album since 2005’s “Cry.” This new release, titled “Fireflies,” takes a wide turn away from the commercial genre that had become the center of focus of Hill’s more recent recordings — as well as being a curious combination of film noir and science fiction. Openings with a near accident and closing with an explosion, the film chronicles the tail of private eye Mike Hammer (Dallas Keefe), specifically after he picks up a femme fatale hitchhiker is young Clark Gableman.

"Deadly" is one of film noir’s most unique and poignant examples and is acknowledged as a significant inspiration for the French New Wave in the 1950s. The film features a manic search for the "great whatzit," a symbolically modern Pandora’s box, which proves violently disastrous for the film noir’s characters. The overall tone of doomed protagonists dissimulates the feel of "Deadly."

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Bengal Bouts co-President Nate Schroeder dedicated himself this spring to winning the heavyweight title.
Schaefer overcomes jitters and tough foes
Senior entered tournament as No. 2 seed after shoulder surgery a year ago

By TIM DOUGHERTY
Sports Writer

When senior Bengal Bouts co-captain Greg Schaefer wakes up on fight-day mornings, the radio is on and he's moving back and forth in his Notre Dame Ave. apartment, trying to keep his jitters from basing him around. He arrives at the Joyce Center hours before his scheduled match that day. He checks his look in the mirror — analyzing his phantom punches at a fantasy opponent hours away from their dance in the dark. Then he does his best to devoid his mind of all things boxing. He even strums a little guitar — anything petty to keep from obsessing over the c a n a s dream he has been r u n n i n g down for years. "I get real n e r v o u s, " Schaefer said. "I think a lot of the guys F o r S c h a e f e r, though, the pre-fight has been longer than "a lot of the guys." A nagging shoulder injury has kept him from finishing a tournament bout since his freshman debut that ended in a split-decision semifinal loss in the 155-pound weight class. His problems started one day during the six weeks of training in the fall of his sophomore year, when Schaefer dealt a punch but his shoulder would not let him take it back. Instead of throwing a fast, he threw his shoulder right out of socket. A surprise setback for the accountability major, his shoulder problem bothered him throughout training. The shoulder popped out again during the first round of his sophomore fight, which he could not continue. "You don't want to get surgery, unless you absolutely have to," he said. "So I tried to let it heal on its own." But it happened again during training his junior year, and this time it "stayed out," trying a successful surgery last March. "The surgery went fine," Schaefer said. "It hasn't slipped out, so far. This season's going well. I feel pretty confident." Now as the No. 2-seeded senior in the 160-pound bracket, this tournament is Schaefer's final opportunity to take home the title — though he would not have far to take it. A native of Granger, Ind. and alumnus of Penn High School, S c h a e f e r's Bengal Bouts wait began before he entered Notre Dame as a student. He remembers his father, a Notre Dame professor, asking him to come watch some of his students fight. That experience hooked Schaefer right where it counted — the adrenaline gland. "I was amazed that all these guys were pounding on each other — with all their friends watching," Schaefer said. "I told myself if I got into Notre Dame that was definitely something I wanted to do. So I signed up freshman year at activities night." Schaefer's friend senior Mark Schaefer, right, deflected Phil Albonetti's punch during Schaefer's quarterfinal victory in the Bengal Bouts at the Joyce Center Tuesday. A year after shoulder surgery, Schaefer is the No. 2 seed in the 160-pound division.

Senior Bengal Bouts captain Greg Schaefer, right, winds up to punch Phil Albonetti during Schaefer's quarterfinal Bengal Bouts victory at the Joyce Center Tuesday.

"We have to carry on the tradition. We have to help pound into the guys' heads that we're raising money for the missions in Bangladesh."

Greg Schaefer
boxer

"Every guy you ever fought, you have a mutual respect for that person. One of the great things about the program is the camaraderie you get with fellow boxers. It's a different type of friendship."

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Senior Bengal Bouts captain Greg Schaefer, right, deflicts Phil Albonetti's punch during Schaefer's quarterfinal victory in the Bengal Bouts at the Joyce Center Tuesday. A year after shoulder surgery, Schaefer is the No. 2 seed in the 160-pound division.

"Your nerves start going and everyone is yelling at you. A lot of guys will lose all their technique when they go out there, but you've still got to maintain what you've learned."}

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Traditions of toughness

First-year boxer Brian DeSplinter is brother of three-time champ but blazes his own path in this year's Bengal Bouts tournament

By ERIC RETTER
Sports Writer

A lot of kids follow the athletic trails their older brothers blazed for them. Not so many walk in the exact footsteps. Like his older brother Mark before him, freshman Brian DeSplinter has started his boxing career and carried on the torch of a family tradition.

Before his first season of his young Bengal Bouts career came to a close — DeSplinter lost his first-quarterfinal fight to Michael Schmitt Feb. 28 — DeSplinter reflected on his progress through the men’s boxing program:

“I can’t believe I made it through the training and all that sort of thing. I didn’t think I’d be able to,” he said.

“It started off [with me wondering] whether or not I could get through the workouts — and then whether or not I could in the ring. It’s pretty amazing how far I’ve come.

Throughout his first year in the ring, Brian did his best to pick up where his brother, a 2003 graduate and three-time Bengal Bouts champion, left off.

“I talked to him [before my first round fight],” Brian DeSplinter said. “He told me what I should do before the bout. I think he mentored me like that. He’s been a lot of help.

Some of that help came this past fall, during the novice season, when the older DeSplinter returned to South Bend to help DeSplinter, his younger brother work on some of the finer points of the sport.

“I went back to campus this year while he was in training, and it was amazing,” Mark DeSplinter said. “I would get in the ring with him, and it was fun, with the pointers I gave him, coming to practice and seeing how good he was — seeing how it all came together.

Perhaps because of his success in the ring, the elder DeSplinter didn’t initially talk to his brother about boxing.

“He didn’t want to give me a lot of help at first, because he didn’t want me to think that I had to follow,” Brian DeSplinter said.

But as Brian began showing increasing interest, his older brother stepped in and began to pass his wisdom on to his younger brother.

“He came down to the boxing room once or twice, moved around with me and showed me some stuff,” Brian DeSplinter said.

While the story of an older brother helping his younger sibling along an athletic path is an old one, the relationship between the DeSplinters has a unique link. In each of their most recent seasons, each brother has worn a blood-stained sweatshirt to each and every practice throughout the season, never washing it between the beginning of the semester and the end of the bouts.

The tradition started during the 2004 novice season last year, when Mark DeSplinter, a senior captain, was working out after a practice.

“A friend and I wore down-stairs in the boxing room when we really shouldn’t have been. ... I was fighting pretty well, and I kind of got a little cocky, throwing kind of wild punches and not really protecting myself,” Mark DeSplinter recalled. “All of a sudden, my friend comes underneath and just nalls me with a right hand and almost shatters my nose. It exploded and my sweatshirt just got covered in my blood. I was close to not being able to fight after that year because my nose was so busted up, bleeding every time it was touched.”

Instead of calling it a bad practice and writing the injury off as a mistake, Mark DeSplinter instead chose to make an example of the incident:

“When I did was, I never watched the sweatshirt, because it reminded me that you can lose so easily if you every got cocky, so it reminds me never to get cocky.”

In part because of the superstition luck the bloody sweatshirt brought his brother last season — DeSplinter dominated the 163 class to win his third title — Mark opted to follow the same path when a similar incident occurred.

“When I put a bloody nose on my sweatshirt [last season], I said, ‘Nope, not gonna wash it until I win.’” Brian DeSplinter said.

Though he didn’t advance as far as he wanted, DeSplinter won his first fight, and, if he keeps true to his word, his sweatshirt will be clean before he reports to practice next January.

As his brother Brian’s career progresses, Mark DeSplinter hopes that his sibling will get the same meaning out of the program that he got.

“Bengal Bouts was the best thing I did at ND,” Mark said.

“There’s nothing like it.”

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Junior John Bush’s grandfather Jack won a Bengal Bouts title as an ND student in 1952

By ERIC RETTER
Sports Writer

When Jack Bush last fought for the Bengal Bouts Heavyweight crown in 1952, the division was still piled with football players using the program for offseason conditioning, cameras captured each fight for television audiences, and Rocky Marciano had never lost a fight.

Fifty-four years later, when his grandson, John Bush, enters the ring for a match being filmed for GSN, the only difference will be the absence of football players in the weight class.

For John Bush, his grandfather’s legacy has played a part in encouraging him to get to a pair of 16-ounce gloves and step into the ring. Like his grandfather Jack Bush more than 50 years ago, John Bush is a member of the boxing club at Notre Dame — and Sunday he will attempt to further family comparisons as he fights in the Bengal Bouts’ heavyweight championship fight.

While family played an important role in his boxing aspirations, John Bush — now in his second year competing in the Bouts — decided to fight for numerous reasons.

“I started after freshman year, after seeing the fights and how exciting they were,” he said.

“There was also influence from my grandpa, because my parents would do that, too. It’s a family tradition.”

In these two years, John Bush has found his experience rewarding.

“I like it a lot so far because, first off, it helps add balance with academics and stuff like that,” John Bush said. “Secondly, I like it because it’s a good way to stay in shape, obviously, and third, it’s a great way to meet a bunch of guys.”

Beyond that, his fighting career has given him a common ground with his grandfather, a 1952 Bengal Bouts champion.

“I’ve talked to him on a certain level and tried to teach him a couple things,” Jack Bush said.

Since beginning his career, John Bush has also received advice from his great-uncle Joe Bush — Jack Bush’s brother — and another former Bengal Bouts participant.

“I’m one of Joe’s best fighters,” John Bush said. “He and his brother both did it — they fought each other in the championship actually — and they both would give me their two cents.

In those meetings, John quickly picked up on whose advice he should pay more attention to.

“I listened more to my grandpa, Jack, he ended up victorious in the end,” John Bush said.

In the 54 years since the fights, much family legend has developed around it. According to Joe Bush — who was two years younger than Jack Bush — their mother sat him down and told him to take it easy in his brother, his time would come, Joe’s mother said.

“Jack, however, good-naturedly disputes the rumors,” John Bush said. “No, no, good-naturedly.

Still, those fights hold a special place in Jack Bush’s memory.

“They were televised in Chicago [in those days], and Rocky Marciano was the referee,” Jack Bush said.

For his part, the elder Bush had been hoping his grandson would make the championship.

“Given his promise to revisit his alma mater, I’d love to come, particularly if John made the finals,” Jack Bush said in an interview with The Observer Feb. 25. “I left not many schools in the country that would be set to meet a bunch of guys.”

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PHIL HODGMAN/The Observer


BENGAL BOUTS

Brian DeSplinter, left, punches Matt Bono during their quarterfinal match Feb. 28. Bush defeated Clarence Ervin III in the semifinals Thursday to earn a spot in the Sunday’s heavyweight final.

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PHIL HODGMAN/The Observer

Brian DeSplinter, right, punches Michael Schmitt during his loss in the quarterfinals of Bengal Bouts Feb. 28.

DeSplinter’s brother Mark won three titles.

PHIL HODGMAN/The Observer
125-pounds

WILL MARRA V. MATT GELCHION

**PICKS**
The championship in the 125-pound weight class features sophomore Will Marra against freshman Matt Gelchion.

Marra has fought twice to make it to the finals, defeating Nicholas McLees on Tuesday when the referee stopped the fight in the third round before winning a split decision over top-seed Peter Sarpong.

Gelchion has fought for only 30 seconds in the entire tournament, locking out Nate Serazin in the semifinals on Thursday night.

While Marra has proven to be an aggressive fighter, Gelchion, with less than a minute under his belt, will be more of a question mark.

132-pounds

CHRIS IZAGUIRRE V. KRIS PEREZ

**PICKS**
The 132-pound final will showcase sophomore Chris Izaguirre versus freshman Kris "El Azteca" Perez.

Izaguirre won three fights to make it this far, including a quarterfinal upset over No.1-seed Sagar Navare.

After a first round-bye, Perez has won two fights, with the referee stopping the contest each time.

Izaguirre should use his height and size in the fight, while Perez will likely continue to be the aggressor to offset the size mismatch.

140-pounds

LAWRENCE SULLIVAN V. MIKE HENNIG

**PICKS**
The 140-pound championship fight features Lawrence "The Boston Massacre" Sullivan against Mike "Just Call Me Merck" Hennig.

Sullivan has moved through the tournament in a defensive, counter-punching fashion, taking advantage of his opponent's mistakes.

Both should look to come out using styles similar to those that got them to the finals as they look to capture the title.

145-pounds

ANDREW MCGILL V. TOMMY FORR

**PICKS**
The 145-pound weight class championship pits junior Andrew McGill against junior Tommy "Fightin' for Milk" Forr.

McGill, a captain and one of the more technically skilled fighters in the program, has yet to be tested, as he has cruised through his first three matches.

Forr has utilized an all-out attack to bully opponents.

While it has worked thus far, he has sometimes tired towards the end of fights.

Against McGill, a very-well conditioned fighter, Forr's conditioning may be an issue.

150-pounds

JOHN O'CONNELL V. BRETT SHAPOT

**PICKS**
In the 150-pound weight division, freshman John "The Highlight" O'Connell will square off against Bret "The Mail Never Stops" Shapot.

O'Connell has won unanimously in all of his fights, demonstrating a deadly combination of speed and power.

Shapot, who has been outsized at times during the tournament, is a smart and fundamentally strong fighter.

The battle between these two fighters should be intense and back-and-forth.

155-pounds

CHRIS CALDERONE V. ZACHARY JARA

**PICKS**
The 155-pound weight class final will see junior Chris Calderone against junior Zachary Jara.

Other than Calderone's split-decision quarter-final win against Anthony Schweiss, both fighters have overmatched their opponents in impressive victories.

