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

Notre Dame dominated the Cougars from start to finish, the Irish hadn't holding their breath in the closing minutes. "It was a relief," Irish junior quarterback Jimmy Clausen said. "Close games all the time, it kind of gets old.

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

"It was probably one of the most phenomenal catches I've ever seen anyone make, ever," Irish coach Charlie Weis said. After a three-and-out on Washington State's first possession, Notre Dame drove down the field before stalling in the red zone. Freshman kicker Nick Tausch converted the field goal to put the Irish on the board 3-0.

While the Irish defense stifled the struggling Cougar offense, Clausen drove the Irish to their first touchdown late in the first quarter, converting on a 7-yard pass to wide receiver Jared Karstetter. The time was enough for the Irish, however, as Tate made the touchdown grab at time expired.

"I've seen them before, it's not the only one I've ever seen. But I don't know how many times you see one guy with three guys around him go up," Weis said of Tate's leap.

"I don't know how many times you see one guy with three guys around him go up ... I thought it was phenomenal." — Charlie Weis

Irish head coach

The Hail Mary from Jimmy Clausen made the score 30-7 at the half and was "cautiously optimistic." The Notre Dame defense did its part in the blowout as well, holding the Cougars to 206 yards of total offense and only 104 through the air.

The Irish put their final 10 points on the board on a long pass down the middle from Clausen to classmate John Goodman, who outraced a Cougar defender 64 yards for the score. "Tuel threw for a little over 100 yards and got sacked a bunch of times, he was under pressure," Weis said. "They were getting after him today, there was no doubt they were getting after him." The Cougars managed 102 yards on the ground, but many of those came long after the Irish starters had left the game.

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

Irish defensive end

NOTRE DAME 40, WASHINGTON STATE 14

The Irish starters had left the game by the end of the third quarter, with Notre Dame leading 37-7. The Cougars had no answer for the Irish offense, which rolled up 541 yards, with Clausen finishing 15 of 21 for 290 yards and three touchdowns.

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

"The Irish held a significant edge in talent on both sides of the ball, and Notre Dame used that to its advantage to build, and then hold, the big lead over the course of the entire game. "I just felt like getting upfield and getting penetration was the key thing, and to stay low and be more athletic than them," said Irish sophomore defensive end and Texas native Kapron Lewis-Moore.
quarterbacks: Jimmy Clausen played like he has all season, and his stock continues to rise. Dayne Crist looked shaky but threw a nice touch-
down before leaving with an injury.

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

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

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

defensive line: The front four continues to improve, and the six defensive linemen
combined to make nine tackles for loss. Ian Williams added an interruption
of a screen pass.

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

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

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

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

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

When you mentioned to someone
that Notre Dame was playing
Washington State in San Antonio, the most common response was
"why?" I'll even admit that I
was skeptical of the first "off-
site home game" that was
part of Notre Dame's new 7-4-1 scheduling model.

But after a weekend in San
Antonio, it's clear that the
idea is a great one, even if the
execution could use a little improvement. The weekend kicked off Friday
night with a pep rally in front of the Alamo, one of America's most
famous venues. Even though the pep rally wasn't the most raucous I've ever seen, the crowd itself was a sight to behold. Notre Dame estimated that close to 8,000 fans attended the rally, and the crowd spilled out onto the adjacent streets. The speakers included former Notre Dame running back Allen
Pinkert and radio broadcaster Don
Crigqui, and the Band of the
Fighting Irish played all the crowd
favorites — and threw in a little
Lone Star flair by playing "Deep in
the Heart of Texas."

After the pep rally ended, the
crowd moved down to San
Antonio's famed River Walk.
Random "Let's go Irish" chants
started up and down the river. And a few fans rode down the
river back and forth waving a
Notre Dame flag and cheering for
the Irish.

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

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

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

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

"When you get into an experi-
ment like this — and this is an
experiment, taking a home game
on the road — you need a great
partner," Notre Dame Athletic
Director Jack Swarbrick said at
the pep rally. "And we couldn't
have a better partner for our first
off-site game than San Antonio."

