Sisters lead Saint Mary’s through the years

By KELLY MEEHAN
St. Mary’s Editor

When the Sisters of the Congregation of the Holy Cross founded Saint Mary’s in 1844, they could hardly have fathomed what the College would be like in the year 2006. For the sisters at Saint Mary’s—the first college the international Congregation established in the United States—looking 162 years into the future may have seemed like a challenge; but the decades passed quickly. Intense construction, dedicated educators and unrealized plans to become a co-educational institution marked eras of the College’s diverse history. But one thing has remained constant: the Sisters of the Congregation of the Holy Cross’ unique presence on campus, guiding and influencing Saint Mary’s. Congregation President Sister Joy O’Grady said what began as a “family business” of sisters who traveled to Notre Dame, Ind. from Bertrand, Mich., to educate women has flourished into one of the nation’s premier sites of higher education and a retirement home for Sisters who have completed their international work.

Over the years the Sisters’ leadership positions at the College have dwindled, but they have not compromised their stake in assuring that the “excellence of the [Catholic] Church is maintained and fostered within a holistic education,” O’Grady said.

The Sisters of the Congregation of the Holy Cross live at one of three places on campus, including Augusta Hall.

PLAY/sister slideshow

See PLAY/page 6

Cell phone service cut short

Some students cite calling interruptions

By JOHN TIERNEY
News Writer

If the cellular phone is a college student’s lifeline, a lot of the Notre Dame community was left drowning in the rain Thursday.

Many students complained of poor or no phone service throughout the day. Calls that were answered were dropped after just 10 to 15 seconds, some students said. Text messaging functions, however, did not seem to be impaired.

The day of choppy service for many major carriers left students frustrated and some blamed the poor service on the day’s steady rain. But Dewitt Latimer, chief technology officer in the Office of Information Technologies, said cell phone service is usually not affected by the weather.

“There is no reason to believe that the rain or the clouds would have interfered with the antennas,” he said.

By Thursday evening, freshman Mike Kelly, a Verizon customer, said he was frustrated almost to the point of destroying his phone. "I haven’t been able to make a call all day,” Kelly said. “I was about to throw my phone into a puddle ‘cause I thought it was just a joke that follows.

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**INSIDE COLUMN**

Owens and 'Little T'

I would like to preface this by saying that it will be the first and last time I will ever make any addition to the most over-publicized athlete in the history of sports. I apologize, but this one was just too hard to let go.

Two days ago a new series of children's books aimed at providing good role models for America's youth was released by Terrell Owens.

The story line follows a young ... wait. Terrell Owens, the same man who once pulled a Sharpie out of his sock after scoring a touchdown, will now be signing books for kindergarten kids?

Believe it or not, it's true. BenBella Books has signed the Cowboys' wide receiver to deliver a series of illustrated stories that will teach children lessons that T.O. has apparently taken all of his 32 years to fully grasp.

Owens started drumming up the idea in his rookie season while with the 49ers but needed to do some additional research before he felt he was ready to begin the writing process.

The first set of books are titled "Little T Learns to Share," "Little T Learns What Not To Say" and "Little T Learns to Apologize." — honestly, the last one's a joke. Rumor has it that Owens is currently working on the fourth installment which will be called "Little T Learns about Painkillers," a piece that is sure to tender those annoying children's pill bottles obsolete. (Okay, so maybe that one was a little bit of a joke, but not too far off of a stretch.)

Little T's lessons in the future may also include, but are certainly not limited to: enjoying the outdoors (just not on the sidelines) and getting a good night's rest (especially in the middle of offensive team meetings).

Owens is currently partnered up with college friend Courtney Parker and illustrator Todd Harris in the project, but once this craze takes off, everyone is sure to want a piece of the action — Keyshawn Johnson, Dennis Rodman ... they are even talking with O.J. about a Halloween special.

It's only a matter of time before Drew Rosenhaus manages to wiggle his way into the series as well. Perhaps as the evil money-grubbing Dr. Drew whose negative influence Little T has to overcome to learn his lesson. Hey, anything to make an extra buck, right Drew?

With all of the wonderful children's literature around today — Dr. Seuss, Roald Dahl, Stephen King — is this avid reader will be sticking with Clifford.

**QUESTION OF THE DAY:** What's tougher, the JEDIS or the HOGWARTS GANG?

- **Nick Caprin0**
  
  "Jedi because the power to destroy a planet is insignificant next to the power of The Force."

- **Dan D'Amore**
  
  "The Jedi, because I've never heard of a female Jedi."

- **Jim Harig**
  
  "Da Bears."

- **John Leahy**
  
  "Uh ... I'm way too cool for science fiction."

- **Carl Andersen**
  
  "No, he's really not."

- **Steve Brennan**
  
  "With or without Dumbledore? Because Dumbledore's (awesom)."

**OFFBEAT**

"Grape Guy" catches 116 grapes in mouth

SYDNEY, Australia — An American man caught 116 grapes in his mouth in three minutes in what he hopes will become a new Guinness World Record, his publicity team said Thursday.

Steve "the Grape Guy" Spalding, 44, of Dallas, Texas also set a personal record for endurance grape catching, using his mouth to catch 1,203 grapes thrown from a distance of 15 feet over half an hour, according to publicist Deanna Brown.

No Guinness World Records officials were present at Spalding's grape-gobbling attempt, carried out Thursday in Australia overlooking Sydney's iconic Opera House.

Tickets are $7 at the Lafortune Box Office which can be reached at (574) 631-8128 — or $10 at the Student/Athlete Ticket Office — which can be reached at (574) 631-8128.

The Notre Dame women's soccer team will take on Colorado in the third round of the NCAA Tournament tonight at 7:30 p.m. at Alumni Field. Call (574) 631-7356 for ticket information.

Asian Allure 2006: Illumination will take place tonight at 8 p.m. at Washington Hall. The show is open to all Notre Dame, Saint Mary's and Holy Cross College students. Tickets are $7 at the Lafortune Box Office — which can be reached at (574) 631-8128.
Paraguayan senator lectures on failures of government

Country has little support for democracy

By JOHN-PAUL WITT
News Writer

Diego Abente Brun, former Paraguayan senator and minister of Justice and Labour, spoke Thursday at the Hesburgh Center on the challenges facing Paraguayan democracy.

Throughout his lecture entitled "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Dilemmas of a Small Latin American Democracy," Abente criticized the state of Paraguay's democratic government and explained the various challenges that need to be overcome to bring Paraguay to the level of the most developed Latin American nations — Argentina, Chile and Brazil.

Abente introduced his lecture with a brief history of modern democracy in Latin America, saying that by the 1980s and 90s, most nations were moving away from the Marxist foundations of their democratic system and adopting a more liberal system. Paraguay has a legislatu...
History
continued from page 1

The Sisters have gone from dominating the College's presi­
dential and professor positions to currently maintaining lead­
ership roles behind the scenes as members of the Board of Trustees.

And while the majority of Saint Mary's administration is laypersons, Sisters continue to fill significant roles as con­
dents for mission, professors, director of space planning and assistant to the president for mission.

The majority of the Congregation, however, is con­
tinually present at Saint Mary's. Near­by 200 Sisters call the College's campus "home."

With a median age of 74, they are over 50 years older than the 1,500 members of the student body, but they still play a vital role within the College community.

They reside in three locations: Augusta Hall, Saint Mary's Convent and Rosary Hall — in the southwest corner of campus. The Sisters' portion of the land-stake exceeds the 50 acres that belong to the College.

As a separate entity, the Congregation owns the vast majority of woodlands that run along the eastbound side of Interstate 80-90, the nature trails and most of the land in the front of Saint Mary's along Route 31/33. It also leases the Belles' athletic fields to the College.

The unique ownership of the land bordering Saint Mary's gives the Congregation complete jurisdiction of its uses. Most notably, the Congregation entered into an agreement ear­lier this year with the Holladay Corporation to build a Hilton Garden Inn and conference center, set to open before the 2007 football season, on the northeast corner of campus.

The decision to lease the land for the construction of this hotel and conference center, which took much of the student body by surprise in August 2006, was deemed a "formal business relation" by O'Grady.

"Negotiations were developed for some time," she said, "and we kept the College apprised the whole time."

At the final decisions of the time and location of the con­struction were made, O'Grady and College President Carol Ann Mooney were engaged in close and careful consideration and we make every attempt to incorporate even more understanding about the Congregation's influence on the College during this year's Heritage Week. Mooney said the positive influence inquisitive students had on the Sisters was impressive.

"The Sisters were thrilled with the student interest in their heritage last year," Mooney said.

Contact Kelly Meehan at kmeehan@stmarys.edu
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

McCain calls for GOP reform after loss
WASHINGTON — Sen. John McCain, casting himself as the embodiment of the Republican Party’s future in the vein of Ronald Reagan, said in a speech that laid out his vision for the party that he, once again, will offer Americans enlightened, effective leadership.” The Arizona senator, who supported past democratic reforms before it ended its majority. Although he has been an opponent of the war in Iraq, he welcomed the change and the opportunity we have to bring about a peaceful future in the region, he said.

McCain also invoked several housing businesses and the offices of government ministries, said Obama’s Lord Chamberlain, the Honorable Fikileka.

National News

McCain for GOP reform after loss
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Local News

Semi chemical leak closes highway
LOWELL, Ind. — A chemical leaking from a semi-truck on I-80 has caused a precaution about 10:30 a.m. CST as hazardous materials responders prepared to neutralize the chemical, sodium hydrosulfite, said Mike Higgins, a spokesman for the Lake County Sheriff’s Department.

Ethiopia

Darfur peacekeeping force planned
Annan, other world leaders do not set timetable; Sudan has reservations

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan opens a critical international meeting in Ethiopia to discuss the increasingly desperate situation in Darfur Thursday.

Annan and several other diplomats predicted there would be no lingering effects from the bruising leadership campaign as the party looks ahead to taking control of the House in January after a dozen years in the minority.

Not everyone sounded convinced, though. "I created these tensions that we now have to work on," said Rep. Jose Serrano of New York, a Hoyer supporter.

"If they're freshmen, they get a pass on this one," he said.

Democrats chose their leaders for the next two years as lawmakers in both houses labored to wrap up work for the expiring 109th Congress and look ahead to the 110th, which convenes on Jan. 4.

Walker Republicans hold elections on Friday, with a two-way race for minority leader.
Play
continued from page 1
"Forgiveness," in which a man who has decided to save himself for marriage falls in love with a woman who has had sex. Through God's grace, Liddy said, he comes to for­
give her and even re­baptizes her as a born­again virgin in Saint Mary's Lake.

The play does, however, include its fair share of sexual assault and rape stories — even more than "Monologues" did — meaning the interviews did, as well.

"This play comes from stories of Notre Dame students; therefore I argue that it is even more striking than The Virginia Monologues because it is a reflection of our cam­

The Observer • CAMPUS NEWS

Play
continued from page 1
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"Mitch Bederman, one of the producers of "Daughters," which will be performed this spring, said the issue of rape and sexual violence in classes this week. But victims of sexual assault and rape need more than just this play, Papak said.

"It takes a lot more than a pep talk for some students to turn their world to expose that something like that happened to them," he said. Ideally, Brauer said, there wouldn't be a need for plays like "Daughters" and "Monologues" at all.

"The day when Notre Dame is a sexual assault-free, rape-free campus," he said, "That's obviously the goal.

Whether "Monologues" will be performed remains to be seen, although Liddy said her involvement in another production would prevent her from participating in "Monologues" this year. "We need a break," she said.

"It's a kind of a catch-22," she said. Bederman, on the other hand, suggested that "Monologues" has run its course, at least for the time being.

"It's my impression that's what's happened to this different years, different groups of people say, "Oh, we need the Monologues," because they want to have the Monologues like the football schedule. People are going to have a vacation from the 'Monologues' this year.

Contact Eileen Duffy at eduffy@nd.edu
THE OBSERVER

BUSINESS

Friday, November 17, 2006

MARKET Recap

Dow

12,305.82 +54.11

Up: 948 Down: 203

Composite Volume: 1,746,164 1,509
2,744,087,380

AMEX

1,996.77 -13.79

NASDAQ

2,449.06 +6.31

NYSE

8,901.35 +25.08

S & P 500

1,190.04 +10.40

Nikkei(Tokyo)

16,163.87 -0.00

FTSE 100(London)

6,254.90 +25.10

The nation's biggest radio station owner, San Antonio-based Clear Channel Communications Inc., has agreed to be acquired by an investment group.

Clear Channel agrees to buyout

Offer of $18.7 billion, the third-largest in U.S. history, will make company private

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Three weeks ago, it looked like that was over.

That's how long it took radio giant Clear Channel Communications Inc. to accept the third-largest buyout offer on record in the U.S., after announcing in late October that it was considering "strategic alternatives."

And while the nation's biggest radio station operator has left the door open a bit in case something else comes along, it agreed to an $18.7 billion offer from Thomas H. Lee Partners LLC and Bain Capital Partners LLC.

In addition to paying $37.60 in cash for each Clear Channel share, the buyers will assume an additional $8 billion in debt.

"We tried to figure out what would be a way out of that and obviously the private equity markets have a much different view," said Frederick Moran, a managing director in the credit solutions group of Lee.

"Mays said $37.60 was a "great price" for shareholders and the private equity firms "think they got a great company and have a long-term view associated with it."

The transaction would be one of the biggest deals to take a company private, excluding debt, and illustrates the value that specialists have been able to assemble to acquire public companies.

HCA Inc. shareholders on Thursday overwhelmingly approved a $21.3 billion leveraged buyout — the second largest over in the U.S. that will take the nation's No. 1 profit hospital chain private. That deal is the largest since the $25.1 billion leveraged buyout of Nabisco Inc. in 1988, according to Thomson Financial.

San Antonio-based Clear Channel owns or operates 1,150 radio stations and is the largest operator of radio stations in the country. The company said in a regulatory filing that it doesn't expect any senior management changes or significant layoffs.

Mark Mays will remain CEO while Randall Mays, his brother, will stay on as chief financial officer. Their father, Lowry Mays, the chairman, will continue to have an active role, the company said.

"Clear Channel is an exceptional media franchise that is well-positioned to grow thanks to the solid foundation the Mays family has created," John Connaughton, a managing director at Bain Capital, said in a statement. "It's not yet clear how much the Mays stand to make in the deal. Clear Channel said Thursday that some members of senior management agreed to "significantly" reduce payments that would be made on a change of control.

A Clear Channel spokesman declined to elaborate. The Mays family owns about 7 percent of the company.

Mark Mays said only that "we don't stand to gain anything except what shareholders gain."

James Goss, media and entertainment analyst at Barrington Research, said the price of $37.60 was in line with expectations. The figure represents a 10.2 percent premium over shares' closing price on Wednesday.

Citigroup wins bid for Chinese bank

NEW YORK — Citigroup Inc., America's largest banking institution, confirmed on Thursday that a Citigroup-led consortium has been selected to acquire a majority stake in one of China's biggest regional financial institutions, Guangdong Development Bank.

The consortium will acquire an 85.6 percent stake in Guangdong for 24.267 billion yuan, or $3.06 billion, Citigroup said.

New York-based Citigroup itself will hold a 20 percent stake — under the 25 percent maximum allowed by Chinese government regulations. International Business Machines Corp., headquartered in Armonk, N.Y., will have a 4.74 percent share.

Meanwhile, two China-based companies — China Life Insurance Co. and State Grid Corp. — will each get 20 percent stakes, while Beijing-based CITIC Trust will hold a 12.85 percent share and Guangzhou Puhua will get 8 percent.

GDB, which is owned by the provincial government and has more than 500 branches and about $48 billion in assets, is based in the fast-growing industrial province that abuts Hong Kong.

Citigroup had been fighting since last year to buy the Chinese bank and the announcement of the deal signals that it will be able to greatly expand its operations in China. Citigroup currently has branches in just six Chinese cities.

It beat a competing bid from a consortium led by France's Societe Generale AG.

A signing ceremony was held in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province.

Citigroup said in a statement issued in New York that "this transaction represents the first time a major international financial services company, leading a consortium of co-investors, has been permitted to obtain substantial ownership and assume a significant management role in a Chinese financial institution."

In Brief

Social Security plan called 'off the table'

WASHINGTON — The incoming chairman of the Senate Finance Committee said Thursday he wants to hold hearings on looming insol­

vencies in the Medicare and Social Security programs but said President Bush's plan to partially privatize the system is dead.

"Don't waste our time," said Democratic Sen. Max Baucus of Montana. "It's off the table."

He said the rising cost of Medicare and other health care costs is a priority for the committee, though he did not detail how the committee would approach those problems. He said he will hold hearings on Medicare.

Baucus said he will propose legislation to sim­

plify the Medicare prescription drug program by streamlining the number of plans available and making it easier for people to choose one.

Baucus, 64, has been on the committee for more than two decades and briefly was chair­

man when Democrats took Senate control in 2001, the same year he collaborated with Bush on tax-cut legislation. The senator also sided with Republicans on a Medicare overhaul in 2003, a move that frustrated many in his party

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Hammes
continued from page 1

predicts they will see similar
volume for the last home
game.

Director of Retail Operations
Sally Watrowski said the
Hammes Bookstore will be
staffed with approximately
three hundred employees this
weekend to accommodate the
expected 55,000 visitors. But
Watrowski said the level of
preparation for this weekend is
the same as for every other
football weekend in the fall.

"We bring the same level of
interest to our work every
football weekend," Watrowski
said. "We want to make sure
every fan has the
best experience possible." This "level of
interest" must continue all week-
ed, as fans start to arrive at the
bookstore as early as Friday morning
and continue shopping through
Sunday.

Watrowski said the busiest
time during the
weekend is right before the
football game, "when there is
no win or loss and fans are
still happy," she said.

The most popular
items at the Bookstore are
anything that "has Irish
written all over it," Watrowski
said. This includes face
tattoos, football jerseys
and the hooded swea-
shirts, which
Watrowski described as the "college sta-
ple." Now that the football season
is drawing to a close, the
bookstore is preparing for the
holiday season rush. A large Christmas tree
and decorative wreaths have been
erected to give the bookstore a festiv-
ity. New holiday apparel
will be in the bookstore and
students can get their holiday
shopping done before they
return home for winter break.

"I am definitely going to buy
my family Notre Dame gear," Sullivan
said. "Stuff that has Notre Dame on the front of it,
probably either a shirt or a
reversible jacket." Students do acknowledge that despite their good
intentions to buy gifts for their fam-
ily, they often buy a little
something for themselves as
well.

"I always end up buying
myself the stuff they have
displayed on the tables, or the
stationery," Sullivan said. "I love
pretty stationery."
Garbage man found guilty of rape, murder
Cape Cod criminal receives life sentence
Associated Press

BARNSTABLE, Mass. — A garbage man was convicted Thursday of rape and murder in the slaying of a fashion writer who was found beaten and stabbed in her Cape Cod home, her 2-year-old daugh­

ter clinging to her body.

Christopher McCown, 34, received the automatic sen­
tence of life in prison without parole for the 2002 killing of Christa Worthington, 46.

"I never meant for this to ever take place," said McCown, who thanked the judge and court officers for showing him respect during the six-week trial. "Your honor, all I can say is I'm an innocent man in this case."

McCown, who worked in the small town of Truro where Worthington lived, ini­tially denied having any phys­
tical contact with her. After police told him his DNA had been found on her body, McCown said they had con­
sensual sex and he had beat­
en her. But he said a friend plunged the knife through her chest.

"We put the boots to her," McCown said, according to police. The friend was never charged.

McCown cried as the jury came into the courtroom, and his attorney, Robert George, wept as well, with the sleeve of his suit coat. McCown bowed and shook his head "no" as the verdict was read.

"People ask about closure, but there will never be clo­
sure because Christa is never coming back to us," said her cousin Mary Worthington, who read a statement before sentencing.

Defense attorney Robert George reminded the jury that police had focused on Worthington's former boyfriends before finally arresting McCown nearly 3 1/2 years after the crime.

George said police decided Worthington was raped because they could not believe that McCown — a black, uneducated garbage man — could have had consensual sex with Worthington, a white, sophis­
ticated woman who worked for years as a fashion writer in New York and Paris.

"The black man didn't get raped," George said. "It's probably one of the best stadi­
ums in the country and most people don't even get a chance to go there. I take it for granted a lot, but Saturday I won't be

not until leaving the junior from 'Rude' kicks me out.

While many fellow seniors share mixed feelings nearing their final home game, they also hope to make the day a memo­
"I would have loved to have been undefeated right now, but I'll take only one loss."

Not only are senior fans leav­ing, but 28 football players are graduating — which, students say, makes Charlie Weis' upcoming third season unpredictable.

"It's going to be a test of Charlie Weis' coaching ability because a bunch of new recruits are coming in, like Jimmy Clauson," said Burke. "And a lot of freshmen are going to be

put in starting spots, so it should be an interesting year. We'll see if they can step up or not."

Contact Maggie Dunn at mcdunn01@stmarys.edu

Fall 2006 Schedule
Experience an intimate discussion with Notre Dame's most engaging
faculty speakers on some of the most pressing issues of our time.

9/9—Penn State "More Than a Movie: Assessing 'The Da Vinci Code'"
(10) DeBartolo Hall
James Collins, Professor of Film, Television, and Theatre
Mary Rose D'Angelo, Associate Professor of Theology
Charles Baxter, Associate Professor of Art, Art History, and Design

9/16—Michigan "The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on Our Bible"
Eugene Ulrich, Rev. John A. O'Brien Professor of Theology

9/30—Purdue "Successful Aging"
Cindy Bergeman, Chair and Professor of Psychology

10/7—Stanford "The Bone Collector"
Michael Zuckert, Nancy Rowe Drexel Professor of Political Science

11/4—North Carolina "The Role of Religion in Paxbuilding"
R. Scott Appleby, Professor of History, John M. Regan Jr.
Director of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies
John Paul Lederach, Professional Specialist, Kroc Institute
A. Rashid Omar, Assistant Professional Specialist, Kroc Institute

11/18—Army "Seeds of Change" A Musical Performance
Georgine Resick, Professor of Music
John Blacklow, Assistant Professor of Music

3–1/2 hours before kickoff in the Annexenger Auditorium. Snite Museum of Art (unless otherwise noted).

For more information, visit http://saturdayscholar.nd.edu

Seniors to see final home game
Students say goodbye to student section, reminisce about past seasons
By MAGGIE DUNN
News Writer

Four years ago, they set foot in the Notre Dame Stadium and experienced the overflowing pride of Irish fans, football play­
ers and students on their own turf. Now, as Saturday's matchup against Army approaches, thousands of sen­

ors face the bittersweet goodbye that is their last home game as students.