This matchup has been in the works since the beginning of the tournament, as the duo entered as the top two seeds.

Both are smart and technically skilled, and this should be one of the closest and most exciting finals of the tournament.
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Friday, March 3, 2006

160-pounds

JEFFREY HAUSFELD V. GREG SCHAEFER

PICKS
ERIC RETTER
Schaefer
KEN FOWLER
Schaefer

Sophomore Jeffrey Hausfeld will face senior captain Greg Schaefer in the finals of the 160-pound weight division. Hausfeld, a hard-puncher with a tendency for wildness, will be looking to defeat the second captain of his Bengal Bouts campaign. Schaefer should look to keep the fight from turning into a brawl, which would benefit Hausfeld.

170-pound

BRIAN NICHOLSON V. ANDREW BRESLIN

PICKS
ERIC RETTER
Nicholson
KEN FOWLER
Nicholson

The 170-pound championship will pit two smart and experienced fighters in seniors Brian Nicholson and Andrew Breslin, a captain. Nicholson, a much taller fighter, should use his jab and extensive reach advantage to keep the smaller Breslin away. Breslin should try to get underneath Nicholson’s long arms and use his hooks — one of the party punches — to work Nicholson’s body.

165-pounds

CHARLIE GOUGH V. BILLY HEDERMAN

PICKS
ERIC RETTER
Hederman
KEN FOWLER
Gough

The championship in the 165-pound weight class will feature senior Charlie Gough against law student Billy Hederman. The two fighters have a similar style, as both have effectively used their jab to create opportunities during fights. Hederman showed he has the power to stop fights early, TKO’ing Matt Hazelbeek in his quarterfinal match.

180-pound

DAN WARD V. JEFF GOLEN

PICKS
ERIC RETTER
Ward
KEN FOWLER
Golen

In the 180-pound division, senior Jeff Golen will take on junior Dan Ward. The two fighters employ contrasting styles, as Ward is one of the toughest fighters to hit and focuses on quick, precise punches, while Golen is an aggressive and technically sound fighter with lots of power. Golen must increase the tempo of the fight to win.

CRUISERWEIGHT

JOHNNY GRIFFIN V. PATRICK K. RYAN

PICKS
ERIC RETTER
Griffin
KEN FOWLER
Griffin

The Cruiserweight title fight will feature senior Johnny Griffin against sophomore Patrick K. Ryan. Griffin, arguably the best fighter in the bouts, is an aggressive fighter with great power. A quick puncher, Griffin should look to capitalize with big combinations. Ryan should look to keep his distance and pick his spots, bringing a full attack when he decides to engage Griffin.

HEAVYWEIGHT

NATHAN SCHRROEDER V. JOHN BUSH

PICKS
ERIC RETTER
Schroeder
KEN FOWLER
Schroeder

The Heavyweight bracket championship will feature senior co-president Nathan Schroeder against junior John Bush. Bush, a southpaw, will try to fight like the bigger fighter and keep Schroeder away with his long reach. Schroeder, a crafty boxer with knockdown power, will look to get inside and throw, especially if Bush trades punches.

SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT

TONY CUNNINGHAM V. BRIAN KOENEN

PICKS
ERIC RETTER
Koenen
KEN FOWLER
Koenen

The Super-Heavyweight division final will pit junior Tony Cunningham against junior Brian Koenen. In his earlier fights, Cunningham has often charged directly at his opponents. While often effective, these bombardments have at times been reckless and generally leave him exhausted. Koenen should look to move and avoid the charges and land more controlled combinations if Cunningham gets tired.

76th Annual
Bengal Bouts

Sunday, March 5, 2005
1:30 p.m.
Joyce Center Arena

Fight Previews by Eric Retter
Photos by Claire Kelley
Graphics by Matt Hudson and Dustin Mennella
Cruiserweight Griffin looks for second title in three years

By CHRISS KOREY
Sports Writer

Winning it all in his first tournament is hard to top. Johnny Griffin, the top-seeded cruiserweight in this year’s bouts, did just that — and considers it the best boxing experience of his life.

“My favorite memory of boxing is the championship fight as a sophomore,” he said when he was crowned the champion of the light-heavyweight division. Although Griffin was compteting in the Bouts for the first time in 2004, he participated in practice as a freshman but was sidelined due to illness. The Observer called him “one of the best natural fighters the Bengal Bouts has seen in years.”

In 2005, Griffin lost in a split decision to Billy Zizic, a powerful graduate student, in one of the closest matches of the tournament. But this has been a more effective year. As one of the senior captains in 2006, Griffin has worked hard to polish his own skills, but also to help improve the skills of others.

“It was a lot easier when I was a member instead of a captain,” he said. “They’re looking to you for a lot of leadership, stuff. It’s a whole different standpoint.”

The senior philosophy major has worked to balance his own workouts, captain’s duties and schoolwork.

“It takes a lot more time, you help with [younger boxers'] practice and then go back out and practice, and still get your work done,” he said. “I still get some homework done after three hours of helping everyone else.”

Griffin said boxing at Notre Dame was unique in how it combined a team aspect with the individual nature of boxing.

“I’d say training to the most challenging part,” he said. “Boxing is a team sport, upon the way Notre Dame does it. It’s not really a team sport.”

The difference between training for Bengal Bouts and training for another boxing tournament are seen in the workouts the fighters go through.

“It’s not like a regular boxing gym where you have a personal trainer, random guys watching to help you — it’s really focused on yourself,” Griffin said. “And that’s the fact that you’re training with each other the whole time, pushing each other.”

Griffin first got involved with Bengal Bouts during his freshman year, but a bout with mono interrupted his first season.

“That’s what got me into boxing in general — my freshman year, the boxing table at Activities Night,” he said. “I caught mono so I couldn’t do it freshman year, but sophomore year I went out and just loved it. I like it so much more than team sports because it’s just you, all the responsibility. If you win, it’s all on you. If you lose, it’s all on you.”

Griffin, a native of Sacramento, California, plans to attend law school next year. But he will take the title-winning experiences and friendships away from his Bengal Bouts experience. The friendships are unique because a Bengal Bouts boxer will find himself in the ring fighting against his friend.

“In the end you have to go out there and do it yourself,” he said.


Contact Chris Korey at ckorey@nd.edu
Long hair earns Stypula No. 2 seed

By DAN MURPHY
Sports Writer

Before his sophomore year of college, Stu Stypula had never set foot inside of a boxing ring.

But his relentless work ethic — and a little help from a throwback haircut — earned the junior one of six spots as a Bengal Bouts co-captain this year and the No. 2 seed in the 180-pound weight class.

"I was 2005 captain said I had been selected because at the time I had long hair and they wanted to reintroduce the "shag look" into the program captains," Stypula said.

Stypula is not a stranger to his position. He captained his high school's cross country and lacrosse teams.

He described his leadership role as a "double-edged sword". Stypula said his role as a captain is time-consuming, especially as most of the training sessions are devoted to instructing younger boxers or being a practice partner for others.

The captains have to arrive well before all of the other fighters in order to get to the workouts they need to be physically prepared to compete.

But Stypula believes that in some ways, his new role and the commitment that goes along with it have improved his work ethic and helped him become stronger.

"I have been inspired by a sense of leadership to work harder and be a better boxer than I would be if I wasn't a captain," he said.

If Stu "Beans" has really improved his technique. It is bound to make some noise in the 180-pound division this year. This was the second straight year Stypula earned the No. 2 seed in the tournament.

But he has no intentions of resting on his laurels. "I hope to be a contender for the division championship," he said.

Stypula had no problems getting through the first round in last year's 180-pound class. He faced off against senior Michael Sierfinz and came away with the unanimous decision. In the next round, "Beans" sparred with Duang "Sudden Death" Barreis. Despite putting up a good fight, Stypula fell to the eventual division champion in the semifinal round.

But winning was not his main goal when he joined Bengal Bouts. As a two-sport athlete in high school, Stypula was simply looking for a way to stay in shape while learning a new sport.

"I also wanted to find out if I was as tough a guy as I thought I was," he said. "I found out that boxing isn't always about being the tougher guy."

Stypula said these words resonate with Bengal Bouts competitors, as their fights are only a small part of the work that the boxers put into raising money for the Bangladeshis missions. The fighters organize countless hours of promotion and fund-raising to make the dream a reality.

"The money feeds incredible amounts of people as well as clothing and educating them and playing salaries for many of the workers over there," he said.

The junior biology major also takes away a great deal of knowledge from the program that he has given so much time and effort.

"Bengal Bouts has definitely prepared me for a career in the medical field," he said. "I also taught me to work for a purpose higher than myself."

Stypula said he wants to continue his work as a captain next season, but he is intent on making his mark as a champion on this year so he can dedicate even more time to training younger boxers as a senior captain.

Contact Dan Murphy at dmurphy@nd.edu

Disobedient son becomes Bengal Bouts captain

Andrew McGill's work ethic in the gym earned him title after his sophomore year

KYLE CASSILY
Sports Writer

The last words Andrew McGill's father said to his son as he dropped him off for freshman orientation were simple and yet clear: "Don't join Bengal Bouts.

McGill, a native of Erie, Penn., initially intended to heed his father's advice, which came from a desire not to see his son tossed around in the ring. But the now-junior and Bengal Bouts captain has no regrets in disobeying his father.

"I tried to ease into it," McGill said of telling his father he joined the boxing program.

"After coming up the first year and seeing me fight, my parents saw I could keep up with these guys and not get too much busted in. They called me later and enjoyed watching," McGill first joined the boxing club with no intention of sparing or actually participating in a tournament. He merely saw it as a way to stay in shape with several other fights.

But he steadily broke his way into sparing contests and then decided to enter the annual tournament to raise money for Holy Cross missions in Bangladesh.

"My mom always films the fights, and in between the rounds she zooms in on my face to see if I'm alright," McGill said of his parents' continued support.

McGill has done more than avoid a knockout in the ring; he has excelled in the program to become a captain via hard work and a strong ring presence.

As a freshman, McGill made it to the semifinals in the 140-pound weight class and last year lost in the semifinals. This year the fighter will compete in the 144-pound weight class — in order to focus more on personal health than the size of his opponents.

"This year I stayed healthy, not losing the weight, and developed my skills," he said. "I'm fighting better than ever."

McGill lost in the semifinals last year in a 144-pound bout with Matt McCann — a match he describes as the toughest he has faced.

McCann hit with force and willpower, bringing a break point of the fight left McGill in the best of shape.

"The key when you go into that ring is to plan what you want to do," McGill said. "This season we always work on their plan and carries it out, will win. You dictate the pace, you dictate how the fight is fought and you should be victorious."

Another key component for McGill is intense training. The past two years he has spent more than three hours a day in the gym getting in fighting shape and refining novice boxers the ropes.

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Andrew McGill, left, celebrates his victory over E. J. Alston in the preliminary round of Bengal Bouts Feb. 21. McGill defeated Chris Hanlon Thursday to advance to the 145-pound finals.

"If someone buys a ticket, it feeds a family for a week — from just buying a $10 ticket," he said. "It's a nice feeling to know that you're disciplining yourself. You're making friends, getting in shape, learning how to box, but at the same time you're giving a great benefit to such a great organization as Holy Cross missions."

Not least of all for a guy who disobeyed his parents.

Contact Kyle Cassily at kcassily@nd.edu
Chris Calderone seeks a Bengal Bouts title to avenge the nuances of the sport he said.

As a freshman in the 160-pound weight class, Calderone won in the preliminaries, only to drop a tough bout in the quarterfinals to eventual champion Chris Loughery.

The next year — his first at 155 — Calderone slugged his way into an intense match with the then-freshman, his match against Andrew Morrisey. Following a very hard-fought bout, Calderone was knocked out of the tourney and went on to win the weight class.

For the past two years, as a senior, he has been one of the top three fighters in the school and joined the boxing Club in search of a substitute to sports.

"I felt like, 'Wow,'" he said. "I've got a lot to offer. It's much more physically demanding than anything I've done before. Older boxers and alumni coaches taught him the nuances of the 'sweet science' of boxing and helped him through the rigorous training."

Basola said those mentors were crucial in his development as a boxer.

"The novice program was my introduction to the sport. Basola said. "I got to see what the workouts are like. It also got me into some semblance of shape. It's much more physically demanding than anything I've done before, but also to excel in the ring."

"A lot of my time with the program is taken getting the novices up to speed," Basola said. "We tell them to talk to us when they need help. They come to us to ask questions so we can build them up and make them better fighters."

Most freshmen face training in the fall, giving older fighters the upper hand, but not always.

"It's teamwork thing, but you also get to compete individually," Basola said.

Calderone admitted that when he joined Bengal Bouts he did not know much about the nuances of boxing and how to train.

"I've never thrown a punch in my life," he said. "I knew about the sport, but not the nuances of the sport."

Although the training is rigorous, Basola said that it is not conducive to excessive weight loss to compete in a certain weight class.

"We try to discourage that as much as possible," he said. "We have to make sure they can participate in the fights and do well."

Training sessions, which can take up to 20 hours a week, will be the norm as the tourney nears, are as rigorous, if not more so, than any varsity sport.

"The workouts are very structured," Basola said. "First we do our calisthenics — we call them 'cals.' We do 15 sets a day.

"On top of that we do our training and form work, which is where we teach the novices how to fight."

Although the training is intense, Basola said that it is not conducive to excessive weight loss to compete in a certain weight class.

"We try to discourage that as much as possible," he said. "We have to make sure they can participate in the fights and do well."

Besides physical workouts and technical drills to teach the novices valuable experience and skill, there is a psychological hurdle of climbing into the ring to fight another person.

