Ushers relish Stadium experience

By SARA FELSENSTEIN
News Writer

"Welcome to Notre Dame," they say, with bright yellow jackets and infectious smiles. "It’s good that you’re here." There are 850 of them at Notre Dame Stadium, rain or shine, on game days, "Inside the Echoes" working up to 12 or 13 hours, arriving from 24 different states and representing a wide range of professions.

Who are they? They are the Notre Dame ushers. Veteran usher Richard Scheibelhut started his ushering career in the student section 57 years ago, when he was 17 years old. "I started out one game in the student section. I told them I quit and I’ve been in Section 29 ever since," he said. Scheibelhut said one of the best parts about being an usher is interacting with the fans that return game after game. He has seen three generations of families come through his section. Scheibelhut has not taken a penny in 57 years for his work.

"I’d say the primary motivation for people to be ushers is that they want to be part of the game day experience representing Notre Dame," Gagnon said. "It’s not as comfortable as being a guest — on the other hand, it’s hard to compete with the feeling you have when you’re there early. You open the Stadium and welcome people and take a lot of pride in being part of the Notre Dame experience." The usher program dates back to famed football coach Knute Rockne’s day.

See Also
In the student section, I told them I quit and I’ve been in Section 29 ever since," he said.

Usher Sean Wernert stands in his bright yellow jacket and welcomes fans from around the country to the Notre Dame Stadium on game day.

ND biology professors collaborate on malaria

By ANNA BOARINI
News Writer

Notre Dame’s research on malaria is a "web of interaction," involving multidisciplinary research and collaboration, biology professor Dr. Michael Ferdig said.

Currently, there are multiple faculty members researching malaria and the mosquito vector that carries it.

Biology professor Dr. Nora Besansky researches the African mosquitoes that carry human malignant malaria. Her current project is to develop a vaccine against the disease.

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By KRISTEN DURBIN
News Writer

After completing Notre Dame’s first iPad-based "reader" pilot class in October, Corey Angst and his Project Management students found that the device lived up to its widespread media hype. "My students felt that the iPad would be useful before they even began using it, and there was hardly any change in that belief over the course of the class," said Angst, assistant professor of management at the Mendoza College of Business.

Angst administered four surveys to his students throughout the course: one before the students received their loaned iPads, one three weeks into the course, one at the end of the course and one a few weeks after returning the devices to the University. He said these surveys provided him with valuable feedback as to whether or not iPads play a significant role in an individual student’s learning experience in relation to a specific course.

"One of the goals of this pilot was to monitor the usefulness of the iPad in a classroom setting, and the survey results showed that the students’ opinions on this remained relatively consistent," Angst said. "This seven-week class showed that there is tremendous value in the device, especially in a group project setting."

See also: "Inside the Echoes" working up to 12 or 13 hours, arriving from 24 different states and representing a wide range of professions.

Stud. gov’t listens to “whining”

By JOHN CAMERON
News Writer

Students had the opportunity this week to air their complaints to student government representatives during the first Whine Week. Student government posted student leaders around campus to field questions and take suggestions for improving the Notre Dame experience.

We have been in the dining halls, LaFortune, and we’ve had a member of student government go to almost all the Hall Council meetings, and we’ve also had suggestion boxes in the office," student body president Catherine Soler said. "Right now we’re in the compiling process."

Soler said Whine Week, a new event this year, was a result of discussion in Student Senate about the need for improving dialogue between student government and the student body.

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See IPAD/page 4

See WHINE/page 6

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One vandalism case involving clearing the sidewalk on Union Street and another on the Greminger Walk between DuBose and Mayes has been reported to the administration. The incident remains under investigation.

Correction: The Observer regrets indulging as a professional publication and strives for the highest standards of journalism at all times. We do, however, recognize that we will make mistakes. If we have made a mistake, please contact us at 631-4542 so we can correct our error.
ROTIC honors Veteran’s Day

By NORA KENNEY
News Writer

As the sun set on an unusually warm November evening at Notre Dame, members of the Notre Dame ROTC unit joined several distinguished guests Thursday at the Clarke Memorial Fountain, popularly known as Stonehenge, in honor of Veteran’s Day.

The event was the culmination of a 24-hour period, beginning Wednesday at 5 p.m., during which members of the ROTC were placed for non-stop vigilance at the fountain in honor of those who have served the country, especially POWs and MIAs.

The ceremony began at 5:15 p.m. Thursday evening with a moment of silence, the singing of the National Anthem and an invocation by Fr. Sean McGraw, an assistant professor of political science at Notre Dame.

“An important part of this is the tradition of defending the nation as one that is deeply rooted in Notre Dame’s history,” he said.

“Those who have served the country and the men and women fight for the country,” he said.

The ceremony concluded with a final prayer from Fr. McGraw, who said he was proud to be part of the event.

Caponi said his first two rules were important to remember.

The ninth rule to live by, Caponi said, was to love what you do.

Caponi’s culminated his top 10 rules.

“People have said to me, ‘Sir, I have used the opportunities you are well done, you want to know what you make a difference in people’s lives and have a very clear insight of what role you play,” Caponi said.

He followed with his top 10 rules to live by. Caponi said his first two rules were important to remember.

Caponi said laughter can help relieve tensions in a lot of difficult situations.

Caponi’s culminated his top 10 list with a rule that he said was probably the most important of the 10 — volunteer.

Caponi said location isn’t an important because you have to do what you care about.

The eighth rule was to communicate often and clearly.

The tenth rule was to love what you do.

The ninth rule was to love what you do.

The seventh rule was to love what you do.

The sixth rule was to love what you do.

The fifth rule was to love what you do.

The fourth rule was to love what you do.

The third rule was to love what you do.

The second rule was to love what you do.

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iPad continued from page 1

but not necessarily in the way we anticipated. Both Angst and Jon Crutchfield, academic technologies consultant, emphasized the fact that high expectations usually go hand in hand with brand-new technologies, but these expectations usually give way to marked decreases in user satisfaction. However, that trend was not observed in this initial test run at Notre Dame.

“As people begin to use new technologies, their satisfaction usually goes way down once they start to find the limitations of a device,” Crutchfield said. “In this case, the satisfaction level of students on the final survey was almost identical to the expectations expressed in the first survey.”

In response to the survey question, “Which statement best sums up your general feelings about using the iPad in the Project Management course?” only two of Angst’s 36 students chose the answer “I didn’t like it,” as opposed to 12 students who answered that they loved using the device during the class.

According to Angst and Crutchfield, the most widely observed drawback to the iPad was its e-reader capabilities, which contrasted with their initial prediction of the device’s viability as an alternative to traditional textbooks. Crutchfield noted that most students had difficulty annotating and highlighting text in the electronic version of their textbook and that making the transition from a traditional textbook proved challenging.

“We thought the e-book aspect would be the strongest determinant of value for students,” Angst said. “Instead, students felt there were limitations to reading books on the device, but they were willing to give up optimal book reading for the iPad’s other advantages.”

Angst and his students cited the device’s portability, consolidation of information in one place, easy access to content, functional versatility and connectivity as the iPad’s advantages. Angst also pointed out that the students had significantly improved since the beginning of the course, and he predicts the iPad and other e-readers will function better as textbook alternatives in the future.

Two focus groups met to discuss the role of the iPad in the Notre Dame classroom after the Project Management class ended. Student members of these groups were able to provide feedback about how they adapted to using the devices daily.

“One older student told us that they had learned how to study successfully over the course of their time at Notre Dame, so asking them to switch to a different style of learning was a challenge,” Crutchfield said. “Some of the students were more successful than others at taking what they know and finding it differently.”

The focus groups also compiled a list of the pros and cons of using iPads in the classroom. However, the surveys Angst administered to his students provided more specific student responses to their individual use of the iPads.

“One thing that struck me was my students’ responses to whether they thought they could learn more in any class, not just Project Management, using the iPad,” Angst said. “Fifteen of them felt that they would learn more just by having the device available.”

Although students were encouraged to use the iPads as they wished without being extensively trained, Angst said that professors who teach iPad-based courses in the future should have an understanding of apps that are available, as well as provide students with some guidelines as to the device’s capabilities in relation to their specific class.

“Professors can set themselves up for failure if they allow student use of the device to be entirely organic,” Angst said. “Some students will embrace the freedom, but others won’t bother to figure out how to use it if they are focused on more important things in terms of academics.”

In terms of the ways students used the iPad to fit their needs, Crutchfield said he was surprised that a few students typed all their class notes on the iPad’s keyboard. “It’s not the greatest keyboard in the world, so we expected that to be a challenge,” Crutchfield said.

Despite the device’s drawbacks, Crutchfield said only two students had technical problems with their iPads, both of whom he said were easily resolved. Additionally, the device’s monitored security settings prevented one student from losing all his data when his iPad was stolen from his car.

“Both Angst and Crutchfield said that the pilot was valuable in highlighting the fact that introducing the devices at an earlier point in students’ college careers would help facilitate further integration of the device into regular learning.”

“When students were asked how the devices would have affected their learning if they had been given to them as freshmen, most agreed that they would have studied using the tools provided,” Crutchfield said.

Angst said the ultimate goals of these pilot classes are centered around the student and his or her individual needs. “It all comes back to the student choosing a device that allows them to do the things they personally need to do, whether it’s the iPad or another device,” Angst said.

Overall, Angst and Crutchfield said they achieved the goal of providing more information about the use of e-readers in the classroom, and it will continue as the more data is gathered from the current round of classes using the iPad, including First Year of Studies Dean Hugh Page’s Contemplation and the First Year Experience class, librarian Cheri Smith’s Library Research course and Professor Erin Fonciak’s Law School 101 class. The devices will be used in a Law School course and at least one foreign language course next semester, Crutchfield said. “We weren’t looking to see if the iPad was the perfect e-reader or classroom support technology,” Crutchfield said. “But it gives us a baseline to compare similar devices in the future, which we still intend to do.”

Contact Kristen Durbin at kdurbin@nd.edu

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By ALICIA SMITH
According to Saint Mary's Alumni Relations

Saint Mary’s alumna Sarah Rykowski said she found the same sense of community in the United States Army that she felt during her time at Saint Mary’s College.

The same sort of sisterhood I had at Saint Mary’s I found in the Army,” she said.

Rykowski returned to the College to speak in honor of Veterans’ Day Thursday in Carroll Auditorium. Rykowski shared her story with students, faculty, staff and community members.