"It's pretty sad because it's been a part of my life for four years and to say goodbye is going to be tough," Saint Mary's senior Lauren Sheldon said.

"Although I am pretty sure I'll go to games after I graduate, I'm going to miss the student section because it is a different experi­

ence from the regular seats.

At my first Notre Dame game before I was a student, I would watch them in fascination," she said. "Then when I got to be a part of that, it was amazing."

Notre Dame senior Matt Buckle said he'll miss the tailgating — but also the stadium itself.

"I'll miss being at Notre Dame Stadium," said Buckle. "It's probably one of the best stadi­
ums in the country and most students never even get a chance to go there. I take it for granted a lot, but Saturday I won't be

not until leaving the junior from 'Rude' kicks me out.

While many fellow seniors share mixed feelings nearing their final home game, they also hope to make the day a memo­
"I would have loved to have been undefeated right now, but I'll take only one loss."

Not only are senior fans leav­ing, but 28 football players are graduating — which, students say, makes Charlie Weis' upcoming third season unpredictable.

"It's going to be a test of Charlie Weis' coaching ability because a bunch of new recruits are coming in, like Jimmy Clauson," said Burke. "And a lot of freshmen are going to be

put in starting spots, so it should be an interesting year. We'll see if they can step up or not."

Contact Maggie Dunn at mcdunn01@stmarys.edu

"Seeds of Change," a program of French music from the first half of the 19th century, includes works by Berlioz, Chopin, Liszt, Gounod, and Saint-Saëns, as well as spoken commentary drawing parallels between the music of the period and concurrent trends in literature, the visual arts, social history, and politics.

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Gamers line up for new PS3
Customers anticipate U.S. debut of Sony device after 6-month delay

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Die-hard gamers and entrepreneurs prepared to shell out $500 or more for the new PlayStation 3 console that goes on sale Friday, many of them after waiting in line for days despite the likelihood they’d go home empty-handed.

Retailers across the country arranged midnight sales at some of their stores. Lines sometimes stretched around the block, even where the first consoles wouldn’t be sold until Friday morning. Deliveries went down to the wire with FedEx vans sending boxes of the sleek black or silver consoles to individual stores Thursday.

Nine months pregnant, Julie Mosley said she tried to ignore her contractions for the chance to score machines for her family, her daughter’s father and her younger brother.

“I’m going to hold out as long as I can,” Mosley said Thursday as she sat on a cooler in the 19th spot outside a Circuit City in Mount Laurel, N.J., joking about giving birth on the sidewalk.

Potential customers braved freezing temperatures in Fargo, N.D., and heavy rain and winds in Baltimore and other East Coast locales.

“Katrina could come through here and I wouldn’t switch,” said Marco Cajis, 20, of Baltimore. “I spent the night on the cold snow.”

Short supplies and strong demand could be the formula for trouble as Sony Corp.’s PlayStation 3 makes its U.S. debut half a year late because of problems completing work on a built-in, next-generation DVD player.

The struggling electronics company, which has contended with laptop battery recalls and trials rival in key products such as music players and liquid crystal displays, is counting on the PS3 to maintain and build its dominant position in video game consoles.

In Palmhude, Calif., authorities shut down a Super Wal-Mart after some shoppers got rowdy late Wednesday and started running around inside the store. In West Bend, Wis., a 19-year-old man ran into a pole and struck his head racing with 50 others for one of 10 spots outside a Wal-Mart.

At a Circuit City Stores Inc. location in New York, potential buyers traded accusations of line-cutting and tried to avoid fights amid heightened emotions.

“You can’t even sleep unless you have your eyes open,” Watana Nada said.

Some customers were buying PS3 machines for themselves or as gifts, but many were hoping to resell them at a profit. Even before Friday’s launch, units were fetching four or five times their retail price at eBay, including auction site.

“As soon as I buy it, I’m going to sell it,” said Jose Mota, 26, who grabbed the first spot in line Thursday outside the Union City, Calif., Best Buy. “People will pay whatever just to get their hands on one.”

Many stores reported calm. At a Best Buy in Boston with 140 machines for sale, employees simply gave out tickets for the first 140 in line so that everyone can go home.

At San Francisco’s Sony Metrotown mall, a “sacred scroll” notebook kept track of the first 250 people in line so they could go to the bathroom or pick up food without losing their spots. Some even got wristbands guaranteeing a unit.
CINGULAR IS THE FIRST WIRELESS PROVIDER with a Notre Dame on-campus network.

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It drew fewer critics, featured far fewer vaginas and probably went unnoticed by many on campus.

But while in the past there was no avoiding the "Monologues" — a play with material explicit enough to rock a Catholic campus into debate — for those who attended one of this week's productions of "Loyal Daughters," the message was inescapable.

Sexual assault is a problem at Notre Dame. And so is Notre Dame's culture.

When a girl tells the story of how she was raped not once, but twice at a party off campus — and then found herself locked into a torturously silent semester abroad with the first rapist — it's clear that there's a problem.

When two guys sit in front of an audience, ridiculing a girl for "crying rape to ResLife" as they play video games, it's clear that there's a problem.

"Loyal Daughters" does a far better job than "The Vagina Monologues" at making its point and pertaining to the University community. It includes males, and it does that in several important contexts: as the wrongdoer and the wronged, as straight and homosexual, as an adult both aware and confused. "Loyal Daughters" also focuses on the role alcohol plays in sexual violence — a point that is essential to the play's goals, since alcohol abuse is all too frequently a disastrous factor in incidents of sexual assault.

It's impossible to undermine the real stories of real Notre Dame students. And it includes extra material that — while maybe not directly related to sexual assault — points at what several professors and students have referred to as a pervading "culture of silence." It's not easy to talk about sex and sexuality in a Catholic context — and that's why it's necessary to do so.

While the "Monologues" may have enjoyed more visibility, the play generated attention for the wrong reasons. Controversy over whether a ski glorifies lesbian rape or a dominatrix's relationship toward her clients doesn't contribute to the overall goal of rape prevention. Discussion about potential problems within the Notre Dame culture does.

That's exactly what "Loyal Daughters" contributes to this campus — and exactly why it should contribute in the future. A student-written production based on extensive interviews wouldn't breed as much irrelevant controversy.

This isn't an issue that pertains to a small group of people. Sexuality — and the ability to freely address it — concerns every person on this campus. A play that attempts to involve as many of those people as possible is an effort that should be praised, promoted and, above all, continued.

Letter to the Editor

"Consent" is no justification

After reading the articles on "Loyal Daughters" in Tuesday's Observer ("Loyal Daughters' draws hundreds" and "Professors, playwright discuss sexual assault"), I was disappointed to find that the crux of the matter. Bederman admits that these harmful cultures pervading "culture of silence." It's not easy to talk about sex and sexuality in a Catholic context — and that's why it's necessary to do so.

Therefore, the solution is not to encourage these vices among consenting adults, but to recognize them as evil and avoid them while properly ordering our natural desires. This is our Christian duty before God and the only way to truly prevent sexual violence.

On the other hand, if you decide to play with fire, there's a good chance that you're going to get burned.

Jonathan Kalchenbach
senior
Kegley Hall
Nov. 16

EDITORIAL CARTOON

"It kind for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." — Plato, philosopher
Fallacies of a free market

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the idea of government as an unprecedented experiment in democracy, liberal European Catholics such as Louis de la Foye feared, would have been embarrassed by the fact that liberty and equality could both be realized within it. Equality seemed possible, they admit, on the condition of the extension of suffrage and the rise of public education. But would not both of these egalitarian programs result in a general mediocrity? Everyone may be literate and competent at arithmetic, but the natural genius might suffocate among his spellin' and cipherin' peers. Universal suffrage would guarantee each person a role in the political sphere, but the great mass of citizenry would likely be thrown into the sub rosa of the decimated aristocratic society that had been broken into, at least, a stretch, I want to say, a large stretch, I want to say, a much larger stretch, I want to say, an impossible stretch, I want to say, an absolute impossibility, I want to say, an absolute impossibility, I want to say, an absolute impossibility.

At least since Johnson's Great Depression, America has been an extraordinary example of how the political process of a country seems to have been turned over to the practice of free private enterprise. The rise of corporations has dramatically altered the way of business, the market would provide a modern aura unlimited in the potentialities for a new kind of corporate capitalism. The lesson of the Great Society programs is still being learned in most of our major cities, where literally hundreds of thousands of persons are crammed into the high-rise tenements, in which they have no control over their living conditions and are given no reason to believe that their domicile could ever be sufficiently theirs to become a home. Most of these egalitarian projects have ended not so much in mediocrity as misery. What is worse, these manifestations of a "classless" and just society have actually become dumping grounds for the "politically and economically dispossessed" persons as the program of economic "liberty" has spread over several decades.

This project of liberty, in the mean­time, has thought about its own activist federal government, pawning the roads (literally and figuratively) for the uncontrolled growth of mega-corporations. I apologize for repeating a cliché, but it is a true cliché, that this unrestrained growth of mega-corporations has been the result of a free market that is "homogenized" in its treatment of all people, including those who work hard to determine how we can know all one's fellow members and live alongside whom we study, work, and live have experienced. That the play (or the playwright) finds 'nothing dramatic may find 'nothing wrong with consensual sexual activity that is 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, fornication, masturbation, or 'homosexual, bisexual, 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The Notre Dame Chorale will perform a joint concert with the Chamber Orchestra Saturday at 8 p.m. Football tickets grant fifty percent off admission.

Suso said: "We’re privileged to learn from such a versatile musician and director." Ekhoff is the perfect representative of the group’s craving for versatility. He is a talented accompanist who can sight read and play music without any prior knowledge of the piece, Suso said.

"She is truly an invaluable asset to the Chorale and an exceptional musician," he said.

Every year, the Chorale invites new members into its fold. This year’s iteration is no different, according to Suso, and has flourish with a unique blend of voices. Approximately half of the Chorale is made up of new voices. We have a great blend of new talent and veterans," Suso said.

Beyond this weekend’s festivities, the Chorale has one more signature event on the horizon this semester — dual performances of Handel’s “Messiah” Dec. 9 and Dec. 10. Besides their spring concert, Chorale will be traveling to New Zealand next May. If all goes as anticipated, the group will be touring with the prestigious New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

For now, though, Chorale's focus is on just one more performance — the next one. Under the bright lights of the Leighton Concert Hall, the group's versatility will once more be front and center.

"Those in attendance will hear classical, baroque and renaissance music," Suso said.

"It makes time for a few sentimental favorites — the Notre Dame Victory March and the Alma Mater."

The idea for this concert came from a joint concert the Irish Glee Club sang with the Naval Academy two years ago. The structure of tonight's concert will be similar to the previous concert. The Notre Dame Chorale thought this would be an excellent time to perform with another one of the service academy glee clubs.

"This is a great opportunity because of the tradition of the two schools," Catanese said.

The Notre Dame Chorale will perform a joint concert tonight alongside the United States Military Academy Glee Club at the Leighton Concert Hall. ROTC, will be hosting the Army Glee Club members.

"I think you can attribute that to the hospitality at Notre Dame. It will be a good chance to share Notre Dame with them," Catanese said.

Also, the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Francis J. Harvey, will be in attendance. This will be an honor in its own right, but Harvey is also a Notre Dame graduate. This connection will provide a bridge between the two institutions aside from the music they will be singing. This will be the perfect addition to the final home game of the season, one that Catanese feels is a great opportunity for both groups.

"This is a great opportunity because of the tradition of the two schools," he said. "The dual traditions of collegiality from football can now spread to music as well."
Mobbing the Manor

Morrissey and O'Neill take their top-notch running games all the way to Notre Dame Stadium.
Two-back system key for Mob and Manor

By BILL BRINK Sports Writer

The paradigm was established long ago — one primary running back per backfield. Any more than that may occasionally beheld to warrant more than one primary back. But both teams this week will utilize two backs.

Manor tailback Brian Pieh stretches the field with his speed and breakaway ability. Pieh is one of two backs used by the Manor, alongside junior Nick Bencomo.

Pieh, who combines strength between the tackles with speed when he breaks into the secondary. 

“I don’t think I fit into the category of any one runner,” Bencomo said. “I just try to run hard every time I touch the ball.

Just when the defense starts to stack the box, freshman Brian Pieh stretches the field with his speed and breakaway ability. Pieh is one of two backs used by the Manor, alongside junior Nick Bencomo.

Mannor tailback Brian Pieh rushes against Keough in Morrissey’s 20-0 win over the Kangaroos Oct. 8. Pieh is one of two backs used by the Manor, alongside junior Nick Bencomo.

“Turf is quick, agile and darts downfield through any hole he can find. But to count in short-yardage situations, the Mob turns to Matty McBrayer, who complements Turner’s quicker running with a downfield, bruiser style. The perfect third-and-short back. Mattingly hits the hole quick and hard. But even with his size and strength, Mattingly is still elusive in the open field.

“I think I can bring both speed and power to the table,” Mattingly said. “From game to game I can vary my running style based on the defense we are facing.”

The Mob decided to use a two-back system when it realized the amount of talent that was and continues to be at that position,” Bencomo said. The addition of Pieh to the Manor helped cement the two-back system for Morrissey, which could now utilize the two different types of tailbacks effectively.

The two-week layoff has really helped us prepare for the playoffs,” Klein said. The teams enjoyed having a two-week layoff to heal injuries and allow for extra practice time. "The two-week layoff has been great. The team is rested and ready for Sunday," Conley said.

But after the week off, both teams are ready to get back to playing games that count.

The anticipation of playing in the stadium is so great that it could be hard to stay focused in practice,” Klein said.

Mannor tailback Brian Pieh rushes against Keough in Morrissey’s 20-0 win over the Kangaroos Oct. 8. Pieh is one of two backs used by the Manor, alongside junior Nick Bencomo.

By JOHN TIERNEY Sports Writer

Morrissey and O’Neill will put the pride of their dorms and their one-loss seasons on the line Sunday in the Men’s Interhall championship game at Notre Dame Stadium Sunday at 1:30 p.m.

Both teams advanced to the championship game with a relatively easy trip through the postseason. O’Neill started off at No. 5, but easily knocked off No. 4 Carroll 21-5 in the opening round. O’Neill then advanced to the finals by virtue of a 12-0 shutout victory over Sanford on November 5. The Mob was led by quarterback Chris Stroh, who threw for 147 yards and completed 12 of his 16 passes.

Running back Braden Turner ran for 34 yards on 10 carries with a touchdown, while fullback Mike Mattingly rushed for 47 yards on 10 carries.

Both the running backs and the quarterback credited the offensive line for their performances, as the line opened up rushing holes and gave Stroh time to find open receivers.

Morrissey’s opening round game against Zahn was much closer than O’Neill’s, with a failed two point conversion by the Rahib flats marking the difference in the 7-6 Manor win.

Both teams saw a similar offense last year in the playoff game at Sanford. "We each offer different skills,” Klein said.

For Morrissey, the championship game will be about relishing the opportunity to finally play in the stadium. After coming up short in the semifinals in two of the past four seasons, the Manorites were finally able to control the trenches.

"It feels awesome to be able to play in the stadium. I don’t know if it will completely sink in until we actually set foot on the field,” Klein said.

While emotions are always important in football, more relevant to the outcome of the game will be the play of the teams’ offenses. In a game that O’Neill captain Pat Conley predicts will be "reasonably low-scoring but with the key to the Mob’s success will be dominating in the trenches and controlling the football on both sides of the ball.

"I think the linemen will make some important blocks that will spring our running backs for a big gain,” he said.

Conley is confident in the ability of his team to play at championship level not only on offense, but on defense as well. One main reason for the offensive production the Mob had throughout the postseason was its defense’s ability to win the field position battle.

“Since defenses prepare for run, they are not really a power runner, but on defense as well. One main reason for the offensive production the Mob had throughout the postseason was its defense’s ability to win the field position battle.

“Our defense has been strong all year and I expect the same on Sunday,” Conley said. “Our offense has been able to move the ball very well against all defenses and should be able to on Sunday. A lot of players on both sides are going to make plays.

Morrissey's defense, meanwhile, need to play with focus and discipline, something that was important to their play throughout the year.

"Our defense was out focused and play our best came of the two-week layoff,” Klein said. "Nonetheless, it was and continues to be at that position,” Bencomo said. The addition of Pieh to the Manor helped cement the two-back system for Morrissey, which could now utilize the two different types of tailbacks effectively.

Two-back system key for Mob and Manor

By BILL BRINK Sports Writer

The paradigm was established long ago — one primary running back per backfield. Any more than that may occasionally beheld to warrant more than one primary back. But both teams this week will utilize two backs.

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Just when the defense starts to stack the box, freshman Brian Pieh stretches the field with his speed and breakaway ability. Pieh is one of two backs used by the Manor, alongside junior Nick Bencomo.

"I see myself as more of an open field back,” Pieh said. “I am not really a power runner, but if need to I can run up the middle.

Morrissey is not the only team that has developed a two-back system. Turnaround quarterback Joe McFarley threw for three touchdowns and ran for another, while completing 6-of-9 passes in the semifinal win. Morrissey held on to the win thanks to the power running game of Klein, Brian Pieh, and Nick Bencomo, who combined to run for 146 yards on 24 carries.

Like O’Neill’s, a large part of Morrissey’s victory was the ability of their offensive line to control the trenches.

“The offensive line needs a lot of recognition because of how dominant they have been this season,” Manor tailback Brian Pieh said. “The running game, and passing game for that matter, would not have nearly as successful as they have been if it’s not for the guys up front.”

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Morrissey and O’Neill — the two teams that have developed a two-back system for Morrissey, which could now utilize the two different types of tailbacks effectively.

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Just when the defense starts to stack the box, freshman Brian Pieh stretches the field with his speed and breakaway ability. Pieh is one of two backs used by the Manor, alongside junior Nick Bencomo.

"I see myself as more of an open field back,” Pieh said. “I am not really a power runner, but if need to I can run up the middle.

Morrissey is not the only team that has developed a two-back system. Turnaround quarterback Joe McFarley threw for three touchdowns and ran for another, while completing 6-of-9 passes in the semifinal win. Morrissey held on to the win thanks to the power running game of Klein, Brian Pieh, and Nick Bencomo, who combined to run for 146 yards on 24 carries.

Like O’Neill’s, a large part of Morrissey’s victory was the ability of their offensive line to control the trenches.

“The offensive line needs a lot of recognition because of how dominant they have been this season,” Manor tailback Brian Pieh said. “The running game, and passing game for that matter, would not have nearly as successful as they have been if it’s not for the guys up front.”

For Morrissey, the championship game will be about relishing the opportunity to finally play in the stadium. After coming up short in the semifinals in two of the past four seasons, the Manorites were finally able to control the trenches.

"It feels awesome to be able to play in the stadium. I don’t know if it will completely sink in until we actually set foot on the field,” Klein said.

While emotions are always important in football, more relevant to the outcome of the game will be the play of the teams’ offenses. In a game that O’Neill captain Pat Conley predicts will be "reasonably low-scoring but
Pangborn, PW ready for title game rematch

By MIKE BURDELL
Sports Writer

Different year, same teams. This year’s Women’s Interhall championship features a rematch of last year’s title game in a showdown between Pangborn and Pasquerilla West.

Looking for a repeat from last year’s 13-0 win in the championship, the Purple Weasels understand the enormity surrounding the game and believe they will be able to handle the pressure.

“We won the championship last year so we know what it’s like playing in the stadium,” Purple Weasels captain Mo Spring said.

Although the Purple Weasels have aspirations of repeating their title, they aren’t the only team going into Sunday’s matchup with confidence and excitement Pangborn still has a bad taste in its mouth after their title, they aren’t the only team going into Sunday’s matchup with confidence and excitement.

“We’ve been working for this all year. We have been thirsty all year. We have been thirsty,” Purple Weasels spring said.

“We’ve been working for this all year. We have been thirsty all year. We have been thirsty,” Spring said. “They get our Field position.”

But on the other sideline, Pangborn feels it can rely on the mistakes it feels Pasquerilla West will make. If the Phoxes are able to effectively exploit the Purple Weasels’ weaknesses, they think that will be enough to win.

“Both teams really know each other well, so the team that can avoid turnovers and not give up the big plays should win,” Holder said. “It should come down to coaching, execution and taking care of the ball.”

Both teams have used similar styles of play in their returns to the stadium. The Purple Weasels and the Phoxes throughout the season have both relied on the play of their defenses and their quarterbacks — Cara Davies for Pasquerilla West and Katie Mooney for Pangborn.

Purple Weasel defense takes team back to the stadium

By COLIN REIMER
Sports Writer

“Offense sells tickets; defense wins championships.”

No matter what worn-out cliché you use, the message is always the same. A successful team or program is always predicated on a solid defense.

That is why it comes as no surprise that the primary reason Pasquerilla West has an opportunity to defend its title is its defense.

The Purple Weasels have shut out three opponents this season, including previously undefeated Welsh Family in the semifinals. Pasquerilla West has allowed just 25 points all season, an average of only 4.2 points in six games.

“We pride ourselves on shutting out and goal line stands,” Purple Weasels’ Patrolling this year in setting up their offense for easy scores. But with the lockdown corner-back Brusky and ball-hawking safety Brigid Bulfin patrolling the offensive back — seniors Julie Putnam and Caroline Schmidt.

“We have a lot of intensity, and some great people rushing,” said Brusky of her defensive teammates. “Because they bring so much pressure, the secondary can make big plays. Rushing two people isn’t a problem.”

And while Putnam and Schmidt are busy chasing down the opposition’s quarter-back, Spring, Brusky and the rest of the Purple Weasels shift their focus to blanketing receivers.

“We like to be an aggressive defense, and try to dictate the pace of the game,” Spring said. “It’s all about balance. You don’t want to expose yourself too often, or you’ll get burned.”

In addition to having a strong defensive mentality, the Purple Weasels also have the athleticism needed to make the big play.

“Because of the similarities and history between the two squads, we feel it is an exciting game Sunday,” Holder said. “The fact that we fell short last year doesn’t play a factor.”

Brusky said, “There are not only ingredients to a dominant defense.”

But athleticism and ability are not the only ingredients to a solid defense. Spring says that the biggest keys to a successful defense is its communication and chemistry.

“We work as a unit,” she said. “Everyone knows their role, and everyone executes.”

Meanwhile, Brusky said that the excellent communication between her players in the result of years of experience.

“Our starting defense is all seniors with the exception of one player, so we’re very familiar with each other’s styles of play,” Brusky said.