"You're very alone in boxing," Basola said. "It's like you and another guy in the ring and you have to fight with your feet."

As co-president, Basola has many other responsibilities aside from training younger fighters."

"You have to be on top of everything," he said. "You have to work with ... RecSports to do the paperwork for the Bout. You have to make sure that donations are coming in. You have to get the ads for the programs. You have to make sure the training is up to speed. You have to make sure that there are gym fees in the pit so we can spar. And you have to make sure the coaches are up to speed so they know what's going on."

Of course, Basola is not alone in organizing the 150-plus member club and 130-plus fighter tournament.

"Bengal Bouts co-president Naite Schroeder shouldered almost all of the administrative work," Basola said. "We also have eight captains in the club. They organize the training and work with the novices."

Also working with the program are Bengal Bouts alumni, including law professor Charles Furey, University pilot Pat Ferrell and Tom Suddes, a Notre Dame alum who travels from Ohio every year to help with the club.

"We've got some dinosaurs in the program that come back year in year out and year in year out," Basola said. "As for the senior, his four year Bengal Bouts career has seen many ups and downs, culminating in his 160-pound championship last year."

In his first two years, Basola advanced to the second round but was unable to win more than one match. He said he's improved a lot technically from those early bouts.

"My freshman year I was really nervous and really excited," Basola said. "I kind of lost control and started throwing punches without thinking."

This year, Basola was upset in the quarterfinals by sophomore Jeff Hausfeld, one of his proteges. Hausfeld defeated Mark Hinken Thursday in their semifinal bout and will take on Greg Schaefer in the 160-pound final Sunday.

By KYLE CASSITY

Chris Calderone takes a punch from Nathan Dyer in their semifinal bout at the Joyce Center Thursday. Calderone won the match and will face Zachary Jara in the finals Sunday.

Contact Kyle Cassity at kcass@nd.edu

Basola goes from novice to captain in a few short years

By CHRIS KHOREY

When Mark Basola first heard of Notre Dame's charity boxing tournament, he had never fought in his life.

"I heard about [Bengal Bouts] the summer before coming here — from some family friends," the senior said. "Joining was really out of character for me. I had never thrown a punch before my freshman year at Notre Dame.

For Basola, who played basketball and swam in high school, the Bengal Bouts novice program served as a way to take the next step in his life. "It was a teamwork thing, but you also get to compete individually," Basola said.

"We've got some dinosaurs in the program that come back year in year out and year in year out," Basola said. "As for the senior, his four year Bengal Bouts career has seen many ups and downs, culminating in his 160-pound championship last year."

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Contact Kyle Cassity at kcass@nd.edu
Wobbly 'Domino' lands face first

By TAE ANDREWS
Sene Crit

With a slick preview trailer, "Domino" looked to feature the coolest on-screen bounty hunter appearance since Boba Fett in "The Empire Strikes Back." Well, maybe the coolest bounty hunter not to wear Mandalorian armor.

Although Fett's taciturn performance is a tough act to follow, the presence of Keira Knightley's sheer attractiveness at least promises to make up for any mer­cenary shortcomings. Trading in Lipps's hat-in-hand cues, Knightley appeared poised to capture both her wanted quarry and the hearts of teenage males across the country — dead or alive. While she more or less succeeds as a femme fatale, the film as a whole suffers from an awful plot and overly complicated cinematography.

Through a series of poorly done and very poorly thought-out the film only offers a glimpse of Domino's childhood. Following the death of her father, young Domino becomes an angst-ridden rebel without a cause. She also takes to randomly whip­ping around a pair of nunchaku. The pair­props her warrior past and the hearts of teenage males across the country — dead or alive.

As an angst-ridden teenager with an Avril Lavigne-like vibe, Domino naturally de­cides to pursue a career as a fashion model. Tragically, her willingness to engage in high jinks on and off the runway proves her inability to assimilate into the world of beautiful people, and she soon quits.

Escaping from the superficial world of 90210 to a world of 1870s and 911s, Domino decides to pursue a career of de­­gital and excitement as a bounty hunter. After chopping off her hair in favor of a bob and do, she completes her transition from Pop Star to Scary Spice by joining up with Ed Wood (of the now-defunct band Crow, with per­­formances nearly as strained as Scott Stapp's vocals). Wielding shotguns in lieu of guns, they are clearly trying to change the rock industry motif to "Sex, drugs, rock and roll" but fail miser­ably.

Of course, all of the blame for this can be placed squarely on the shoulders of director Tony Scott. Once known as the genius behind "Top Gun," Scott is in a tailspin free-fall nearly as bad as the one that killed Goose.

Using cinematography similar to his last film, "Man on Fire," Scott again elects to use a perpetual motion approach in shooting Domino. This gets old quickly — he can't keep the cam­era still, always zooming in and out, or flit­ting around. With this recently developed case of cinematographic ADHD and a few artistic montages, Scott clearly has delu­sions of art-house grandeur.

In reality, shaking the camera only makes the audience want a dose of Dramamine. What all of this proves that "Domino" is a cliched action film posing as an indie flick. Some of the more "artistic" montages were designed to show the perspective of being tripped-out on mari­juana. In fact, one of the DVD extras is a featurette entitled "Bounty Hunting on Acid: Tony Scott's Vision Style."

The sheer awfulness of this film is enough to make any viewer wonder what mind-altering narcotics Scott was doing when he cooked up this bomb. The only thing this film has going for it is Keira Knightley's hotness factor. Even in all her hip-hugging jeans glory, she is barely enough to save "Domino" from the dread­ful land of one-star ratings.

Contact Tae Andrews at
randrews@nd.edu

Once known as the genius behind "Top Gun," Scott is in a tailspin free-fall nearly as bad as the one that killed Goose.

Domino
New Line Platinum Series
New Line Home Video

It's as far from civilization as you can get at Notre Dame — but one look across the water will show you the gleaming face of your golden home.

NOTRE DAME'S BEST... Sunsets
BY OBSERVER PHOTO STAFF

By joining Observe Performing Arts, International Studies. Sunset over the Hesburgh Center offers a chance for reflection on these and many other topics.

It's as far from civilization as you can get at Notre Dame — but one look across the water will show you the gleaming face of your golden home.

Pinpoints of light remain as the evening draws to a close; campus hums with activity long after darkness reigns outside.

For next week: What are the best fountains on campus? Send your suggestions to obsphoto@nd.edu
Perez continues to dominate 132-pound division

By J ACK THORNTON and TIM KAISER
Sports Writers

125: Peter Sarpong vs. Chris Hanlon
The first bout of the evening played out like a dogfight, as Zander Souza quickly knocked out off-campus senior Peter Sarpong in the first round. To begin the first round, the two fighters shot out of their corners and traded punches with no defense. Sarpong was quicker though and gained control of the first round before the bell most likely cost him.

Sarpong kept up his attack in the second round, pounding out a series of hooks with a sophomore held on his own, however, and won the decision in the third round. An obviously exhausted Sarpong dropped his defense, allowing for a quick stir up around the ropes with a series of hooks. In the final 80, Marra just had more gas in the tank, coming back to defeat Sarpong by split decision.

125: Nate Seizin vs. Matt Gallagher
In the next fight, all freshman Mike Fisher had needed was 30 seconds and one nasty hook to defeat Seizin. Sophomore Nate Seizin, while Seizin knocked a hook from Seizin in the first round with a brutal right hook that dropped Seizin to the mat. After giving him the chance to get back up and return the favor, the ref called the fight.

132: Chris Izaguirre vs. James "The Beast from the Beach" Carlson
A clash of styles resulted with Zach sophomore Chris Izaguirre and his opponent, "The Beast from the Beach" of Fisher Hall. Izaguirre needed 30 seconds and one nasty hook to defeat Carlson. Izaguirre knocked down Carlson in the first round of the fight and earned him a standing eight count. Seizin then won control of the fight as Homewrecker began to tire and Carlson's punches made contact. Izaguirre received another standing eight count after a huge right hook from the Boston Massachussetts, and the ref stopped the fight 1:24 into the second round.

140: Mike "Soldier" Schmitt vs. Mike "Just Call Me Merck"
"Soldier" Mike Just Call Me Merck had another shot at a national title against a determined Mike "Soldier" Schmitt in the fight. After the 1st round, Call Me Merck came on top and won it outright, dropping a series of brutal left and right hooks that sent Seizin to the floor. Schmitt tried to keep Hanley away with some over-the-top punches, but for his opponent, fighting with a style that can best be described as "downtown.

Sophomore lived up to his moniker, however, and came back up for more, and even gaining the advantage briefly in the third round. In the end, however, Hanley's aggressive style worked as the O'Connell junior won and earned his opponent a unanimous decision and the close win.

145: Andrew McGill vs. Chris Hanlon
Zahn junior Andrew McGill cashed in a dominating performance, defeating O'Connell junior McKay in the second round. Working with his height disadvantage, McGill was able to establish a pattern of low left jabs to the body followed by a right hand to the head. Coming from such a low angle, every punch from McGill was so dominating, as well as an quick, knocking head off pace.

Hanlon struggled to land punches, McGill set up shop, and landed a brutal right hook on Hanlon in the first round, but the third round, but the Zahn junior cashed in a dominating performance, defeating O'Connell junior McKay in the second round. Working with his height disadvantage, McGill was able to establish a pattern of low left jabs to the body followed by a right hand to the head. Coming from such a low angle, every punch from McGill was so dominating, as well as an quick, knocking head off pace.

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**MLB**

**WBC loses four big names**

Ramirez reports to camp instead of tourney

Associated Press

On the same day Manny Ramirez finally joined his Red Sox teammates, Dominican Republic teammates Guerrero, Billy Wagner and C.C. Sabathia pulled out of the World Baseball Classic.

Ramirez arrived at spring training Wednesday, six days after Boston's first full-squad workout and one day after Major League Baseball's mandatory reporting date. He was given permission by the team to show up late so he could continue working out near his Miami home.

The enigmatic slugger arrived with his agents and others in a pair of spiffy vehicles, one cop, one silver. He sported dark orange dreadlocks and was on the field for only an hour. And he passed up several chances to say he's pleased to still be with the Red Sox after he asked to be traded following last season.

"I'm here, I'm here," Ramirez said when asked if he's happy to be with Boston. He wouldn't entertain questions about past trade rumors.

"My main focus," he said, "is going 4-0 in the WBC. That's the season to help Boston win."

He also confirmed he won't play for the Dominican Republic in the World Baseball Classic. Ramirez arrived at spring training Thursday night U.S. time in Tokyo when South Korea plays Taiwan. The Dominican Republic's first game is next Tuesday against Venezuela.

"I'm not ready, so I'm not going to go out there and make a fool of myself," he said.

Ramirez isn't expected to play in Thursday night's exhibition against Minnesota, but Boston manager Terry Francona didn't expect him to be out of the lineup for long.

"I'm fine, I'm fine," Ramirez said. "I guess a lot of people want me to be back and that's why I'm here."

Guerrero pulled out of the WBC, saying he will not play for the Dominican team because of the deaths of his three cousins last weekend in a car accident.

"I feel mentally that I cannot go out there and play to the level and compete for my country," Guerrero said through a translator at Los Angeles Angels camp in Tempe, Ariz.

Wagner and Sabathia dropped off the United States team and were replaced by Washington right-hander Gary Majewski and Yankees left-hander Al Leiter.

Wagner, the All-Star closer who signed a $43 million, four-year contract with the New York Mets on Friday, said he needed more time to get his arm in shape.

"I just didn't feel like I was ready yet," the hard-throwing lefty said in Fort Myers, Fla. "I want to do what's right for my country, and I'm not a very good pitcher in March. I didn't want to hurt the (WBC) team."

Sabathia also said he wouldn't be ready to pitch in the WBC and he doesn't want to risk an injury that could cost his Cleveland Indians. His good friend and former teammate Ivan Rodriguez was also pulled from the U.S. team with only three starters on its 14-man pitching staff.

"I'm trying to maybe do my part and stay with my team with only three starters," he said.

**PBA**

**Tiger stays in front at Ford Championship**

Woods has lead over Mickelson after eight under performance

Associated Press

MIAMI — Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson shared a teed duel at opposite ends of Doral on Thursday, and the outcome didn't change halfway through.

Woods was still one shot better.

"In a balmy start to the Florida swing, Woods again reached the 603-yard 12th hole in two shots and ran off a string of birdies along the back nine of the Blue Monster for an 8-under 64 and a one-shot lead over Mickelson and four others in the Ford Championship at Doral."

"I knew 7 was leading, so try to get up there somehow," said Tiger Woods, golfer. "We finally made our drive, and it would have been easy to walk away after last year."

"Boone’s production plummeted dramatically since the 2003 season. The three-time princess’ new was cut by the United States and Minnesota last year, when he battled 221 with seven homers and 37 RBIs in 326 plate appearances."

"When Lopes made another shot at dousing out with him on Sunday, and I’m glad that he’s playing well. I’ve got to do my part and stay with him."---C.C. Sahathia

"I'm going to go out every day, every week," Mickelson said. "I'm just trying to keep pace. I'm trying to maybe have another shot at dousing out with him on Sunday, and I'm glad that he’s playing well. I’ve got to do my part and stay with him."---C.C. Sahathia

"I'm looking forward to the WBC and to play to the level and compete for my country," Guerrero said through a translator at Los Angeles Angels camp in Tempe, Ariz.

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NBA

Cleveland comes back on Murray's late three

Cavaliers sneak by Bulls with buzzer beater in Chicago

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Ronald Murray made a 3-pointer from the right side with 3.9 seconds left, and the Cleveland Cavaliers escaped with a 92-91 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Thursday night afterallowing a 25-point lead.