“Policy is about what’s happening now, and we’re talking about what happened in 2007, but it’s relevant because it is about veterans in more than just myself,” she said. “Finally, it also takes time for many veterans to come forward about what happened and what their experiences were in their deployment.”

After graduating from the College in 2002, Rykowski attended law school before she decided to become a member of the Army.

“I come from a family that has military service in my mom’s side which goes back to the Revolutionary War,” she said.

After was released from the hospital, Rykowski said Saint Mary’s alumna Shanna Conner, one of her close friends from the College, met her and kept her company.

“We flew over to Camp Victory, and the first person to meet me off the aircraft was a Saint Mary’s girl,” she said. “She is one of my best friends. I talk with her everyday.”

After her injury healed, Rykowski said she returned to her deployment and completed it.

Rykowski was awarded with a Purple Heart for her service in Iraq, but she said it wasn’t the most important thing she drew from her deployment.

“I felt more proud of finishing that deployment and kind of getting through it than I did actually getting the Purple Heart,” she said.

Contact Alicia Smith at asmith01@saintmarys.edu

Malaria continued from page 1

research examines evolutionary changes of the mosquito Anopheles Gambiae.

Ferdig focuses on the vector, studying the parasite itself. His research looks at the malaria parasite and its resistance to drugs.

Together, with other researchers and scientists at Notre Dame, these biologist have been able to comprehensively look at the cause, the mosquito vector and the effect of malaria.

“Malaria is a parasitic disease that is characteristic of poorer parts of the world, especially the tropics,” Besansky said.

There are four types of malaria and while all cause harm, only one, malignant malaria, is always fatal, Besansky said.

What makes malaria different than other vector-carried diseases is the complex life cycle of the parasite.

“It would take me about 2-1/2 hours to tell you malaria’s lifecycle,” Ferdig said.

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Besansky said when a mosquito bites a human, the parasite first enters from the bite and then travels to the liver. After it leaves the liver, the parasite attacks the red blood cells. The red blood cells then burst and the parasite can re-enter the blood stream or attack another part of the body.

What makes malaria a unique parasite is that both humans and mosquitoes carry it.

“The mosquito can transmit the parasite to a person, but if the mosquito bites again, it can take the parasite back into its system and the mosquito can transmit the parasite to another person,” Ferdig said.

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Ushers
continued from page 1

“When Rockne first had tryouts for ushers, 1,000 people came to audition,” he said.

The distinctive caps the ushers wear also started with Rockne. Ushers in white caps are called captains—they are first level supervisors. Ushers in gold caps are the top supervisors.

Gagnon, a 1966 Notre Dame alumnus, had a background in security and law enforcement before returning to campus 15 years ago to take a job as an usher. “When Rockne had it, he said he was missing being at Notre Dame. Gagnon said his love for the University is a sentiment that many other ushers share and cite as a reason they join the program. In fact, 500 of the 850 ushers work for free.

Gagnon said the usher application process is very competitive. “The No. 1 qualification is that the person has to be willing to work a long day, and be an ambassador to Notre Dame. They have to be hospitable. They have to look out for the safety of our guests in the Stadium, and occasionally have to enforce Stadium rules.”

The ushers come from a variety of backgrounds. “I have a former ND football player who has a national championship ring, I have an MIT graduate, I have a Yale graduate ... I have a range of professions represented [including] a psychologist, architect, lawyers and college professors,” Gagnon said.

Fifteen to 20 of the ushers are parents of former Notre Dame students, and only about eight are Notre Dame alums. A job as an usher is extremely rewarding, Gagnon said, but there are challenges that come with the job as well.

“The most difficult thing is when you have to remove somebody from the Stadium because of a serious issue, when somebody’s fighting or heavily intoxicated,” he said. “[Another] difficult thing is when you have injuries or illness. We’ve had people fall or have heart attacks, or have heat-related issues, those kinds of issues that require a lot of care and concern.”

Gagnon said the student section is the one place in the Stadium where he does not actively assign an usher. Every usher that works in the student section has volunteered to work there.

“When I ask people ‘why did you apply?’ to work the student section, they all give the same answer, ‘We like the energy of being here with the students.’”

Supervisor Shirley Cox also visited with her one day, and was thrilled,” she said.

Cox’s daughter graduated in 1998, but Cox never gave up ushering. In fact, she has moved up the ranks since then. She started in section 108 as volunteer usher, then moved to section 125/126 and became a supervisor, and finally was moved to the tunnel and made a top supervisor.

“I love the tunnel, to see the players come in, the band come in, the visiting teams, press conferences,” she said. “I’m there, I’m down by the field, and I have to pinch myself to say, This is real.”

“Ushers may come from various back- grounds and places all over the country, but they all share one thing in common — their love for Notre Dame,” she said. “I love my job, just like all the ushers — every one of them will tell you [that].”

Gagnon said: “I loved [Notre Dame] from day one as a student when I came here 48 years ago, and my feelings haven’t changed in 48 years. Cox recently broke her leg. She said she’s like a football player — “out for the season.”

“The broken leg, however, does not mean her time as an usher is over. “I’m going to be one of the usher statues — I’m going to be there a long, long time. I just love it too much,” Cox said. “I’m going to do it until I can’t do it anymore.”

Scherbult’s shared similar sentiments. For him, 57 years as an usher simply isn’t long enough. “I figure I have another five, six years — as long as my legs hold up, I’m going to keep coming,” he said.

Whine
continued from page 1

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Andrew Bell student body vice president

“I think we can sit in here and try to think of ideas to change student government all day, but it wouldn’t be as effective as going out and listening to students directly.”

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“It’s been interesting for us because there’s a lot of things we’re hearing that we have answers to or have been addressed in the past,” she said. “I think it’s just a sign that we’re not communicating well enough with them with information they should be privy to.”

Soler and Bell encouraged students to bring questions, suggestions and complaints to student government at any time. “We’re always available in our office to come up and talk to us, and we’re available personally by e-mail or on our student government e-mail,” Soler said.

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NAZARETH — A DNA test on a single hair has cast doubt on the guilt of a Texas man who was put to death 10 years ago for a liquor-store murder — an execution that went forward after then-Gov. George W. Bush’s staff failed to tell him the convicted man was asking for genetic analysis of the strand.

The hair had been the only piece of physical evidence linking Claude Jones to the crime scene. But the recently completed DNA analysis found it did not belong to Jones and instead may have come from the murder victim.

Barry Scheck, co-founder of the Innocence Project, a New York legal center that uses DNA to exonerate inmates and worked on Jones’ case, acknowledged that the hair doesn’t prove an innocent man was put to death. But he said the findings mean the evidence was insufficient under Texas law to convict Jones.

Jones, a career criminal who steadfastly denied killing the liquor store owner, was executed by injection on Dec. 7, 2000, in the closing weeks of Bush’s term as governor and in middle of the turbulent recount dispute in Florida that ended with Bush elected president.

As the execution drew near, Jones was pressing the governor’s office for permission to do a DNA test on the hair. But the briefing papers Bush was given by his staff didn’t include the request for the testing, and Bush denied a reprieve, according to state documents obtained by the Innocence Project.

Scheck said he believes “there is corroborative evidence that Bush would have granted a 30-day reprieve had he known Jones was seeking DNA testing.

“It is absolutely outrageous that no one told him that Claude Jones was asking for a DNA test,” Scheck said. “If you can’t rely on the governor’s staff to inform him, something is really wrong with the system.”

Bush had previously shown a willingness to test DNA evidence that could prove guilt or innocence in death penalty cases. Earlier in 2000, he had granted a reprieve to a death row inmate so that Scheck and other attorneys could have evidence tested. The test confirmed the man’s guilt and he was executed.

A spokesman for Bush, who is on a book tour, declined to comment Thursday.

The other primary evidence against Jones came from one of two alleged accomplices: Timothy Jordan, who did not enter the liquor store but was believed to have planned the robbery and provided the gun. Jordan testified that Jones told him he was the triggerman. However, under Texas law, accomplice testimony isn’t enough to convict someone and must be supported by other evidence. That other evidence was the hair.

“There was not enough evidence to convict, and he shouldn’t have been executed,” Scheck said.

Scheck, a death-penalty opponent, said the case shows that the risk of a tragic mistake by the legal system is just too high. “Reasonable people can disagree about the moral appropriateness of the death penalty. The issue that has arisen is the risk of executing the wrong person,” he said.

San Jacinto County District Attorney Bill Burnett, who prosecuted the case, died earlier this year.

“I still think he was guilty,” Joe Hilzendager, the murder victim’s brother, said Thursday. “I think they executed the right man.”

Former San Jacinto County Sheriff Lacy Rogers also said he is convinced Jones committed the crime — “without a doubt in my mind.”

In the nearly 35 years since capital punishment was reinstated in the U.S., there has never been a case in which someone was definitively proven innocent after being executed. That would be an explosive finding, since it would corroborate what opponents of the death penalty have long argued: that the legal system is flawed and that capital punishment could result in a grave and irreversible error.

Jones was condemned to die for the 1989 killing of liquor store owner Allen Hilzendager, who was shot three times outside the town of Point Blank, population 559. Authorities said his getaway driver was Danny Dixon, previously convicted of shooting a girl between the eyes and burying her in a cemetery.

During the trial, a forensic expert testified that he examined the hair under a microscope and concluded that it could have come from Jones but not from Dixon or the store owner. No DNA test was performed for the trial.

Prosecutors also hammered on Jones’ brutal past. While serving a 21-year prison sentence in Kansas, he poured a flammable liquid on his cellmate and set him on fire, killing him.

Jones was executed at age 60, the last person put to death during Bush’s time as governor. In his final statement, Jones did not acknowledge guilt but told the Hilzendager family he hoped his death “can bring some closure to y’all. I am sorry for your loss and hey, I love all y’all. Let’s go.”

DNA test casts doubt on executed man’s guilt

Associated Press

DALLAS — A DNA test on a single hair has cast doubt on the guilt of a Texas man who was put to death 10 years ago for a liquor-store murder — an execution that went forward after then-Gov. George W. Bush’s staff failed to tell him the convicted man was asking for genetic analysis of the strand.

The hair had been the only piece of physical evidence linking Claude Jones to the crime scene. But the recently completed DNA analysis found it did not belong to Jones and instead may have come from the murder victim.

Barry Scheck, co-founder of the Innocence Project, a New York legal center that uses DNA to exonerate inmates and worked on Jones’ case, acknowledged that the hair doesn’t prove an innocent man was put to death. But he said the findings mean the evidence was insufficient under Texas law to convict Jones.