Brusky also discussed several underappreciated fundamentals that are unique to a solid Women’s Interhall defense.

“Flag-pulling is huge. It’s not the most glamorous part, but it’s very important,” Brusky said. “It’s also key to have football smarts. It helps to be able to recognize formations that indicate when a team will run or throw.”

But perhaps the most important factor in the success of the Purple Weasels’ defense is the mentality that they bring to every game.

“We love the game,” Brusky said. “We all enjoy going out and competing on game day.”

Contact Colin Reimer at creimer@nd.edu
Rematch at Rock's House

Pasquerilla West and Pangborn return to Notre Dame Stadium to square off in a replay of last year's championship game.
Hollywood infidelity a plague on populace?

A serious look at the role of celebrity marriage (divorce) in our culture

By CASSIE BELEK
Assistant Scene Editor

Diamonds are forever — celebrity marriages are not. Often times when celebrities tie the knot, that sparkling ring on the finger is nothing more than a fleeting symbol of a doomed union under the scrutiny of paparazzi and adoring fans. The divorce rate in the United States has reached 50 percent, and while an exact statistic is not available, the divorce rate in Hollywood is certainly higher. When celebrities marry, the question is always "How long is it really going to last?"

The recent weeks and months have brought a slew of high-profile celebrity divorces, the most recent being that of Britney Spears and the newly christened "Fedrix." The message that these celebrity divorces is sending is that marriage is temporary, happiness can be found with someone else and moments of hardship can be evaded instead of confronted.

This message is most evident among those celebrities with short or multiple marriages. Spears' short-lived first marriage, the non-"Seinfeld" Jason Alexander lasted a mere 55 hours. The childhood friends wed in Las Vegas as a joke only to get it annulled shortly thereafter. The pop princess, a role model to thousands of young girls, showed a blatant disregard to the institution of marriage and displayed little regret for her actions.

In a slightly longer marriage, Renee Zellweger and Kenny Chesney married after a four-month courtship, but Zellweger annulled the marriage 128 days later, citing "fraud" on Chesney's part. The marriage between the Oscar winner and the country superstar is an example of celebrities marrying too quickly, only to go for the easy fix when they realize they do not know each other as well as they thought they did. This irresponsibility in choosing a spouse often leads to multiple marriages. Think Jennifer Lopez (three marriages), Nicolas Caso (three marriages), Billy Bob Thornton (five marriages) and most infamously, Elizabeth Taylor (eight marriages).

Of course, the death knell of many Hollywood marriages is a cheating spouse. Infidelity is sad, tragic and unacceptable. However, celebrity couples rarely stay together when one is caught cheating. Nick Lachey, Ali Landry, Denise Richards and Jennifer Aniston all left their respective spouses after reported infidelity. Most recently and shockingly, Reese Witherspoon and Ryan Phillippe announced their separation after reports surfaced that Phillippe carried on an affair with Australian actress Abbie Cornish on the set of their upcoming movie "Stop-Lose."

Witherspoon and Phillippe may be amicably sharing their children, but the nation is about to observe a bitter custody battle between Spears and Federline. Celebrity divorces are perhaps most tragic when children are involved. They become the victims of the faults of their celebrity parents by being pushed into the limelight as their parents appear in weekly tabloid cover stories.

Are there cases in which divorce is beneficial for a celebrity? Perhaps there may be. Few will argue that Whitney Houston's decision to finally leave Bobby Brown will harm her more than help her. After 14 years of marriage scattered with drug abuse, Houston seems to be reclaiming her career and her health.

Others will argue that Spears is also justified in leaving her spouse, who is perhaps the most embarrassing man on the planet. Kevin Federline has spent his two-year marriage with Spears squandering her fortune, getting her pregnant and using her fame to launch a "music career" that culminated in the sale of only 6,000 copies of his debut album during its first week. Spears is now in the process of staging a glorious comeback and career resurrection by ending her toxic marriage to her former back-up dancer.

The celebrity divorce mystery is indeed a difficult one to solve. Why do celebrities divorce with such ease and frequency? Perhaps it is because they can afford it. The celebrity divorce is not as financially devastating as those of ordinary civilians. Perhaps the rampant failure of marriages is the reason many celebrity couples justifiably choose not to marry, but to remain committed partners nevertheless. Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt are the most current couple to take this route. The two will most likely not marry, even though Pitt has officially adopted Jolie's children and they now have created little baby Shiloh. The arrangement works for them, much like it works for Johnny Depp and Vanessa Paradis. After one divorce and four broken engagements, Depp remains in a successful eight-year relationship with Paradis and they share two children to prove their happiness.

Despite the consistently high rate of celebrity divorces, Hollywood love is not impossible. Success stories exist, like those of Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson, William H. Macy and Felicity Huffman and Warren Beatty and Annette Bening. However, notice the exclusion of young couples because, as Phillips and Witherspoon and taught us, forever is not a guarantee. The exception to this cautionary tale would be Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith, who married in 1997. Their marriage is the perfect example of what can be, and their doubtful divorce would surely be categorized as one of the trials and tribulations preceding the Apocalypse.

Overall, celebrities can marry happily. The length of that happiness varies, sending a negative message to the American public. More often than not, it seems, celebrity marriages are doomed from the beginning. However, in typical Hollywood fashion, as one marriage dies another one is born.

The impending nuptial of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes is the latest internet obsession, but TomKat would do wisely to re-write their vows to take each other "for better or for worse as long as we both shall live or until we get lazy and stop trying." Perhaps their vows would be more effective if they were burning with instead of the broken promises made by so many divorced celebrity couples before them.

Contact Cassie Belek at cbelek@nd.edu
After losing his stick, Blues center Ryan Johnson (17) attempts to block a shot by Oilers. Moments later, scoring a goal that beat Manny Fernandez to give the Blues a two-goal lead less than a minute later, scoring a goal that beat Manny Fernandez to give the Blues a two-goal lead.

参数 5, Canadiens 1

Olli Jokinen scored three goals for his second career hat trick and the Florida Panthers broke a four-game losing streak with a victory over the Montreal Canadiens on Thursday night. Jokinen's three goals for his second career hat trick and the Florida Panthers broke a four-game losing streak with a victory over the Montreal Canadiens on Thursday night.

The Panthers hadn't won since a 2-1 victory over Toronto on Nov. 2. They dropped 11 of 14 overall. Chris Gratton and Jay Bouwmeester also scored for Florida, which had lost four of five at home since starting the season 4-0-0 there.

Tom Plekanec scored for Montreal, which had two four-game winning streaks. The Canadiens went 2-0-2 during a six-day road trip. Ed Belfour stopped 27 shots for the Panthers.

David Aebischer made 20 saves for Montreal before being replaced by Cristobal Huet at the start of the third period. Huet stopped 14 of 15 shots but the Canadiens missed a chance for their first three-game winning streak of the season.

Jokinen, who hadn't scored since Florida's last victory, gave the Panthers a 2-0 lead 37 seconds into the middle period when his left wrist shot went through the legs of two Montreal players before lifting the puck over goalie Brian Boucher with 16:53 left in the frame.

But Nagy beat Boucher with a sharp wrist shot low to the stick side, and Joseph made a pad save on Michael Holmgren's forthright breakaway try to secure the win.

Karl Stewart and Martin Lapointe scored 92 seconds apart midway through the first period for the Blackhaws, who are 2-0-1 in their last four games.
**NCAA Men's Basketball Coaches Poll**

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**NCAA Women's Basketball Coaches Poll**

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**Big East Men's Basketball Poll**

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**around the dial**

**NBA**
- Washington at Detroit 6 p.m., ESPN
- Philadelphia at Phoenix 10:30 p.m., ESPN

**NCAA FOOTBALL**
- Central Michigan at Northern Illinois 8:05 p.m., ESPNU

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**Steroids**

Track coach Trevor Graham remains free after posting $25,000 bail. The one-time coach of Olympic champions Marion Jones and Justin Gatlin lied to federal investigators in 2004.

**Trainer refuses to testify on BALCO**

San Francisco — Two central figures in the BALCO steroids probe were front and center Thursday, accused of obstructing the federal grand jury investigating performance-enhancing drugs in sport.

Elite track coach Trevor Graham pleaded not guilty to hindering the grand jury's probe, while Barry Bonds' personal trainer was refusing to cooperate with the same investigation.

Graham remained free Thursday on a $25,000 bond, but a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ordered Greg Anderson to report to the Dublin federal prison by noon Monday.

"We are disappointed," Anderson's attorney, Mark Geragos said of the 9th Circuit ruling. "But it is certainly not over."

Geragos said he is considering asking a 15-judge panel of the San Francisco-based appeals court, or even the Supreme Court, to consider Anderson's plight.

Outside his arraignment Friday afternoon, Bonds testified about where drugs could be obtained asking a 15-judge panel of the San Francisco federal grand jury, Graham did not comment after his attorney, Gail Shifman, entered the plea on his behalf.

"He'll be vindicated," Anderson, 40, already has been behind bars twice before, after being held in contempt of court for his refusing to testify. Both times, the prison stints were cut short because of legal technicalities.

Now, he could serve more than a year behind bars unless he agrees to tell the grand jury what he knows.

Geragos unsuccessfully argued Anderson shouldn't have to testify about whether he gave Bonds steroids, contending prosecutors have an illegally obtained tape recording of Anderson discussing steroids with an unidentified person.

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**IN BRIEF**

Cardinals re-sign Spezio to two-year deal with Tigers

**DETROIT** — First baseman Sean Casey is staying with the AL champion Detroit Tigers, agreeing to a $4.5 million, two-year contract Thursday.

Acquired from Pittsburgh last season, Casey was a hitting star in the World Series. He batted .329 with two home runs and five RBIs against the St. Louis Cardinals, but Detroit lost in five games.

"Everybody is a piece to the winning team," Casey said on a conference call, "and I felt like not winning last year, but getting there — having that whole thing — for me it felt a little like unfinished business."

Casey also hit .353 against the New York Yankees in the first round of the playoffs. He missed most of the AL championship series against Oakland with a calf injury, but said he's been healthy since.

"I'm 100 percent," Casey said. "I felt 100 percent during the World Series."

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**As' bench coach promoted to Manager**

Oakland, Calif. — Bob Geren will be promoted from bench coach to manager of the Oakland Athletics, according to a high-ranking baseball official.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the team won't introduce Geren as its new manager until Friday, filling the final managerial vacancy in the major leagues this offseason, one month after the A's fired Ken Macha.

General manager Billy Beane went with the most experience and the familiar face, his longtime friend and former high school baseball opponent in San Diego.

Of the three finalists, a list that also included Colorado Rockies bench coach Jamie Quirk and ESPN baseball analyst and former Texas Rangers pitching coach Orel Hershiser, only Geren had managerial experience.
McGrady doubles up on Bulls in Houston win

Rockets nearly blow 21-point lead but hang on for victory

Associated Press

Tracy McGrady had 21 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists and Yao Ming had 20 points and 12 rebounds to 18 to the Houston Rockets, who nearly blew a 21-point lead but hung on to beat the Chicago Bulls 101-100 Thursday night.

Rafael Alston scored 19 and reserve Scott Padgett scored 11 to spark a first-half run as the Rockets beat the Bulls for the seventh time in eight meetings.

Ben Gordon almost single-handedly carried Chicago to a dramatic comeback win, scoring 30 of his 37 points in the final half.

He scored nine in the final minute and his driving bank shot with 27 seconds left cut Houston's lead to 95-92. After Shane Battier sank two free throws, Gordon swished a 3-pointer with 12.2 seconds left to pull the Bulls to within 97-95.

"I was just trying to be a little aggressive," Gordon said. "I've been struggling with my shot lately, so I wanted to get to the free-throw line. That's what kind of got me going." McGrady said. "We want to be great. It's got to change. We can't throw away games like this."

Alston hit two foul shots with 14.4 seconds left and Gordon missed a 3-pointer from the wing. Luther Head sank two free throws with 4.7 seconds remaining.

Andres Nocioni had a layup and 3-pointer in the closing seconds.

Gordon hit 11-of-22 shots and had six rebounds.

The Bulls' comeback bid was reminiscent of Houston's 92-84 loss to San Antonio on Tuesday, when the Rockets blew a 19-point lead in the third quarter.

The Rockets missed 12 of their first 19 shots before Padgett's 3-pointer late in the first quarter triggered a 20-6 burst.

Padgett scored all of his points and grabbed five rebounds during the spurt and Kirk Snyder finished it with a three-point play that gave the Rockets a 37-30 lead.

After hitting six of their first eight shots, the Bulls missed 17 of their next 23.

Yao had nine rebounds in the opening half and banked in a turnaround just before the half-time buzzer to put the Rockets up 50-39.

Houston started the second half with a 12-2 burst, capped by McGrady's banked-in 3-pointer. McGrady shrugged his shoulders and high-five team owner Les Alexander as he trotted down the court.

But the lead was hardly secure.

On Tuesday, Houston led San Antonio by 19 late in the third quarter, then missed 25 of its last 27 shots to lose. The Rockets nearly blew big second-half leads in narrow wins over Memphis, Milwaukee and New York.

And about the same time the Rockets had collapsed against the Spurs, it started happening again.

Gordon's pull-up jumper with 3:50 left in the third quarter cut Houston's lead to 74-69 — the exact score when San Antonio started its comeback two nights ago.

"I'm not happy at all," McGrady said. "You've got to be happy about the win, but the overall picture is not good. We know some of those games can slip away."

NBA

Sparks upset No. 19 Longhorns

Junior guard scores in waning seconds to secure MSU victory

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Drew Neitzel scored on a drive with 2.4 seconds left to give Michigan State a 63-61 victory over No. 19 Texas on Friday night in the semifinals of the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic.

Neitzel, the only junior in the Spartans' starting lineup with five sophomores and two freshmen, took an inbound with 8.4 seconds left.

"Give him credit, he did a heck of a job," Spartans coach Tom Izzo said of Neitzel. "He trusted right through. I think they were worried about a shot and they were pretty spread apart."

Neitzel dribbled behind the 3-point line, from where both teams seemed to be taking the majority of their shots, put the ball on the floor and drove right down the lane for the winning points.

Texas called a timeout and had a final chance, but A.J. Abrams' long shot from a step inside halfcourt bounced off the rim.

Michigan State (4-0) will play Wisconsin (3-0) on Friday night at Madison Square Garden.

In a game of two young teams, freshmen were key for both.

Raymar Morgan had 18 points for Michigan State, while Kevin Durant had 21 for the Longhorns (2-1), one less than Abrams, a sophomore.

Michigan State finished 9-for-17 from 3-point range, while Texas was 7-for-26. Abrams was 6-for-13 on 3s, well off the 11-for-17 he was in the Longhorns' first two games.

The Spartans used a 12-0 run — nine of the points coming on 3s — to take a 54-47 lead. Abrams hit consecutive shots from behind the arc to get the Longhorns within one.

Abrams hit his last 3 of the game with 5:26 left to pull the Longhorns within 59-58 and Durant made one free throw with 4.02 left to tie the game.

Arams made two free throws with 2:48 left to tie the game for the last time at 61, and there were five missed shots and three timeouts before Neitzel came up with the winning play.

"We decelerated guarded Abrams on 3s, he can hit them from all over," Izzo said. "Overall, we did a decent job on him."

Neitzel finished with 15 points and six assists and Maurice Joseph added 12 points for the Spartans.

NCAA Men's Basketball

Christmas Dinners

Fri. and Sat., Dec. 1 and Dec. 2 at 7 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 3 at 2 and 7 p.m.

In Regina North Lounge

The 34th Annual Saint Mary's College Madrigal Christmas Dinners

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Jane Palko to Deliver Keynote Address Thursday, November 30th

Jane Palko, Associate Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, to deliver keynote address at Notre Dame's 17th annual fall conference: "The Catholic Intellectual in the 21st Century: Building Bridges between Historic Theological Disciplines and the Modern Academy." The conference will explore the intersection of historical and contemporary academic disciplines in the context of the Catholic intellectual tradition. For more information or to register, please visit ethicscenter.nd.edu.
NCAA FOOTBALL

Hokies, Tigers, NCAA investigating lawsuit

Lawyer allegedly gave cash to former Virginia Tech corner

Associated Press

NORFOLK — Two universities and the NCAA are investigating allegations that two pro athletes received cash and other items from a lawyer when they were still in school, officials said Thursday.

Virginia Tech is working "in a spirit of cooperation with the NCAA" to investigate claims against former Hokies football player Jimmy Williams, now a corner, with the Atlanta Falcons, school athletic director Jim Weaver said.

Weaver said the investigation resulted from a lawsuit that attorney Carl C. La Mondue of Norfolk filed last week demanding Williams and his father reimburse him about $55,000.

"We're in the early stages of it, but we've got to get to the bottom of it, and our objective is to get to the bottom of the issue as quickly as we can," Weaver said in a telephone interview.

La Mondue also filed a similar lawsuit last week in Norfolk Circuit Court seeking reimbursement for almost $50,000 in cash and benefits from former Hokies football player Jimmy Williams, now a Falcons player, school athletic director Jim Weaver said.

Weaver said Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client

Jim Weaver said.

La Mondue said in a telephone interview.

"I'm not worried about it. I'm good," Williams said. "The truth will come out." Falcons spokesman Reggie Roberts said Thursday that the team had no comment.

Happy Walters, an agent for Shawn Williams, said Thursday that the claims made in the lawsuit against his client were meritless. He said Williams was traveling with the Pacers and unavailable for comment.

A message was left seeking comment from the Pacers.

"We have also been in contact with the NCAA and are working cooperatively with that organization to investigate these allegations," university athletic director R.C. Johnson said in the statement.

NCAA spokesman Jennifer Kearns confirmed Thursday that the NCAA is working with both schools to investigate the allegations against the athletes.

The NCAA generally does not comment on specifics about investigations, she said.

The NCAA prohibits athletes and their relatives from receiving "nonpermissible awards, extra benefits, or excessive or improper expenses not authorized by NCAA legislation," according to the NCAA's Web site. Such benefits include a loan of money.

Jimmy Williams had not responded to the lawsuit against him, filed in Norfolk Circuit Court.

Williams told the Daily Press of Newport News, Va., that he and his father never accepted gifts or money from La Mondue.

"He's saying he gave us some ridiculous amount of money, which is not true," Williams told the newspaper.

Williams said La Mondue wanted to become his agent, and that he had met with the attorney in November 2005, but that La Mondue "wasn't big enough." Williams hasn't hired a lawyer, and said the NFL Players Association is "handling" the situation.

"I'm not worried about it. I'm good," Williams said. "The truth will come out."

Falcons spokesman Reggie Roberts said Thursday that the team had no comment.

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Athletics hire Green to replace Macha as manager

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Bob Geren will be promoted from bench coach to manager of the Oakland Athletics, ending a monthlong search for Ken Macha’s replacement.

Two A’s players told The Associated Press that Geren called them Thursday after he was hired. The team scheduled a news conference for Friday afternoon to formally introduce Geren as their new manager. He fills the final managerial vacancy in the major leagues this offseason, one month after the A’s fired Macha.

General manager Billy Beane went with the most experience and the familiar face, his longtime friend and former high school baseball opponent in San Diego. Beane’s closer Huston Street said he heard Thursday from Geren, who told the pitcher he got the job.

“I’m really excited. [Green] has already called me and we’ve spoken a little bit. I spent my first full year in the big leagues with him in the bullpen,” Street said.

Geren joined the A’s organization in 1999 as manager of Class-A Modesto, then spent the next three seasons managing in the Dominican Winter League and managed during three of his five seasons in the Red Sox organization from 1994-98. He has a 452-390 record in seven seasons as a minor league manager.

As center fielder Mark Kotsay also received a call from Geren on Thursday with the news — exactly the kind of communication players appreciate, Kotsay said.

“Bob seems to be a good communicator and he probably reached out to everybody on the club and let them know he’s the manager of the Oakland A’s and is looking forward to managing us,” Kotsay said in a phone interview. "Obviously he’s very familiar with the team. He’s familiar with the staff. His experience over the last couple of years as bullpen coach and bench coach will help him be a great manager for our ballclub.”

The 45-year-old Geren, the only Geren in the Red Sox organization since 1994-98. He has a 452-390 record in seven seasons as a minor league manager.

Geren thought working as bench coach for a season benefitted him because he could see what worked and what things he might have done differently in the top job.

“There were a lot of potential candidates and a lot of people deserving of the job,” Street said. “Billy’s going to do what’s best for the organization. I really wasn’t worried about who the manager would be. We trust Billy and his decision making. I think he made the right move. Bob is going to bring a lot of positives to the table and a lot of baseball knowledge.”

Macha was fired after four seasons on Oct. 16, two days after Oakland was swept by the wild-card Detroit Tigers in the AL championship series.
ND VOLLEYBALL

Bearcats wrestle Irish in Big East

No. 5 seed Notre Dame seeks upset in league tourney

By KYLE CASSILY
Sports Writer

Notre Dame enters the Big East tournament this weekend in an unfamiliar position, but will face a very familiar opponent.

The No. 5 seed Irish will play No. 4 seed and tournament host Cincinnati in the quarterfinals tonight at 6 p.m. at Fifth Third Arena. The Irish (16-11, 10-4 Big East) won the tournament last year by beating Louisville in the championship, and split the regular season title with the Cardinals. But this season has been a rebuilding year as six freshmen have seen significant time.

"The team is very excited," Irish coach Debbie Brown said. "We're disappointed and a little frustrated with how things ended up. But they know it's a new season now and everyone is starting at zero and one. I think we'll be going in with confidence and believing in each other."

Junior captain Adrianna Stastik and sophomore outside hitter Mallorie Croat were named first team All-Big East at the postseason awards banquet Thursday at the University of Cincinnati. Sophomore middle blocker Julienne Stremick was awarded second team All-Big East honors.

"I thought they were really well-deserved," Brown said. "It's great for each of them to be recognized — and for the team overall."

Stastik missed several matches in the latter half of the season after suffering a high ankle sprain Oct. 22 against St. John's, but Brown said that she is back to her pre-injury form. "(Adrianna's) definitely in a really good place with that," Brown said. "We're definitely keeping it heavily tagged, but she's playing really well."

Notre Dame met Cincinnati at Fifth Third Arena a little over a month ago when the Irish were swept 3-0 by the Bearcats. It was the second loss in a three-game skid that also saw the team fall to conference powerhouses St. John's and Louisville before dropping from first to fourth place in the league.

"I think it's good to play at Cincinnati again because we've been there earlier in the year and played on the court before," Brown said. "Honestly I don't see it as huge advantage for them. We're very ready to play."