Murray, acquired from Seattle at the trade deadline, scored 11 of his 13 points in the fourth quarter as the Cavaliers snapped a five-game losing streak.

The winning shot came after Kirk Hinrich's free throw gave the Bulls a 91-89 lead with 11.6 seconds left. The Bulls had scored the last six points of regulation and were ahead by 11 with 10.9 seconds remaining.

But Murray hit a 3-pointer from the right side with 3.9 seconds left to give Cleveland the victory.

With forward Drew Gooden injured his neck when Allen傷 his hand by countering some of Mahmoud's shots and landing some solid punches of his own to get the win.

Junior Tony Koena defeated Benjamin Bush by split decision in a very close match, the last of the evening. Both fighters were surprisingly agile and while each landed powerful shots, they were able to dodge out of the way of most of the damage. The two fighters appeared even throughout the fight, but Koena connected with a few combinations in the third round to get the victory.

Contact Tim Kaiser at tkaiser@nd.edu

BENGAL BOUTS — SEMIFINALS

Ward looks to defend title

By TIM KAISER

180: Dan "Poundtown" Ward vs. Robert Lorchbie
Junior Daniel Ward defeated senior Robert Lorchbie by unanimous decision.

The first round was uneventful, with almost no punches landed. But baxxers dodged each other's shots and clinched before any damage could be done. The two fighters continued their emphasis on defense in the second, blocking while landing body shots, before Ward landed a few shots to Lorchbie's head at the end of the round. Ward also won the third on the strength of a particularly hard jab to the face of Lorchbie.

180: Daniel Stypula vs. Jeffery Golm
Junior captain Daniel Stypula dropped a close match to senior Jeffery Golm by split decision.

The first round was back and forth, but Golm landed a few more body shots in the second. Stypula and Golm exchanged some solid punches of their own to get the win.

110: Johnny Griffin vs. Peter Courtney
Senior Johnny Griffin turned the most dominant performance in a close match to sophomore Peter Courtney with a three-point run that gave the Bulls their first lead of the second quarter as the Bulls back-up after being taken to a hospital with a sprained neck during the Minnesota game and scored four points in 17 minutes. And Chris Duohan played 17 minutes after leaving that game with a bruised jaw.

He had 19 at halftime, matching his total the previous night in a loss to Sacramento.

With forward Drew Gooden out with flu-like symptoms, second-year pro Anderson Varaje, the first of his career and responded with 13 points and six rebounds. But he missed two free throws with 18 seconds left and the Cavaliers down 69-67.

Eric Snow added 14 points and eight assists.

Hinrich had 25 points and nine rebounds, two nights after he had 30 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists in an 111-100 victory over Minnesota.

Allen finished with 19 at halftime, and eight assists.

A few minutes later, Duhon took a shot to the face that he tried to take a charge against Minnesota's Justin Reed and was done for the night.

Duhon was already sore after taking an elbow to the jaw from Gordon in practice on Monday.

HOLY CROSS MISSION LECTURE AT NOTRE DAME

THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT CHAINED: Images for Mission in Cultures

Saturday March 25th, 2006

MCAT, LSAT, GRE, & GMAT practice tests at Saint Mary's College

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The Observer • SPORTS

Friday, March 3, 2006

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NCAA Men's Basketball
AP Top 25

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Big East Men's Basketball

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NFL

Commissioner Paul Tagliabue speaks during a news conference following a meeting with NFL owners at the Grand Hyatt Hotel Thursday in New York. NFL owners voted unanimously to extend the free agency deadline.

Owners extend free agency deadline

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL delayed the start of the free-agent signing period by three days Thursday, seven hours after the owners had seemed to end all hope for a labor contract extension.

The move came just as a number of teams far out the salary cap were about to dump high-paid veterans. It provides a cooling-off period for the league and the NFL Players Association to reach a deal and keep those cuts under control.

A bizarre day of twists and turns began when the owners took just 37 minutes to rubber stamp a recommendation by their labor committee to turn down the union’s final offer—a meeting so short that many people who expected a long session showed up after owners had already left.

"The situation is as dire as dire can be," commissioner Paul Tagliabue said after owners and team officials raced for flights that had taken them thousands of miles for a meeting of less than an hour. "Seven hours later, it wasn’t quite as dire, although league officials cautioned that nothing had been done.

Still, NFL spokesman Greg Aiello noted in a statement that the union had agreed to push back the free-agency deadline "to provide time to resume negotiations."

That is an indication that despite the rhetoric, contact continues between Tagliabue and union head Gene Upshaw, who have always had a close relationship.

The union is asking for 60 percent of the league’s total revenues to go to its players, the NFL is offering 56.2 percent.

The extension puts off free agency for a class led by two running backs, NFL MVP Shaun Alexander of Seattle and Edgerrin James of Indianapolis.

There are two years left on the labor agreement first signed in 1993 and extend continually before the deadline.

But unless there is an agreement, there will be no salary cap in 2007, which could create big-spending "leaves" and low-revenue "haves," a situation that has prevailed in other sports such as baseball.

That also has traps for teams and players: a player would be eligible for free agency only after six years instead of the current four; there would be no salary minimum, and annual raises would be limited to 30 percent.

In Brief

Reds pitching coach has cancer, stays with team

CINCINNATI, Fla. — Cincinnati Reds pitching coach Vern Ruhle has cancer, but plans to stay with the team while getting treatment.

The 55-year-old Ruhle informed Reds players on Thursday morning, then accompanied the team to Lakeland for its spring training opener, an 8-5 loss to the Detroit Tigers. He didn’t disclose the type of cancer he has, but said doctors expect him to make a full recovery.

"My doctors feel that they’ve caught it at an early stage and it is very treatable," Ruhle said in a statement. "I plan to maintain a presence in spring training, but there will be times when I am away from the team for a few days as I receive treatment."

Ruhle declined to comment beyond his statement.

The cancer was detected by a blood test given to players and coaches as part of spring training physicals. Ruhle lives in Sarasota, Florida, and will be treated by doctors in the area.

Francoeur hopes to remain successful in Braves lineup

KISSIMMEE, Fla. — In less than a year, Jeff Francoeur has gone from being a precocious rising star to a bench player.

Francoeur had taken just 57 at-bats at Double-A Mississippi to being a possible starting outfielder for the United States in the World Baseball Classic.

That’s just a typical leap for the precocious Francoeur.

After Francoeur made his major league debut with the Atlanta Braves on July 7 last season, he played as if determined to show he should have spent the full year in Atlanta.

He was hitting .413 at the end of July and was still around .330 to late August when his smiling face was featured on the cover of Sports Illustrated. By early September he was tied for the National League lead in outfield assists. After the season, he was third in rookie of the year voting.

McNair to remain a Titan for one more season

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Titans decided Thursday to pay a $1 million fee that will keep quarterback Steve McNair with the team this season but allow him to become a free agent after 2006.

The move means the Titans won’t have to pay a $30 million option that would have extended McNair’s contract through 2009, the quarterback’s agent said Thursday. Still, McNair will take up more than a quarter of the team’s salary cap space.

The future of McNair’s 2003 co-MVP had been in doubt with the Titans facing pressure to get under the cap by Thursday.

"What this amounts to is they decided to pay $1 million and not add three years to his contract, so this is his last year," McNair’s agent said Thursday. McNair will take up more than a quarter of the team’s salary cap space.

around the dial

NBA
Washington at Philadelphia, 7 p.m. ESPN
LA Clippers at Utah, 9 p.m. ESPN

Golf
Ford Championship at Doral
3 p.m. USA
NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL

Spartans return to winning ways against No. 25 Badgers

Davis scores 27 and grabs nine rebounds to lead Michigan State

Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Michigan State coach Tom Izzo was on Paul Davis all week to be aggressive going to the basket and play big in the middle. It looks like the senior center was taking the coach's advice.

Davis controlled the paint, scoring 27 points and grabbing nine rebounds as Michigan State (No. 23 ESPN/USA Today; No. 25 AP) to a 74-65 victory over Wisconsin (No. 25 ESPN/USA Today; unranked AP) on Thursday night.

"You hate saying coach is always right, but there's no question that changes my game and my mentality," Davis said. "The biggest thing was to post strong and get the foul line more often."

In his next-to-last home game, Davis was 9-for-12 from the field and 9-for-10 at the line for Michigan State, which had lost two in a row and four of five to fall out of the race for the Big Ten title.

Maurice Ager had 19 points despite being in foul trouble for much of the game and Shannon Brown scored 18 for the Spartans (20-9, 9-6), who reached 20 wins for the seventh time in nine years.

"If you're always going 11-0 or 12-0 in the preseason, you can get 20 wins easier," Izzo said. "If you're playing other people, it's a lot more difficult to do that, I'm proud that we did it the hard way. When you do that, your kids get mentally tougher."

Michigan State improved to 37-11 in games played in March over the last eight years. With a home win over Illinois on Saturday, the Spartans would lock up a first-place tie in the league title. But those hopes were dashed on Thursday.

Badgers guard Kam kron Taylor came into the game averaging 15 points, but scored just nine on 4-for-18 shooting. Wisconsin led 23-13 midway through the first half before Michigan State got going. A 7-0 spurt late in the first half helped the Spartans go up 35-31 at the break.

Davis had 12 points and Brown had 10 in the first 20 minutes, when the Badgers were just 2-for-6 at the line.

Brown's alley-oop slam and fadeaway 3-pointer jump-started a run early in the second half. The Spartans led 48-36 before Tucker, the Big Ten's leading scorer, took charge with 19 second-half points.

But Tucker missed two free throws that would have cut the deficit to 59-57, and Ager answered with 12 points in a span of 2:22 before fouling out with 1:01 left.

"If I felt I had to do something like that," Ager said, "I sat out for a long time and had to make up for it somehow. I had to take over the game and help Paul out.

Michigan State shot 58 percent in the second half and 51 percent for the game, improving to 13-1 when they shoot at least 50 percent.

"That's the ball game right there, that stretch from the 3- minute to the 2-minute mark," Wisconsin coach Bo Ryan said. "We get a couple of free throws that don't get in. It's a couple-of-possession game there, and that's where you'd like to keep it."
ND Track and Field

Irish host Alex Wilson Invite
NCAA spots are up for grabs this weekend

By JASON GALVAN
Sports Writer

The Irish are set to compete this weekend at the Alex Wilson Invitational at the Loftus Sports Center today at 5 p.m. and Saturday at 10 a.m. The Invitational is the last opportunity for athletes to qualify for nationals — with this in mind — those close to making the cut are looking to take their performance up a notch.

The Notre Dame men and women are coming off an outstanding performance at the Big East Championships, where the men earned an unprecedented 11th straight finish among the top three and the women earned the first-place trophy.

Now, the athletes from both squads are looking forward to earning spots to compete in the NCAA championships March 10 and 11 in Fayetteville, Ark.

"I just need to focus ... see if I can up my heights and try to make it to nationals," Irish freshman pole vaulter Mary Saxer said. "If not, it's not the end of the world, but it would be great if I did."

Surprisingly, Saxer may not make the cut despite an outstanding season which saw her take second place at the Big East meet and break a school record by clearing a height of 4.05 meters at the Notre Dame Invitational in January. For her to make the NCAA meet, Saxer must take her performance a step further and break the school record she set a little over a month ago.

Others looking to tune up before the national competition include junior All-American Kurt Benninger. Benninger was unable to compete at the Big East meet two weeks ago after suffering through a nagging Achilles tendon injury that has hampered him all season. However, Benninger insists he is feeling fine and ready to compete this weekend.

"I'm really excited to go out there and race again," Benninger said. "I want to see where I'm at ... take some of the rust off and get ready for [the] NCAA's, which is the big goal."

Benninger has only been able to compete at two meets this indoor season. However, he made the most of his chances. At the Notre Dame Invitational, he ran his second sub-four minute mile and placed first at the meet.

The junior will not be competing in the mile this weekend. He will instead run as part of Notre Dame's distance medley relay team.

"We're pretty confident we can qualify in this event and we're hoping to go out and accomplish something," Benninger said.

Junior Thomas Chamney, who will compete in the mile this weekend, will instead run as part of the No. 2 relay team.

"The meet is all about the individual," Freeman said. "This can be faster considering I am usually going this fast in the first 100 meters of the 200. It will be nice just being able to go all out and not have to worry about finishing another 100."

Fanslau plans to compete in the 200 freestyle and 100 fly.

"You never know if you'll end up competing in a different race next year," he said. "The 200 freestyle may be a possibility for me."

MacKay will compete in the 100 backstroke as opposed to his usual 200.

"Preparation hasn't really been that different," Fanslau said. "We rested a lot for the Big East meet. We've just been having a lot of fun this week." Freeman said the competition at the meet will be fierce.

"I'm sure there will be some fast swims because it is a last chance meet and people want to get their nationals qualifying times," Freeman said.

The final chance meet is taking place two weeks after the Irish defeated second place Pittsburgh by 224.5 points to capture their second consecutive Big East Championship Feb. 18. Besides Freeman, other Irish swimmers with a chance at competing in the NCAA Championships March 23 in Atlanta include Tim Randolph in the 100 breaststroke and Jay Vandenberg in the 1,650 freestyle.

Contact Chris Hine at chcine@nd.edu.

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The Office of Student Affairs is now accepting nominations for the Denny Moore Award For Excellence in Journalism

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For a nomination form, please visit our website at http://osa.nd.edu

Nominations are due by Thursday, March 9, 2006.

Write Sports! 1-4543
Irish midfielder Bill Uva moves upfield against Penn Feb. 26. Notre Dame will play Cornell this weekend.

Irish senior Mike Mannus.