Jones, a career criminal who steadfastly denied killing the liquor store owner, was executed by injection on Dec. 7, 2000, in the closing weeks of Bush’s term as governor and in middle of the turbulent recount dispute in Florida that ended with Bush elected president.

As the execution drew near, Jones was pressing the governor’s office for permission to do a DNA test on the hair. But the briefing papers Bush was given by his staff didn’t include the request for the testing, and Bush denied a reprieve, according to state documents obtained by the Innocence Project.

Scheck said he believes “there is corroborative evidence that Bush would have granted a 30-day reprieve had he known Jones was seeking DNA testing.

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More than three years after the execution, Jordan recanted his claim that Jones admitted to being the triggerman. In an affidavit, Jordan said he was scared, and “I testified to what they told me to say.”

Texas Gov. Rick Perry and the No. 1 death penalty state, having executed 464 people since 1930, three decades.

The Jones case is second time this year that the guilt of an executed Texas inmate was thrown into doubt. Cameron Todd Willingham was put to death in 2004 after being convicted of setting the 1991 fire that killed his three daughters. But several renowned experts said earlier this year that the investigation of the fire was so flawed that the arson finding can’t be supported.

The hair in the Jones case was tested 10 years after the execution at the request of his son Duane, along with the Innocence Project, other groups and The Texas Observer magazine. Prosecutors agreed to the testing.

“At the very least, if they had tested his DNA before he was executed, he could have gotten a new trial or his sentence overturned or changed,” Duane Jones said Thursday. He said his father “told me that he had robbed banks, that he was a thief. But he wasn’t a person who would go out and murder someone on the street.”

Enjoy 7.9% APR on all purchases throughout November and December.
**Artisans reanimate tree**

**Associated Press**

YARMOUTH, Maine — In life, New England’s champi-
on elm tree, nicknamed Herbie, stretched more than
100 feet skyward, towering over its neighbors and
camouflaged local landmark.

Nearly 10 months after being dismantled by chain
saw, the majestic tree has been reincarnated by artis-
sans as a variety of items including a stunning electric
guitar. The custom guitar, along with baseball bats,
upscale furniture and other keepsakes, will be auc-
tioned off Saturday to bene-
fit the Yarmouth tree trust.

“When I first heard the story that the tree was com-
ing down, just being a gui-
tar builder and wood maker, I
wanted to get my hands on
some of that wood,” Olson
said.

His finished product is a
solid body guitar with Her-
bie’s wood in the body and the
neck, along with an
ebony finger-
board, suit-
able for rock
and blues.

Bidding starts at
$3,500.

Olson said he hopes the
buyer isn’t afraid to play it.

“As far as I’m concerned,
every musical instrument should be played. I like the
idea of people playing a gui-
tar that’s being used to cre-
ate music at the same
time,” he said.

Another unusual piece is
an intricately carved por-
trait of Knight.

Knight, Yarmouth’s volun-
teer tree warden, realized
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Experts fear suicide copycats

PHILADELPHIA — The experts call it "contagion" when a suicide or rash of suicides inspires others to follow in an attempt at martyrdom or solidarity in death.

Most people would call them copycats. Whatever the name, it appears to have been at play in at least one suicide since Rutgers University freshman Tyler Clementi’s highly publicized jump off the George Washington Bridge. And experts fear that other recent suicides might fit the mold or that more are ahead.

That creates a conundrum for advocates who want to stop teenage bullying and their related suicides, as well as for the media outlets that cover them: how to spread the word without romanticizing the problem or unwittingly encouraging vulnerable teenagers to choose death.

“...it was related to the current event,” said Madelyn Gould, professor of psychiatry and public health at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. “But it could be any vulnerable person who is feeling suicidal to know who can help you, who are the places to turn to for help, where to find the resources you need for survival. It’s a good aftermath of a horrifically tragic event.”

President Barack Obama and talk show host Ellen DeGeneres were among those who applauded Clementi’s death. It’s important for people who are feeling suicidal to know where to turn to for help, that there are places they can turn to for help, Gould said.

By the count of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, said that since Clementi’s death her group’s crisis hot line has handled about 75 percent more calls than usual. Requests for survival kits have spiked even more, she said.

The second possible factor is that vulnerable youth may feel like, “If they couldn’t cut it, neither can I,” Gould said.

Someone who’s mentally ill may learn about a suicide and consider it a reasonable option, said Madelyn Gould, professor of psychiatry and public health at Columbia University in New York. “A vulnerable person might say, ‘That stopped the pain.’”

Experts say that while contagion is real, it’s getting more difficult to identify.

Ann Haas, director of prevention programs at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, said that before the Internet, it was relatively easy to track the phenomenon. When several happenings within the circulation area of a newspaper, contagion was likely a factor.

But when news knows no geographical boundaries, she said, it’s hard to tell whether the suicides are linked. And if Clementi’s death was related to something farther than just the most recent suicide stories.

Authorities say the 18-year-old killed himself after learning that his sexual orientation was made public online and another student peeked via webcam as he had an intimate encounter with a man. A friend who was JavaScript: Math.random()[5], was believed to have been bullied for their perceived sexual orientation and quickly became a cause celebre.

A pair of issues long known to gay rights advocates and suicide prevention experts soon became more widely known: Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth are more likely to attempt suicide than their straight counterparts. And bullied youths are more likely to try suicide than those who aren’t.

There was no way that Tyler Clementi’s death was not going to be covered, said Columbia University psychology professor William Haas. “I don’t think there is a hopeless group of people who can help you, who are willing to listen, to help you be safe. Do whatever you feel inside that you are,” she said.

To reduce the chance of contagion, media outlets should be careful not to conclude that suicides are the result of just one factor — and they should show the pain the suicides cause for families, said Roy Peter Clark, a senior scholar at the Poynter Institute, a journalism think tank in St. Petersburg, Fla.

“It’s not whether you cover these, but how you cover them,” Clark said.

It’s not merely a single event that triggers a suicide, Gould said, and most people who kill themselves love someone or are feeling suicidal to know who can help you, who are the places to turn to for help, where to find the resources you need for survival. It’s a good aftermath of a horrifically tragic event.”

NEW YORK — Luis Guerra swore he had nothing to do with any murder, that whoever picked up the phone before he was arrested was wrong. Still, he was held at the Rikers Island jail for more than a year before the charges were dropped.

That’s not the way it ended for the nearly 393,000 people who come in contact with the city’s correctional system each year, most of whom are held there for at least 15 years. The city is out to drop it.

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INSIDE COLUMN

Dining hall disaster

It’s 12:35 p.m., Monday afternoon. Some food is swimming in the dining area, and I’ve been in class since 8 a.m., and there’s nothing I want more than to get a quick lunch before heading back to Kregow, probably for an excessive-long nap my roommates will judge me for taking. One thing stands between me and that lunch-nap combo: a massive crowd. I guess then it’s more like two thousand things. After waiting two minutes to get swiped in, things are looking even worse: This truly is a feeding frenzy. Going in all directions, with no discernible flow or organization, while employees look flustered and push giant carts of food or dishes around, pausing occasionally to awkwardly wedge between students to drop off a pile of plates. Add to this the fact that more than half of the student body seems to get extremely confused with the moving and stopping process once they step inside, and it adds up to a frustrating mess. Don’t get between the vegetables and grill.

Later (minutes of napping I’ll never get back), I walk into the dining area ... look around ... look around ... “There they are.” I sit down, probably sweating a little at this point. My friends are at all different stages in the dining process: One has just started eating, another is wrapping up, one just got fra-yo while another is paging through The Observer about the Notre Dame coaches. I spot some of my roommates dicho to our table, and I think about how ungrateful the student body is for the gift they’ve been given.

But for now, we are students. If only for a few more months. And we’ve seen how teams still feel that beating Notre Dame is the greatest victory in their program’s history (see statements by the coaches of Tulsa, Connecticut and Syracuse). We watched the hiring and firing of Notre Dame coaches take over ESPN last fall, and we’ve even seen our losses make headlines.

Why? Because it’s still Notre Dame. In 2007, the lows were the lowest in Notre Dame history — the first loss to Navy in nearly half a century, not to mention 28-0 beatings from USC and Michigan. But an upset win over UCLA, a senior day victory (the last one Notre Dame Stadium has seen) against Duke and a season-ending romp versus Stanford kept our spirits alive.

The next fall, a rousing victory in the rain over the Wolverines was balanced out by a snowball-laden loss versus Syracuse on Senior Day.

Yet the Hawaii Bowl that Christmas and the shut-out win over Nevada to start the 2009 season were enough to sustain us through a string of last-minute wins (over Purdue, Washington and Michigan State).

We started calling ourselves the “Cardiac Catholics” and, despite a down-to-the-wire loss to Michigan, Notre Dame entered USC week on a high unmatched since then. Campus that week was electric. Signs were hung from dorm windows, banners plastered on the walls, and with us. We will brag about our status as the class with the most losses in Notre Dame history, but we will still enjoy in every Saturday and support our team to the point of being obnoxious. Notre Dame still matters to college football coaches and players, to television viewers and to journalists and bloggers across the country. But it matters even more to the seniors who will stand for their last Ala Mater Saturday.

And it always will.
Freedom is “the absence of necessity, coercion or constraint in choice or action” (legal definition). The word freedom dominates U.S. political discourse. While the rhetoric is expansive, its use in U.S. politics has become a concrete and tightly bound definition of personal choice without the interference of government. This interpretation of the word and its portrayal as the founder’s sole intention defined the rhetoric of the wave of conservative victories in 2010.

What was left out of 2010 debate is that there is a spectrum of freedom that spans from government intruding on individual freedom by requiring certain behavior from its citizens, to an economic structure that chases people to economic necessity in their decision making. The debate of what it means to be free is not as simplistic as conservatives like to believe. A person who must choose to turn down treatment for a disease because her family can not afford it is equally relevant to the discussion of freedom as someone who is forced to buy health insurance to prevent free-riding and bring costs down for everyone. Let the citizens choose whether they want to prevent government from protecting citizens from medical tragedies due to economic constraints, but it is unfair to claim that more government involvement in health care unequivocally means less freedom.