In that Oct. 8 match against the Bearcats, the Irish were defeated 20-30, 25-23, 22-30. Cincinnati got out to a strong start in the first game, and the outmatched Irish could not recover, although they put up a fight in the second game.

"Last time we played them, our serving and passing weren't very good at all," Brown said. "That's the biggest fundamentals of the game. We need to serve well and put a lot of pressure on them."

Brown said that in preparation for the quarterfinals, the team has been practicing different game plans with all of its substitutes in an effort to utilize the entire team.

"We're looked at every scenario we could have used them in to maximize all the talent that we have," she said.

In other matches, No. 1 St. John's will play No. 8 South Florida, No. 2 Louisville will face off against No. 7 Connecticut and No. 3 Pittsburgh will battle No. Marquette — all matches will be held today, with the semifinals to be played Saturday and the championship Sunday.

Contact Kyle Cassily at kcassily@nd.edu

SMC BASKETBALL

Belles set to commence season

Saint Mary's will face nationally ranked opponent in tournament

By KEN FOWLER
Sports Editor

Tipping off the season with a new coach and eight freshmen, Saint Mary's wants to look forward. If the Belles are searching for an opportunity to gauge their status, they need look no further than the afternoon's matchup with nationally ranked Wheaton.

First-year coach Jennifer Henley and Saint Mary's take on the Thunder, ranked No. 5 by D3hoops.com, at 3 p.m. in the first round of the Lee Plumid Classic in Wheaton, III. Wheaton finished 22-5 in 2005-06 and reached the round of 16 in last season's NCAA Tournament.

"Bridget and Alison, along with Broderick, have done a great job helping our freshmen with the transition to the college game," Jennifer Henley Belles coach.

"The team as a whole is very focused on what we need to do this season," Jennifer Henley said.

The Belles again finished 11-15 overall but their 9-7 conference record was the program's best-ever MIAA mark. After the season, Saint Mary's declined to renew Bendor's contract for undisclosed reasons. Henley was hired in July to take over as the third Belles coach in as many years.

"The team as a whole is very focused on what we need to do this season," Henley said. "We are all looking forward to the tough competition we have on our schedule. Our goals are to improve upon our success and continue to build this program."

Depending upon the outcome of the Friday games, Saint Mary's will play either Wilmington or Wisconsin-Whitewater Saturday to conclude the four-team tournament.

Contact Ken Fowler at ksfowler@nd.edu

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**ND Women's Swimming**

**Irish Go-pher back-to-back titles**

**Ranked squad defends Minnesota Invite**

By CHRI$ HINE

Sports Writer

No. 20 Notre Dame travels to the University of Minnesota this weekend to defend their title in the Minnesota Invitational against 12 other challengers, including the No. 16 Gophers.

"There are a lot of good teams coming this year," freshman Vivian Healey said. "This year the competition is harder, but our team is also better this year."

The Irish have a 3-0 record in dual meet competition with wins over Purdue, Pittsburgh and Michigan State. This year's 39-member squad features 16 freshmen.

Healey said that invitational meets are a good time for the individual swimmers to focus on improving times to meet Big East and National qualifying standards instead of worrying about swimming multiple events in a dual meet to outcome an opponent.

"Instead of our goal being to beat a certain team, like in the dual meets, you just want to be able to swim a certain time," Healey said. "We want to get good times for the Big East tournament, and we also have the U.S. Open coming up in two weeks.

Healey will try to improve her time in the 100-yard breaststroke. The U.S. Open is 1:05.19 seconds, while Healey has a time of 1:05.21.

"You need to be really focused. You work on all sorts of things — turns, head position, body position," she said. "It's not just conditioning. Like last week, I worked on head position."

"This year the competition is harder, but our team is also better this year."

Vivian Healey
Irish Freshman

Healey's win last Saturday in the 100-yard breaststroke contributed to Notre Dame's 188-112 win over Pittsburgh. In that meet, senior Katie Carroll set a school record in the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 1:49.80 as Notre Dame won 9-0-16 events in their way to victory.

The day before against Michigan State, Notre Dame won 10-of-13 events in their 155-86.5 win. Freshman Achhee Edgell picked up her first win of the career in the 200-yard individual medley, while junior Caroling Johnson picked up two wins in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard butterfly.

In their first dual meet of the year, the Irish drowned No. 25 Purdue 185-115. Carroll set another school mark in the 200-yard freestyle while posting an NCAA qualifying time in that event and the 200-yard individual medley.

The Minnesota Invite begins today and will end Sunday.

Contact Chris Hine at chines@nd.edu

**SMC Swimming**

**Belles gear up for favored Britons**

**Saint Mary's hopes to ride recent momentum**

By BILL BRINK
Sports Writer

Coming off its first victory of the season over Rose-Hulman, Saint Mary's coach Ryan Dombkowski said they will have a much tougher time against 1-1 Albion. Last week, the Belles won six individual events, but the top times of Albion's swimmers in five of those events are faster than those posted by Saint Mary's last weekend.

Dombkowski understands the challenge the Belles face, but believes the Belles have a fighting chance.

"On paper, we don't have the horses to run with Albion," he said. "But several of the events should be very close and the point swings could be the margin we need to have the determination to win all of those battles."

The intensity level and excitement of the team helped Saint Mary's beat Rose-Hulman and must be present again for them to swim well against Albion.

The atmosphere of the meet was definitely a factor against [Rose-Hulman]," freshman freestyle swimmer Lindsey Nels said. "In order to maintain that excitement we have to once again bond together as a team and show our support even more."

Dombkowski agrees, placing the burden of motivation on the team.

"Great swims come from preparation and motivation," he said. "The former I can help to take care of during the week, the latter has to come from within themselves and from their teammates."

Nels was one of four Belles to win individual events last week and one of the three freshmen to do so. She won the 1000-meter freestyle in her very first attempt in the event.

"I had never swum it before, so I wanted to start off well," she said. "Also, my counter was very helpful. She would tell me when I needed to go faster and how close my competition was."

The team's freshmen have been swimming well in the past two meets, taking five of Saint Mary's seven individual victories in those contests. Dombkowski hopes freshman Meredith Lierz can break out as well.

"She's a young swimmer with a raw talent for 'o'sprins," he said. "If we can refine her technique and her races, she has great potential."

The Belles need to focus in order to match up against a talented Albion squad.

"Albion is much faster than Rose-Hulman up front and even deeper," Dombkowski said. "We would need to have several upsets to have a chance, but that's why you swim the meet."

Contact Bill Brink at sbrink@nd.edu

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**Irish Athletics**

**Basketball**

**#5 Hockey**

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**Friday, Nov. 17th @ 8:05PM vs. #3 Michigan State**

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**NCAA TOURNAMENT AT ALUMNI FIELD**

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**#3 Michigan State**

**South Bend Tribune**

Discover what's in it for you.
Dave Brown and the Irish now are 7-5 win over the Irish in his rookie season. "This weekend isn't going to be about scoring the prettiest goals. It'll be about scoring those rebound goals in front of the net because of the way they play their defense," said Seiba, who has one career goal against the top-rated squad in the CCHA, putting the seventh-best save percentage in the nation at 92.8.

The defensive unit is currently the top-ranked squad in the nation, allowing only 11 goals in their first 10 contests. "As long as we stick together out there and shut down their top couple lines, I think we will be fine," O'Neill said.

The Spartans top line, made up of three sophomores to three goals in the past five games, Kennedy also has three assists in the current hot streak. He is joined by fellow sophomore Tim Crowder, who is in the middle of his own five-game point streak with two goals and six assists dating back to the team's 7-5 win over Sacred Heart Oct. 28.

Notre Dame's young guns have also been performing at the top of their game recently. Sophomore center Erik Condra was named last week's CCHA Player of the Week and the also received national player of the week honors from InsideCollegeHockey.com. Condra had two goals and three assists in last weekend's two home wins over Bowling Green.

With a win and a tie this weekend, Notre Dame could move into a tie for first place in the CCHA, putting them in great shape as they get into the bulk of their conference schedule in the next few weeks. "Trying to get to Joe Louis Arena, host of the CCHA tournament championship, is our first goal, but right now we just want to focus on tomorrow night," Seiba said. "Getting a victory Friday night would be huge, so we can't really look beyond that." Tickets for the game have already sold out, but 500 seats will be available for Notre Dame students on a first come, first served basis.

Contact Dan Murphy
dmurry6@nd.edu

Kenney continued from page 28

Two years later Kenney managed to walk on to play with Notre Dame. "It was nerve racking," he said. "(Irish coach Charlie) Weis was really upfront with us. Pretty much every single you weren't sure if you would be cut but it was a great experience." Kenney said he is dedicated to playing his role as the opponent's defense work in and week out on the practice field and getting the starters ready to take the field on Saturdays.

Off the field, Kenney has leaped into politics with a two summer internships — one in Springfield, Ill and the other in Los Angeles. While in the city of angels, he interned under governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and met the ex-movie star. "It piqued Schwarzenegger's interest to hear that I was a football player," Kenney said. "I asked him for some advice on how to gain some weight and get bigger." Kenney also wants to stay involved with the game somehow after he hangs up his cleats this winter. Although he never wants to step onto the field, Kenney would love to coach at the high school level or for some advice on how to gain some weight and get bigger. Kenney also plans to attend graduate school.

Contact Dan Murphy
dmurry6@nd.edu

Hockey continued from page 28

150-pound sophomore goalie Jeff Lerg. Last year, Lerg was named CCHA Rookie of the Year, as well as MVP of the conference tournament. He posted the seventh-best save percentage in the nation at 92.8.

L erg held the Notre Dame offense at bay in their two wins over the Irish in his rookie season. "This weekend isn't going to be about scoring the prettiest goals. It'll be about scoring those rebound goals in front of the net because of the way they play their defense," said Seiba, who has one career goal against the top-rated squad in the CCHA, putting the seventh-best save percentage in the nation at 92.8.

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Contact Dan Murphy
dmurry6@nd.edu

Irish center Justin White attacks the net in Notre Dame's 6-1 win over Minnesota State-Mankato Oct. 12 at the Joyce Center.
Citadel

continued from page 28

tions on the Leopards the next night, jumping out to an early lead and coasting to a 92-60 win.

After playing two games in two days, Irish coach Mike Brey ran his team through a light workout and film session Wednesday before giving them Thursday off. Brey himself was sick Thursday and unavailable for comment.

The Citadel comes into Sunday’s contest 1-2 with losses to Michigan State and Iowa and a win over Ohio Valley. The Bulldogs will play Charleston Southern Friday before heading to South Bend.

Guard Viytautas Valulis leads The Citadel in scoring by averaging 15.7 points per game, while forward Mel Everhart has dominated the boards by grabbing 11.3 rebounds per game.

The task of keeping Everhart off the glass will go to Notre Dame forwards Luke Harangody, Luke Zeller and Rob Kurz.

Harangody, a freshman, is averaging 15.7 points and 7.7 rebounds so far this season. Kurz is Notre Dame’s leading rebounder at 8.7 per game and is averaging 13.0 points per game.

Zeller is averaging 5.3 points and 3.3 rebounds per game this season. Carter is Notre Dame’s leading scorer with 18.3 points per game and fellow guard Colin Falls is the only other regular contributor among double figures for the Irish, with 10.3 points per game. The two seniors have combined for 16 three-pointers this year on 46 percent shooting from behind the arc.

Contact Chris Kehoe at ckehoe@nd.edu

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ND WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

Penn State hands Irish first loss of ’06 season

After a Tulyah Gaines jumper tied the game at 2-2 in the first quarter, the Lady Lions went on a huge run, capped by a three-pointer from guard Kamela Wisniewski to stretch the lead to 14.

Notre Dame (2-1) was 0-0-2 from the floor in the run and 0-0-2 from the line, in part because of Penn State’s tough defense throughout the game.

“We missed some open shots,” Brey said. “We missed some free throws when I don’t think they were guarding us as tightly,” McGraw said. “We needed to get better shots, I think. I have to credit their defense with that.”

The Lady Lions (4-0) held the Irish to a 27-percent shooting from behind the field and dominated Notre Dame in the paint. Penn State had six blocks to Notre Dame’s two, and out-rebounded the Irish 39-27 — 32 on the defensive end.

Leading this inside stand was center Amanda Brown, who notched 12 points and 10 rebounds.

Because of this defense, Notre Dame was unable to get things started offensively all night. Irish starters center Melissa D’Amico, guard Brenna Gray and forward Crystal Erwin totaled six points combined.

Notre Dame also lacked a spark off the bench. A fourth-quarter effort by freshman guard Tyrone Grant — who scored a game-high 19 points — was not enough.

“Our sixth, seventh and eighth man are all freshmen so when we do sub, we get younger,” McGraw said.

Another problem for the Irish in their comeback attempt was Penn State’s ability to shoot the three. In the closing minutes of the first half, with Notre Dame down only 12 points Lady Lions guard Adrienne Sauce drained a three to stretch the lead back to 15.

As the second half began, Sauce (nine points) continued her shooting display with another three-pointer to extend the lead to 20.

“The things they looked like a freshman, poised team play in the game,” McGraw said. “They really, to me, seemed to have a good equal-opportunity type of offense where everybody contributes.”

The Irish return home Sunday at noon where they will try to rebound against Western Michigan. The Broncos (10-2) have been a high-scoring team in their two losses, putting up 80 points per game this season.

“We just need to turn around and try to rebound against Western Michigan,” McGraw said.

Contact Jay Fitzpatrick at jfitzpa@nd.edu

Frank Friday, November 17, 2006

The Observer • SPORTS

page 25
Weisner some time this week refresh wide areas of the field," some of the positions in the slow in stepping up with the win, despite backs in to cover the only outshoot-the way for the Irish held fifth minute, as he has years, they will face an upset Colorado squad (14-5-4) led by a national freshman of the year finalist striker Nikki Marshall in her first season as a Buffalo, Marshall’s 17 goals and 38 points have set nine school records. Colorado won a pair of 2-1 games against Colorado College and Beaver last weekend in Boulder to earn the trip to Alumni Field.

Notre Dame, meanwhile, enters the match after beating Oakland (Mich.) 7-1 last Friday before struggling to get by Wisconsin-Milwaukee in what coach Randy Waldrum called one of the closest games in the seven years he has been at Notre Dame. Freshman Michelle Weissenhofer scored in the fifth minute, as the Irish held on the rest of the way for the win, despite only outshooting the Panthers 9-7—Notre Dame’s closest margin on the year.

"I think we were a little slow in stepping up with the outside backs in to cover some of the positions in the wide areas of the field," Waldrum said. "We spent some time this week refreshing it. It wasn’t anything new they threw at us. We just didn’t deal with it well."

Irish senior captain defender Kim Lorenzen said Notre Dame’s defense will need to control the ball more than they did Sunday to give themselves the last chance to win.

"On Sunday we found ourselves defending a lot," Lorenzen said. "In optimal situations we don’t want to be defending as much as we are." Waldrum said the Irish defense will face a dangerous challenge tonight in Marshall and Co.

"She’s deadly fast," he said. "They’re going to be one of the better teams we’ve played this year if the video tape holds up when we get them here in person."

Irish should be aided by the return of senior defender Christie Shaner who sat out last weekend due to illness. Although Shaner and sophomore Brittany Bock did not practice Wednesday,Waldrum said they were precautionary measures due to the rainy weather this week. He expects both to play tonight.

In addition to Irish health, the weather may affect conditions on the pitch, which has been rained on all week. However, precipitation is expected to stop several hours before game time.

"We’re just really focusing on making sure our touches are good, getting used to this awful weather and getting used to these conditions," said Lorenzen about practice this week. "Because chances are it will be like that Friday."

Whatever the weather brings, Waldrum expects his team to be focused and ready.

"At least this time of year I guess you can’t be too critical if you’re still playing the next game. As disappointing as I thought the performance was, I’d be shocked if we don’t come out Friday very good." Randy Waldrum Irish coach

NCAA continued from page 28

and there certainly aren’t any easy games in the round of sixteen," Irish coach Bobby Clark said Wednesday after Notre Dame’s win over Illinois-Chicago. "Maryland’s the defending national champs. We’re very aware of the enormity of the task ahead of us."

Notre Dame surprised the two-time defending champion Indiana Hoosiers 2-0 in Bloomington to advance to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament last season for only the third time in school history.

Now the 2006 Irish will try to do what neither the 2005 team nor any group in program history has been able to do — advance to the quarterfinal round of the NCAA Tournament. Despite Notre Dame only having four appearances in the third leg of the NCAA Tournament— including this year — many of the Irish players are in a familiar situation.

When the senior class was in their first year at Notre Dame in 2003, the Irish advanced to the third round before falling to Michigan on penalty kicks. One year later, No. 5 seed Notre Dame was upset in the second round by Ohio State. And last year’s team followed its upset win over Indiana with a 1-0 loss at Clemson.

Punching a ticket to this year’s Elite 8 will not be easy for Notre Dame. Maryland locked every hit in the defending National Champion on Wednesday night — defeating red-hot St. John’s 2-0 in their second round matchup. The Terrapins held a 17-6 advantage in shots on the evening, and their two goals ended a St. John’s 674-minute shutout streak—a Johnnies school record.

Maryland, who is currently No. 7 in the NSCAA/adidas national rankings, enters Saturday’s game 16-4-1. Including Wednesday night’s victory over St. John’s, the Terrapins have won 13 consecutive NCAA Tournament games played in College Park.
FOOTBALL

Kenney focuses on sport, political life

By DAN MURPHY
Sports Writer

Seven years ago, No. 4 Michigan State and No. 9 Notre Dame played to a 2-2 tie in the last showdown between top-10 ranked teams in the Joyce Center — until tonight.

The Irish (8-1-1), now No. 5 in USCHO's national poll, will face off against No. 4 Michigan State (5-2-1) in a home-and-home series this weekend. The action starts at 7:05 and will be nationally broadcasted by CSTV. Saturday night's game at Munn Ice Arena will be televised by Comcast starting at 7 p.m.

"It's going to be exciting. It's our first big chance to prove ourselves," senior defenseman Wes O'Neill said. "We just need to come out even keel and not let our emotions get the best of us." O'Neill has four career points (one goal, three assists) against the Spartans, which leads all current Irish players. Senior wing Josh Sciba is not far behind with two goals and an assist in his eight career games against Michigan State.

"This weekend presents a huge challenge to us as a team, and I think everyone is looking forward to that challenge," Sciba said.

The biggest test for Notre Dame this weekend is Michigan State's 5-foot-6, 200-pound guard Colin Falls, right, defends IPFW guard Chris Perkins in Notre Dame's 92-49 Nov. 10 at the Joyce Center.

FOOTBALL

Spartans march into Joyce Center for historic match

No. 5 Notre Dame welcomes No. 4 Michigan State for most anticipated home hockey match since Feb. 5, 1999

By DAN MURPHY
Sports Writer

For 6-foot, 180-pound defensive back Tim Kenney, donning the blue and gold for the past two years has fulfilled a life long aspiration.

Kenney grew up just two hours away from campus in Belvidere, Ill. He is a third-generation Domer, with both his father and grandfather having graduated from Notre Dame.

"I grew up wearing a gold helmet and being a Notre Dame fan all through high school," Kenney said. Kenney kept himself busy by captaining his football, basketball and baseball team in his senior year. He was All-State in football in his final season. That year he had 70 tackles and two interceptions for the Belvidere Buccaneers.

The political science and government major headed to the University of Illinois for his freshman year of college. He was in the process of walking on to their team when he learned that he had been accepted to Notre Dame.

HOCKEY

Sweet cookin'

Colorado stampedes into Alumni Field for round of sixteen

By TIM DOUGHERTY
Assistant Sports Editor

After squinting by Wisconsin-Milwaukee last Sunday 1-0, Notre Dame hopes to regain its top-ranked form against the Notre Dame region's No. 4 seed Colorado tonight in the Sweet Sixteen round of the NCAA Tournament at 7:30 at Alumni Field.

Though the Irish are making their 12th NCAA Sweet Sixteen appearance in the last 14 years, they have not reached the Round of 8 since 1980.

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The Send-off

Notre Dame says goodbye to one of its toughest — and greatest — senior classes.
There's one group to thank for the Irish revival

It took them a little while to get going, but that was surprising. A few freshman struggles are expected. A legendary program's inspiration isn't.

Notre Dame football didn't know how to win when Brady Quinn of Dublin, Ohio, and Tom Zbikowski of Arlington Heights, Ill., and John Carlson of Lithfield, Minn. and Jeff Samardzija of Valparaiso, Ind. and Victor Abalos and Amberose Woodson of Baltimore, Md., entered school four years ago.

It was broken. One eight-game stretch aside, Notre Dame hadn't played a football program in America that had been a national side note for 10 years.

Four years later, Quinn, Zbikowski and the rest of the Notre Dame football team is different.

Is it the season? The reason? It's not Charlie Weis directing a team.

They endured more tough everyone else is, no matter how talented and tough everyone else is, no matter how hard.

It's that stuff definitely sparks the defensive back's play.

“Everything the coaches do is driven by Weis,” said Coach Weis, for instance, is fully into the psychology behind sports. I'm not sure —

And Ndukwe would know. The business major with a concentration in counseling has a dual major in psychology.

“Coach set a challenge in front of me. He's like, ‘I want you to lose 20 pounds. But I want you to lose 20 pounds. But I want you to lose 20 pounds. But I want you to lose 20 pounds. But I want you to lose 20 pounds.' That was pretty cut up. I was like, ‘From where?' He basically said if I didn't go, I wasn't going to play.”

Chinedum Ndukwe

Irish safety Chinedum Ndukwe intercepts an Anthony Morelli pass during Notre Dame's 41-17 win over Penn State Sept. 9.

Chinedum Ndukwe Irish free safety

hit because the safety respected the coach's thorough understanding of personnel adjustments. But Ndukwe isn't so sure that Weis wasn't just using him to improve the defensive back's play.

As they entered Notre Dame, so have Ndukwe's relationships off campus.

“I'm usually with Brady a lot since he's one of my best friends. I don't have a lot of different reasons.”

Chinedum Ndukwe

As the high school friends' relationship has thrived at Notre

They endured heatings at the hands of Pittsburgh, Boston College and BYU; revived of 5-7 and 6-6; blowouts at home to USC and Florida State.

They were the future of a program with not much of a future. They didn't listen when everyone said Notre Dame football was done, was just like everyone else.

They leave here Saturday, with legacy intact. But they weren't finished.

A young Ryan Harris said he wanted a national championship. He's still young. A senior Quinn with his legend with each passing game.

It's Rhema McKeating, keeping mind and body fresh through injury and returning to the starting lineup a better player. It's Samardzija, growing his hair and his legend with each passing game.