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Regional News continued from page 24

NCAAs has a better chance of winning," men's foilist Mark Kubik said. "Basically everyone will be trying to win each other so we get two qualifiers [in each weapon], but on the whole it's individual.

The qualification process is slated so that 40 percent of the score depends on initial seeding, and the remaining 60 percent on Saturday's performance.

Each team is allotted only two fencers per weapon, for a total of six fencers per sex and 12 overall.

That added stipulation means that some of Notre Dame's fencers will have to do a top five ranking — might not qualify.

"Many will be fencing against each other for a position," Kubik said. "It's going to be a pretty stressful weekend, and I wouldn't say a lot of them are worried, but they're pretty anxious. It's probably going to be the most tense match of the year.

The initial seeding have already been set, and early returns are very positive for the Irish. With the top two spots in men's epee, Mark Kubik and Jakob Wurzbach are 1-2 to foil. In the sabre, Patrick Ghattas, Matt Stearns and Bill Thanhouser hold the top three spots, meaning two will most likely qualify while one will not.

Tickets for Saturday's game are $6 pre-order on www.lacrosseamerica.com and $8 at the gate.

Contact Tim Dougherty at tdougherty@nd.edu

Corrigan continued from page 24

"They're a very good team," said Corrigan of the Big Red, who beat Binghamton 16-3 in their season opener last week. "We're going to have to play well to beat them.

Senior co-captain D.J. Driscoll acknowledged the challenge the Irish face.

"They're at good at just about every aspect of the game," he said. "They're coming in ranked fourth in the country, so we're expecting a tough fight.

If the Irish defense hopes to be as effective as it was in last week's 8-4 win over then No. 14 Penn State, it must contain inside lacrosse preseason first-team All-American — and 2005 second-teamer — Lee Boulakos. Boulakos, an offensive midfielder, scored 29 goals and recorded 14 assists last year, is one of Cornell's two preseason All-American and three All-Colony Conference selections per the nation's best player.

"The game's always kid, goal sized and shoots the heck out of the ball," Corrigan said. "They do a lot of good job of getting themselves opportunities. They are a patient team and they know how to get what they're looking for, and he's one of the things they're looking for.

If Driscoll and the defense cannot contain Boulakos, he still must get by sophomore goal tender Joey Kemp, whose first intense action as a college player came after replacing Stewart Crossland in the third quarter of last year's loss at Cornell. Making his return against the Big Red, Kemp is coming off a 13-save performance against Penn State, in which he made several splendid stops.

While the Irish defense concentrates on stopping Boulakos and the Big Red attack, attackman Pat Walsh — a Towarrior nominee himself — hopes to spark an Irish offensive surge after only recording one point in last week's triumph — the team's final goal with under two minutes left in the game.

A strong showing by the Irish can do nothing but help the Notre Dame recruiting effort.

"The game is growing out there," Corrigan said. "There are certainly more guys playing at the Division I level.

"It's a good stop b of time All-American in the mid-90's, Irish midfielder Todd Russas. Russas — whose father was an All-American football player for the Irish — played lacrosse at Loyola Academy before taking his game to Notre Dame and one year in the MLL, in 2003. Though he is a member of the 2002 and 2006 U.S. national teams, Russas' day job has kept him from playing further in the MLL. That day job actually brought him back into town last weekend — when Corrigan said Russas was protecting President Bush as a member of the U.S. Secret Service.

For as this weekend, Corrigan hopes the current Irish can guard their net as well as one former player guards his base.

"There were periods in last year's game when we looked absolutely awful," said Corrigan. "We turned the ball over and didn't play very smart. I think we're in a little better shape this year.

Tickets for Saturday's game are $6 pre-order on www.lacrosseamerica.com and $8 at the game.

Contact Tim Dougherty at tdougherty@nd.edu

Regional News continued from page 24

Notre Dame also has Adrienne Novel, Emilie Prat and Melanie Statitska in the top five of women's foil, as well. Maribel Vaguins and Valerie Providenza 1-2 in women's sabre. If Notre Dame can perform to its seedings (as well as Northwestern and Wayne State), rival Ohio State might only send one female fencer to the national championship meet.

In total, Notre Dame has 15 fencers currently in qualifying position when the Buckeyes host the Hoyas this weekend. Ohio State beat Notre Dame overall in the Midwest Fencing Conference Championship.

Since last week's second major event, fencing has switched its focus to technique and overall fencing experience.

"Basically the full squad has been trying to fence as much as possible — less conditioning and more putting," Kubik said.

"We fenced really hard this weekend to get ready and to get a feel for how fencing makes it this weekend," women's foilist Rachel Cota said.

In addition to qualifying as well as they can, the fencers can also make the NCAAs by garnering one of two at-large bids. Adjemian earned one last year and Orlando did the year before that.

Despite the potential for teammate versus teammate competition, Cubik said both teams will rally around what's best for the squad.

"Actually, the attitude is really nice because everybody wants to support each other's performance ... there's competition of course, but everyone wants what's best," Cota said. Cota, who can't fence this weekend because of an injury, said she and her teammates are doing whatever they can to improve as individuals before making ribbons for those competing to wear. Cota was also confident in the team's ability to qualify in all 12 spots.

"There's gonna be some pretty tough competition," Cota said. "I'm pretty confident we'll qualify all the fencers we need, but it's going to be a fight and we'll be up to the challenge.

Contact Jack Thornton at jthornton@nd.edu
Baseball

continued from page 24

professional dome where weather is not a factor is a good experience for his team.

“It’s a much different atmosphere than we’re used to,” he said. “But it’s an exciting thing because you’re playing in a Major League stadium, you don’t have to worry about getting games cancelled due to weather, and you don’t have to worry about factors like wind and wetness affecting anything — so that’s all fun.”

After this weekend, Notre Dame has one more tournament on the road before coming home March 21 to face Wright State.

The Big East season starts March 25 on the road when the Irish face Georgetown.

We’re playing the toughest teams that we can find,” Mainieri said. “You’re not going to beat them all. You try to beat them all, and you hope that your team just keeps getting better so that when you do get to conference play your team has really gelled.

But, he said, the Irish are always better later in the season than now, when they have to play on the road for a month before having any home games because of the South Bend weather.

“We have to play quite a few games on the road to start the season, and our team’s always a better team in April and May than we are in February and March because we’re playing so many road games and we’re just getting the season started,” Mainieri said.

“When we finally get to play some home games, it really helps our team quite a bit. We’re going to go out there this weekend and just try to improve in every facet of our game, particularly in taking advantage of our scoring opportunities.”

Contact Heather Van Hoegarden at hvanhoeg@nd.edu

Irish shortstop Greg Lopez hits a fly ball against Villanova April 25 last season. Notre Dame will travel to Minneapolis to play in the Dairy Queen Classic this weekend.

Demons

continued from page 24

A win Saturday would give the Irish the No. 12, 11 or 10-seed, depending on results from other conference games. It would be the sixth post-season berth in Irish coach Mike Brey’s six years at Notre Dame. But if Notre Dame loses, its five wins will not be enough to clinch one of the 12 spots in the league tournament. Even if Notre Dame wins, there are several possible scenarios in which it could end up with the No. 12 seed in the Big East tournament. If St. John’s beats Rutgers Sunday, Louisville beats Connecticut Saturday and Providence loses to Marquette Saturday, the Irish will be the No. 12 seed.

That also goes for the scenario in which Rutgers wins and Louisville and Providence lose. Or it would apply if Rutgers, Louisville and Providence all win.

The Irish also could end up with the No. 11 seed if St. John’s beats Rutgers, Providence beats Marquette and Louisville beats Connecticut. Or, if they could be the No. 11 seed if St. John’s beats Rutgers and Louisville and Providence win their respective games.

Notre Dame could grab the No. 10 seed if St. John’s, Providence and Connecticut win — a likely possibility if Providence can defeat Marquette on the Golden Eagles’ senior night. DePaul beat Notre Dame earlier this season 73-67 on Jan. 7 at Allstate Arena. In that game, Irish guard Colin Falls led the Irish with 26 points on 9-of-15 shooting, his second highest single-game total this season.

On Saturday, Notre Dame will be playing on its home court during Senior Night — the final home game for Irish seniors Chris Quinn, Rick Cornett and Francis.

“We want to get our last home win,” Francis said. “And it’s going to be Senior Night for us, so it’s going to be a pretty good atmosphere back at Notre Dame.”

DePaul is 4-3 in its last seven games but 4-9 in its last 13. The Blue Demons have defeated Seton Hall, St. John’s, South Florida and Syracuse during that stretch.

Merjia leads the Blue Demons averaging 14.4 points per game during the entire season, but forward Wilson Chandler is the top DePaul scorer in Big East play, averaging 14.6 points in 15 conference games.

Contact Bobby Griffin at ngsf@nd.edu and Pat Leonard at pleonard@nd.edu

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CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tiffany Thiessen, 31; Richard Dean Anderson, 55; Gail O'Grady, 42; Marcia Hargreaves, 41

Happy Birthday! This may turn out to be an emotional year, but only if you hanno't taken care of business that should have been handled over your head for some time. Rid yourself of the burdens you have been carrying around with you, once and for all, and you will see the light at the end of the tunnel. It's time to stop letting negatively consume you. Instead, fight for the positive and you will find yourself in a new headspace. Your numbers are 3, 14, 28, 32, 46.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't start anything today that will lead to a confrontation with someone you love. You have to keep things light and pay your efforts into areas where you are already heading in the future. **

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Visiting a friend will lift your spirits and guide you down an interesting new path. You have plenty to contribute, and if you do, you will find friends with someone interesting. **

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Consider your past and you have met along the way. Someone from your past may be able to help you, but you may not be able to leave over. Piece yourself and stay in control.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Emotional matters may be difficult to deal with today. An old friend or relative may not understand what is going on. Your explanation will help and bring you closer together.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Suddenly changes regarding your financial situation will surprise you. You can make good decisions regarding your health. The more you do to make improvements, the better you will feel. **

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Potential days can be formed, but make sure that for the both on your page before making any promises. Once you have your plans laid out, nothing will stop you from achieving your goals. **

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): What you think is going on and what is really going on will not coincide. Back up and refrain from voicing your opinion until you have a better understanding of what everyone else is doing. **

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Today is all about knowing yourself and getting to the bottom of things. You can fix all the troubled areas in your life if you are precise, determined and dedicated. **

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A more reasonable viewpoint will appreciate what you do to help out. Your luck is changing, and you may find yourself in a wonderful situation. If you have a change of heart. Grovel if you must.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Get down to business and let whoever you are working with know how to get things done.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Love and romance are certainly in the picture, but do in your ability to produce something very creative and unusual. Allow your thoughts to reach your goals and you will feel satisfied. ****

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive and caring and know how to get things done. You strive to do your best and will take on more than your share in order to help. You are a thoughtful, kind and concerned friend.

Check out Eugenia's Web site at astroeducators.com and eugenialast.com.

JOCKULAR

ALEC WHITE & ERIK POWERS

Gentlemen born a few winters to the Editor in Chief and receive some of the results of their labors.

Please do not make me tell you that I am a drawing of Jesus and Father Jenkins doing what I think they'd do.

(just a little bit)

Most of the time, you can't see the hair on your head.

But now, I've got you covered.

The story goes,

I help you get out of the rain.

ELAÏD DOWN

HENRI ARNOLD MIKE ARGIRION

JULIET

That the jumbled word game is an inessential link with a grammatical function.

EXOD

HEBLED

WHAT THE MINER BELIEVED AT THE END OF HIS SHIFT.

LIDIAN

New arranges the circled letters to form the jumbled word game, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Yesterday's Jumbles: DOWNY CLOAK DAMPEN WEEVIL

Answers tomorrow:

DYW E N Y C L A O A M P E N V W I L E E

THE OBSERVER

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Please do not think they're doing ...
FENCING

Regional power
Notre Dame hopes to take all available Midwest berths in the NCAA Championships

By JACK THORNTON
Sports Writer

The Irish are poised to qualify several fencers for the NCAA Championships at the Midwest Fencing Regional this Saturday in Chicago. The top five finishers in all of the women’s events as well as men’s sabre and epee will qualify for the NCAAs. For the Midwest Fencing Conference, only the top three finishers in the Regional earn a berth. Unlike last weekend’s Midwest Fencing Conference Championship, the Regional is based solely on individual competition. The meet will feature pool play followed by direct elimination.

Individuals from each team will compete in all three weapons to earn a berth to the NCAA Championships in Houston, Tex. March 15-19. "It’s team-oriented in the sense that whatever team qualifies more people for the NCAA Championships in will compete in all three squad’s 2-2 finish at the feature pool play followed by of the women’s events as well direct elimination. qualify for the NCAAs. For the qualify several fencers for the is based solely on individual Midwest Fencing Conference Midwest Fencing Regional this based solely on individual competition. The meet will feature pool play followed by direct elimination. Individuals from each team will compete in all three weapons to earn a berth to the NCAA Championships in Houston, Tex. March 15-19. "It’s team-oriented in the sense that whatever team qualifies more people for the NCAA Championships in will compete in all three squad’s 2-2 finish at the feature pool play followed by of the women’s events as well direct elimination.

Men’s Lacrosse
Irish take on Big Red in Illinois

Contest between two ranked teams will be first for Chicagoland

By TIM DOUGHERTY
Sports Writer

The Chicago area has never hosted a Division I men’s lacrosse game. That will change Saturday at noon when the No. 12 Irish face off against No. 8 Cornell in a marquee non-conference game at Benedictine University in Lisle, Ill. Lacrosse America is sponsoring the game — technically an Irish home contest. Notre Dame lost to the Big Red 11-10 in Ithaca, N.Y. last season.