Before further argument, it must be exposed how far the lines have been moved on the definition of freedom. The 46 percent who every American President Obama is seeking on the wealthiest two percent to a rate of 71.75 percent under Clinton when the budget was balanced and more than 22 million jobs were created has been computed to social welfare and a government takeover of the economy. These claims become increasingly hyperbolic the more history is examined. The new tax rate under President Obama on the highest earners would be considerably lower for that tax bracket than the rates of three Republican presidents in their third year in office, prior to being reelected. Under the Eisenhower administration the U.S. had a top marginal income tax rate of 91 percent, under Nixon it was 71.75 percent and finally under Reagan it was 30 percent. While it is always a temptation to create growth as fast as possible by dismantling what appear to be irrational limitations, the temptations must occasionally be refused. A new political class has been elected that believe the U.S. needs to drastically reduce restraints on business design and make a system that is the act in its best interest is what is preventing our country from being pulled from a fiscal recovery. Democrats do not want to stop business, President Obama and the vast majority of Democrats are articulate capitalists who believe a system of competition and markets drives ingenuity and efficiency, but they also believe speed limits must be set that ensure the long term health of society.

It is a natural impulse to want to get something as fast as possible, and hold it as cheap as possible, but without constraint that urge has likely created problems for a strong, the same value can occur across society when regulations are removed. The deregulation of the subprime mortgage market, which allowed banks to keep the financially vulnerable above water while they recover their health, work to ensure that they can cannot be cut in order to reduce taxes on businesses and the wealthiest two percent. The United States will never represent anything but the strength and opportunity of capitalism despite the worst fears of the right. Setting limits to ensure the health of civil society is not an infringement on the founding values of this country or the freedom of individual citizens. It is not anti-business to disagree with business some of the time. In reality, business functions better in the long term if there is some assurance that the cost to drive aggregate demand must be kept down. The United States is at risk to succumbing to a systemic risk of democratic governance, that short term need or pleasure, will replace sound and balanced long term economic growth and societal health. It is important to have a social infrastructure in society designed to promote freedom and make a nation more competitive. Are seniors more free when cost cutting results in the retirement age on social security being pushed further and further? Should the poor have the freedom to know they can temporarily feed their families and the rise in food stamps in order to buy other necessities for their family? Should their success in the free market determine the family’s survival? Should Americans have the freedom to pollute the environment or the freedom to live with clean air, clean water, and a stable climate? Should communities be forced to allow people into debt they cannot afford, or should people be protected against exploitative contracts written by the nation’s wealthiest lenders? Do people have the freedom to own a gun? Should we discuss freedom in democracy? Or is it more important that the government not regulate campaign donations or who can vote in an election or over elections? These are debates on freedom that should not have clear partisan lines. Unfortunately, these issues are robbed of a fair hearing when one party monopolizes the definition of freedom.

A real discussion of freedom in America does not leave out the millions of Americans who work hard and pay taxes, but the rules only remain in poverty. No one is less free in the United States than the 43.6 million unemployed Americans who work hard and pay taxes according to the Census Bureau. In 2010, one in five U.S. families admit to struggling to put food on the table and 20 percent of children are growing up in poverty. Should we put freedom from government influence ahead of the success of the next generation? It is fair to debate the level of which government should be involved to ensure opportunity and a safe and just society, but it is unfair to say that the American domestic force threatening the freedom of U.S. citizens is the government.

Chris Rhodenbaugh is a senior political science major and editor-in-chief of Notre Dame’s Progressive Headquarters. He can be contacted at crhodenb@nd.edu.

The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Observer.
Notre Dame Stadium turned 70 this year, but this old giant of college sports spaces still has a few surprises. Cappy Gagnon, head usher, takes Scene on a tour of the historic Stadium.

Through a door just off the stairway with the “Play Like a Champion Today” sign is a cave-like room that houses the odds-and-ends of game day: yard markers, first down chains and the cheerleaders’ megaphones.

Stadium ushers inspect benches after each game to check for splits or breaks. The benches are made from California redwood, an expensive material, but one that can withstand football fans. There’s a good chance some of the planks date back to Stadium’s first season in 1930.

A set of rings awarded for national championship wins are held within Notre Dame Stadium. Because some of Notre Dame’s eleven national championships were before rings were awarded for the victory, several of the rings in the display case were “retroactively” added, Gagnon says, to complete the set in the Irish locker room.

The Irish locker room used to hold only 70 players, forcing walk-ons to suit up across the street before pregame warm-ups. A room was expanded and more lockers added in the 1997 renovation.

After the thrill of the game has passed ushers begin to clean the Stadium. They start at the top row (there are 81 in all), using leafblowers to send trash down toward the field. This is all finished by Monday afternoon, but in the meantime, sometime flocks of birds like this one sometimes descend to pick up some scraps.
One of the remnants of the original 1930 Stadium are the restrooms in the Irish locker room, complete with exposed pipes and a stall door that never stays closed.

In the above photo, more than 100 journalists sit on the third level of the press box to watch and report on the games. At left is the University president's private box. It comes with two great views: one of the whole field and another of the back cross campus.

Cappy Gagnon, right, the head usher, points out the NBC cameras that capture pregame rituals like hitting the “Go Irish Go” sign at the top of the stairs leading from the locker room to the tunnel.

The “Play Like a Champion Today” sign first went up during the Lou Holtz era, but now it’s so much a part of tradition that a replica comes along for away games.
Dan Hawkins was fired as football coach at Colorado three days after the Buffaloes suffered their biggest meltdown in school history put a cap on his five failed seasons with the Buffaloes.

Athletic director Mike Bohn presented longtime assistant Brian Calabro to interim coach for the final three games of the season. It left Saturday against Iowa State at Folsom Field. Bohn said search for a new coach would begin immediately.

The final loss came Saturday. Colorado blew a 28-point lead at Kansas State in the final 11 minutes for a stunning 52-45 win. It was the biggest collapse in the 121-year-old program’s history. Hawkins stepped up to the podium at a news conference Tuesday, thanking former players, coaches and team personnel as he spoke for nearly 13 minutes, ending his speech with “Go Buffs.”

“I know it’s been a tough time for everyone. I know it’s been a tough time for us. Hopefully we can get those things remedied,” said Hawkins, who addressed the team and informed them of his removal first thing Tuesday morning. “I really hope the negativity that might surround me doesn’t surround them. They don’t deserve that. It’s my responsibility and I take full responsibility for that.”

Quarterback Cody Hawkins, the son of Dan Hawkins, was among the seniors who addressed the media, saying he found out Sunday night. “I had a little time to deal with it,” Cody Hawkins said. “College football is a business. There are a lot of great guys in this business who kind of get put out on the street.”

Dan Hawkins was one of the hottest coaches in the nation when he was brought to Boulder to replace Gary Barnett, whose tenure was marred by scandal and a 7-5-1 loss to Texas in the Big 12 title game after the 2008 season.

This season, the Buffs started 3-1 but have lost five in a row in the Big 12, increasing the call for Hawkins’ ouster, especially after Saturday’s loss when he walked out on his postgame radio interview. “While we recognize the progress that we have made in several areas during nearly five years under Dan, the negativity and divisiveness that is associated with the current leadership has become detrimental and is beyond repair to our current enterprise and it’s time to make a change.”

As for future plans, Dan Hawkins said those remain unknown. “Life’s an adventure. I’ve always sort of looked at it like that,” he said. “I’m sure I’ll coach again at some point, at some place. ... I’m going to be a pretty passionate spectator here for the next three, hopefully four games.”

Over the weekend, it appeared that Hawkins may retain his job. Bohn issued a statement Saturday night after flying back from Lawrence, Kan., that did not mention Hawkins’ job status. However, Hawkins continued to take heat for having his quarterback son throwing the ball in the fourth quarter instead of running out the clock with a big lead. Some argued Dan Hawkins was more focused about getting his son the win.

“Here we go again,” smiled Calabro, who’s hoping to be considered for the opening. “My role again is very much like last time I sat here. ... My role is to calm the storm.”

John Mackey, who suffers from dementia, and Mike Haynes, who has battled prostate cancer, would not qualify for the coverage. But the league noted that there are other policies to cover those medical issues.

Any retirer disqualified due to dementia, ALS or another cognitive disorder will have access to the Benefits of The 88 Plan,” McCarthy said. The 88 Plan, named after Mackey, provides funding from the NFL and the union to help with the care of players afflicted with dementia or related brain problems.

Martin, whose independent group is charged with confronting a variety of issues involving former players, hopes the union reconsider.

“Why are you criticizing the source if at the end of the day that source will provide an unprece- dented benefit for a large group of players?” he said. “It’s not the wise approach, look at what that benefit will provide for the larger audience.”

The Observer accepts classifieds every business day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Notre Dame office, 624 South Dining Hall. Deadlines for next-day classifieds is 3 p.m. All classified must be prepaid. The charge is 5 cents per character per day, including all spaces. The Observer reserves the right to edit all classifieds for content without incurring refunds.
Heat fall to Celtics again

Associated Press

MIAMI — New roster, same problem for the Miami Heat. They just can’t find a way to beat the Boston Celtics.

Ray Allen hit his first seven 3-pointers and finished with 35 points, Paul Pierce added 25 and the Celtics led wire-to-wire in a 112-107 win over Miami on Thursday night, beating the Heat for the second time this season and handing them a second straight home loss.

Boston has won 13 of the last 14 regular-season meetings in addition to eliminating Miami in the opening round of last season’s playoffs. Then, the Celtics ended the LeBron James era in Cleveland a couple of weeks later, setting the wheels in motion for James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh to team up in Miami.

Rajon Rondo finished with 16 assists and Kevin Garnett had 16 points and 13 rebounds for Boston, which led by as many as 20.

James finished with 35 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists, narrowly missing his second straight triple-double. Wade was held to eight points on 2-for-12 shooting and a separated shoulder. He did not play in the second half over roughly the equivalent of a separated shoulder. He did not play in the second half.

Allen running to the open spot, and waiting to see if the Celtics could get the ball to him. When they did, he made the Heat pay. His last 3 might have been the biggest — it put Boston up 102-89 midway through the fourth quarter, and the Celtics had been on from there in a frantic finish.

Haslem had 21 points and 10 rebounds for Miami, which got 13 points from Eddie House. Nate Robinson added 12 for the Celtics, who moved to 7-2.

The Celtics wasted no time taking control, making nine of their first 15 shots. Some were downright spectacular. Glen Davis set a pick on House, giving Rondo a full head of steam to blow past Bosh for a highlight-caliber dunk and a 22-10 lead.

Even the breaks went Boston’s way.

Midway through the second, Rondo tried a bullet pass down the center of the court in transition, only to have Wade get a hand on the ball and tip it off the backboard. Didn’t matter — Davis, remarkably agile for someone listed at 289 pounds, was running at full steam, reached back and managed to get just enough of his paw on the ball to tip it for the 50-29 Boston edge.