The person Ndukwe is closest with at Notre Dame was Quinn. He was Quinlin's target at Dublin Coffman High School in Ohio, catching 150 passes, 2,174 yards and 24 touchdowns during their high school days.

As the entered Notre Dame together, their friendship helped Ndukwe adjust to the new college experience. It's Zbikowski, reinventing the passing game.

It's Rhema McKeating, keeping mind and body fresh through injury and returning to the starting lineup a better player. It's Samardzija, growing his hair and his legend with each passing game.

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Tough enough to handle

Why Brady Quinn is who he is and how he's evolved through the years

Editor's note: This story first ran Dec. 12, 2005.

By PAT LEONARD
Sports Writer

Brady Quinn knows Notre Dame coach Charlie Weis places responsibilities on his quarterback, so she figured her son Brady would have the two years to prepare for such a disciplined and demanding program.

"I said, 'Aren't you glad you got Quinn's mother recalled asking her son. "Because I was thinking in the fall, he had been a freshman, just 18, getting the starting position, that would have been overwhelming for him.

"Ilbrady goes, 'No, that probably would have been easy as a freshman because that's all you know.'"

The junior quarterback's comments might make Irish fans daydream about what could have been, or it could explain why Weis' offense developed so quickly and efficiently in less than a year with 18- to 21-year-old college kids.

At this time last season, Quinn (6-foot-4, 231 pounds) was not thinking Heisman. And he no longer is this year, or so he says. But following a career season in which he set numerous Irish program records, the confident junior quarterback plays like any coach, but his major demand calls for someone not wearing a headset on the sidelines, Quinn to take control.

He said, "Brady, look. This is totally your decision, but there comes a point in your life when you play sports where there's a difference between playing injured and playing hurt," the junior said. "If you're hurt or your pride's hurt, and you think you can get back out there, do it. But if you feel like you're really just gotten an injury, you should sit down.

Quinn shook his head, shook off the hit and finished the game.

He forced to 2005, his first start as a college quarterback on the road at Purdue — 39 passing attempts, four interceptions, only one touchdown, one sack and a slew of hurried, knockeddowns and hits.

The rust talent showed, but the bearding was brutal.

"I don't like to hear that word (Purdue), every time I think of that as a mom," his mother said.

Quinn would have to live by his uncle's words for a while. The losses hurt.

Quinn's statistics improved as he gained more game experience, but he won just nine of 21 games as a starter in his first two years under former coach Tyrone Willingham. Though his numbers were improving, through his sophomore season, the team was not. Coming from a competitive and athletic family — Brady played baseball, basketball and football into high school at Dublin-Coffman; his father Ty played baseball and wrestled; his younger sister Kelly plays soccer at Virginia; his older sister Laura played field hockey and softball and even modeled — Quinn always has been a perfectionist.

"When we were younger and we had catch, he would throw it — and obviously he has a really hard throw — and I could never catch it," Kelly Quinn said. "He'd get so frustrated at me and say, 'Catch the ball, Kelly.'"

Notre Dame's 31-point losses to archrivals, then, did not sit well with a kid who had the most organized desk in his first grade classroom.

"He was always a very intense child … always a perfectionist in any sports he did, with his room, with his outfits," his mother said. "Maybe he role-modeled me a little bit."

And every perfectionist desires complete control over assigned tasks. Enter Charlie Weis, and a system that gave Quinn the freedom he wanted, the discipline he needed and his first chance look 22-2 last-second loss to undefeated USC at what perfection in college football means.

Grown up

Quinn controls most of Notre Dame's offense at the line of scrimmage — at least he has the freedom to get theiz's to go. But the Irish may find his abilities intimidating like any coach, but his major demand calls for someone not wearing a headset on the sidelines, Quinn to take control.

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Quinn's spirits have raised along with his play. The Irish say he is more vocal as a leader this season, a characteristic reflected in his confident, focused demeanor on the field.

"Brady's more vocal in the huddle, taking charge and being more aggressive," said wide receiver Maurice Stovall, who has caught 60 passes and 11 touchdowns from Quinn this season. "He's galvanizing the game as far as watching film and reading defensive coverages (has improved, a lot)."

Quinn's statistics have accumulated, the quarterback said, in part because Weis has taught him a lot about abstracting short-term memory and not dwelling on mistakes. And Quinn has been able to receive that advice and apply it — no matter how harshly the coach instructs at times — because of his nature.

"I think that Brady was mature enough to realize regardless of the personality or if there had ever been a personality conflict — which it sounds like (Brady and Weis) get along perfectly fine — that Brady knew he was going to respect and appreciate what Coach Weis had to add and bring to the table," his mother said.

Quinn has endless and acute awareness about how he has learned from Weis beginning in spring practice and continuing into his BCS bowl preparation.

"(This offense) places a lot of responsibility on the quarterback, and it deals with a lot more mental things coming up to the line of scrimmage and playing in the game," Quinn said. "I learned that there was a lot more to playing quarterback in different systems and in our particular offense than I had realized before.

But while Weis believes quarterback recruiting should be lining up for the chance to play for an NFL offensive mind like his, he understands Stark's value as more than just a good leader. In the case of Quinn's development, it's not only what the offense has done for him, Weis consistently says. Notre Dame's success is just as much about what Quinn does for the offense.

Whether or not the Heisman Trophy voters recognize Quinn as being worthy of a New York City visit, the junior knows his place — short of the ultimate goal.

"Everyone who is there [for the Heisman announcement] is undeniably playing in the national championship," Quinn said. "So it's hard to argue that you should be there when you're 9-2 and playing in the Fiesta Bowl, instead of the Rose Bowl."

Even Weis, who coaches with a demeanor of rationality and tough love, had problems with Quinn not receiving the invite. But his quarterback has come even farther to the point at which he is so realistic and poised and prepared for decisions thrown his way — and about recognizing the improvements still required of him — that he can handle anything.

And if that doesn't work, he can always audible.

Contact Pat Leonard at pl@nd.edu
Defensive end Victor Abiamiri was a prep standout in Baltimore. Four years later, he's back to show how far he's come with the Irish.

Editor's note: This story ran Oct. 27, 2006.

By KEN FOWLER
Special Editor

Victor Abiamiri has made a name for himself. His attitude is fierce and pointed, his intelligence sharp and his football knowledge top notch. He draws double teams, school him in the classroom and himself in the film room. Abiamiri simply isn't enough. NFL scouts drool when they see a 6-foot-4, 270-pound defensive end with the Irish surname, who runs a 4.5 40-yard dash and packs 265 pounds of speed and power. His body size and weight are perfect for the position, and what NFL teams see is upside—something that has not been fully seen in him.

A native of Randallstown, Md., Abiamiri returns to a home crowd this Saturday following two games in which opposing quarterbacks struggle to look anything like a threat, with their eyes looking at dirt, then turning up at the 1-yard line and taking off or bailing from a deep blue jersey.

But Abiamiri didn't first pick up the game as some other players did. He was already a football star when he started with St. Gilman School on Baltimore's north end. Abiamiri was confident. Just like, wow, I smile. "I was saying with a smirk edge. "He was everyone's No. 1 at defensive tackle at Notre Dame School," said Tom Lemming, a longtime national recruiting analyst. "Basically every school and one of the best Irish players recruiting this year." He's one of those big, mean guys that really doesn't like to be mean. I think that's why he kind of looks like playing football because he's able to walk into the field and dish it out on the field and be happy. For Abiamiri, it's simple. When he's on the football field, he's both his opponents. Off the field, he's the man Poggi and Ehrmann benefit from. He says he applies the lessons he learned from Ehrmann "in the locker room, in the dining hall, in the classroom." Abiamiri says he makes sure he's a leader who are upset and know they can turn any situation around with hard work.

Brady Quinn Irish quarterback

"He came in and was about six-four, 250 as a freshman — about the same size I was as a freshman," he explains. "He's one of those big, mean guys that really doesn't like to be mean. I think that's why he kind of looks like playing football because he's able to walk into the field and dish it out on the field and be happy."

By KEN FOWLER
Special Editor

Victor Abiamiri was first suited up for Notre Dame, our Pro teams from games across the country are once again looking at his potential and potential.

Projected by some to be a first-round pick, Abiamiri is playing under the careful eyes of scouts. Like he did during his senior year of high school by announcing his commitment—play the All-American finished, Abiamiri is pushing any NFL Draft talk aside. "Irish defensive end Victor Abiamiri, right, leaps over a pile to ensure that Stanford quarterback Trent Edwards, left, doesn't escape a tackle in a 31-10 win over the Cardinal Oct. 7.

The home option

Abiamiri will try to be a problem once again Saturday in an important game for the senior. He says he managed to get 15 to 20 tickets for family members in the Baltimore area to see his first — and only — collegiate game in the area. "It's awesome to be able to go home and play in front of family and friends," he says. "But against an option team, his job is a little different."

He will have to replace his ball pushes and set the right mental focus and sharp discipline. As offensive tackles black toward the center of the line and fullbacks come full-steam-ahead toward the corner, Abiamiri's task will be much different.

"We might not even block one of Victor, much less double him," Navy coach Paul Johnson said Tuesday. "We will read him on the option."

That means Abiamiri will be forced to wait for Midshipmen quarterback Kaipo-Noa Kabukuru to set him for his career to the corner. If Abiamiri takes the wrong angle or bites at the wrong time, Navy could run right through the Irish line.

Irish defensive end Victor Abiamiri, right, leaps over a pile to ensure that Stanford quarterback Trent Edwards, left, doesn't escape a tackle in a 31-10 win over the Cardinal Oct. 7.

The Observer
Friday, November 17, 2006

Man of promise

Abiamiri shooting up to No. 10 in his "Big Board" list of the best draft prospects in the nation. He has a very, very, very high motor that goes with his athleticism. He will have to replace his ball pushes and set the right mental focus and sharp discipline. As defensive tackles black toward the center of the line and fullbacks come full-steam-ahead toward the corner, Abiamiri's task will be much different.

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The Observer
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Man of promise
Tough, 'Zibby' style

Strong safety Tom Zbikowski leads Irish defense with attitude and experience

Editor's note: This story first ran Sept. 16, 2005.

By PAT LEONARD
Sports Writer

The offensive player in him just wouldn't shut up. Tom Zbikowski needed the ball, and he needed it now.

It had been since high school that Zbikowski had run an offense, when he played quarterback, safety and returned kicks at Buffalo Grove High School in Buffalo Grove, Ill. But one touch of the ball was all he wanted.

Never mind that he had already intercepted Michigan State quarterback Stephen Beese twice this year.

And to top it all off, Zbikowski was named special teams captain for this week's game against the Spartans because of his contributions on punt returns.

"Tommy is one of the real leaders of our football team," defensive backs coach Bill Lewis said. "I don't imagine there's anything that Tommy does that he doesn't do competitively."

As Notre Dame attempts to end Michigan State's winning streak in South Bend, one of the "real leaders" of the Irish has a message to convey.

"They coming in and winning four straight in our place is really not acceptable," Zbikowski said. "You can't let teams come into your place and win at home."

And like that, "Zibby" -- as they call him nowadays -- has developed a Keyshawn Johnson-esque attitude that says "Throw me the damn ball," per the title of the former Southern Cal receiver's book. Except Zbikowski doesn't say he wants the ball. He just takes it.

Zibby the student

Zbikowski's classroom is not always in a school building, with 8,000 other undergraduates and textbooks. His classroom, and that of his teammates, is also the room where he watches film; where coaches dissect the past week's game; where he and his coaches tape show tape of mistakes, and only mistakes, in past years' games.

Irish head coach Charlie Weis showed his squad similar film of Notre Dame's last four home losses to the Spartans this week.

"He's not a boisterous guy," Lewis said. "He's not really easy for his teammates to see what he's all about."

"Zibby" hisanna.

"He's not a boisterous guy, but it's very easy for his teammates to see what he's all about," Lewis said. "Because everything he does on the field he does full speed."

That speed was fast enough to gain recognition as Gaterade Player of the Year in Illinois Zbikowski's senior high school season, when he threw for 1,382 yards and 11 touchdowns, rushed for 1,287 yards and 23 touchdowns, racked up 43 tackles and made three interceptions.

And like that, "Zibby" -- as they call him nowadays -- has been a staple in the Notre Dame secondary the past three seasons.

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Zibby the teacher

Zbikowski could have walked away from football and the sport that he's been saying in the media, they don't really have any fear when they come in to play us," he said. "But we've got to put fear in them.

As the Irish defense prepares to face the Spartans, head coach Charlie Weis said, "I think as we go down the stretch, this is a long time to improve — scary, isn't it?"

"Whenever he sees something that I could possibly be doing better, he'll mention it," said starting free safety Chinedum Ndukwe. "That's just the kind of guy he is. He'll step up to say 'Maybe you need to take that one more step when you hit someone' or 'Take that extra step when you're backing up.'"

"He knows what he's doing back there. He has a good football mind."

Zbikowski is not only new to the starting secondary. He is now to defense altogether. The former wide receiver can now contribute to the defense rather than just doing punting.

But as Weis has observed through spring practice, fall practice and the early season, the coach believes Zbikowski has had an obvious positive influence on less experienced players like Ndukwe.

"Somebody who's been out there and who's seen things happen at full speed — changing every week — is different than someone who just goes through it in training camp," Weis said. "I think when you have that settling force that checks you in and out of the right coverages and adjusts for motions (like Zbikowski does), it really takes some of the pressure off you that you have to be the sole adjuster, especially when it comes to the secondary."

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**RHEMA MCKNIGHT**

**Medical man**

Wide receiver had ACL surgery last fall, spent time with sick and injured children since

By ERIC RETTER

During the past 15 months, senior receiver Rhema McKnight has spent a lot of time in hospitals. After tearing his ACL in Notre Dame's second game of the 2005 season, McKnight spent time in the hospital rehabilitating his injured knee, which has healed enough to allow McKnight return and start each of Notre Dame's ten games this season.

"Last year there was a teenager that was really facing a life-changing surgery. something nobody would want to go through, and he was just scared to death," McKnight said. "Memorial pediatric nurse Julie Kowalenko said, "I gave McKnight a call, and he did not hesitate to come up to the hospital and spend time with him."

Kowalenko said she received a letter from the boy's mother about a month ago thanking her for all the support she provided. After reading them, McKnight said, "I thought the ball was his "prized possession" and that "all of his friends were green with envy.'"

From time to time, McKnight also gets letters from the parents of kids he has visited. After reading them, he generally forwards them to his mother back in Inglewood, Calif.

"I guess she's making a scrapbook," he said.

Kowalenko said McKnight's relationship with the hospital started when she was introduced to him through senior Brandon Lenk, who was McKnight's roommate for two years. Kowalenko also noted that that Notre Dame center Bob Morton and quarterback Brady Quinn have dropped by on similar occasions.

"They do so much for us and we never think of it as a big deal, but it's a huge deal," she said. "The kids look up to them, they watch them on TV. They don't think of them as local TV, they think of them as movie stars."

McKnight, however, downplays his involvement.

"It wasn't anything serious," he said. "She called me, asked me if I could come down, and I was like, 'Cool, no problem.'"

Recently as last week, McKnight met Kowalenko at the concourse of Hesburgh Library to sign memorabilia and visit Memorial. When he arrived, he faced a young interviewer who wanted to know everything from his favorite color to whether or not he got to choose his jersey number.

McKnight, whose favorite color is blue, explained that he was No. 11 in high school, but that, upon arriving at Notre Dame as a freshman, the only single digit available was No. 5, so that was the jersey he chose.

"Rhema answered every single question," Kowalenko said.

If this year's plan to play, McKnight would be wearing the jersey of an NFL team somewhere. McKnight, who has contributed since his first game in a Notre Dame uniform, led the Irish in catches in both 2003 and 2004 — with 47 and 42, respectively — and his career was about to take off under then-first year head coach Charlie Weis's offense.

However, the knee injury he sustained in a play in that season's second play — where he still came down with the catch — altered the course of his plans. McKnight spent the year watching the sidelines, but he says that year helped him change his perspective.

"As you get older, things become repetitive and you don't continue to enjoy every moment," McKnight said. "I'm not taking things for granted this year."

While he had already established himself as the first play­er selected in the endzone by the student section after home wins, McKnight rededi­cated himself to having fun on Saturday afternoons.

"A big thing is that I've learned to make sure I enjoy it, because it can be taken away from me at any moment," he said. "Winning a football game is tough, a lot of people don't realize that, and anytime you win a game you gotta make sure you enjoy it.

Despite missing a whole sea­son, McKnight regained the on-field relationship he had enjoyed with Quinn before Notre Dame's first official snap.

"The good thing is we'd done it before prior to my injury," McKnight said. "We got to picking it back up during the summer, and hopefully we'll keep progressing throughout the rest of the year."

In his final season, McKnight has been a pivotal player for the Irish, catching 25 passes, a team high he shares with sen­i­or receiver Jeff Samardzija, for 726 yards and 12 touch­downs — a team high he owns alone.

In last Saturday's 39-17 win over Air Force, McKnight set the Notre Dame career reception record with his 158th catch, and he is not surprised that he has had the kind of success he has had this season.

"In the offense we have, you know it's going to be the last ball around a little bit," he said. "It's more about us going out and making plays." As McKnight's final game at Notre Dame Stadium approaches, he reflected on last season's senior day and saying goodbye to the class he came in with.

"It was tough not being able to go through it the first time and watching those guys leave," he said. However after five years — which he noted have seemed long at times — he is ready for his home finale.

"I'm looking forward to it," he said. "There's definitely a different buzz in the air, with the senior students, it's their last game, too."

Outside of football, the major difference between McKnight's two senior seasons is his aca­demic standing. McKnight, who graduated last December, is currently pursuing a mas­ters degree in psychology, McKnight said the structure of his graduate classes offers a sharp contrast to his pursuits the past four years.

"It's not like everything is in class or due the next day," he said. "A lot of the things you do are on your own in terms of research.

He also draws equal contrast between graduate student housing and on-campus dorm life, where he lived until gradu­ating.

"I was close with a lot of guys, especially in my section," he said. "I had a great time."

After moving into graduate student housing, he lived with a French student until early this semester. At the moment, McKnight — a consensus extrovert — does not know his current roommate's name.

In addition to psychology, McKnight also graduated with a supplementary major in Spanish and a degree in com­puter applications.

Perhaps surprisingly, in his time as a student, he has grown into quite a computer buff, and he discovered a pas­sion for technology.

"A lot of the schoolwork I had was on computers, and [found] I love computers," he said. "I love what they have to offer."

McKnight said he followed the budding interest because of current trends in the profes­sional market.

"That's what the world's going now," he said. "Technology is improving every day, why not pick up something that'll last me a long time."

However, when he first came to Notre Dame, he was not nearly as well versed in the technological language.

"I wasn't exactly the fastest type," he said.

And right now, McKnight's focus remains on football. After the season winds down, he will begin preparing for April's NFL draft and exploring the options that he had planned on exploring a year ago. Despite his focus on preparing to enter the ranks of the professional athletes, McKnight will still be a student next semester.

Even before his college foot­ball career concludes over, McKnight has already started thinking about life after the NFL.

I have aspirations of playing in the NFL, but nothing's guar­anteed," he said. "I want to make sure I set myself up in terms of my long term future, whether it's going back to the inner city working with kids or hopefully owning my own practice and doing other psy­chology things."

In preparing to walk away, McKnight credits his time in South Bend with helping him get ready for both athletic and academic professions.

"I've come a long way," he said.

Contact Eric Retter at eretter@nd.edu

**IRISH INSIDER**

Irish receiver Rhema McKnight picks up a block on a 5-yard reverse against North Carolina Nov. 4.
The overachievers

Two walk-ons have a whole lot more than football to fall back on, but their experience at Notre Dame has been shaped by the team

By Ken Fowler

In the backfield of Notre Dame's scout team offense are a fullback who worked as a parliamentary intern in London and a pre-med student for Alumni Hall.

Tailback John Lyons and fullback Matt Augustyn both played football in high school but came to Notre Dame for its academics. Each ended up on the gridiron within two years and have been the recipients of extraordinary understanding by the coaching staff.

Augustyn was believed to be the first player in program history to study abroad for a semester while on the team. A political science major, Augustyn traveled to London for a junior and interned as an intern for Adam Holloway, the conservative minister of Parliament from Gravesend.

"I was willing to drop it to be on the team," Augustyn said. "But both Irish running backs [Jeff Jenkins and Asaph Schwapp] were in the huddle, so I decided I had planned on pursuing law school in the fall." Augustyn was interested in studying in London to take the Medical College Admission Test.

"I'm probably looking to do some kind of sports law," he said.

Drive and recognition

Augustyn took a slightly different path on his way to the team. After graduating from Phillips-Andover Academy in Andover, Mass., the fullback spent a post-graduate year at the prestigious Phillips-Andover Academy.

New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick also attended the school, and Augustyn met Irish coach Charlie Weis, then Belichick's assistant in New England, during his year there.

Augustyn deferred acceptance of other universities to study at Phillips-Andover, and he jumped at the chance to come to Notre Dame.

"I was looking at a bunch of schools, mostly Ivies," Lyons said. "But Notre Dame was the only place I was willing to go to give up football." Augustyn did not truly give up football.

"I'm probably looking to do work in the business realm for their education," he said.

Not an end

Going forward, both Lyons and Augustyn hope to continue their education. Lyons said he is "probably looking to work in the business realm for the next couple of years before I look into law school." Augustyn said, "So that way I have some sort of financial foundation to pay for it, so I'm not 100,000 dollars in debt.

Lyons said he has other intentions.

"I just figure I'm going to dig myself in, nice and deep," Lyons said. "I'm pre-med so I'm going to take my classes here and get some more loans for med school, hopefully, and go from there."

But the focus for both right now is on Army.

With sophomore starter Asaph Schwapp's injury earlier this year, Augustyn has seen the field in late-game situations.

"It sounds awful, but Asaph's injury—I've kind of benefited from," Augustyn said.

Lyons is still searching for his first game experience. As the show-team tailback, he's used to facing a first-team defense in practice. But that also means he's used to expectations of failure.

"If we're down running scout team, it's sort of anticipated that you're going to lose," Lyons said. "We're going up there against the first-team. We're not anticipating six, seven-yard gains."

As their final home game approaches, Lyons and Augustyn have worked together for two years - with the 6-foot-3, 220-pound Augustyn working every practice to open holes for the 6-foot-1, 200-pound Lyons. Now, they hope that work on the show team will replicate itself Saturday at Notre Dame Stadium.