Irish coach Kevin Corrigan said his team has been interested in setting up a game in the Chicago area for several years, and — in

see CORNELL/page 21

Baseball
Team excited to play in major league park

Dairy Queen Classic in Metrodome will host ND, three others

By HEATHER VAN HOEGARDEN
Sports Writer

Despite his Notre Dame squad’s 2-2 finish at the Service Academies Classic last weekend, Irish coach Paul Mainieri is looking for much of the same from his team at this weekend’s Dairy Queen Classic in Minneapolis, Minn. "I think if we play just as well as we did last weekend that we have a chance to be successful," Mainieri said this week. "We just need to take more advantages of our scoring opportunities this weekend."

The Irish start the weekend this afternoon when they face Nebraska (5-2), ranked as high as No. 4 by College Baseball, at 12:15. Senior lefty Tom Thornton (1-0), who gave up no runs in seven innings in his first start last weekend, will take the mound for the Irish against Nebraska’s John Chamberlain (1-1, 1.93 ERA). Thornton was named the Big East Pitcher of the Week after his seven shutout innings against Indiana State on Feb. 23.

Saturday, Notre Dame sends Jeff Samardzija to the mound to face Minnesota’s Dustin Brabender for the 6:35 p.m. matchup.

The tournament concludes Sunday as Notre Dame squares off with Arizona at 11:05 a.m. Jeff Manship will pitch for the Irish against the Wildcats’ Brad Mills (2-0, 1.86 ERA). All of the tournament’s games will be played in the Metrodome, the home stadium of the Minnesota Twins. This year the Golden Gophers are set to play 24 of their 26 home games there. Last season, Minnesota played 19 games there, going 11-4. Mainieri said playing in a
IRISH SENIOR POINT GUARD MEGAN DUFFY HOPES TO LEAD NOTRE DAME THROUGH THE BIG EAST TOURNAMENT THIS WEEKEND AND INTO THE NCAA BRACKET
Irish start with Bulls and hope for Huskies

Notre Dame faces South Florida in first round of tournament

By KEN FOWLER
Sports Writer

Notre Dame looks to improve its NCAA Tournament prospects this weekend in Hartford, Conn., as the Irish square off against South Florida in the first round of the Big East Tournament at 6 p.m. Saturday.

Both No. 10-seed Notre Dame (17-10, 8-8 Big East) and No. 7-seed South Florida (19-10, 9-7) seek to wrap up a dramatic season. If the Irish can improve its RPI, it could secure a spot in the upcoming NCAA Tournament.

"No. 34, that's pretty good," head coach Muffet McGraw said Tuesday after Notre Dame's 72-65 win over Pittsburgh at the Joyce Center. Notre Dame and the Bulls played once this season, a dramatic 68-64 South Florida victory at the Joyce Center Jan. 28. Bulls forward Eri'Ana Parish hit a 3-pointer with two seconds left in regulation to force overtime, and Irish guard Megan Duffy missed a three of her own that would have tied the game with three seconds left in the extra session.

"(Our) biggest focus is ... to get some wins and get to the NCAA Tournament," Duffy said after Notre Dame's 41-point first round win over Pittsburgh — the team's third consecutive victory. "Now we're back on track," she said. "I'm thrilled with the way we're playing. Three games in a row, our confidence is high."

Duffy said the team has momentum heading into Hartford. "We're in good position now, where we need to win ... a couple games in the Big East Tournament to be sure we get in the field of 64." The 6-foot Parsons had nine points and 14 rebounds in the game. For the Irish to win Saturday, they must contain her and 5-foot-11 forward Jessica Dickson, who finished just 2-of-12 shooting on the night. She was in good position throughout the game.

"It would be nice to win a couple of games and know we're in the NCAA Tournament," McGraw said.

"I'd like to keep winning just because we don't want to be waiting for a week to see where we go," Irish coach Muffet McGraw said Tuesday after Notre Dame's 72-65 win over Pittsburgh. "It would be nice to win a couple games and know that we were in."

The Irish entered their contest with the Panthers at No. 34 in the most recent Ratings Percentage Index (RPI), and South Florida checked in at No. 32. The NCAA Tournament selection committee uses the RPI as one of the major tools in seeding the 64-team bracket. "I'd like to keep winning just because we don't want to just because we don't want to turn and score," South Florida beat Connecticut at 6 p.m. in the second round. If the Irish win both games, they will play in the conference semifinals Monday at 6 p.m. against No. 3 DePaul.

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Allen thrives off the bench one year after injury

Sophomore guard Charle Allen in last season's NCAA Tournament but now is excelling on the court

By ERIC RETTER
Sports Writer

Her coach didn't expect her to perform at the level she has this season.

Noether did conventional medical wisdom that said after an injury like the one sophomore guard Charle Allen suffered last March — a torn ACL — a player typically wouldn't be a major contributor until one year later.

"I thought March," Notre Dame head coach Muffet McGraw said about Allen's return to the lineup two weeks ago against Connecticut. "I didn't really expect her to be playing at that level until January."

When the Irish take on South Florida Saturday the Notre Dame guard will play in her 28th game this season, and she has logged meaningful minutes in every Irish contest of the 2006-07 slate. "I'm surprised, too," McGraw said. "She's surprised us by coming back so early.

For her part, Allen, who averages 8.7 points and 24.4 minutes per game, has made her rehabilitation to the team a personal struggle.

"At the beginning of this season, I was really focused on just getting into playing shape. And I say I'm about — I'm about 100 percent," she said. Over the last month, Allen has improved the overall level of her game. This fact has shown mainly in her offensive output, as she has scored in double figures in six of the past seven games. During that time, she has scored 25 or more points in four of those contests.

"I felt like in the last three games before Connecticut she looked like a different player," McGraw said on Feb. 18. "I really think that she's getting better and better." Although Allen, however, has shown more consistent play, she's still finding her rhythm. Her 16 points Tuesday against Pittsburgh matched her total against Marquette Nov. 18 — the first game of the season. "My coach is telling me, encouraging me, to shoot more," Allen said. "I guess she has faith in me and I have faith in myself, so right now I'm just looking for my shot, a little more."

Throughout the past seven games, a majority of Allen's points have come in the second half. Often, the team has been down when Allen begins to score big against Villanova, a 35-20 deficit Feb. 7, Allen led the team's effort to tie the game from a 21-point deficit to force overtime — scoring all of her 14 points in the second half behind 7-for-10 shooting.

"Maybe I should turn it on a little bit earlier, because I always turn it on at the end and we're in trouble," Allen said. Allen has also been a consistent force throughout the season. She recently went 4-for-4 in the second half of last week's game against the Demon Deacons.

"I just go in there and try more because people underestimate me because of my size," Allen said. "They don't really look in box me out so I try to grab every loose change that our forwards don't pick up."

In part because of that mentality, Allen's 24.4 minutes per game ranks third in the Irish in the category. However, she still has many more cracked the starting lineup, having started just one of the team's 27 games. "I think we need a spark off the bench," McGraw said. "I think that she gives that great lift coming off the bench."

She's played well and they are sure about starting her, but if we; changed the lineup, I'm sure who would give us that energy off the bench.

Despite not being on the court to start games, Allen says she has felt no diminished value in coming off the bench. "That's all I wanna do is play, whether I start or whether I don't," Allen said. "Whatever coach feels like doing with me, I'll do whatever she asks."

Contact Eric Retter at eretter@nd.edu

Irish not sure which squad will show up to play

Team has been inconsistent, falling to weak squads but hanging with league's best

Who's going to show up? That's the biggest question for the Irish this weekend as they head to Hartford for the Big East tournament.

Over the course of the season, No. 10-seeded Notre Dame has proven it can hang with anyone, that it can play good teams and that it can erase deficits. This is the team that came back from 15 down to beat Pittsburgh Tuesday. This is the team that overcame a 12-point deficit to beat DePaul 78-75 on Jan. 17. This is the team that erased a 21-point deficit against Villanova Feb. 7, falling only 69-65 in overtime.

When they want to, they can play with anyone.

However, the Irish (17-10, 8-8) have had their share of 10 losses come by 10 points or more, including a 29-point drubbing at the hands of the DePaul Blue Demons and an embarrassing 74-61 loss to Seton Hall, a team that finished with three wins in the Big East.

Because of this, it's no surprise that Irish coach Muffet McGraw described her team as "frustrating to watch." After Notre Dame lost a heartbreaker to South Florida — its opponent in Saturday's first round — squandering a 15-point second-half rally and losing 69-65 in overtime Jan. 28.

For much of their season, it has seemed at times that two Irish teams have played every game in every Irish contest that digs itself a big hole and a second half that desperately fights out of them.

At halftime of Tuesday's game, when the Irish were down 10, senior point guard Megan Duffy gave the team her final regular game halftime talk.

"We looked flat out there. I didn't think we were working hard enough," Duffy said. "Nothing that I don't normally say. This has been the pattern, second-half Notre Dame game to game and eventually won 72-65.

Heading into the Big East tournament, where the Irish desperately need a strong showing to keep their NCAA Tournament hopes alive, Notre Dame needs to break out of this second-half malaise to become too common this season.

Yes, the Irish have heart, and have shown it in their numerous comebacks from big deficits. In do-or-die situations, they have shown a majority of games that Notre Dame will play from here on out — this coolness under pressure will be a very valuable asset.

However, same game, the Irish are only coming back from big deficits because they continue to lose them in them, and they have trailed by at least 10 in 12 games this season.

Much of this relates back to the one issue that is inconsistent Notre Dame has showed throughout the season. Though the team has become more consistent in recent games, many of their games have been marred by long scoring droughts and offensive struggles.

While improving the offensive consistency has been one of McGraw's focus points in practice all season, the team has continued to be a streaky squad. "If I knew how to explain it, we would have a better record than what we have now," sophomore guard Charle Allen said.

Over the course of the season, the Big East has proven that, top to bottom, it is one of the most competitive conferences in college basketball. During the regular season, the Irish generally played the nine teams ranked ahead of them closely, bringing four tough offensive struggles.

Judging by the Irish's showing in the opening round of the Big East, it seems Notre Dame will need to pull a double-shift.

The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Observer. Contact Eric Retter at eretter@nd.edu
Deal and deliver

Point guard Megan Duffy has taken on the role of passer, scorer and leader in four seasons at Notre Dame

By KEN FOWLER
Sports Writer

Megan Duffy has had people in her face all year.

"I've been faced, I feel like, with every kind of defense," Duffy said. "They've put players that are taller than me, like 6-foot athletic players and scrap­py players. There's been box-and-one's, and most games my defender never leaves me.

The senior pre­season All­American entered the 2005-06 campaign with a reputation as the nation's top pure point guard, but her team this season was different than the Irish squads she had led from the point in the past. So her role changed. And opposing teams had to adjust.

"I've always been a point guard," Duffy said. "I get my kicks out of setting people up and seeing them score."

Playing with standout forward Jacqueline Batteast last season, Duffy's 175 assists were the third most by a junior in team history. But a year later, Batteast's gone and the produ­ct of Chaminade-Julienne H.S. in Dayton, Ohio, has evolved into Notre Dame's top scoring weapon on offense.

"I think the entire season coming in, I realized I had to be a scorer from the point guard position, which is a little differ­ent for me," Duffy said. "Normally, your first role as a point guard is to set everybody up. I still have to keep that in the back of my mind.

Duffy enters this weekend's Big East Tournament as the conference's eighth­leading scorer, averaging 15.5 points per game. Her assist totals have fallen from 5.39 per game as a junior to 4.25 this season, but her scoring is up—from 12.3 per game. Her assist totals have dropped from 10.8 per game as a junior to 7.9 this season. Her assist totals have dropped from 10.8 per game as a junior to 7.9 this season.

"I feel like the first half of games, sometimes I find myself being a little too passive out there," Duffy said. "Once the second half comes — and over­time — I've got to be able to step up my game. Whether it's knocking down free throws or getting some good shots for the team.

That's what she has done, and that's what she has taught her team.

"That's one thing I know about this team, we're going to keep fighting," Duffy said. During Notre Dame's 75-66 overtime victory over the Bears, Duffy coolly sank 8-of-8 from the free throw line in the extra session and finished with 10 points in the five extra minutes.

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The tee in her veins is so evi­dent that Pittsburgh head coach Agnus Berenato refused to foul Duffy with 22 seconds remain­ing three days later because she thought it would be an exercise in futility.

"Why foul?" Berenato asked. "Megan makes her free throws. Why, when we played so hard for 40 minutes, let her get two more points?"

It's just that simple when Duffy's at the line late in the game — opposing coaches don't even hope the 89­percent free­throw shooter will miss.

McGraw said Duffy knows she can make the big shots and her example is the best thing for a young, struggling team like this year's Irish squad.

"It's been challenging for the players to really keep themselves up," the coach said. "I think that's where we really feed off Megan because she never loses her confidence."

And that's no matter how hard other teams try to break her poise.

Duffy said the toughest part about scoring is the bulls­eye that rests on her jersey. After the Pitt game, Berenato said the Panthers' main goal in the contest was to keep Duffy below her scoring average.

But now it's not just opposing teams keeping a close eye on Duffy — WNBA teams are scouting her as a first­round pick for the 2006 draft. During the Big East television broad­cast of Notre Dame's win over Cincinnati, former Connecticut and New York Liberty star Rebecca Lobo said she expected Duffy to be a top­10 pick.

"She's got all the skills ... to lead a team," Lobo said.

Duffy said she has tried to suppress all thoughts about a future in the WNBA for now.

"The past two years, I've real­ized that it's a dream of mine and a goal of mine to play pro­fessional basketball," she said. "It's one of those things that you keep in the back of your mind. My senior year has kind of been a job interview for these four, five, six months. It can't be absorbed in it too much because that's when you start playing poor and mentally get out of it."