By halftime, it was 61-46, and a defensive debacle that started Tuesday hadn’t yet ended.

In a 24-minute stretch of basketball at home, counting the overtime against Utah, the Heat’s defensive numbers were just plain offensive. They gave up over roughly the equivalent of a full game, which wouldn’t be good enough to beat any NBA club.

And certainly not the defending Eastern Conference champions.

Not the way Allen was shooting.

At times, Boston appeared to be putting on a clinic. Using only one touch pass, Rondo swung the ball crosscourt to Allen for an open 3 from the right wing. Garnett worked the two-man game with Davis to perfection. Shaquille O’Neal merely stood his ground on a drive by Wade, swatting the ball away while barely moving.

The Heat tried just about anything to get a spark. Zydrunas Ilgauskas started at center in the second half over Joel Anthony. Jerry Stackhouse and Mario Chalmers were in the rotation, as the Heat went 11-deep — something that hardly ever happens.

Nothing worked.

Even when Miami made a little run, Boston had an answer. When the Heat got within 32-31 in the second quarter, the Celtics held them to two field goals in the ensuing 5½ minutes. When Wade got his first field goal of the night early in the third, Allen scored five points in about 90 seconds to push the Boston lead to 20. And when Haslem got Miami within 97-89 with 8:17 remaining, Robinson hit a runner in the lane, followed quickly by Allen’s seventh 3-pointer of the night.

Miami had one more run left, and when Wade tried a 3 with 3:33 left, the Heat nearly got within four. But the shot rattled out, Pierce made a fadeaway on the ensuing possession to push Boston’s lead back to nine, and Miami’s standing-room-only crowd soon began heading for the exits.

The Observer ◆ SPORTS

NHL

Rangers end home woes against Sabres

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Martin Biron had no intention of subbing for top Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist. That doesn’t mean he wasn’t ready to go once he got the late call.

Biron made 29 saves on the shortest of notice and earned his second win of the season when Artem Anisimov scored his second goal of the game 1:32 into overtime to lift New York to a 3-2 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Thursday night.

All signs pointed to this being a day off for the veteran goalie, but Biron was pressed into action after Lundqvist showed up sick.

“He said he wasn’t feeling that great. I didn’t know what that meant,” said Biron, who played for the second time in three games. “It was about a quarter after five, a few minutes after our meeting.

“I was already in game mode, so that was part of the job. If you are going to go or not, you have to be ready to go at any time."

Anisimov netted the winner after he found a loose puck in the slot for a shot past backup goalie Jhonas Enroth.

Rudolfs Fedotenko had a goal and assist for the Rangers, whose offense got a big boost when top scorer Marian Gaborik rejoined the lineup after missing four games due to a separated shoulder. He did not get on the score sheet, but Gaborik recorded three shots in nearly 19 minutes of ice time.

“People have been struggling in our building, so it’s a huge win,” he said. “I haven’t played for three works, but I feel pretty good.”

Tyler Esmi and Mike Grier scored for Buffalo, which lost to New York for the second time this season.

The Sabres went to overtime for the third straight game after winning the previous two in shootouts. The Sabres pulled out a 3-2 win at New Jersey on Wednesday night with Enroth in net when Devils forward Ilya Kovalchuk lost the puck off his stick without getting off a shot on the final attempt.

Enroth made 25 saves in his fourth appearance in five games in place of reigning Vezina Trophy winner Ryan Miller, who is sidelined because of a lower body injury.

Buffalo earned five of six points on its three-game road trip. The Sabres are 5-3-2 on the road, but winless at home (0-6-1).

“It’s something to build off of,” said Fedotenko, who should be able to take how we play on the road back home.

The Rangers had lost two straight at home and four of five at Madison Square Garden. They appeared to be on a similar path in the third period when Fedotenko had a goal waved off because offside.

“Maybe the whistle was blown before the puck went into the net. Buffalo also had the second power play with 6:06 left in regulation.

Holy Mass according to the Tridentine Rite is celebrated every Sunday at 9.00 a.m. when the University is in full session in the Chapel of Alumni Hall.

Adeste Fideles!
NEW YORK — Derek Jeter's grandmother has been joking that he doesn't have a job.

"Really it does feel like there's anything different," the New York Yankees captain said Thursday about becoming a free agent for the first time. "I understand there's negotiations that are going to come and those sorts of things, but for me personally I don't feel any different."

Jeter and his agent, Casey Close, met with general manager Brian Cashman, managing general partner Hal Steinbrenner and team president Randy Levine on Monday in Tampa, Fla. Jeter said the meeting "set the framework" for contract negotiations and went well.

"It really wasn't that big of a deal," he said. "It wasn't like meeting people for the first time. It really wasn't that complicated."

Cashman, Jeter and fellow free agent Mariano Rivera were all together in New York on Thursday night, but not for negotiations. Before attending former manager Joe Torre's Safe At Home Foundation benefit, they couldn't avoid contract talk.

"It'd be nice to get it over with so you don't have to answer any more questions," Jeter said. "It's not just reporters. You walk down the street and people want to know, 'Come play for this team. Come play for that team.'"

Cashman described the negotiations with Jeter as in their "infancy stages."

"He wants us as much as we want him," Cashman said.

Rivera said of his contract negotiations: "I don't know anything."

Cashman's busy week also included sitting down with free-agent target Cliff Lee and his wife in Little Rock, Ark., on Wednesday. It was the first time Cashman had met the ace left-hander.

"Just seemed like a great guy that's not very excitable, excellent at what he does, knows what he wants to do," Cashman said. "Wants to put his family in the best position possible. Wants to be happy. Wants to be successful. Wants to be part of a winner." The Yankees' competition probably will include the Texas Rangers, who acquired Lee in July and rode him to their first World Series appearance.

"This is a place that intrigues them a great deal," Cashman said of the Lees coming to New York. "But unfortunately there's other places I'm sure intrigue them as well."

Cashman also met with Jorge Posada on Monday. The 39-year-old catcher had arthroscopic surgery to repair a small tear in the meniscus of his left knee Wednesday.

"We had a good, honest, direct conversation," Cashman said. "He was professional. All he wants is it doesn't feel like there's anything different, and he wants to play. If things go the way we're drawing it up, he'll be in the lineup as the DH. But I told him he needs to prepare as a catcher, at the same time, because it doesn't mean things will go the way you expect."

Posada was limited to 120 games last season, including 83 at catcher, as he shared time with Francisco Cervelli. Jesus Montero, a Triple-A All-Star at Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, is expected to be brought up some-time next season. The Yankees also have another promising prospect in Double-A catcher Austin Romine.

"I'm sure he's going to want to prove that he has more games in him to catch," Cashman said. "I'm sure Montero's going to want to prove it's time for him to catch. I'm sure Romine's going through that. 'Hey, why is Montero getting all the ink? They should be writing about me.' I'm sure Cervelli is in the middle of this thing saying, 'Hey, this is a bunch of (junk). I should be the guy they're talking about being the everyday guy." It creates great competition. That's what I want."

Cashman was also searching for a pitching coach after Dave Eiland was fired following the season. The GM started interviews Thursday, talking to bullpen coach Mike Harkey and Oakland Athletics roving pitching instructor Gil Patterson.

Cashman must decide just how valuable Jeter is on and off the field as he comes off a season in which he hit a career-low .270 and turned 36.

"I'm glad I'm not Brian Cashman that has to put a dollar sign on it," Torre said. "Asked if other teams would pursue Jeter and Rivera, Cashman said, "Hope not. I'm sure we'll wind up paying them as if they are."
Conference finish propels Belles to NCAA Championships

By MAJA GUSTIN
Sports Writer

The Belles secured their highest-ever conference finish at the MIAA Championships and are ready to carry that momentum into the NCAA Division III Regionals.

Led by sophomore Julia Kenney, Saint Mary’s followed Calvin and Hope in the MIAA Championships for a third-place finish.

“Securing third place in the conference was huge for us as a team,” Belles coach Jackie Bauters said. “It was a big confidence booster and allowed the team to see what their true potential is individually and collectively.

Though Bauters says the team has had “positive feelings and success” all year, she believes the MIAA finish will help propel them forward going into regionals.

“I believe it has given them more drive to push themselves,” Bauters said. “Everyone learned something different coming out of Championships that needs to be applied to the regional meet, so they have been working on their area of improvement. The team is really working on just putting all the pieces together to run the best race possible. They have all of the tools and work in place, so it’s really about applying the race strategy to get them to the finish line knowing it was a smart race, and they don’t have anything left.”

The Belles have several standout leaders and runners to thank for their recent success.

“I think what really distinguishes this year form other years is the cohesion of the team and their shared vision,” Bauters said. “Our captains, [senior] Carrie Nebesny and [junior] Joanne Almond have really helped to keep the team focused on our goals and disciplined throughout the season.

“That being said, this team is unique because everyone plays an active role in our success.”

Bauters noted several top performances from the Belles at the championships and predicts improvement going into regionals.

“Julia (Kenney) is looking to make a run at qualifying for nationals,” Bauters said. “Everything in practice says she has what it takes to compete for a position, but it is going to be tough, so we’re looking to see her shine whether she makes the cut or not.”

“Joanne is ready to have a standout race,” Bauters said. “We haven’t even seen the tip of her potential yet, and I feel confident the mental preparation she’s been doing will lead to a great race.”

The final five should combine with Kenney and Almond for a tremendous race.


“After they scored, we were on the sideline. We just looked at each other and smiled,” White said of the Baltimore Ravens moments like this. “We knew we were going to go down there and get what we needed to win the game.”

Ryan needed less than a minute to pull off an 80-yard drive, hooking up with Michael Jenkins on a huge third-down pass along the sideline before hitting his favorite receiver for the winner.

“After they scored, we were on the sideline. We just looked at each other and smiled,” White said of the Baltimore Ravens moments like this. “We knew we were going to go down there and get what we needed to win the game.”

Ryan rolled to his left to get White open, and White hopped up, screaming with joy.

White was listed as questionable for the game after hurting his right knee in the Ravens’ win over Tampa Bay and practicing only once during the short week. But he had a big smile when he danced out of the tunnel during the pregame introductions and clearly wasn’t bothered.

He finished with 12 catches for 184 yards, giving him a staggering 70 catches for the season. Ryan has 42 catches, with 26 going for 100 yards or more, completing 32 of them for 316 yards and 5 touchdowns.

“We’ve been in these situations before,” said Ryan, who improved to 18-1 when starting at home. “We were confident.