"It would be great to block for John [in the Army game]," Augustyn said. "It would be a fantastic thing."

And if either crosses the goal line, they'll know exactly what to do.

"All the walk-on guys have 19, 20 touchdown celebrations planned," Lyons said. "Of course you have expectations to do something fun."

Contact Ken Fowler at kfowler1@nd.edu
By RAMA GOTTUMUKKALA

Spun Writer

On a team where the hairstyle makes the man, Trevor Laws' long, as nature looks to stand out with the best of the rest — he did it by turning it around.

"He had the hair exactly the way he has it now," Abiamiri said. "If you remembered the seniors that cut his hair, and how sad he was and how funny he looked in the backfield, Laws can often be spotted laughing and cracking jokes on the sidelines. "There's a lot of moments you've got a mate's love and admire, Laws said with a laugh. "It's pretty interesting.""}

Laws described his teammate as a "character." Oliver isn't the only member of the Notre Dame football family to use the word "character" to define Laws.

"When I first met Trevor, he was the same guy he is now," sophomore middle linebacker Maurice Crum said. "So I was like, 'Man, who is this character? Is this guy ever serious?' But it's like, 'Oh, he's in the field in play, I like, 'I see when he gets serious.'"

"A great technician." As a person, Laws has changed little from his freshman year — he's still smiling. That doesn't mean his senior season over the last three years has been hard to ignore. "From the first time I met him till now, he's grown as a person and in a football player," Oliver said. "It's getting better and better.

A highly touted recruit coming out of high school, Laws was the Gatorade Player of the Year in Minnesota and a USA Today first-team All-American. Laws enjoyed his role as a two-way starter, contributing to the stat sheet and his team from three different positions — fullback, defensive end and defensive lineman.

But like most two-play athletes in high school, he had to face the harsh reality of life as a defensive end — the only touches he'd get would be ones he'd have to work the hardest for. "It was tough knowing that I had to give up ball handling the ball every now and then. But I looked in the mirror and knew that I wasn't going to be a running back forever," Laws joked.

"I tried to enjoy what I could in high school," he said. "I'm excited about being a collegiate player, too."

Focusing on technique and strength, Laws has steadily tapped the potential of his 6-foot-1, 283-pound frame at one of the toughest positions in football. "One of his strengths is that he's a great technician, takes pride in it, and he's just done a great job for us," Oliver said.

That attention to detail served Laws well in another high school sport — wrestling. Although he calls football "his first love," Laws had every reason to consider attending a top-notch wrestling program like Iowa or Minnesota.

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The Observer • IRISH INSIDER

Nothing off the top

A nationally ranked wrestler in high school, Trevor Laws is Notre Dame's resident free spirit

"They can't touch me," he joked.

Living the great outdoors

Laws was a Midwesterner prepared for something, they get on me.

"I think Trevor's kindhearted, funny and has a good way of making a joke about anything. Anytime I'm around him, I always find that I'm laughing at him or laughing at myself or laughing at anything, you know." In fact, Laws probably smiles too much, jokes defensive line coach Jappy Oliver. Oliver has seen Laws grow close with the rest of the defensive line over the last few years. Aided by his shag, but Laws can admit to the characters of the group," Oliver said. "It's pretty easy to use the word "character" to define Laws.

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BOBBY RENKES

Texas will head home for position with KPMG

By KEN FOWLER
Sports Editor

Bobby Renkes has always been a good student. While the Dallas Morning News named Renkes one of the top-20 players in the region as a junior in high school, "the Texas schools" began recruiting him as a freshman. "He was a good student. His first three years on campus, Price has averaged more than 45 yards per kick and played a key role in several Notre Dame victories, especially the 10 defensive struggles of September and October.

After playing soccer "forever," Price has discovered his talent while playing the "other football" in high school. "In soccer, when I played goalie I could punt the ball really far," Price said. "It started out as a hobby and then I realized I had a little talent." Price's journey from talented elementary schooler to Division I starter has been a process of refining his technique and trying to harness the howitzer leg he was blessed with.

"My problem was trying to kick the ball too far, and I was oversteering. Now I try to stay short and compact and it's paid off," Price said.

"I always grew up thinking of Notre Dame as a great school to go to," Renkes said. "I looked at a lot of the Ivy League schools for academic purposes and a lot of the other schools for football purposes, and Notre Dame was the one that really put the two together." Contact Ken Fowler at kfowler@nd.edu

By CHRIS KHOREY
Associate Sports Editor

"It was amazing, the Notre Dame connection," Renkes said. "Just talking to anybody at the Chicago office, everybody from Notre Dame [who works for KPMG] goes to Chicago. But as soon as Dallas knew that they had a place to get a Notre Dame person, they were all over it." Renkes said Dallas KPMG partner Rick Ehrman, a Notre Dame graduate, was one of his best influences during his internship.

Irish kicker Bobby Renkes (14) stretches with Notre Dame long snapper J.J. Jansen during the team's practice Tuesday. Renkes will take a job with KPMG in Dallas after graduation.

"He kind of took me under his wing," Renkes said. "Every time he comes up for a game he calls me about the tailgate. Renkes has gotten into four games as Notre Dame's kickoff specialist this season - starting at the position from Georgia Tech through the Michigan State game. He averaged 64.9 yards per kickoff on 21 attempts before freshman RyanBurkhart (29 attempts, 58.9-yard average) took over the starting job.

"If I didn't see the field one bit, I would have been just as happy being a part of the Notre Dame team," Renkes said. "I didn't start playing football until my senior season in high school. After playing soccer "forever," Renkes saw his first collegiate action on the gridiron only two years after his first-ever football appearance. Against Stanford in 2004, he had three kickoffs of 58, 59 and 50 yards - the last being a touchback after a personal foul penalty against the Cardinal.

"It was a little overwhelming for Renkes of that first appearance. Renkes got five more starts that season, making more kickoffs with three more touchbacks. He finished the season with 1,319 yards for a 57.3-yard average.

"I've gotten some random IMs and Facebooks. I try to take it all in stride and enjoy it because I've never thought this would happen?"

"But the diligent student had some other options. Several Ivy League schools showed interest in Renkes, and his grades opened other avenues for him to attend a football school. He turned down those prestigious universities in the Northeast and enrolled in South Bend as a non-athlete who is playing for the Boilermakers.

"Are you still wearing a college uniform?"

"No, I'm wearing an NFL uniform," Price said.

"I always thought I was going to go to Notre Dame," Price said. "I've been a Notre Dame fan growing up." Price said "I remember coming home from a soccer game and seeing them on TV and wanting to come here. It was a life long dream." For the Irish were frustrating, however. Behind D.J. Fitzpatrick on the depth chart, Price struggled with his consistency. He would boom kicks 60 yards and then have one go off the side of his foot or, worse, get blocked. Price knew what he had to do to correct the problem, but for some reason he couldn't put it into practice. "When I was kicking and D.J. would see something, he would try to correct me," Price said. "I would do the same thing with him. In fact, I think I could explain things to him better than I could do them myself."

"Then, once Fitzpatrick graduated and Price was thrust into the starting lineup this year, everything suddenly clicked. "My problem was trying to kick the ball too far, and I was oversteering," Price said. "Now I try to stay short and compact and it's paid off."

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"Price practiced by putting a towel a couple of yards in front of him and making sure he kicked the ball before he got to it. Suddenly, he was consistent and talented. It was the recipe for star-
Ryan Harris sits at the Islamic Society of Michiana mosque in South Bend on Sept. 11, 2004. Harris is a devout Muslim.
Nick Borseti talks with a thick New England accent and a straightforwardness that fits perfectly with Charlie Weis' style.

Borseti is a fan of football players who like to keep their sideline and on their classes.

"The social atmosphere as opposed to other colleges isn't much to toate about," Borseti said. "I just like the fact that people who come here, come here to play football, and that's it. They come here to play football and get a good education, and they're not concerned with the social atmosphere or any of these outside influences. You've got a really dedicated student athlete when they come here.

Borseti is a student-athlete whose path has taken him from his first academic love to another.

He began as a mechanical engineering major but switched to industrial design because football interfused with his engineering classes.

"Academics are really important coming here," he said. "I'm an industrial design major now, and I'm in love with that major as well. It's definitely important that I'm leaving with a degree, and I'm proud of it.

With that degree, Borseti said, he hopes to enter the world of product design. He singled out automobiles and consumer electronics as specialties he would like to work on. "I know this is a football player, so you kind of have a mindset as him, and that's why he respects the team so much. It's always great coming to a program and onto a team because you immediately have 100 friends," he said. "We have a lot of good friends on the team and they make lifelong friends.

Borseti's favorite moment in his Notre Dame career dates back to his first career appearance, on kickoff coverage in the second game of the 2004 season - Notre Dame's 28-20 victory over Michigan.

"That game was a good hit and a good talk with a couple of time outs that felt good. And the fact that the unranked Irish beat the then-No. 7 Wolverines made it sweeter.

I remember when everyone rushed the field after the game, and I raised my helmet - it felt a lot better knowing I was part of the victory," he said.

Because Borseti did not play as a freshman, he can apply for a fifth year of eligibility. But the senior said anything ahead of the upcoming game is past his mind.

"We get it drilled into our heads so much that it's game-by-game," he said. "I'm not really looking ahead." Contact Ken Fowler at kfowler@nd.edu

CARL GIOIA

It was always all about the kickoffs for Gioia

By CHRIS KHOREY

Irish linebacker Nick Borsetti (56) covers running back Travis Thomas in Notre Dame's annual Blue-Gold game April 22 at Notre Dame Stadium. Borsetti is an industrial design major.

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Irish senior kicker Carl Gioia boots an extra point during Notre Dame's 38-31 victory over Stanford in Palo Alto, Calif., last season.

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Irish senior kicker Carl Gioia boots an extra point during Notre Dame's 38-31 victory over Stanford in Palo Alto, Calif., last season.
Defender just the latest in a line of athletes

By DAN MURPHY
Sports Writer

Dwight Stephenson is in development companies and investment banking. Football has kept from gaining as much as expected. He would like to, but he has managed to find work in the business world.

He has spent short stints interning with several companies and has done a lot of work in his athletic career. He now runs a Florida construction company.

Dwight Stephenson, Jr.
Irish defensive lineman

The 6-foot-2, 250-pounder has battled a deep defensive line for playing time the past two seasons. Last year Stephenson played in six games for the Irish on defense and made nine appearances on special teams.

"I think the coaching staff just feels it's unfair to unlace me on regular college football players, but when they do it'll be quite an experience," he said.

Dwight Stephenson, Jr.
Irish defensive lineman

Stephenson is interested in development companies and investment banking. Football has kept from gaining as much as expected. He would like to, but he has managed to find work in the business world.

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**DAN CHERVANICK**

Positive outlook is a common thread for lineman

By KEN FOWLER

The smile on Dan Cherivanick’s face tells his story this year.

The fifth-year senior was a defensive lineman until last spring, when Irish coach Charlie Weis moved him to the offensive side of the ball to help compensate for Notre Dame’s thin depth chart. After playing two seasons and recording just two tackles in his first four years at Notre Dame, the transition lifted his placement on the depth chart, but his work ethic rewarded him in another way.

The valedictorian of Holy Name High School in Reading, Pa., Cherivanick was both dedicated and important to the team with the offensive line situation in question. And he had some experience on offense. Along with winning all-league academic honors in Berks County, Pa., Cherivanick was an all-league offensive tackle and defensive interior lineman.

With Cherivanick’s mother helping move in his sister, Marie, a junior at Notre Dame, in late August, Weis awarded Cherivanick a scholarship for his dedication.

“My mom was crying,” Cherivanick said. “And I called my dad, and told him, ‘You know those loans [for my post-graduate year]? Don’t worry about them’.”

Cherivanick said his father had just come home from a long day at work and warned him that the good news better not turn out to be a joke.

“It wasn’t.”

Every time Cherivanick talks about one part of his five years, his feelings almost invariably boil down to four words.

“It’s just been great,” he said time after time.

Like many of his fellow seniors, Cherivanick, whose brother Mike walked on to Pittsburgh’s football team, said the mid-week work and optional lifting sessions are the toughest part of the season — but also the place where he has forged the strongest bonds with teammates.

“The friends I’ve made — it’s been wonderful,” Cherivanick said. “I wouldn’t give that back for anything.”

The tireless work that led Cherivanick to a 3.594 four-year GPA at Notre Dame — and a 3.75 average his final undergraduate semester — impressed his coach, who likes to treat football as a business. But such a relationship should probably be expected, with Cherivanick earning a degree in accounting as well as history.

And he already knows exactly what he’ll be doing with the business degree and the Master of Science in Finance that he will have earned by May.

Cherivanick interned with Citigroup this summer and, after interviews with New York financial powerhouses Merrill Lynch, Cantor Fitzgerald and others, he accepted a position at UBS next fall as an analyst in the company’s fixed-income sales and trading program.

He said the competitive nature of Wall Street, where he just wants “to get a shot,” correlates perfectly with his background in football.

And Cherivanick said he already knows of a few Notre Dame graduates in New York working their way up corporate ladders. Cherivanick said the demands for perfection and teamwork in Notre Dame give him a solid foundation for a lower-Manhattan business mentality.

But as the Army game approaches, Cherivanick has a second chance to soak up the memories from practices and team meetings, until the final lap around Notre Dame Stadium.

Contact Ken Fowler at kfowlerl@nd.edu

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**DAN SANTUCCII**

Santucci brings defensive mentality to O-line

By KYLE CASSILY

Fifth-year offensive lineman Dan Santucci has had to switch to a different side of the ball and swap positions mid-game, but the one thing that has remained constant for the starting right guard has been his teammates and his ability to adjust to change.

In spring practice before his third year at Notre Dame, Santucci was asked by former Irish coach Tyree Willingham’s staff to switch from the defensive line to the inside of the offensive line. The proposition came after Santucci played in all 12 games his sophomore season on special teams and made a brief appearance against Stanford at defensive tackle, earning his first monogram.

“At first it was a little bit of disappointment, because I’m sitting there playing D-line and all of a sudden I get moved,” Santucci said. “But when they asked me, and I went home and thought about it, that night — I swear to God — I was just really excited.”

He carried that excitement over onto the practice field that spring and made a big enough impression to earn a recurring spot in the trenches in 2004. He played in 11 games at guard, including 45 special team appearances — and made his first start, at left guard, against Oregon State in the Insight Bowl.

The hardest part of the change, Santucci said, was sitting back on pass protection, when he had been accustomed to playing aggressive with the defensive pass rush. He already knew, however, how to block for the rush after playing tight end in high school.

“It was about after the sixth or seventh game, at Navy of my junior year, I felt like after that game — I played almost all half — and I felt comfortable starting Santucci said of the position change. “I just got more and more comfortable as the game and at the task at hand,” Santucci said. “But I think it made me a stronger person.”

And Santucci, a Chicago native, knew a little bit about what he was getting into before he enrolled at Notre Dame. During his junior year at St. Patrick High School on the city’s north side, his team went 2-7. But the following season, he led the Shamrocks to a 7-4 record and a playoff win — the school’s first since 1968.

The summer prior to that season, Santucci turned down scholarship offers from Purdue and Northwestern to accept a scholarship from then-Irish defensive line coach Greg Mattison — the transition lifted his position change. “I just got more and more comfortable as the game and at the task at hand,” Santucci said. “But I think it made me a stronger person.”

Everyone went with it and Santucci, whose brother Mike walked on to Pittsburgh’s football team, said the mid-week work and optional lifting sessions are the toughest part of the season — but also the place where he has forged the strongest bonds with teammates.

“Everyone went with it and everyone was excited about it,” Santucci said. “I think it made us closer together knowing that whoever is in there, you could trust them at that position.”

And that trust carries over well past the sidelines of Cartier Field and the locker rooms of the G ug for Santucci. Sullivan, Morton, senior Ryan Harris and the man they are tasked to protect.

“We’re all tight, we go out to eat every Thursday night at Bruno’s Italian,” Santucci said. “We go eat there as a group, we sit there and watch the Thursday night game, half of it. We hang out other times, watching Monday Night Football, things like that.”

And Santucci has a strong bond with the guy he is replacing for the 2005 season, senior Mark Scherber.

“They were very close, and me and Mark go back since we were freshman.”

Santucci said his favorite moments in college will always be the sight of all the offensive linemen rushing into the end zone every time they score and mobbing the receiver or running back in celebration of a solid drive up field.

“The main thing for me is playing with the guys, my friends and still like that, that I made here,” he said. “The tight senior class that we had, being a big part of that, just being able to go out there everyday and have fun and play with them, are all memories that I’ll take with me.”

Santucci will put aside the knowledge of football that he already earned from the Mendoza College of Business and pursue football into the professional ranks after the season ends. But for the time being he is focused only on Army and his last run down the tunnel into Notre Dame Stadium.

“I think before the game I’m going to be focused on winning. I’m not going to worry about anything else,” Santucci said. “But I think after the game, it’s going to be as big a little bit of a different experience. I really don’t know how to say it now before I experience it, but it’ll definitely be a special day — something I’ll remember the rest of my life.”

Contact Kyle Cassily at kcassily@nd.edu
Charlie Weis second season at Notre Dame 
career record:
18-4 at Notre Dame: 18-4 against Army: 0-0

Roster
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The Observer

Charlie Weis
head coach

The Black Knights are giving up 164.3 yards per game in the air but have picked off just three passes from their opponents. The team has a total of nine quarterback sacks for a loss of 57 yards and have broken up 22 passes this season.

For the past few weeks, Charlie Weis has focused on keeping his players focused. They've posted multi-score wins over Air Force, UNC and Navy despite a scare against UCLA. He's ready to send the seniors out in style.

For Brady Quinn to continue to play like everything is on the line every week—and right now, it is. His 8-8-150 yard and three-touchdown stat line in the first quarter of the Air Force game was jaw-dropping and he can put up even better numbers Saturday.

Darius Walker had one of his best games against Air Force last week, and his average yards per rush improved to 4.7. James Aldridge also had some meaningful carries against the Falcons. The Irish average 133.7 yards per game.

Irish experts

Mike Gilloon
Editor in Chief

Bob Griffin
Asst. Managing Editor

Brady Quinn continues to make his case for the Heisman, and it's hard to argue with the stats. He has completed 164-of-260 with 13 picks and five scores. Carson Williams is 39-for-67 with seven picks and three touchdowns.

The Army defense can play like everything is at stake.

This is the kind of game where a smaller running back, Walker can break free of tacklers and put up yards and touchdowns. If the Irish go up early, the game might be turned over almost entirely to the running backs.
The Irish secondary has a disturbing habit of giving up big plays to mediocre passing attacks. Opponents gain 193.5 yards per game against Notre Dame and have scored 18 touchdowns through the air so far this season.

The Black Knights pass for an average of 133.8 yards per game, led by Jeremy Trimble, Walter Hill and Tim Dunn. Trimble and Dunn are tied for the lead in touchdowns with two apiece, but the rest of the team has combined for just four.

The Irish average 21.6 yards per kick return and 8.3 yards per punt return. They give up about 18.9 yards per kick return and 11.1 yards per punt return. They did, however, give up a kickoff return for a touchdown to UNC.

The Irish average 137.1 yards per game. The Black Knights have an unlikely to rack up above-average day.

Notre Dame matches up closely to the Army rushing attack, gaining 133.7 yards per game on the ground. At this point in the season, they have even more experience defending the option and making adjustments to the rushing defense.

Army runs the option sometimes, and has a fairly strong rushing attack, coming in at 137.1 yards per game. Quarterback Wesley McMahan leads all rushers with 643 yards on 133 attempts and Tony Moore has five scores.

The Black Knights have accumulated 18.2 yards per kick return and 18.5 per punt return. They've given up just 16.1 yards per kick return and 8.5 yards per punt, which should match up well with the Irish.

The Irish defense gives up a lot of yards, but not that many points. Even if the Black Knights have an above-average passing game, they are unlikely to rack up enough points to pull out a win over the Irish in South Bend.

The Irish managed to hold Air Force and Navy to a combined 27 points in two games this season. Army has more of an air attack than the Midshipmen, but a weaker running game. The Irish should dominate the line of scrimmage.

Armed Forces

Notre Dame's special teams play has been up and down through the season. Army seems to have done a good job keeping returns to a minimum, but the Irish will be the best team that the Black Knights face this season on all sides of the ball.

Notre Dame lost five games to service academies in the last 30 years. The last time the Irish lost to the Americans?, 1996, Notre Dame was due for a patriotic drubbing. And this is the same Army team that hung tough with Texas A&M earlier this year. Wait. I almost forgot how explosive, dangerous, efficient and exciting the Irish offense is. And Army is No. 1 in the nation in charitable giving—a 1.6 turnover ratio. Nice.

Both teams know that there's a lot of history on the field when they line up against each other. But it's a new era of college football, and Weis and his seniors are determined to create their legacy as this season closes.

Notre Dame does not hate America. It does, however, like to post one-sided wins over the service academies. This isn't meant as a disrespect to those serving our country. The teams have a long and storied history that has shaped the face and look of American athletics. But it's Quinn & Company's last hurrah in the House that Rock Built. The score won't even be close.

The teams have a long and storied history that has shaped the face and look of American athletics. But it's Quinn & Company's last hurrah in the House that Rock Built. The score won't even be close.
Craig Cardillo

Anchor's awes for wide out at season's end

Cardillo will report to USS Rushmore to begin career in Navy

By KEN FOWLER
Sports Editor

Craig Cardillo's fifth year at Notre Dame has probably been his longest. The kicker-turned-receiver spent four years balancing school, football and one other major time commitment — Navy ROTC. But thanks to a roster exception, he has spent this semester with "only" football and graduate classes on his plate. Cardillo's just happy to have that opportunity.

"I didn't know I was going to be able to come back," Cardillo said.

But the Navy filled its incoming officer need from ROTC graduates across the country and afforded Cardillo a half-year reprieve from starting his four-year active service. He will have another four years of commitment to the military upon hisbuyout ends.

Cardillo joined the Irish in the spring of his freshman year, walking onto the team as a place-kicker. He didn't see action as a sophomore or junior and then switched to scout team wide receiver. There, he made a mark. He won the unit's offensive player of the week award three times in 2005 — while preparing the Irish defense for Michigan State, Southern California and BYU. Cardillo said he is used to people wondering how he managed all his time commitments while still dedicating himself fully to the team.

"Some of the things for ROTC are optional," he said. "So it is manageable. Cardillo didn't participate in most voluntary activities, including the color guard, which saved him time. And he said team workouts sometimes overlapped with ROTC physical training exercises, which lessened the load. But other days, he said, he couldn't escape multiple running sessions and weight room work.