Duffy said while she is looking forward to a possible career in the WNBA, she is also trying to enjoy her experience at Notre Dame and as a co­captain of the team with fellow senior, for­ward Courtney LaVere.

"It's been a tremendous four years for me," she said in the press conference after Notre Dame's win on Senior Night. "I wouldn't trade it for anything. Playing for Coach McGraw, and with my teammates and with my sidekicks here, Courtney, it's been a lot of fun."

Duffy ended Senior Night with the ball in her hands as Berenato's Panthers moved back and allowed her to cross halfcourt.

"I was lucky to have my hands on the ball the last few sec­onds," Duffy said. "It's a good way to go out."

Contact Ken Fowler at kfowler1@nd.edu

Irish senior point guard Megan Duffy drives to the hoop against Huskies guard Ketia Swaner during Notre Dame's 79-64 loss to Connecticut Feb. 19.

Webster McGorman/The Observer

At left, Irish point guard Megan Duffy defends Pittsburgh guard Mallorie Winn Tuesday during Notre Dame's 72-65 victory on Senior Night. Right, Duffy delivers a cross­court pass against the Panthers. The senior co­captain finished the regular season averaging 15.5 points and 4.25 assists per game.
Fighting Irish

COLD WAR

Irish take on Alaska-Fairbanks to begin CCHA Playoffs

Left to right: T.J. Jindra, Jason Paige and Chris Trick

Photo Illustration by Graham Cisler and Matthew Sennberg/The Observer
ND meets familiar foe to open playoffs

Irish, Nanooks faced off to finish regular season last weekend

By Chris Khorey
Sports Writer

It's possible that Notre Dame and Alaska-Fairbanks have gotten that other college hockey team even exist.

The Irish and Nanooks, who squared off for two games last weekend at the Joyce Center in each team's regular season finale, will play again at the same arena in a three-game series tonight, Saturday and, if necessary, Sunday in the first round of the CCHA playoffs.

Tonight's contest will begin at 7:35 at the Joyce Center.

"It's an interesting scenario, to play four games, possibly five, in a row against one team in the same place," Fairbanks coach Tasie MacMillan said.

Notre Dame coach Jeff Jackson said gameplanning is more complicated in a rematch scenario.

"You know their strengths and weaknesses and you figure out your strengths and weaknesses against them," Jackson said. "It's easier to some extent but it can also be more difficult because you have to get into more detail.

"We have to make some adjustments based on their strengths."

The Irish and Nanooks split last weekend, with Notre Dame taking a 4-1 decision Friday and Fairbanks winning 2-1 Saturday. The two teams ended the regular season tied for first place with 26 points, but the 5-3 advantage in head-to-head goals for the Irish gave them the 3-1-1 tiebreaker.

Although the two teams are evenly matched record-wise, they use very different styles of play. Fairbanks, whose players own a 15-20 pound weight advantage on average over the Irish, will try to force the puck into the corners and use players like 6-3, 223 pound left wing Kyle Greenstreet and 6-3, 226 pound left wing Jordan Emmerson to dig it back out and create scoring chances.

Notre Dame captain and right wing T.J. Jindra said Fairbanks' aggressive and physical style of play reflects the size advantage they have over most opponents.

"They like to dump the puck and get on our defensemen, so we have to see that and we have to make adjustments for that," he said.

Jackson said after seeing the Nanooks strategy last weekend his team has been preparing in practice to counter it.

"I think we have to come up with ways to avoid allowing them to be overly physical with us," Jackson said. "If we move right and support the puck right, we can avoid it.

Along the front line, the Irish have gotten their most production this season from left wing Mike Walsh, center Josh Schla and right wing Erik Condra. The trio has combined for 33 goals and 80 points this season.

Last Friday, however, offensive production came from a much more unlikely source. The little used fourth line of left wing Garrett Began, center Tony Gill and right wing Evan Batinick combined for two of Notre Dame's four goals both in the first period. Began's third career goal on assists from Rankin and Gill, and Rankin's scoring his eighth career goal on a pass from defenseman Wes O'Neill.

"A fourth line has to have a kind of identity to it," Jackson said. "They're not big but they have a lot of energy and they feed off each other well. Getting a couple goals out of those guys is great.

The Nanooks countered the early scoring burst from Notre Dame's fourth line by going to a three-line rotation after Rankin's goal. Jackson responded to this by giving his fourth line more playing time for the rest of the series. Jackson said he will not employ that rotation this weekend.

"My hope is to go into the weekend playing four lines, regardless of what they do," he said.

In net, Notre Dame will rely on junior Dave Brown, who has started 29 times this season and given up 2.56 goals per contest. He was named February's CCHA Player of the Month Wednesday.

Fairbanks has rotated freshmen Chad Johnson and sophomore Wylie Rogers in goal for most of this season. While Johnson has the lower save percentage (2.55) to Rogers (2.61) and started Friday's game against the Irish, he was pulled in favor of the sophomore after allowing three goals in the first period. Rogers also started Saturday's contest, but MacMillan did not say who will start this weekend.

Regardless, Jackson said his team will be facing quality goaltending.

"They've got a great 1-2 punch," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised to see them come back with Johnson. We can't overlook goaltending as one of their strengths."

With Junior Parents Weekend, Bengal Bouts and the Midwest Conference Fencing Championships requiring the temperature to be turned up in the Joyce Center Fieldhouse in the last two weeks, Jackson said he has been disappointed with the quality of his team's home playing surface — calling it "the worst of the season after Friday's game.

"It has nothing to do with our personnel, it just has to do with our environment," he said. "It's not fair for (Bengal Bouts) to freeze or for us to have bad ice. It's not our rink staff's fault, they're doing the best with what they have to work with.

Warmer temperatures in an ice rink soften the ice and make it uneven, a fact that impacts the game dramatically, Jindra said.

"It's soft, you have to protect the puck more," he said. "The chances of turning the puck over when it's in the corner are much greater. Still, both teams have to adapt to the ice. It's the same ice for both teams."

Rather than make the almost 8,000 mile round trip back and forth to central Alaska, the Nanooks chose to spend the week in South Bend, practicing at the Joyce Center and communicating with their professors via email.

"Our team is more comfortable on the road than we are at home, to some extent," MacMillan said of his travel-hardened squad.

The closest CCHA competition for the Nanooks is Northern Michigan, located 3,200 miles away in Marquette, Mich. Fairbanks joined the CCHA before the 1995-96 season, competing as an independent before that. The only other Alaska school that plays Division I hockey, Alaska-Anchorage, competes in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA). The Irish and Nanooks will face off at 7:35 tonight, Saturday's game and Sunday's game, if necessary, will start at 7:05.

Contact Chris Khorey at ckhorey@nd.edu

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Fairbanks decides to stay in South Bend between end of regular season and beginning of playoffs

By KYLE CASSILY
Sports Writer

This road trip has had a little more to offer Alaska-Fairbanks than its typical 3,500-mile trek. In all the Nanooks will have dealt with two consecutive weekends, the team scored nearly two weeks in a South Bend hotel, a majority of the team being ill and even the superintendant.

Hunckering down
After splitting last weekend's series with the Irish, the Nanooks decided to stay in town, a decision that will have far more effects on this weekend's first round of the playoffs rather than return to Fairbanks. As a result the Nanooks have been forced to headquarter themselves out of the local Jameson Inn since Feb. 22.

Getting people like being around each other, "sophomore left wing Kyle Greenete said of the team's wind stick in a hotel for long periods of time. "We'd rather be here at home, but we're pretty comfortable on the road. In Alaska we travel a lot and stuff, so it's not much of a problem."

Alaska-Fairbanks head coach Tavis MacMillan has had no trouble keeping his team happy with serving cabin fever. The squad has followed a sched­ule filled with events to pass the time. The Nanooks spend every morning practicing in the Joyce Center in preparation for the Irish this weekend. Lunch, strength training, and a two-hour study session occupied a majority of the team's after­noon until dinner. The past few nights the team has spent at the mall or lounging around the hotel.

The team even took a road trip within a road trip on Wednesday night when they watched the Chicago Blackhawks play the Nashville Predators at Chicago's United Center.

"The team gets closer to game day however, video ses­sions and pro-game rituals will rear its ugly head and more."

Jackson has assembled. Ask any long-term college hockey fan about...Montgomery now dons a head­gear of regular seasons. He has taken what was viewed as a rebuilding year and trans­formed Notre Dame into a seri­ous contender for the CCHA title.

A serious con­tender when the team is placed in eighth­place in the league stand­ings without a doubt. Jackson has reversed the ice­berg when it comes to the cracker jack Irish coaching staff Jackson has assembled. Associate head coach Paul Possinger and former Notre Dame head­coach are familiar with the players.

Jackson has reversed the ice­berg when it comes to the cracker jack Irish coaching staff Jackson has assembled. Associate head coach Paul Possinger and former Notre Dame head­coach are familiar with the players.

An excellent team in the first year of the IceDogs. In 2004-05 they had six tallies. There are seven Irish players with some experience on this season. Last year Cory Mcelan led the team with 12 points — this season there are five players with 22 or more points. Team chemistry has been improved by 32 percent overall from last season and the power play unit is ranked fifth in the CCHA in successful conver­sions.

Jackson brings a pedigree of regular and postseason success to an Irish team that has made only one NCAA tournament appearance.

Dave Brown has been a wall between the pipes since December, playing in 25 out of the last 26 games and posts a 2.50 goals against average for the Irish. Illinois Blu­ sailors have surrendered only 17 goals in the last 10 games, four of which were a 7-0 shutout of Bowling Green State. A flawlessly slow start to the season — the Irish headed into a 1-5 record — has given way to a 10-9-3 tally since Dec. 2. In that span Notre Dame has faced four teams currently in the top-10 in the country and six oppo­nents were ranked when they faced the Irish.

The first roadblock in the way of an Irish CCHA playoff run is the polar bear-sized Nanooks of Alaska-Fairbanks. On average the Nanooks out­weigh the Irish by seven to eight points per man and are 1.4 years older. This age dif­ference may seem negligible until one factors in that the Nanooks have only six juniors and seniors. The Irish have 14 upperclassmen.

Few have traveled the CCHA playoffs as successfully in the past than Jackson. He's fin­ely tuned his squad to hand­le the rigors of a physical Nanook squad and the dis­tracting of a long road trip to corral Fairbanks for a second round bid.

Jackson knows how to win and if he ever needs a reminder of what feels to lose — he just has to look down the bench at Montgomery.

The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Observer. Contact Kyle Cassilly at kcassily@nd.edu
Notre Dame forward Michael Bartlett fights for the puck with a Ferris player near the Nanooks goal.

Notre Dame's 4-1 victory

By CHRIS}

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In his first season at the helm of the Irish, Jackson has righted a ship that appeared to be sinking just a year ago. He has assembled a crack group of coaches that complement each other well.

In his second year at Fairbanks, MacMillan, has crafted a strong defensive team that only allowed 2.82 goals per game this season. His Nanooks have fought tough teams like Michigan and Miami to a standstill all year long.

Despite MacMillan's success, you can't argue with Jackson's pedigree. Two national championships in three appearances with Lake Superior State don't lie. He has what it takes to lead the Irish to the nation-

Head coach Jeff Jackson said: "There's a reason that's a quote. But if we let that contemplate come before our ultimate goal, it's going to hurt us. We can't take cheap shots or we'll be killing penalties and giving up goals we don't have to for them.

Friday's game featured 17 penalties and 45 penalty minutes, including 21 minutes handed out for the skirmish at the end of the game. No one was immune from the rough play, as Notre Dame goalie Dave Brown was knocked into his own net several times.

Both teams have told Fairbanks players told me all game they would be running for me," Brown joked on Saturday that he was afraid of anybody.

Saturday's 2-1 Nanooks win was significantly cleaner, with the two teams combining for just four penalties, an important aspect of the contest that should be seen on the nonethe-

less. "Last weekend was like a playoff weekend for us and like a playoff weekend for them," Notre Dame captain T.J. Jindra said. "If anything, what it's like is that we have two playoff weekends in a row.

Both coaches took their teams to task after Friday's contest. "I want them to focus on their emotion and energy," Notre Dame coach Tavis MacMillan said. "I want them to focus on scoring and not on hitting opposing players.

"We have a young team and the guys have some energy... They have to learn to channel it," Fairbanks coach Tavis MacMillan said.

Jackson said the importance of the contest made it especially key to keep penalties to a minimum.

"There's too much on the line," he said. "There's too much at stake to take stupid penalties.

Jackson also said it is crucial that the Irish avoid going overdoing the physical play that led to the Nanooks' big goal at most positions.

The Irish as a team played at a 10-15 pounds per man more than our team," he said.

MacMillan said he knows the Nanooks have a size advantage in most of their opponents and that he does games that way accordingly, but that he would never condone intimidation or dirty play.

"We're a big team," he said. "But I don't like stuff after the whistle. I like spirit, I like energy. You've got to get into the game, be (passionate) and just play hockey.

Despite amassing 27 penalty minutes as a team in Friday's victory, the Irish are still the second-scorkest penalized team in the CCHA, averaging just 16.18 penalty minutes per game.

Fairbanks is ninth in the twelve-team league, averaging 22.06 per game.

Brian Aarons was the referee for both Friday and Saturday's games, an assignment his brother, John Philo, handles the rest of the season.

Referees for this weekend's playoff series have yet to be announced.