NFL

Ryan leads Falcons to home win over Ravens

Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan led his team to a hard-fought 26-21 win over the Baltimore Ravens on Sunday.

With just over a minute left in the game, Ryan found Michael Jenkins on a huge third-down pass along the sideline before hitting his favorite receiver for the winner.

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ND CROSS COUNTRY

Runners to wrap up season

By MAIJA GUSTIN
Sports Writer

The Irish head into the final leg of their season running high after fifth- and sixth-place finishes at the Big East Championships.

Two weeks ago, the Irish men finished fifth out of 14 teams while the women ranked sixth out of 16.

Senior Dan Jackson led the No. 30 Irish men, finishing 12th overall with a time of 25:32. Freshman Martin Grady followed, finishing 20th overall in 25:59 with sophomore Jeremy Lee.

For the women, freshman Kelly Curan finished 42nd and 47th, respectively. Junior Rachel Velarde and sophomore Rebecca Tracy followed in 33rd, trailing by 30th. Senior Erica Watson and freshman54 Meg Ryan led the pack, finishing 10th overall with a time of 25:32. No. 30 Irish men, finishing 12th out of 16.

Villanova won the women's race and was followed up by Louisville, Providence and Villanova.

For the women, freshman Meg Ryan led the pack, finishing 30th. Senior Erica Watson followed in 33rd, trailed by sophomore Rebecca Tracy in 38th. Junior Rachel Velarde and freshman were Kelly Curan 42nd and 47th, respectively.

Villanova won the women's title. Georgetown finished second while Syracuse came in third. The top five was rounded out by Providence and West Virginia.

This weekend, the Irish head to Oakland University for the NCAA Great Lakes Regional. They will face a slate that includes Butler, Cincinnati, Dayton, Eastern Michigan, Indiana State, Indiana, Marquette, Miami (Ohio), Michigan, Michigan State, Oakland, Ohio State, Purdue, Toledo, Valparaiso and Wisconsin.

Wisconsin is currently ranked No. 5 in the nation on the men's side while Indiana is No. 12. For the women, Michigan State is No. 16 while Michigan is No. 18. Toledo is No. 30. In the 2009 Regionals, the men finished seventh overall out of 30 teams. The women won the 32-team women's race.

The first five in 2009 consisted of Wisconsin, Michigan State, Ohio State, Indiana and Butler.

Contact Maija Gustin at mgustin@nd.edu

NBA

Chicago routes road-weary Golden State

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Derrick Rose and the Chicago Bulls knew exactly how to take advantage of a tired opponent.

Luol Deng scored 26 points, Rose had 25 and Chicago raced to a 30-point lead in the first half en route to a 120-90 romp over the weary Golden State Warriors on Thursday night.

"When you see a team come in on a back-to-back you've got to get up on offense and get down the court and push the ball," Rose said. "It starts with the defense getting a lot of deflections, guys rebound the ball good and push it. That's when we're dangerous."

Rose added 13 assists for his third double-double of the season. He finished one assist shy of his career best, which he's increased twice already this season. Rose is handing out 9.6 assists per game, 3.3 better than he averaged in either of his first two NBA seasons.

Monta Ellis had 24 points to lead the Warriors, who pulled out a 122-117 victory in New York on Wednesday night.

"Monta is one of the best scorers in the league," Bogans said. "At practice they were killing me today, saying he might have 50 tonight.

"I went home and got ready to play. I wanted to come in and make everything tough for him. He's a great player. And they did a great job of helping me out also."

Rose and Deng combined for 39 points in a first half that Chicago dominated in every facet of the game. The Bulls outrebounded Golden State 26-20 and forced 11 turnovers (leading to 21 points) while committing only four. They outshot the Warriors 51.1 percent to 39.1 percent.

Still, Bulls coach Tom Thibodeau said he was never really satisfied with the big lead.

"You never feel comfortable with 30-point leads," Thibodeau said. "They can score quickly. I thought it was important for us to get off to a lead and play from a lead. The way they score points, you can never relax."

Senior Dan Jackson runs in the Notre Dame Invitational Oct. 1.

Senior Dan Jackson will be running in his last collegiate race this weekend.

He is making God known, loved and served.

He fought for the return of democracy in Chile.

He brings hope through ACE to countless children in Catholic schools across America.

He teaches a new generation of committed leaders at the University of Notre Dame.

What could you do?

Come and see...
Irish hope to rebound from loss to Purdue

By JOE WIRTH Spot News

Coming off a loss to Purdue last weekend, Notre Dame will compete against the University of Utah Friday.

The Utes lost their last two meets two weeks ago against Denver. Junior Eric Bonicelli and sophomore Garret Beemann will lead the Utes at the meet after victories in their previous meet. Bonicelli won the 200-yard butterfly, while Beemann came in first in the 100-yard freestyle.

The Irish will counter the Utes’ attack in those races with Tyler Gauger in the 200 butterfly and Frank Dyer in the 100 freestyle.

Senior captain Mike Sullivan said that he wants this next meet against Utah as a springboard for the rest of the season.

“Everyone is very excited,” Sullivan said. “We’ve been working hard and we’re in a good position for the meet.”

“I think every one of the starting five will be in a good position for the meet, but for the rest of the season including the Big East and NCAA meets,” Sullivan said.

The meet against the Utes will mark the fifth meet for the Irish. Irish coach Tim Welsh said that he looks for gradual improvement in the meets early in the season.

“We are putting all of our eggs in the improvement basket,” Welsh said. “This is the last home meet this semester, so we are very excited.”

The Utes have not faced the Irish since the 2005 Notre Dame Invitational and Welsh said facing an unfamiliar team is a big challenge.

“They are an unknown team from a good conference,” Welsh said. “They are from altitude, so that means something.”

The meet will start tomorrow at 5 p.m. at the Rolfs Aquatic Center.

Contact Joe Wirth at jwirth@nd.edu

ND VOLLEYBALL
Squad travels for final games

By MICHAEL TODISCO Spot Writer

The Irish hope for a successful weekend in the Garden State, as they wrap up their regular season with conference matches on the road at Rutgers and Seton Hall.

As their season comes to a close, Irish coach Becca Bruszewski reflected on how her team as grown over the season.

“We made tremendous strides this year, with definite progress from week to week,” McGraw said. “We’ve got a couple of things we could do fundamentally,” she said.

Despite the lopsided score against Michigan Tech, Notre Dame had plenty to work on, including zone offense and man-to-man defense, McGraw said.

“We felt there’s some things we could do fundamentally,” she said.

That may be all the time they have to work on the basics for a while, which McGraw said is fine with her team.

“The players’ perspective, generally there’s too much practice and not enough games,” McGraw said. “They’re definitely ready to get to the games.”

Contact Laura Myers at lmyers2@nd.edu
**Women's Swimming**

Fall season concludes with Ohio St. scrimmage

By CORY BERNARD

The Irish will conclude the fall season Sunday against Big Ten competitors Michigan State, Ohio State and Purdue in a scrimmage hosted by the Buckeyes in Columbus.

Coming off a scrimmage last weekend against the Hoosiers, Notre Dame will face a tougher lineup this weekend, according to Irish coach Martin Stone.

“We’re swimming against two teams who were in the NCAA last year — Michigan State and Ohio State,” he said. “We’re excited to face some very, very fine programs.

The scrimmage format allows the Irish to test various crew combinations in true racing format against tough competition without any of the results actually counting. Stone said his squad is eager to improve upon last week’s showing.

“We’re excited. We’re looking to row a little faster than last weekend,” Stone said. “We’re excited to face some very, very fine programs."

Some very, very fine programs.

The programs.

**ND Women's Swimming**

Irish to face Utah in the pool Friday in dual

By MICHAEL TODISCO

Sports Writer

Before Notre Dame battles Utah on the gridiron Saturday, the schools will meet Friday at the Rolfs Aquatic Center for a showdown in the pool.

Notre Dame will be looking to rebound from a narrow defeat last weekend against Purdue, in which the meet was decided in the final relay.

Senior leader Samantha Maxwell hopes the team can make an important mental adjustment coming off the loss to the Boilermakers for the Utah meet.

“When we swim Purdue last week, they came at us from the very start,” Maxwell said. “Going into Utah we need to make sure that as a team, we are engaged in every race, whether we are physically swimming the race, or cheering on a teammate.

Maxwell and the Irish are looking forward to a challenging meet against the Utes, which will be the final dual meet for Notre Dame as well as parent’s weekend.

“Utah should be exceptional competition for us,” Maxwell said. "They have some very talented swimmers on their squad that are coming to race for a win. It should be a fun meet to compete in and our team is excited to host them on our parents’ weekend.

The team focused on team unity this week in practice. Maxwell stressed that team cohesion will help the Irish as a unit during meets.

“Our focus this week has been on training hard and backing each other up in workouts,” Maxwell said. "If we are able to invest in each other’s swims at our meets. It is important for everybody to be involved in their teammate’s swims, helping them through challenges and celebrating their successes.

The meet begins Friday at 5 p.m. at Rolfs Aquatic Center.

Contact Michael Todisco at mtodisco@nd.edu

**Waldrum**

Continued from page 24

have been really good for us.”

In order to encourage attendance, admission to Friday’s contest will be free for all Notre Dame students.

Attendance for the match with the Huskies was just 416, and Waldrum said that home field advantage was simply not a factor in the game.

Waldrum did, however, mention that the early exit from the conference tournament did give the coaching staff an opportunity to evaluate personnel decisions, hinting that a couple of lineup changes could be in effect for Friday’s tilt.

“We looked at some of the personnel we were using,” Waldrum said. “While we were a little reluctant to make changes because we were winning, I think sometimes when you lose like we did, and then a few weeks where you haven’t been great, it makes it easier to make those changes.”

No. 4 seeded Notre Dame (12-2-1, 9-0-2 Big East) has never faced New Mexico (12-2-5, 5-6-2 Mountain West), but the Irish have won their previous two NCAA opening-round matchups against first-time opponents Toledo and IUPUI.

“You don’t really know how [the Lobos] are going to come out, because it’s their first time in,” Waldrum said, “but I think you expect them to come out just flying and just happy to be here. One thing we’ve seen in watching game tape is they’re a very well organized team defensively.

Led by sophomore Kelli Cornell between the pipes, the Lobos have maintained a 0.39 goals against average and a .913 save percentage, giving them the second-ranked defense in the nation.

While the past two weeks has given the squad a chance to refocus and prepare for New Mexico, Notre Dame’s greatest advantage may be a healthier Courtney Bargy.