Workouts at Notre Dame were nothing new for him. Cardillo attended Hauppauge High School in Suffolk County, Long Island. He played quarterback, receiver and kicker there and was an all-county selection in football as a senior. He also won all-league honors in basketball his junior and senior seasons.

After considering the naval Academy as a college destination, Cardillo jumped at the chance to go to Notre Dame. He majored in history and earned a 3.27 grade point average as an undergraduate.

In January, just a few days after the national title game, Cardillo will make his way to San Diego where he will begin his full-time Naval career on the USS Rushmore LSD-47, nicknamed "America's Gator." He's not sure precisely what position he will fill as a commissioned officer there because, he said, that boils down to one thing — what the ship needs.

"It's pretty much on-the-job training," Cardillo said.

And while official work duties will be substantial, Cardillo may get the chance to jump back over the football on the Rushmore. The Gators are 2-1 this season in the San Diego Naval Base basketball league, forfolding in their only loss due to "an unforeseen incident," according to the ship's official Web site.

Football won't be out of the picture either. The ship has its own flag football team in a similar league.

But right now, Cardillo said, he's worried about his next game.

Contact Ken Fowler at kfowlerl@nd.edu

Irish receiver Craig Cardillo has been an important offensive scout team member since transitioning from kicker.

Chase Anastasio

Receiver makes biggest impact on special teams

By KEN FOWLER
Sports Editor

Somewhere deep in the Notre Dame archives, the record for most blocked punts sits in bold capital letters.

Whatever name holds that spot has some competition from a wide out sometimes mistaken for JeffSamardzija but more athletic than No. 83 when Notre Dame drops back to field a punt. Over the past four years, Irish wide receiver Chase Anastasio has blocked three punts. In fact, all three came last year — one against Washington, and a pair of deflections at Stanford.

"Someone told me that if I get one or two more, I'll have the school record," Anastasio said.

But that he would have two blocks by this point of his career is no fluke. Anastasio, usually the man attacking the right side of the offensive line when opponents are punting, always has been able to get close.

"It can get a little frustrating," he said. "But you go out there each time with the same motivation.

And, he said, the record has motivated him.

"I'm just trying to help the team on every single play," he said.

Anastasio has just three receptions in his career, but that makes him the leading pass-catcher at wide out with another year of eligibility left. After sitting out as a freshman, he saw most of his action on kickoff returns as a sophomore. Anastasio returned a team-high 19 kicks for an average of 18.6 yards per attempt. He also had one catch for 15 yards.

As a junior, Anastasio touched the ball only three times — his three big plays on special teams.

He said he is used to being a role player and works just as hard every day because helping himself improve helps the team improve overall.

Anastasio grew up in Burke, Va., and graduated from Robinson Secondary School in Fairfax, Va. Like many of the role players on the Irish, he was a star before coming to college. Anastasio was a member of USA Today's top-100 team. As a senior, he rushed for 681 yards and seven touchdowns on 112 carries to go along with his 20 catches for 433 yards and six receiving scores.

At Notre Dame, the receiver is a sociology and computer applications double major with a 3.17 GPA, including a 4.5 in the spring of 2006. He said he is on track to graduate in May.

Anastasio said he wasn't sure if he would return for a fifth year yet — he wouldn't dedicate time to think about that until December, when Irish coach Charlie Weis said he would meet with all seniors with a fifth year of eligibility remaining.

Contact Ken Fowler at kfowlerl@nd.edu

Irish wide out Chase Anastasio leaps for a pass over sophomore receiver Kris Patterson during practice Aug. 31. Anastasio has three career punt blocks and three career receptions.
John Carlson

A long time coming

Irish senior tight end John Carlson's first love was basketball, and his early days as a football player had him anywhere but his current spot.

Editor's note: This story first ran Nov. 3, 2006.

By KATE GALES
Associate Sport Editor

For John Carlson, life is all about choosing.

He balances student life with two careers on Notre Dame's basketball and football teams.

He balances a love of both basketball and football.

He's been doing it since high school, and now, it's who he is.

"Being a student athlete, you don't have as much time or have as many opportunities to do things not many people get to do so I understand that tradeoff is there and I just feel fortunate to be in this place."

Getting involved with football

Carlson still remembers putting on pads for the first time.

"When I was younger, really young — probably 5 or 6 years old — my dad was an assistant coach for a high school football team, so we had some old pads lying around the house," he said.

He and his older brother tried them on and were hooked.

"He and I used to play one-on-one basketball in our backyard," Carlson said. "It seems a little absurd because there's only one guy on each side but we used to do it."

By seventh grade, Carlson was playing organized football. But he didn't settle in at the tight end position immediately.

"I played running back and linebacker as a seventh grader, and a little bit of tight end," he said. "Everyone was running back in middle school I think."

He settled into the tight end position at Litchfield (Minn.) High School. In four years, he was a part of 1331 yards and 23 touchdowns.

Carlson was also on Notre Dame's 41-17 win Sept. 9. Carlson had four touchdowns before being sidelined with an injury.

Irish senior tight end John Carlson splits Penn State's defense as he heads downfield. He was an all-American and was a part of Notre Dame's 41-17 win Sept. 9. Carlson had four touchdowns before being sidelined with an injury.

Carlson's tight end position was a natural fit for him.

"We have a dual role, we're blockers, we're receivers," he said. "Every play I try to execute my assignment to the best of my ability."

"When I get beat on a block or drop a ball, I take that pretty seriously and try not to make the same mistakes over again."

Carlson, Irish tight end

But the position wasn't Carlson's only priority.

He was a standout in basketball and tennis and spent most of his time either in practice or doing homework.

Being busy prepared him for the life of a college student-athlete, though.

"It's a year round thing where you have both academically and athletics and you have to make a priority to excel in both," he said. "I didn't really do anything else. After school I went to practice then I did homework and then I went to bed."

It might seem boring but it's what he likes.

"Every play I try to execute my assignment to the best of my ability."

Carlson was a basketball team freshman for a few years, but his skills on the court were not as beneficial as they were on the gridiron.

"I ended up on the basketball team as a freshman for a couple years and in the sport I loved, it was hard to give up," Carlson said. "I think that really helps me out and I really enjoyed it."

Carlson reached the semifinals of last year's Bookstore Basketball tournament, but lost to Irish quarterback Brady Quinn's team.

Carlson said he did the best he could at that time in his career.

Carlson was named one of the University of Minnesota's three seniors for the senior basketball game vs. Wisconsin.

Carlson said his skills in basketball taught him a lot about football.

"Basketball was really my first love," he said. "But I knew I had a greater opportunity to play at a higher level in football and I took a visit here and it didn't pass the place up — what's not to like?"

Carlson challenges himself to make plays.

"I try to execute my assignment to the best of my ability."

Carlson has 329 receiving yards this season, with two touchdown catches.

Irish coach Charlie Weis, a former tight end coach with the New England Patriots under Bill Parcells in 1993-94, said that Carlson's experience on the hardwood has helped him develop into a major receiving threat for the Irish.

"I think the basketball background back there helped him," Weis said. "I think that really helps at the tight end position. We always said in the NFL that a lot of their best tight ends are those power forwards you see playing in the NBA, a lot that have those skills. He already had potential to be a receiving tight end. It's really that he hadn't been put in that position yet and he's making the most of this opportunity."

Carlson said he felt the tight end position was a natural fit for him.

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A defense often uses a "cover 2" scheme against the Irish or are forced to cover Jeff Samardzija, Rhema McKnight and David Grimes. Quinn often finds Carlson on seam routes over the middle.

"I think a big part of (getting passes) is the guys we have on the outside," Carlson said. "You have to pay attention to Jeff and Rhema and that pretty seriously and try not to make the same mistakes over again."

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Leitko appreciates ND more during time away

By BRIAN DOXTADER
Sports Writer

Travis Leitko didn't fully understand Notre Dame until he was away from it.

The 6-foot-7, 270-pound defensive tackle missed the 2005 season during a yearlong hiatus, but found himself back under the dome in 2006, looking to complete his degree and finish his college football career.

"You miss things you don't realize," Leitko said. "The time off definitely allowed me to sit back, regroup and rethink about what I want and where I am."

As a dedicated student-athlete, Leitko explained, how difficult it can be to balance academics with athletics, especially at a rigorously institution like Notre Dame.

"I was constantly in overdrive just trying to survive," Leitko said. "With that year off, I was able to finally take a breath and look at where I was at what I was doing and really ask myself, 'Is this what I want?'

The answer for Leitko was yes. Upon his return, the Woodlands, Texas native hit both the field and the books harder than ever, taking on both academic and athletic challenges with newfound energy.

Leitko arrived at Notre Dame as a defensive end, but has since shifted to defensive tackle.

"It's been challenging, but I've enjoyed it," said Leitko. "I've been able to adjust pretty well. I'm just trying to do my best.

As a history major, Leitko has found plenty of challenges and opportunities off the field as well.

"I've always been interested in history," he said. "I love the motivations behind what has happened, what moves our society and world, and I think it's a great concentration for your life because it gives you a great base in analytical thinking and human behavior.

"I've been working hard, studying a lot, trying to finish my degree.

Yet the year off has clearly given Leitko better perspective, as he recognizes the pressure that many college students put on themselves.

"As a society in general, we're so pushed to go to college, graduate, get a real job, work, and I think a lot of people are pushed by that timetable," said Leitko. "I think it narrows your scope of how you think, and what you do.

Leitko has tried not to be limited by such a narrow focus, working for Davidson Football as an engineering intern during his time at home. While he spent much of his first semester taking care of his mother and father, who were both ill, he was able to work during the spring when they both took a turn for the better. While at Davidson, he and a team of engineers received a provisional patent on a fiber-optic differential sensor, which measures flow in a variety of engineering capacities.

Leitko is also a familiar presence in Keenan Hall, where he has lived all four years.

"I didn't plan it that way, but it worked out," he said. "It's been a positive experience for me.

Leitko also stressed that he wanted to fully integrate himself into the Notre Dame student body.

"I always try to be around when I can, I try to sleep there. I want to be part of the community.

Most importantly, the time away allowed Leitko to put Notre Dame in perspective and understand what makes it so special.

"I didn't really come here for the tradition," he said. "I think for me, Notre Dame was the best fit, both academically and athletically. I always challenge myself in the classroom and on the field and of the schools I was looking at, I think it best embodied that.

Yet upon his return, Leitko found a lot of what he was missing.

"The people are what make Notre Dame special," he said. "I'm really glad to be back. I just want to get in there and be the best I can be, both academically and athletically.

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Cullen makes dream journey from Interhall to scholarship

By CHRIS HINE
Sports Writer

It seems too improbable to be true.

A young football player comes to Notre Dame with dreams of suiting up in blue and gold. He spends his first semester playing Interhall football, but unlike many others, he does not abandon his dream of making the varsity team. He keeps working, and eventually earns a spot as a walk-on.

That still does not satisfy him. He hustles everywhere in practice to make himself better; eurn the respect of his teammates and make the coaches take notice of him. Eventually, they do spot him, and reward the young man with an opportunity to play in every game — and a scholarship to boot.

It sounds like something out of a movie, but that is exactly what happened to special teams player/defensive end Casey Cullen.

"I was never really expecting the scholarship," Coach Weis told the senior walk-on during the spring when he first got here, when I was a junior, that he was going to offer walk-ons a scholarship," Cullen said. "I didn't know if it was going to be a senior type of deal, but I told myself, 'All right, I'm going to work as hard as I can to just show him I can play.' As it did that he gave me more time to play.

Cullen comes from a family with a strong Notre Dame tradition. Both of his parents are 1977 graduates of Notre Dame and his great-grandfather, Christie Flanagan, was a two-time All-America halfback at Notre Dame in the late 1920s. He attended Saint Joseph High School in Victoria, Texas where he was named to the all-state team as a senior.

Cullen's primary responsibility on the team is on special teams, both as a blocker on kick returns and a tackle on kickoffs.

"On special teams, there's a definite rush and there's not nearly as much responsibility. It's just use your athleticism and makes a play," Cullen said. "It is a lot of fun because you get to hit a lot of people. It's my way of contributing to the team so I like it.

His first taste of action — and a contribution," he said. "I didn't know if it was going to be a senior type of deal, but I told myself, 'All right, I'm going to work as hard as I can to just show him I can play.' As it did that he gave me more time to play.

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Contact Chris Hine at chine@nd.edu
Derek Landri's journey through Notre Dame athletics has been a fierce.Defensive lineman Derek Landri, who blocked two extra points in Notre Dame's 45-26 win against North Carolina, is third on the team with 44 tackles this season (8.5 for a loss) and second in sacks with four. The doctor and thelandscape

Derek Landri Irish defensive tackle

"I formed a good relationship with different people — the Delphi family, the Oliva family — a couple families that are just in the community."

Defensive tackle Derek Landri sacks Michigan State quarterback Drew Stanton in Notre Dame's 40-37 win in East Lansing on Sept. 23.

"I never really got the West Coast thing until I came out here and people start tagging me in the category with [Chris] Frame and [Anthony] Varniglia, the shorty wearing shades," Landri said. "I don't think I fit in the category with those two." While Landri debates his reputation as a surfer dude from California, there's no question he excelled on the football field at one of the top programs in the country — De La Salle, Calif.

The high school has produced numerous NFL players including New York Giants receiver Amani Toomer and more recently, Jacksonville Jaguars running back Maurice Jones-Drew — a good friend of Landri's from their high school playing days (Jones-Drew was a year behind Landri). While at De La Salle, Landri established himself as one of the top players in the school's history, earning such honors as California Player of the Year — joining Toomer and D.J. Williams as the only players in school history to receive that acknowledgement. He was also a first-team USA Today prep All-American that year, and the No. 5 overall high school prospect according to CNN/SI.com. But despite his high school's reputation and his personal accomplishments, Landri felt little pressure coming into college.

"Pressure's what you put on yourself, the majority of kids that come in here are real hyped up, All League, All State, All American, that type of thing. I just think you come here to play ball the best of your ability and whatever happens, happens."
Versatile cornerback sees football as ‘ticket’

Defensive back describes friendships with teammates but remains ‘haunted’ by big play against USC last season

By KATE GALES
Assistant Sports Editor

In his career as a football player, Wooden has played at center, offensive line­man, running back, tight end, receiver, corner­back and safety. This is his freshman year, he red­shirted as a wide receiver his sophomore season, and wooden started at corner­back.

He said it’s the hardest position he’s ever played.

“It’s exciting, you can never take a play off,” he said. “You make one play, one wrong step and you can give up a touchdown. It helps you grow as a person because you’re saying you can make an adversity, you get beat, everyone sees where you are, if you get beat no one sees it.”

Wooden came into the 2006 season with 79 career tackles, after being third on the team in 2005. He also had two interceptions and one fumble recovery.

But after a knee injury early on this season, the former starter has played as a nick­back and third corner­back.

“If I just started watching it, my brother was a football player, and I just loved it,” he said. “It’s been my ticket throughout my life to get me here. I’ve used that to get the best education possible.”

The combination of education and athletics drew him to Notre Dame. He vividly recalls his visit, with current teammates Victor Abiamiri, Tom Zbikowski and Chinedum Ndukwe.

“We had an awesome time,” he said. “It was a great experience ... the whole family atmosphere I felt when I came here, my mom loves it. My parents are all about the education and the football and you get them both here.”

Ndukwe and Zbikowski, his companions on the secondary, would eventually become some of his closest friends.

“Sometimes I get playful, I like to mess around.” [Ndukwe is] the comic of the group, he can say one thing and everyone’s laughing. It’s funny, but as a whole, we know each other really well. We hang out, no one’s really vocal. I look at the other three guys and I ask them and the rest of the guys and you know exactly what they’re thinking. You can look in each other’s eyes and you spend so much time together ... You build relationships.

Wooden, a former resident of Stanford and Dillon Halls, is looking forward to finishing the requirements of his finance major, which he said has helped him grow as a person.

He knows who he is, and the notoriety of the Notre Dame football program hasn’t fazed him.

“It’s exciting to be within the whole thing right now, it’s always been,” he said. “But you’ve just got to go out and be yourself. Day in and day out. I like to smile a lot. I’m a happy kid. You see me on Saturday, I’m a happy kid.”

Wooden said he will likely return for a fifth year, giving him a shot to earn back a starting position and another season’s worth of games at Notre Dame Stadium.

“It’s been quite a journey for me, would eventually become the best part,” he said.

Ashley McConnell, left, practices with teammates. The fullback recorded his first touchdown this season in a 47-21 loss to Michigan Sept. 16.

Fulback’s college experience was difficult transition

Small-town native has learned to balance both football and academics

By MICHAEL BRYAN
Sports Writer

It’s been quite a journey for Ashley McConnell, from a high school basketball star in tiny Adairsville, Ga. — with a favorite sport of basketball — to starting in the national spotlight as a fullback at Notre Dame.

At Adairsville High, McConnell was a three-sport leader in football, basketball, and track and field. Team captain of the football squad as a junior and senior, he rushed for 485 yards and seven touchdowns his senior season, helping his team to an 8-2-1 record. He earned all-area and all-league honors at fullback, and also recorded 65 tackles and two sacks at middle linebacker.

His freshman year at Adairsville High was success on the football field, McConnell’s first love was basketball, and with the recruiting letter starting flooding in for football, he was shocked.

“I guess, I was confused, nobody was calling me,” he said. “I guess it was never that way for me. I loved every minute of it.

“After former Irish coach Larry Eustachy called, however, there was little decision to be made.

“Ever since I got that first letter, there was only one college for me,” McConnell said. “I got my offer from Notre Dame and was a dream come true. I was smiling from ear to ear.”

One of McConnell’s biggest challenges of his Notre Dame career wasn’t blocking towering linebackers, but adjusting to college life.

“I came from a one-stop­light town where you knew everyone to a pretty big college, and it was a big change,” McConnell said. “I had to learn how to juggle school and football and take advantage of my free time, and it was definitely a challenge.

His freshman year McConnell did not see any action at fullback. He worked mostly on the practice squad and the final three games of the year with special teams. His sophomore season he was the last man to make the roster for an undisclosed violation.

McConnell received a sec­ond chance, and rejoined the team after the suspension for his junior year. The player at fullback. It was squaring, however, that was different that one.

“We were a different team this year, we had the advantage of playing under new head coach Tyone Willingham called, however, there was little decision to be made.

“I felt blessed to be back — you’re not guaranteed a sec­ond chance, but you’re privileged to get to play again, and privileged just to be able to go to class.”

He saw his first offensive action on the field his junior year and he played in three games at fullback.

“Everyone just wants to do their part, and I’d be happy just to play on special teams,” McConnell said. “But to get in the first game against Purdue, that was a special moment.”

McConnell has emerged as a solid starter this season after starter had knee sur­ gery earlier this season.

One of the most rewarding moments of McConnell’s career, he said, was the 8­yard touchdown catch he caught in Notre Dame’s 47­21 loss.

“It was unfortunate that it came in a loss, but it was a blessing and a special moment for me and my family and hometown,” McConnell said.

A graphic design and com­puter applications major, McConnell looks forward to graduation and finding a steady job. He is also looking into internship opportunities in the graphic design field.

Ashley McConnell, left, practices with teammates. The fullback recorded his first touchdown this season in a 47-21 loss to Michigan Sept. 16.

You can’t trade that for any­thing.”

Contact Kate Gales at kgales@nd.edu
Jeff Samardzija was just waiting for an opportunity. The opportunity to catch a pass in the end zone. The opportunity to play two sports in college.

And now that he's finally caught not just one, but five touchdown passes, after not finding the end zone for two years, and now that he is a key member of the Notre Dame basketball team as well, he's just looking for more opportunities.

"If they were going to throw the ball my way five times in the end zone I would have expected to have five touchdown receptions," the junior wide receiver said. "You've got to think you're going to make those five catches. It's just a matter of personnel and being in the right place at the right time, and then just taking advantage of the opportunity.

A slow start in the fall

Samardzija came into Notre Dame as a highly touted recruit from nearby Valparaiso High School after excelling in football, basketball, and baseball. Samardzija never missed a start in his four years. He was an all-state center-fielder in baseball, he finished second in the voting for Mr. Football in Indiana and he was third in the voting for Mr. Football in Michigan State, and at least one in every game, tying a school record.

Irish coach Charlie Weis said these numbers are not only throwing the ball more, but Samardzija's skills are as well. "You would expect receivers to have big numbers when you throw it 60 times," Weis said. "I think that Jeff's a very dependable, reliable receiver with great hands and good ball skills. He's been the recipient of being open. We don't ever design plays just to get that guy the ball. We try to throw it to the guy that's open based off of coverage and progression. He's been the recipient of being in the right place at the right time."

"I'm not surprised to see his counterpart put up big numbers thus far this season," said Weis. "He does surprise me at all." Stovall said, "I know the ability that Jeff has. The things that you see in the game are the things he does in practice, so it wasn't a surprise to us at all."

Samardzija says he's just getting more opportunities to have the ball than he was in the past — there's nothing more to it.

"I don't think there's too much of a difference," Samardzija said of this year and previous years. "It's just getting the opportunity to make a play. If you're in the right spot and the right time coming your way — I think last year that there were a couple chances I may have let slip away and I didn't make the plays, and I think this year maybe I made a play or two early that gave the coaches confidence to put me out there in different situations.

The 'other' sport

When Irish baseball coach Paul Mainieri read an article that said new Notre Dame football sophomore Jeff Samardzija wanted to play college baseball if he could, he immediately talked to then-coach Tyrone Willingham, and he said it was alright to look into the possibility of playing baseball as well.

"So I started asking some professional questions, I may have let slip away, and I didn't make the plays, and I think this year maybe I made a play or two early that gave the coaches confidence to put me out there in different situations."

Jeff Samardzija Irish wide receiver

In 2005, Samardzija earned All-America honors and signed a professional baseball contract with the Chicago Cubs.

"I think last year there were a couple chances I may have let slip away, and I didn't make the plays, and I think this year maybe I made a play or two early that gave the coaches confidence to put me out there in different situations."

Jeff Samardzija excels in the end zone and on the pitcher's mound for Notre Dame
A tale of two talents

By KEN FOWLER
Sports Editor

For three years, Travis Thomas usually was on the bench when the Irish offense had the ball. As a senior, that's still the case. But almost everything else is different.

As special teams captain in 2006, Thomas is the least glorified and least scrutinized of Notre Dame's three official leaders — Brady Quinn represents the offense and Tom Zbikowski leads the defense. But even though he's not the one usually projected onto television sets, Thomas is the most vocal of the three, a role he had to get used to.