Contact Chris Khorey at ckhorey@nd.edu.
NEVER BLACK DOWN

IRISH GUARD CHRIS QUINN, CENTER, AND FORWARDS RICK CORNETT, LEFT, AND TORIN FRANCIS HAVE LED THE IRISH THROUGH THEIR TOUGH SEASON. BUT A WIN SATURDAY AGAINST DEPAUL WILL PUT THEM IN THE BIG EAST TOURNAMENT.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRAHAM EBETSCH AND PHIL HUDELSON/THE OBSERVER
Seniors deserve Saturday's opportunity

By BOBBY GRIFFIN
Associate Sports Editor

Notre Dame senior Chris Murphy has witnessed events from a different perspective than those who started during his two-year career with the Irish. Murphy was a member of the 2003-04 NCAA Tournament team. And while he definitely wasn't around during that NCAA Tournament run, Murphy has still experienced many of the same games that his teammates have.

"I went to see those guys who are seniors, and I knew that they played hard. But I never really put it together. It was hard to sit back and watch all that. . . . it's almost worse not playing," Murphy said.

But Murphy did not always lead this life as a Notre Dame student-athlete. Murphy epitomizes the Notre Dame student-athlete.

Murphy has witnessed events than his teammates during his two-year career with the Irish. That's not to say Murphy's dream was nearly an automatic one. Murphy had to balance the friendship of his teammates while earning his degree in accountancy. Murphy also had to balance the chemistry of the team while trying to get up at five to work out.

"I made the decision to go to Notre Dame a year early," Murphy said. "And I said that if I had my life to do over again, I would still choose to go to Notre Dame." Murphy is the first to admit that he was confused the Pirates defense and made the Irish look like a flaccid squad. That translated into fewer transition opportunities for Seton Hall, and that was the game.

But Notre Dame hasn't stuck to that formula. It has played "not to lose" in many games, forced then into close games as the clock winds down. And the Irish then put the ball in the hands of Quinn, who, while fully capable of breaking the Pirates defense, was forced then into close games as the clock winds down.

"That's not to say their dream was nearly an automatic one. Murphy had to balance the friendship of his teammates while earning his degree in accountancy. Murphy also had to balance the chemistry of the team while trying to get up at five to work out. Murphy began to miss practice, screaming in frustration and exuberance over the dominating performance his team had just set forth. That's why Murphy is the first to admit that he was confused the Pirates defense and made the Irish look like a flaccid squad. That translated into fewer transition opportunities for Seton Hall, and that was the game.

Those of The Observer
Contact Pat Leonard at pleonard@nd.edu

Murphy works hard in practice but said he likes to stay quiet during games because there is not much he can say. But when Murphy gets up to practice, he said he works just as hard as his teammates knowing he will likely not be playing in the next game. Murphy also understands when he goes home, he returns to his life as a student. Where some of his teammates might live together, Murphy signed the pledge for his current history and business sophomore year with his non-basketball friends.

"There were times this summer where some of my roommates were here and I would get up at five to work out and they would still be up from the night before," Murphy said with a smile. "That happened a couple times." So when Notre Dame faces its postseason life Saturday against DePaul, Murphy will have his customary role on the bench.

"I think I'll do all right with that," Murphy said. "I don't regret coming to Notre Dame. I think I'll do all right with that." Murphy said. "I'm going to graduate with a degree at Notre Dame, and I think I'll do all right with a career, so I'm not complaining too much."

Contact Bobby Griffin at rgriff3@nd.edu
Irish guard Chris Quinn looks like a regular student but has become a top Big East threat

By ROBBY GRIFFIN

Misleading point

Irish guard Chris Quinn looks like a regular student but has become a top Big East threat.

Quinn has solidified himself as one of the best players in the Big East, if not the country, over the past five games.

But Quinn's willingness to load No. 14 Duke on the floor that remains his biggest asset.

NBA coaches also are just as willing to accept the responsibility.

Average college student

McAlarney remembers meeting Quinn during summer practice.

He had considered Quinn a shooting guard while watching him on television last season and was shocked to see his leadership abilities during workouts.

"When I came here," I was told, "Wesley is a kid who's off his game," McAlarney said. "A lot of people underestimate him every game, but now I think the country knows he's one of the best guards in the country."

McAlarney's initial feeling was not unique.

Quinn has established himself as a top player in the Big East this season, but it took three years for national audiences to recognize his on-court ability.

Much of this is due to his slender, inexcusable appearance — one of a typical college basketball player. But that's exactly what Quinn has become.

Heading into Wednesday's game at Providence, Quinn was second only to the East in seven major statistical categories — minutes played (first), points per game (second), assists (second), 3-point field goal percentage (third), free-throw percentage (third), assists/turnover ratio (third) and 3-point field goal made (fifth).

And Quinn's average build likely will allow some people to overlook his abilities in the past.

But as this season has progressed, opposing coaches are beginning to take notice of the Irish captain.

He doesn't rely much on flashy moves but has the awesome gift of anticipation to compensate for his lack of flair.

He also has shown an ability to get his game to a new level throughout all season. His 6.0 assists per game is second-highest in the Big East by nearly a full point margin.

"I think he's going to be underestimated for his entire career, because when you look at him and he looks like a normal student," McAlarney said. "But he does have quickness about him and he just goes by very fast."

Quinn's performance this year has put him in an unfa­

vorable spotlight in a secondary role.

He was always confident in his ability (he said he thinks he's one of the best guards in the country) but is still shocked when people are viewed differently than his peers.

"Not feeling of myself as a celebrity — I think of myself as a regular guy like most people," Quinn said.

It feels like yesterday the Irish were chosen to be the professional and college players but also varsity high school player of the year.

But Quinn's player is not only a top player in the Big East, but he also plays for the University of Iowa to develop his ego, but the senior guard has gained a sense of humility and is overwhelmed by his success.

"It means a lot to me — to be looked up to by people," Quinn said.

Quinn is 6-4 and 208 pounds.

But Quinn said he always looked up to people, as people of the same age group and matured, now I have other people looking up to me and I always looked up to other people — it's pretty cool.

Not-so-average future

But even though Quinn looks like a regular student, with a 3.0 grade point average, he might not have more attention ahead of him.

"He has made himself an NBA prospect, clearly with the feedback he's received with the year's he's having," Brey said Monday before practice.

Brey said he has received calls expressing interest in the senior guard — a situation few athletes have been able to enjoy.

"When we signed him, nobody would have predicted he would be an NBA player," Brey said.

"As a matter of fact, I don't think anyone would have predicted that he would even be a college player," Quinn said.

That sudden buzz might seem predictable.

But Quinn's 2-10 conference record this season has earned him his own opposition.

"This year you've seen the success of a team that's 15-2 and cruising along," Brey said. "Not only do we ask a lot of him from the floor, (but) he's got a lot of demands as a college student."

Brey said he doesn't know where Quinn ranks nationally among top players — or even top point guards — but the coaches said his skills would receive attention from NBA organizations once the season ends.

Quinn does not speculate where he will be playing professional basketball in the future, but he does express an interest to play somewhere — whether it's in America or Europe.

"I'm definitely looking forward to playing professional basketball somewhere next year," Quinn said. "At this point, I'm just focusing on finishing out my senior year in the best way possible, and then after the season, I'll take a step back and see where I fit."

"Personally, I think I'm right there with anybody," Quinn said.

Quinn routinely speaks with the Notre Dame players who have gone on to professional careers both in the NBA and Europe.

"It's good to get feedback from players like Carroll (NBA, Charlotte Bobcats) and Thomas (Fabriano, Italy). Just last weekend, Thomas stayed at Quinn's house after the Marquette game.

"All these guys really help me a lot," Quinn said. "Just seeing the different things that are out there and the different ways of going about it (helps)."

Focused on the present

Before Quinn starts worrying about his future career in professional basketball, he is responsible for leading the Irish in their final game of the season Saturday against DePaul.

"He certainly isn't thinking about (next year)," Brey said.

"He'd like to make sure this group his senior year into some postseason stuff."

Quinn didn't envision such a tough final stretch.

Brey said getting to the Big East tournament was going to be a challenge, but Quinn said he was hoping to make it to New York from the beginning.

"We've been a tough year," Quinn said. "It hasn't gone exactly the way we (had planned it at the beginning of the year. There have been a lot of ups and downs."

As a senior, it's not the way you want to go out, but you can't change that now.

But while Quinn can't change the past, he does have control over what is left of this season.

When Quinn has played well, Notre Dame has put itself in the best position to win games.

Quinn is averaging 22.4 points in five league wins.

Quinn's teammates have complete faith in their starting point guard and his ability to lead Notre Dame down this tough final stretch.

He scored 16 points in the second half against Penn State Wednesday to keep the Irish from losing to the Nittany Lions.

"As a team, we've been through a lot," McAlarney said.

"Just watching (Quinn) deal with it the right way helps the team."

But while Quinn might feel nostalgic with his college career winding down, he knows he must remain focused and not think about past mistakes.

Quinn said it up to him to think he might only play in one NCAA Tournament — his freshman year.

The Irish advanced to the Sweet 16 — though he also said he'd drive himself crazy if he got carried away with 'what ifs.'

Many people are unclear what if Quinn is focused on.

Beating the Blue Devils would give the Irish a Big East tournament berth and would allow Notre Dame to continue its success. A loss would bring the end of Quinn's collegiate career.

So once again, it's up to Quinn. The season could come down to a tougher game situation.

And then the Irish guard will have to exchange his black North Face for his black jersey.

transforming from a standard college athlete to a standout college athlete.

But Quinn is needed to that role only this year, people are starting to take notice.

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The future can wait

Irish forwards Torin Francis and Rick Cornett have hurled destinies but a common current goal

By PAT LEONARD
Sports Writer

Torin Francis' NBA pre-draft camp T-shirt hangs ironically on his 6-foot-11, 232-pound frame as he rests comfortably into the Joyce Center arena on a Monday afternoon.

The Notre Dame senior has two days before he must put his team on his shoulders and try to make it back into the NCAA tournament two years ago — and push them to the Big East tournament.

But Francis also has more on his mind than average college senior handles.

He yearns for success, as he experienced his freshman season not in a Sweet 16 appearance. He remembers scoring and rebounding along with his teammates, but also in individual growth.

Back surgery at the end of his sophomore season, a bout with severe ankle and brief flirtation with the NBA Draft last spring and a return to South Bend as a senior Irish forward who he is — a role player who averages a low career double-double (11.1 points, 10 rebounds) and has a chance to carry the team as more and no less.

And with personal goals and aspirations weighing equally heavy on his mind, Notre Dame head coach Mike Brey has a chance to play professionally, no matter how small his role, during his junior season he struggled. And overall, even when he and head Francis don't "bounce" off the floor like he used to following back surgery on March 8, 2004.

"I've wanted to be on the court and (folk play)," Cornett said. "I just really have to accept the role here and realize that some games I may play a lot, some games I may not play, and not be upset about it but just keep working hard. Because when they call my name there, I have to be ready to contribute and do well.

Questions remain as to why Notre Dame never applied the red-shirt tag to Cornett in order to retain a year of eligibility during seasons in which he saw minimal action. Brey promises this staff deliberated long and hard throughout the season and concluded each season that the Irish needed Cornett in a jersey.

"The (Rick) red-shirt discussion took place many times in the fall, and not necessarily his freshman year," Brey said. "Do you hold him out maybe in one of the other years? But given where our numbers were 10, 11 (scholarship players) — it was a little nervous, you know, with Francis with back surgery coming back.

Brey also knows Cornett has been frustrated with his playing time, but the coach said it took Cornett a while to fully realize what he had been doing to do so.

"The one thing he and I have always talked about is, in the off season, being really committed," Brey said. "And each summer he's learned the commitment level to play at this level really is a different level. And this summer was the most productive for him. He's been a little bit of a leader.

"He does have other interests, and that's healthy. That's well-rounded, but also then too you want kind of a manicural focus.

"He does have other interests, and that's healthy. That's well-rounded, but also then too you want kind of a manicural focus.

"(Coach) Dame team.

"I'm used to following back surgery on March 8, 2004. "Putting him in order (in the draft) is a scoring threat, he's a player," Brey said.

Surprising many after what Francis admits was a sub par junior season, the Boston, Mass., native declared for the NBA Draft and is getting ready to work out at a pre-draft camp, where he'll get to show his stuff along with some humble advice.

"A couple guys just told me to be prepared, to prepare and spend this year to develop some more, even though I think (Brey's) pretty well at times, and other times I just played O.K. So that was really a high point for me... I think I should come back... (I'll have a good (senior) year personally and will be focused on career aspirations yet, though.

And he claims he entered the draft thinking to make it to the NBA, and he wants to do it alongside his friend, teammate and fellow captain, Francis — something the starting forward welcomes.

"(Brey) is a scorching threat, he's a threat on defense and he goes good enough to go," Brey said. "It wasn't an arrogant move on his part... The crazy thing about the draft (it'll be) you have a good two days in Chicago, you can be the 25th pick and then work out for some teams...

"...Whenever he was eligible for the NBA Draft, whether it was his freshman year, his junior year or this spring, he was gonna be in a dogfight to scratch his way into the league. He's realistic about that. The one thing he can do is he can make a living playing the game somewhere for a while.

What the future may hold

Brey said has played an also has the ability to make money by playing basketball after graduation, but he has also made the most of his Scholarship to Notre Dame and has succeeded at different levels.

"The crazy thing about the draft (it'll be) you have a good two days in Chicago, you can be the 25th pick and then work out for some teams..."

"Even when he doesn't see as many minutes, both seniors remain major reasons why this group has been so successful through a difficult conference slate.

"That's the type of guys we are," Francis said. "Coach Brey and the coaching staff can only do so much. For us, it's how we go out and practice, how we prepare for the games and whether we're mentally ready for the games.

"We could have thrown in the towel a long time ago, but why would we if we still have the opportunity to do big things?""}

They each had the opportunity to throw in the towel, on themselves and on the team, but now all they can think about is what New York City thing.

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