The junior midfielder missed the majority of the regular season due to injury, but showed signs of regaining her form in limited minutes during the final stretch of the season.

“She’s getting closer,” Waldrum said. “I think we were a little worried with the number of minutes she played on previous weekends, but I think she’s getting closer to being able to play 90 minutes in every game. She’s getting awful close to being where she needs to be for the rest of the way.”

A victory on Friday sends the Irish into a second-round match against the winner of the contest between Illinois and Southern California earlier in the day.

While North Carolina will be competing in the same region, Waldrum is confident in his team’s ability to compete and win on the road, especially in Chapel Hill, N.C.

“The Irish have won three of the last four contests at North Carolina, including a victory in the third-round of the NCAA Championships in 2007.

“If you’re going to win a national championship, you have to beat them (the Tar Heels) somewhere along the way, whether it’s going to be in the third round or the championship game,” Waldrum said.

“I hate that cliché about one game at a time, but really at this time of the year you better just focus on that next game or you could be in trouble.”

The Irish take the field Friday at 7:30 p.m. at Alumni Stadium. Sunday’s second-round matchup will be at 1 p.m.

Contact Chris Masoud at cmasoud@nd.edu

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at one level and they probably should be because they’ve been in our program for three or four years, and they’ve all been in college four or five years and certainly that’s a great advantage.

“I think the first thing is Scott Martin has learned to play well with them and they’ve learned to bring Scott Martin along because they know how much we need him,” Brey continued. “That was the first order of business as we got into practice — getting him comfortable, getting him confident.”

The Irish are also looking for freshman guard Eric Atkins to contribute while running Notre Dame’s offensive attack.

“I’m really thrilled with where [Atkins is] at — he’s done everything we’ve asked him to do,” Brey said.

Georgia Southern, who plays in the aptly named Southern Conference, has never faced Notre Dame, but the Irish are 19-1 all-time against Southern Conference foes. The team’s only conference loss was a 54-51 loss to Davidson in the 1982-83 season.

The Eagles won their lone exhibition game 59-55 against Fort Valley State last Friday. In that game, they started three freshmen along top with junior Ben Drayton III and senior Rory Spencer, Georgia Southern’s second and third ranked returning scorers. Top scorer Willie Hanson didn’t play in the contest.

On Sunday, Notre Dame will face Liberty for their second matchup in as many years, with the Irish winning 91-72 last season. The Flames return a young squad that features just five upperclassmen. Their top returning player is junior captain Jesse Sanders, who started all 31 games for the Flames a year ago, and sophomore guard Evan Gordon, Liberty’s top returning scorer with 12 points per game and brother of former Indiana standout Eric Gordon.

The Irish will tipoff against the Eagles at 8:30 p.m. Friday and Sunday at 2 p.m. against Liberty at the Purcell Pavilion.
Jackson
continued from page 24

play to a higher level. It’s always a challenge playing at Yost, because it is an intimidating place,” he said. “I’ve always thought our team relished playing there.”

More importantly, however, will be the Wolverines (5-2-3, 4-1-0 CCHA) on-ice challenge, as Michigan is one of the deepest, most well-rounded teams the Irish will face all season.

“Obviously the crowd’s against you, but you have to be more concerned about the talent Michigan brings to the table,” Jackson said. “I think Michigan has got the best depth up front, on the back end they’re a great defensive team. They’ve got the best bodies in the conference. They’ve got the best goaltending in the conference.”

The Wolverines play a fast-paced, up-tempo game that has given Notre Dame some problems earlier this season. The Irish got off to poor starts against similar attacking philosophies from Boston College and Boston University earlier this year.

“I know they’re very skilled and very fast. I just expect them to play very good and very fast hockey,” Ridderwall said. “We try to practice at a very fast pace, and that’s the main thing we’re doing to prepare ourselves.”

Jackson wants his team to counter speed with speed.

“We want to go at them. We don’t want to sit back,” he said. “I think our team is a little more capable of playing that up-tempo style against a team like that than maybe we’ve been in the past.”

The Irish and Wolverines currently rank first and second in the conference in goals scored per game, and Ridderwall said, “We’re going to have to play a fast-paced, up-tempo style against a team like that. We’re going to have to play with speed. We’re going to have to play a fast-paced, up-tempo game against a team like that, no matter who we’re playing.”

“We want to go,” he said. “Everybody’s going to be looking good. Everybody practiced. Everyone was looking great.”

When asked what was most important, Jackson said, “I think our team is a fast-paced, up-tempo team.”

“The key for the Irish will be limiting costly mistakes that turn into odd-man situations. ‘We’re going to have to play extremely well to have any type of success,’ Jackson said.

“They thrive on transition and if you make bad plays with the puck, they’re going to burn you, so you have to be really responsive and intelligent. Making sure that you minimize the number of turnovers that you make.’

The Irish will be cognizant of the meaning of this weekend’s series.

“It’s always different, you know, Notre Dame and Michigan — in any sport,” Ridderwall said.

Notre Dame and Michigan clash Friday and Saturday in Ann Arbor at 7:35 p.m. each night.

Contact Allan Joseph at ajoseph2@nd.edu

Sophomore midfielder Dillon Powers shoots on goal during Notre Dame’s 2-1 victory over Marquette Nov. 6.

Sutton
continued from page 24

The No. 11 Irish (10-4-4, 6-2-1 Big East) are seeded No. 2 in the Blue Division of the tournament, just behind the undefeated No. 1 Cardinals (15-0-2, 9-0), who are at the top of the conference rankings.

“Playing a team like Louisville could do good things for our confidence and do good things going down the stretch,” Sutton said. “So going through the whole season winning the Big East Tournament would mean a lot to us. That’s the top of the national tournament.”

This is the fourth year in a row that the Irish make a semifinal appearance in the conference tournament, and their eighth trip overall to the semifinals.

Notre Dame and Louisville have played each other for the last two years in the conference semifinals. Last year, the Irish won 4-3 on penalty kicks, and in 2008 the Irish won 1-0.

The Cardinals and the Irish met once earlier in the season in Louisville, Ky., where the Irish fell 2-0. Though the teams were tied 0-0 in the first half, Louisville notched both of their goals in the second half to win the game.

“The game has kind of been built up since we played Louisville last,” Sutton said. “They took it to us a little bit. We’ve been looking forward to this game to get our second chance that they. Hopefully we take advantage of it.

Though Louisville will be a challenging competitor, the Cardinals have the task of breaking Notre Dame’s current five-game win streak. If the Irish win, they will take on the either No. 1-seeded Cincinnati or No. 5-seeded Providence.

The match will be aired live on CBS College Sports at 7:30 p.m.

“We had our training session today. Everyone practiced. Everyone was looking great,” Sutton said. “We’re going to have to play with speed. We’re going to have to play a fast-paced, up-tempo game against a team like that.”

“We want to go at them. We don’t want to sit back,” Sutton said. “Everyone was looking great. Everyone practiced. Everyone was looking great.”

“We want to go,” Sutton said. “It’s all up to us now.”

Contact Molly Sammon at msammon@nd.edu

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WILL SHORTZ

Answer:

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ACROSS

1 Use a joystick

2 Biblical figure who received the curse of Ham

3 Somewhat

4 Massive, in Japanese

5 Country

6 Quail flock

7 Words of

8 Strip teaser?

9 Toughened

10 Seemingly

11 Workers may be

12 Somewhat

13 What can give

14 Big shot

15 City where A.A.

16 “Driving Miss

17 Like collision

18 Conservative

19 Popular bar

20 “I never ___

21 Lake Chapala’s

22 “Alice ___ It

23 Delivery that

24 Ordered

25 Wrap in sheets

26 They’re on the

27 The great

28 Fix, as a bow

29 Fix, as a bow

30 Toughe

31 Things to come

32 Sound made

33 Basketball

34 Maximally

35 Elegantly

36 It’s worth a

37 Sound made

38 Pantry

39 Soft, now

40 What a compact

41 His vet is Liz

42 Green

43 Rolls out for sale

44 Reply to a pushy

45 Think worthy of

46 Change, at times

47 Turned down

48 What big

49 Tough row to

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THE MATING RITUAL

Saturday, November 13, 2010 page 23

THE JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VILIC

SYKAH

BAFLLE

CRAFTO

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Yesterday’s Jumbles: GANEL FUNKY POPLIN HEIFER

Print your answer here:

 tuần qua: Thảm họa từ lăng giáo lý như thế nào?

JOHN FLATLEY

JAMES SOLLITTO, CODY ECKERT and JOHN FLATLEY

THE MATING RITUAL

SCOTT MITCHELL and MATT MOMONT

PROBABILITIES

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Mike Argirion and Jeff Knurek

JEFF KNUREK MIKE ARGIRION

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

NOW arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

WILL SHORTZ

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Leonardo DiCaprio, Jr., Colin Hanks, etc.

Happy Birthday! You have plenty to gain this year but don’t neglect your health, well- being or a relationship that means a lot to you. You will be greater success if you are patient and practical, working strategically toward your goal. Surround yourself with people who are trying to do you a favor. Now might be the time to exercise your leadership skills. An emotional issue must not be allowed to hinder a decision you need to make.

TARZUS (April 20-May 20): Take a close look at what’s being offered. Before you make a major decision, you’ll need to verify the facts. Use your conservative nature to evaluate all the available data, then make your move. Your foresighted, active nature will give you the upper hand when it comes to steering your way. A creative idea will be successful.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Financial discussions will pay off in terms of what you may earn or invest in a project that catches your interest. Taking care of money matters will help your plans to make decisions that meet in the addressed on the spot.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Address the changes that need to be taken care of at home. Re-decorating or make your surroundings more friendly, interacting with progressive and productive individuals will add value to advancing, as well.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You may feel like throwing your weight around verbally but be just a little used to the way you anticipate. Arguments are apparent if you choose to express controlling. Rebounds and second chances will come on the fence.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Talks will pay off if dealing with friends, neighbors or relatives. Business problems at home will pass if you start compromise. Concentrate on your home life and working on a self-improvement project that will bring you greater confidence.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): There is plenty to be hopeful about but first you must be face to face with your skills. Expenses are up and the possibilities will be endless. Sudden and unexpected change will pay you a prairie possession.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your family activities will bring about changes that will not be easy to control. Someone from your past will cause problems for you perhaps on or personally. Don’t take others, but let your social side shine.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don’t jump to conclusions when making calls and listen to the pros. Then you’ll make a plan. You want to make a plan to achieve your resolutions and update old ideas or projects. Familiar change and opportunity will present itself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A secret must be kept if you want to avoid a costly problem. You need to make a decision you aren’t afraid of standing in the way of progress. Do your best to move forward to take part in what’s going on around you instead of getting sucked into the drama.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Avoid making promises or signing up for something that is probably a waste of time. Be creative with your finances and you will be able to come up with a plan that will give you free access to cash and leave your financial

BIRTHDAY BUBBLE: You are practical but adaptable if something appears to be better than what you already have. You strive for knowledge or something to change.