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

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

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

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

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

Contact Sam Werner at
swerner@nd.edu

Tune in to the Irish Insider podcast
at ndsmobserver.com/podcasts
Hughes makes most of opportunity

By MICHAEL BRYAN
Associate Sports Editor

SAN ANTONIO — Junior running back Robert Hughes hasn’t always known when he would play or where he would play, but when given the opportunity with Armando Allen battling injuries, Hughes has stepped up. “When my number is called, I just want to go out and produce,” Hughes said. “I just try to focus on doing my job and making the best of my opportunities.”

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

Then Hughes was moved into a part-time role at fullback following an injury to senior James Aldridge against Nevada. As Allen battled injuries, however, Hughes began receiving more time at running back and carrying the ball. “I really don’t know when the switch went on, but the switch definitely went on and he decided that this was what he was going to do,” said Weis. “Once he made that decision that this is how I am, run with the ball down, leaning forward, not trying to make every one miss, once he made that decision, I think it’s kind of cleaned up for him how he’s going to play the game.” Hughes rushed for 68 yards and a touchdown against Purdue while Allen sat out, and then ran for 70 yards and another score against Washington State. In San Antonio, with Allen out again, Hughes received 24 carries, his only second game with over ten this season. Hughes said the repetitions helped him get into the flow of the game and wear down the Cougars. “It felt great, I got in a rhythm, coach kept calling my number and I just wanted to keep running the ball well, run the ball hard and keep getting yards,” Hughes said.

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

stats

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<tr>
<th>Time of Possession</th>
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<th>WSU</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Notre Dame 3, Washington State 0
Nick Tausch 29-yard field goal with 5:44 remaining.
Drive: 10 plays, 45 yards, 4:23 elapsed.

Notre Dame 9, Washington State 0
Dwael Kamara 3-yard pass from Jimmy Clausen (Tausch kick failed) with 14:41 remaining.
Drive: 6 plays, 60 yards, 3:04 elapsed.

Second quarter
Notre Dame 16, Washington State 0
Golden Tate 16-yard run (Tausch kick) with 2:20 remaining.
Drive: 6 plays, 71 yards, 4:01 elapsed.

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

Notre Dame 23, Washington State 7
Jared Kasterott 11-yard pass from Jeff Tuel (Nice Grane kick) with 1:38 remaining.
Drive: 7 plays, 67 yards, 2:49 elapsed.

Notre Dame 30, Washington State 7
Tate 50-yard pass from Clausen (Tausch kick) with 10:04 remaining.
Drive: 6 plays, 75 yards, 1:16 elapsed.

Third quarter
Notre Dame 33, Washington State 7
Tausch 23-yard field goal with 2:16 remaining.
Drive: 11 plays, 80 yards, 6:19 elapsed.

Fourth quarter
Notre Dame 40, Washington State 7
John Goodman 64-yard pass from Dayne Crist (Tausch kick) with 10:41 remaining.
Drive: 2 plays, 55 yards, 5:16 elapsed.

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

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Notes: Lewis-Moore enjoys homecoming

By SAM WERNER
Associate Sports Editor

◆ The game in San Antonio had an extra special meaning for Notre Dame sophomore defensive lineman Kapron Lewis-Moore, who hails from nearby Weatherford, Texas. Lewis-Moore said he received over 20 ticket requests for the game, but was able to accommodate everyone. “It was good being back to Texas — the hospitality and everything,” Lewis-Moore said. “I miss the Texas weather.”

◆ Freshman kicker Nick Tausch set a Notre Dame record by connecting on his 14th-straight field goal in the third quarter. After missing his first career attempt at Michigan, Tausch has been perfect on the season. Mike Johnston set the previous record of 13 during the 1982 season.

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

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

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

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

◆ Former Irish great and 1987 Heisman Trophy winner Tim Brown was scheduled to speak at the pep rally Friday night, but was replaced by Allen Pinkett at the last minute. Brown, a Dallas native, did represent the Irish for the game’s opening coin toss, serving as an honorary team captain.

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

Contact Sam Werner at swerner@nd.edu

scoring summary

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Hughes 24-131 Tardy 6-77
Ridick 9-51 Winston 3-4
Gray 8-29 Tuel 10-(-1)

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The Observer

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

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

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