"I find myself being more vocal, especially being on the defensive side," Thomas said. "There's a lot of help from Zibby obviously, but I just feel real comfortable with that."

Thomas has had to work hard to become a good linebacker and a vocal leader, but he said that's something with which he's accustomed.

After earning two-time conference MVP honors in high school and totaling 18 rushing touchdowns as a senior, Thomas didn't see the field as a freshman. He finally played — and started — in the first game of his sophomore season, but it was a tough one. He had six carries and as many fumbles — two — as yards. He carried only three, a role he said he just thought it was a good decision overall.

"As a senior, Thomas has started eight of Notre Dame's 10 games, sitting two out after injuring his ribs on the final play of the 40-37 Irish win over Michigan State Sept. 23. When Notre Dame recruits ask Thomas about his emergence, he has a simple message for them.

"I just try to let them know that you're going to have to work for everything you earn here," he said. "You're going to have to earn everything. Nothing is going to be given to you. Every game is a championship game for the people you play against, and academics are tough, so if this is what you're really looking for, then you're going to get it."

One of the things Thomas has gotten out of his time at Notre Dame has been his relationship with his new found mates in the linebacker corps. Thomas is son of fellow senior Joe Brockington, an outside linebacker from Palmyra, Pa., but he got out of his time at Notre Dame "just because we're from Pennsylvania."

Off the field, Thomas is a consulting major in the Mendoza College of Business. He said most of his work deals with problem-solving in discussion groups.

Things are going real well in the classroom," he said. "Senior year is probably the easiest semester I've had so far."

But Thomas has dreams of playing on Sundays before he goes pro in something other than sports. Having played offense, defense and special teams, Thomas just wants to get to the NFL, no matter the role.

"Special teams has been a niche of mine, so maybe at the next level I'm obviously going to have a role there," Thomas said. "You know, the object is just to get there. So the fifth year, like I said, that's going to take care of itself once the season ends. Coach [Weis] and I will meet, but it's not a concern of mine right now."

Contact Ken Fowler at kfowler@nd.edu

Left, senior linebacker and running back Travis Thomas waits on the sideline with his helmet on to get in the game. Right, Thomas breaks open a 43-yard run Sept. 9 against Penn State at Notre Dame Stadium. Thomas had 44 yards on three rushes with a one-yard touchdown run against the Nittany Lions.
Cornerback has two different personalities

By KATE GALES  Associate Sports Editor

On the field, he's a hard-hitting cornerback. Off the field, he's a self-described "nice guy" with an inexplicable fear of large spiders.

Linebacker Mike Richardson has seen a lot in his five years at Notre Dame, and he's wiser for it.

Richardson was recruited at Stanford by former coach Tyrone Willingham. When Willingham accepted the coaching job at Notre Dame, Richardson took a visit to Notre Dame.

"I ended up liking it, deciding that that's where I needed to be," Richardson said.

He had been playing organized football since he was nine.

"I used to play backyard football with my friends from school," he said. "They were all playing organized football and they were like, 'You should come out and play.' So I went out and joined the team and I actually turned out to be pretty good."

He started playing at running back and safety. With the Irish, he sat out his freshman year as a redshirt. With the Trojans, he started playing organized football and football since he was nine.

Richardson was a two-time letter winner in basketball and track along with football, as well as being named captain of all three of those teams in Smith's Smith High School in Smith's, Ala.

"I grew up in the country, went to a city school," Thomas said. "That was my life — sports. I did that year round."

In order to do that involved, Thomas relied heavily on his parents for support. He credits them for developing Thomas as an athlete if for no other reason than they helped him make the games.

"My parents had to drop me off, pick me up," he said. "My sister was in the band — she's a year younger than me — so they'd have to drop her off, come back and get me, back and forth.

One of the most important games Thomas played in was not even on the football field but on the track.

"My junior year we had a [4x400] team that was fourth in the state that was going against supposedly the number one [4x400] team in our state. And we went against them and beat them," Thomas said. "That was the best sports moment I had."

But the sport Thomas truly excelled in was football, where he made 70 tackles and rushed for over 500 yards in five games his senior year before sidelined with an injury. Despite not playing most of his senior year, Thomas was still named to the all-state team in our state. And was a sought-after recruit coming out of Smith's Smith.

During his senior season, Thomas won the Mr. Smith's Smith in Smith's, Ala. and Florida and Notre Dame.

"After the coaches left Alabama, [Notre Dame] was my runner-up, my final decision in choosing Notre Dame. I think it was just a good balance of academics and athletics."

After joining the Irish, Thomas began to expand his interests beyond sports into the classroom, where he began pursuing a management consulting degree.

"If I do come back, it'll depend on what kind of year I have. I might try the NFL, but I might just get a job and get on with my life."

Contact Kasey Gales at KGales@nd.edu

IRISH INSIDER

Irish corner back Mike Richardson sprints toward the ball during Notre Dame's 44-41 loss to Michigan State Sept. 17, 2006.

PHOTO: PHIL HUDELSON/ The Observer

IRISH INSIDER

Irish linebacker Mitchell Thomas grew up with sports dominating his life. At Notre Dame, he has balanced football with his studies toward a management consulting degree.

By JAY FITZPATRICK  Sports Writer

For Mitchell Thomas, sports are life.

Thomas excelled in every sport he tried in high school. He was a two-time letter winner in basketball and track along with football, as well as being named captain of all three of those teams in Smith's Smith High School in Smith's, Ala.

"I grew up in the country, went to a city school," Thomas said. "That was my life — sports. I did that year round."

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After joining the Irish, Thomas began to expand his interests beyond sports into the classroom, where he began pursuing a management consulting degree.

"After football I plan to try going to [into the] consulting field, see how that turns out, see if I like it, if not, I'll try to find something I like," he said.

Even with the classroom load, Thomas still had a passion for football. He had to wait to play, however, and got the chance to start at the beginning of this season against Georgia Tech.

Because he redshirted his freshman year at Notre Dame, Thomas still has the option to return for a fifth year, although he does not yet know whether or not he will. Even if Thomas does come back, he is unsure of his future — and whether it will include football.

"If I do come back, it'll depend on what kind of year I have. I might try the NFL, but I might just get a job and get on with my life."

Contact Jay Fitzpatrick at jfitzpa5@nd.edu
Brian Mattes came to Notre Dame as an Associated Press Pennsylvania Big School All-state selection as a defensive end as a junior and was still remembered for a dramatic moment during the 2005 USC game.

With good fundamentals, you'll be successful nine times out of ten. Mattes, who had 10 sacks as a junior at Wyoming Valley West High School in Plymouth, Penn., quickly learned the ins and outs of playing on the opposite line. And, consequently, he has become very close with the other Irish linemen.

Brian Mattes Irish offensive lineman

"I've learned that the best way to evaluate my performance as a lineman is to go back to the (game) film," Mattes said. "You have to check your fundamentals. With good fundamentals, you'll be successful nine times out of ten.

Mattes said he has never doubted his decision to transfer to Notre Dame, citing "great people, a great education and a great degree" as the most important aspects of his experience here. The decision to return this season was, therefore, not very difficult for him.

When Coach Weis approached me and asked me to play again, I saw it as an opportunity to just be a college student for another year. It wasn't until I got here that I realized how much I was going to miss playing football, so I decided to [come back]."

"You don't realize how much it means to you until you lose it at all, and I know my season was over," Mattes said. "I still remember the_events that unfolded in the hours immediately following my injury. Few know what Frome endured over the following months."

Redshirt sophomores the Irish linemen Abiamiri or Trevor Laws, Oliver knows the difference Mattes makes on the defensive line.

"He might not have the luxury to get a lot of stats, but he does his job well enough to let others be the recipients of plays," Oliver said.

The others referred to by Oliver usually take the form of senior linemen Abiamiri, Laws, and Derick Lundell who have formed a formidable defensive line along with Frome for their four years together at Notre Dame. They've also totaled 149 tackles, eighteen sacks, twenty-one quarterback hurries and two forced fumbles this season.

"We feed each other as far as energy," Frome said. "This year, I feel like we know where we're going to be during a play, and it's kind of like a race to the ball or the quarterback back. As you can see, Vick (Abiamiri) is beating me there a bunch of times." If Frome's football career had come to an end as a young age, he never would have lined up in an Irish uniform, much less alongside Abiamiri, Laws, and Lundell. Growing up with two parents from the Midwest, Frome was only playing at a school from a different state.

"Honestly, I grew up a Michigan fan, and I always kind of envied "Michigan" players. But it wasn't until I got here that I realized it's such an amazing place." After arriving in South Bend during the fall of 2002, Frome has spent his time both rushing the quarterback and tackling his coach's assignments. A workhorse who graduated with a degree in finance from the Mendoza College of Business last spring, Frome finished his undergraduate career with a GPA of 3.46. As for deciding between a football career and following his degree, Frome is leaving his options open. "I see myself working out, trying to make the NFL, and talking to the coaches to see where I fit," Frome said. "I couldn't be here at Notre Dame, graduate school or law school. I have a lot of options." With two regular season games and a bowl game left on the schedule, the senior defensive end is waiting to hear what 's in store for him, who knows where he'll be after he finishes college and returns to the gridiron during his senior year. "It's kind of funny," Frome said. "I don't have a number," Frome said. "I'm very grateful for them for it."
Bob Morton

Irish pull together for guard after father’s death

By DEIRDRE KRAUSLA
Sports Writer

For offensive lineman Bob Morton, the 2006 football season has been one to remember. He has been playing every game, every time he was put on the field. He had a 10-yard touchdown in 2006. He had a 10-yard touchdown in 2006. He had no doubts about the support of his family.

The outcome of the game wasn’t really in doubt, but that didn’t mean Freeman’s touchdown catch last Saturday against Air Force any less impressive.

Freeman had logged just three catches in 11 games this season, all the Irish were in multiple tight-end sets. But when first-team tight end John Carlson went down with an injury, the opportunity to take the lead in the offense had been given to Freeman.

The touchdown wasn’t the only part of his play that stood out to Weis, though. “When those guys came to me before the game and let me know they were playing for my pops, I never felt like I was alone,” said Freeman.

Irish senior guard Bob Morton gets pumped up against Stanford at Notre Dame Stadium Oct. 7.

By KATE GALES
Assistant Sports Editor

The St. Paul, Minn. native started playing basketball at an early age, as well as soccer, basketball and T-ball. His uncle coached a team for third and fourth graders and convinced Marcus’ mother to let him come out for the team.

Freeman settled in at tight end because of the combination of athletics and academics, citing the high graduation rate of Irish players as a selling point.

Current Irish offensive lineman Ryan Harris and former Irish fullback Rashon Powers-Neal both attended Cretin-Durham Hall with Freeman.

As Freeman steps into the role of starting tight end this weekend against Army and next week against USC, Weis expressed confidence in his ability.

“Guys who know me know I like to joke around, but people that don’t know me or meet me for the first time or just cross paths... maybe see me as a shy guy or a quiet guy, but I grow much just blocking, I’ve grown to like and love blocking, but I also love receiving the ball and making running back, and moved to offensive line.

Freeman settled in at tight end because of the combination of athletics and academics, citing the high graduation rate of Irish players as a selling point.

Current Irish offensive lineman Ryan Harris and former Irish fullback Rashon Powers-Neal both attended Cretin-Durham Hall with Freeman.

As the season winds down, Freeman has found himself in a more of a spotlight role. But he is also focused on the future. He said he “aspires to the NFL,” and thinks that his time at Notre Dame — including the emotional and difficult coaching change in 2004 — may help him in that goal.

“You get to experience two totally different guys, two different personalities, two different coaching styles,” he said. “I think everybody here aspires to go to the NFL, when you have experience with different head coaches, you’re that much more prepared to go to the next level and deal with coaches at the next level.”

Off the field, Freeman is known to play NCAA football video games, though never playing with Notre Dame. He also played in Notre Dame’s Bookstore Basketball tournament, making it to the Sweet 16.

“The opportunity to take the lead in the offense had been given to Freeman.”

Irish tight end Marcus Freeman runs through a drill in practice Sept. 7 at the Loftus Sports Center.
# Sizing up the Irish and the Black Knights

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Would you like to work for The Observer? If so, contact one of the following editors:

**News** — Mary Kate Malone, 631-5323

**Scene** — Brian Doxtader, 631-4540

**Sports** — Ken Fowler, 631-4543

**Viewpoint** — Joey King, 631-5303
One and only

With personality, talent and drive, this year’s seniors led Notre Dame out of one of the worst stretches in school history. From a field-storming win over Michigan in 2004 to a near-toppling of No. 1 Southern California in 2005, Brady Quinn, Tom Zbikowski and the Irish have lifted Notre Dame to the top of college football once again.
Senior Dance

Despite contrasting styles, guards Colin Falls and Russell Carter have one goal for their final season — leading Notre Dame back to the NCAA Tournament.
New year brings new chances for fresh group

Jackson provides Irish spark

By CHRIS KHOREY
Associate Sports Editor

In Notre Dame's second exhibition game against Bellarmine, Kyle Jackson got to the free throw line 10 times.

The slashing freshman guard attacked the basket with regularity, using the free throw line to make up for a shooting slump. Jackson said he was excited about his work on the foul line.

Jackson is one of the irish's more promising young players. He said he was happy with his role on the team and that he was looking forward to the season.

Jackson was recently named the Big East Freshman of the Week for his performance against Bellarmine. He scored a season-high 20 points in the game and added five assists and five rebounds.

Jackson said he is excited to see what the season has in store for him.

"I'm just looking forward to the season," Jackson said. "I want to contribute to the team and help them win games."

Jackson said he is looking forward to the season and is excited to see what the future holds for him and the team.

Jackson is one of the younger players on the team and is expected to make a big impact this season.

"I think I can bring a lot to the team," Jackson said. "I want to be a leader on the court and help the team win games."
Senior guards Colin Falls and Russell Carter have different games but similar goals for 2006-07

By CHRIS KHOREY — Associate Sports Editor

One is a spot up shooter and a quiet teacher. The other is a slasher and an emotional firebrand. Together they have one goal — leading Notre Dame to its first NCAA Tournament berth in four years.

Sharpshooter Colin Falls and all-around athlete Russell Carter have opposite styles on the court, but as the only two scholarship seniors on the Irish roster, their leadership will be key for a Notre Dame squad bent on returning to the NCAA Tournament.

"Whenever we go out on the floor, whoever we're playing, we're playing for the NCAA Tournament," Falls says.

When Falls and Carter arrived on campus, NCAA appearances were a regular occurrence. The Irish had made the Tournament three straight years and advanced to the Sweet 16 in 2003, the spring before the two seniors arrived on campus.

"When I got here expectations were higher," Falls says. "We've played below expectations a little bit for whatever reason, but it'll be good if we can leave on a high note.

Now, as seniors, Carter and Falls are looked up to by their underclassmen teammates and have worked together to instill that new attitude.

"If we've got something to say, we'll say it to the group," Carter says.

And what they're saying has worked so far, as an Irish team that features five freshmen and four sophomore is talking seriously about being a contender this year.

"That's the only thing on our minds," Carter says.

Carter and Falls have one more goal for their time at Notre Dame — make good on their last chance at an NCAA Tournament appearance after all.

The high flying screamer

"The next year. Carter moved into the starting lineup and became a major contributor, averaging 11.6 points per game, good enough for third on the team. He also increased the size of his cheering section with his dramatic athletic plays and soaring dunks.

"When a play breaks down, you have to improvisive and that's when creativity will shine," Carter says. "I don't like to show their creativitiy? That's basketball.

"Sometimes, however, Brey's definition of "when a play breaks down" is different than Carter's. The coach has made it no secret to the guard that he wants to see him work with-in the offense more.

"We pretty much stick to our motion offense," Carter says of Brey's game plans. "We can't just say 'this is what we're doing' and let him go from there. We have to be able to improvise individually.

"For as much as Carter and Falls are opposites — they want the exact same thing this season.

"Maybe they're not so different after all.

Contact Chris Khorey at ckhorey@nd.edu

Irish guard Russell Carter explodes to the basket in Notre Dame's opening night 92-49 victory over IPFW Nov. 10.

Falls and Carter have opposite styles on the court, but as the only two scholarship seniors on the Irish roster, their leadership will be key for a Notre Dame squad bent on returning to the NCAA Tournament.

"That calm wisdom translates into Falls' leadership style on and off the court. He's not very vocal on the court but that's one of Notre Dame's exhibition games that Carter got out of there.

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Contact Chris Khorey at ckhorey@nd.edu

Irish senior Colin Falls drives baseline past Villanova guard Allan Ray in the Wildcats' 72-70 win over the Irish Jan. 28.

Falls' and Carter's ability to stretch the defense has been crucial as they have helped create opportunities for Notre Dame's other players. And with senior forward Luke Harangody becoming a more reliable scorer, the Irish have more options on offense this season.

"Carter and Falls have one more goal for their time at Notre Dame — make good on their last chance at an NCAA Tournament appearance after all.

But through it all, Carter just wants to have a good time.

"We need to continue to have fun," he says. "If we have fun, then everything will follow itself. If we treat it like a job and people don't want to be here we won't have success.

The future

If either Falls or Carter is going to have a career in the NBA, a lot is riding on their performances both individually and collectively — this season.

But neither has given up on the dream of playing professionally yet.

"If you don't want to get to the next level, why play basketball?" Carter said.

Falls has even gone so far as to pursue Irish citizenship, which he can get through his grandfather, in order to make it easier for him to play overseas next year — if he doesn't find a spot on an NBA roster.

"I want to play basketball for as long as I can," he said.

But before that, Carter and Falls have one more goal for their time at Notre Dame — make good on their last chance to reach the NCAA's. This year is the odd couple's chance to shine, with Falls' quiet leadership and clutch jumpers and Carter's emotion and crowd-elecitry playing leading the Irish in the Big East.

Because for as much as Carter and Falls are opposites — they want the exact same thing this season.

"Maybe they're not so different after all.

PHIL HUDELSON/The Observer

Irish senior Colin Falls drives baseline past Villanova guard Allan Ray in the Wildcats' 72-70 win over the Irish Jan. 28.
The Observer • IRISH INSIDER
Friday, November 17, 2006

2006-07 OUTLOOK

TIM ANDREE
FORWARD
6'8", 238 lbs.
No. 41 — FR
Senior H.S. stats
Minutes 14.9
Points 8.0
2006-07 expectations
Andree joins the team as a freshman walk-on and is a valuable addition to the Irish practice squad. One of five freshmen on this year's nine-man rotation.

RYAN AYERS
GUARD/FORWARD
6'8", 210 lbs.
No. 42 — SO
2005-06 stats
Minutes 6.8
Points 0.7
2006-07 expectations
Ayers, who rarely used as a freshman but played 34 minutes in an NIT loss to Michigan. He should be a solid role player in this year's nine-man rotation.

RUSSELL CARTER
GUARD
6'4", 220 lbs.
No. 43 — SR
2005-06 stats
Points 11.5
Rebounds 2.2
3-point % 41.9
2006-07 expectations
Carter will be the starting half of last season's backcourt and should continue to be one of the top offensive options this year. His senior season rebounded for his size.

COLIN FALLS
GUARD (Capt.)
6'7", 200 lbs.
No. 15 — SR
2005-06 stats
Points 14.3
Rebounds 2.3
3-point % 39.7
2006-07 expectations
Falls has taken a leadership role as one of two captains. The senior showdown has shown his ability to contribute all over the court but also his threath early on.

LUKE HARAMODY
FORWARD
6'9", 259 lbs.
No. 44 — FR
Senior H.S. stats
Points 23.6
Rebounds 12.8
2006-07 expectations
Harangody looks strong early in the post and should be a key factor in Big East play. He's a "blue collar" player who understands the power forward position.

JOE HARDEN
GUARD
6'7", 212 lbs.
No. 11 — FR
Senior H.S. stats
Points 17.0
Rebounds 10.0
2006-07 expectations
Harden comes from a strong U.S. team, and is one of the bigger guards on the Irish roster. He's shown athleticism and promise during preseason play.

ZACH HILLESLAND
FORWARD
6'9", 227 lbs.
No. 23 — SO
Senior H.S. stats
Points 6.4
Rebounds 2.6
Assists 0.8
3-point % 41.0
2006-07 expectations
Hillesland is a scoring player who has all the tools. His minutes will fluctuate on a game-by-game basis, but the forward will be a factor in the Big East.

KURZ
GUARD
5'11", 185 lbs.
No. 2 — SO
2005-06 stats
Points 1.1
Rebounds 0.7
Assists 0.0
2006-07 expectations
But played 34 minutes in an NIT loss to Missouri. He should be a solid role player at point guard behind McAlarney and Jackson.

ROB KURZ
GUARD (Capt.)
6'9", 233 lbs.
No. 31 — JR
2005-06 stats
Points 6.4
Rebounds 5.1
FG % 46.6
2006-07 expectations
Kurz is quickly becoming a key Big East forward with his positioning and strength in the post. The junior captain can rebound, pass and shoot down low.

LUKE ZELLER
FORWARD/CENTER
6'11", 245 lbs.
No. 40 — SO
2005-06 stats
Points 3.4
Rebounds 3.4
Minutes 13.7
2006-07 expectations
Zeller quickly becomes a solid Big East player abroad, but身价 to prove he can handle post duty. He's an excellent outside-shooter for his size.

MIKE BREY
HEAD COACH
7th season
118-70 overall
2005-06 record
Season 16-14
Big East 6-10
2006-07 expectations
Brey has not taken the Irish to the NCAAs since the 2002-03 season. After focusing on the Big East tournament last season, he has bigger hopes for this group.

JONATHAN PEOPLES
GUARD
6'6", 214 lbs.
No. 20 — FR
Senior H.S. stats
Points 15.2
Rebounds 4.0
Assists 1.6
2006-07 expectations
Peebles offers Notre Dame an athletic option off the bench, but will likely be used sparingly. He's already shown an ability to get to the basket in preseason.

Kieren Pillar
GUARD
6'2", 198 lbs.
No. 35 — SR
Senior H.S. stats
Points 16.3
Rebounds 7.0
Assists 3.0
2006-07 expectations
Pillar is a second-year walk-on from Enfield, N.Y. who is a solid practice player at point guard behind McAlarney and Jackson.

2006-07 SCHEDULE

Photos by PHIL HUDELSON/The Observer

2006-07 PRESEASON POLLS

Syracuse has a new identity now that fourth-year guard Gerry McNamara graduated. Marquette comes into the Joyce Center led by point guard Dominic James.

2006-07 PRESEASON COACHES' POLL

Syracuse is a new identity now that four-