Eugenia’s Web sites: eugeniaalatar.com for confidential consultations;

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FOOTBALL

Two quarterback recruits to visit campus this weekend

By DOUGLAS FARMER
Sports Editor

One game removed from losing its starting quarterback for the season, Notre Dame now has two four-star quarterback recruits visiting for the weekend.

North Carolina verbal commitment Everett Golson announced his plans to visit earlier in the season, but Florida native Jacoby Brissett only announced his plans Thursday, after this week’s “Irish Insider” had gone to print. “[Brisset] is another four-star, big-time quarterback,” said Mike Frank, an Irish recruiting analyst who runs the ESPN-affiliated IrishSportsDaily.com. “He can run, but he also comes from more of a pro-style offense in high school.”

“[Brisset] just came back from watching the LSU vs. Alabama game, and has an LSU offer, so this is a big-time player,” Frank said. “I think he just wants to check [Notre Dame] out. He is a good student, and he’s been honest, this is a very good opportunity for a quarterback. With [Irish junior quarterback] Dayne Crist out, a quarterback could come in and have a chance to play right away, and every quarterback is looking for that opportunity.”

Joining the quarterbacks in visiting this weekend is an offensive tackle who could someday be protecting them. Frank said Jay Whitmire could fit in well with the type of recruiting class Irish coach Brian Kelly and his staff are putting together.

“He’s a guy who’s a pretty big kid and plays physical at the point of attack,” Frank said. “Notre Dame has kind of struggled in the run game, so they need to get that nasty disposition on the offensive line, and I think that is what they see in Whitmire.”

Whitmire, Golson and Brissett could join a recruiting class that includes numerous four-star recruits such as running back Justice Hayes and defensive end Stephon Tuitt.

“There are a lot of fantastic players in this class,” Frank said. “But more importantly, what exists in this class that I don’t think has previously, it is a class full of tough kids, that are very physical and can run. I think the one thing Brian Kelly is really trying to fix is the toughness you need to have in four games at this level. From that standpoint, he couldn’t do a better job of getting that kind of player who will turn this around.”

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ND WOMEN’S SOCCER

Road to the Cup

Irish host New Mexico in NCAA first round

By CHRIS MASOUD
Sports Writer

While the aftermath of a loss can follow a team into its next matchup, the Irish take the pitch on Friday with a simple motivating factor — one more loss and the season is over. Notre Dame will take on New Mexico in the first round of the NCAA Championships, the first time the team has laced up its cleats since a 2-0 loss to Connecticut in the quarterfinals of the Big East Championships on Oct. 31.

“The two weeks have been really good — probably our two best weeks of training,” Irish coach Randy Waldrum said. “I’ve never been a big believer in losing is a good thing, I would rather have won and have gone on and won the conference tournament. But since we didn’t, I think the two weeks

see WALDRUM/page 20

MEN’S BASKETBALL

Georgia Southern first up in regular season

By MIKE GOTTIMER
Sports Writer

Notre Dame kicks off its regular season against Georgia Southern Friday in its first Division I game of the post-Harangody era. Although the Irish will be without one of the greatest players in program history, Irish coach Mike Brey knows that his team is up to the challenge of playing without Harangody.

“One of my themes for this group has been, ‘We did it for six games in 2009-10 without Lake, now can we do it for six months?’” Brey said before the season to

see BREY/page 21

HOCKEY

Notre Dame to face Michigan

By ALLAN JOSEPH
Sports Writer

No. 11 Notre Dame renews its oldest hockey rivalry this weekend when it travels to Ann Arbor to take on CCHA rival No. 8/9 Michigan.

The trip will take the Irish (6-2-1/4-1-1 CCHA) to one of college hockey’s most inhospitable venues, Yost Arena.

“The fans are right over you, so it’s a great experience,” Irish senior alternate captain Calle Ridderwall said. “You know what you’re getting yourself into. I think it’s very motivating going into Yost.”

Notre Dame coach Jeff Jackson agreed with Ridderwall, and said the hostile atmosphere helps his team

see JACKSON/page 22

MEN’S SOCCER

Conference semifinals loom large

By MOLLY SAMMON
Sports Writer

The Irish will play Friday in the Big East Championship Semifinal game against the top team in the country, the Louisville Cardinals, at Red Bull Arena in Harrison, N.J., home of the New York Red Bulls. A win would send the Irish to the conference finals for the 14th time in program history.

Tomorrow’s game is going to be huge, the biggest game of our season so far,” junior midfielder Chris Sutton said. “Louisville is a team we want to play and we want to beat. Louisville has been growing as a program, they’re getting better everyday. We’ll be ready to play, they’ll be ready to play. It’ll be one of the most exiting games in the country.”

see SUTTON/page 22
A chance to make a Senior Day count

When these seniors signed their letters of intent to play for Notre Dame in February 2007, the Irish were coming off back-to-back BCS bowl appearances and had gone 19-6 over the past two seasons.

Four seasons later, it seems that nothing has gone according to plan.

Despite their struggles on the field, 15 of those 18 seniors that signed on 4 years ago are still on the Irish roster today. Going through the worst season in Notre Dame history and a tumultuous coaching change, these seniors have made it easy for players to transfer elsewhere. Frankly, who could have thought that so many players would exit the program that has gone 19-6 over the past two seasons.

Transfers are usually a staple of coaching changes and, especially given the poor performance on the field it would have been no surprise if these seniors looked at other schools. Two players transferred when Brian Kelly took over for Charlie Weis as Irish coach — one for reasons unrelated to football. While Kelly himself probably played some role in their decision to leave, these latter-day transfers were made easy for players to transfer elsewhere.

As important as the future is, though, a win over a ranked team is supposed to be the most emotional game on the schedule. Maybe it will help that Notre Dame will be playing a top-25 team, but these seniors, and the team as a whole, need to play like Senior Day means something to them. If they can harness that emotion, maybe, just maybe, this class will finally experience an elusive “Notre Dame moment.”

No, a win over Utah wouldn’t be the same as being a top-ranked USC team, but you can only play the games in front of you. After everything this class has been through, though, a win over a ranked team is something to celebrate, regardless of the logo on its helmet.

The Class of 2011 won’t win a national championship at Notre Dame. The seniors won’t even graduate with anything close to a winning record, but that doesn’t mean they can’t go out with a bang. It’s hard to say they don’t deserve it.

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

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The Observer.

FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Decommits open up slots

By DOUGLAS FARMER

After two losses on the field, Irish coach Brian Kelly and his staff suffered three more losses in their first attempt at a full recruiting class while at Notre Dame.

Three four-star recruits, offensive tackle Jared Prewitt, linebacker Clay Burton and defensive end Aaron Lynch, opted out of their verbal commitments to the Irish in the past two weeks.

“I think there are a lot of things players are looking for when they make that commitment,” said Mike Frank, an Irish recruiting analyst who runs the ESPN-affiliated site irishsportsdaily.com. “One is a good education, and another is they want to play for a big-time football program that gives you a chance to play for a national championship. And obviously, third, like any college student you want to have fun. I think for Notre Dame to get to that point, they are going to have to start winning some games.”

While Frank said the string of bad luck Kelly and the Irish have undergone is unlike any he has ever seen — from injuries to fake field goals to more injuries — he thinks recruits are failing to see the effects of that ill fortune.

“Kids are looking at it and saying that ‘I want to go to a program that can win a national championship,’” he said. “They just aren’t looking at the big picture and seeing why Notre Dame is losing.”

The decommits from the three heralded recruits, all given a four-star ranking by ESPN’s recruiting analysts, likely eliminates any chance of them coming to Notre Dame, Frank said.

“Once these guys decide to take visits, almost always the original school is out,” he said. “All three of them have confirmed to us that Notre Dame is out of the running.”

The decommits also opened up three more slots for other recruits. Fittingly, three recruits, two of which are four-star recruits as well, will visit campus this weekend and take in the Utah game from the sidelines.

Defensive end Brendan Scarlett, an Oregon native, could fill the spot left by Lynch. Scarlett, heavily recruited by most of the schools in the Pac 10, has long shown an interest in Notre Dame, Frank said.

“He’s a big-time player,” Frank said. “He’s been interested in Notre Dame for quite some time, and I think Notre Dame has a real good shot at him too. It’s his first time out here, and we’ll have to see what he thinks, but he is the kind of kid who I think will fit in well with the type of personalities already on the team.”

Four-star quarterback, and North Carolina native, Everett Golson will also be in town over the weekend. With the recent season-ending injury to Irish junior quarterback Dayne Crist, Golson could take advantage of an uncertain Notre Dame quarterback situation, Frank said.

“With the situation with Dayne being out, and they aren’t exactly sure if he’ll be back or not for the spring, this is an ideal situation for a quarterback,” Frank said. “And (Golson) wants to enroll early, so he would be here for spring football.”

“The thing that Golson brings that a Tommy Rees doesn’t, is that Golson is a tremendous athlete. He can run, and that has been one of the biggest problems of Notre Dame’s offense this year — you have to have a quarterback that can run.”

Also visiting campus this weekend are three-star recruit, and offensive line- man, Jay Whitmire and four-star recruit, and Irish com- mittee, offensive lineman Matt Hagger.

“Haggerly is obviously huge to this class. His talent is immense,” Frank said. “He is a perfect left tackle with a nasty disposition … I personally think he is one of the top two or three players in this class.”

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

Contact Douglas Farmer at dfarmer1@nd.edu

The Observer.
IAN WILLIAMS

Williams leads D-line until suffering MCL sprain

By SAM WERNER

Editor's note: This article first appeared in the Sept. 24 edition of The Observer.

Ask any football coach what the most important position is in a 3-4 defense, and the response is almost unanimous. No matter how talented the other players are, a defense will likely struggle without an effective nose guard to clog the middle of the line.

For the Irish, that responsibility falls on senior Ian Williams.

“We’ve given him an opportunity to play something that he’s good at,” defensive line coach Mike Elston said. “It’s on the center, whipping him. He’s using really good technique. He’s chiseled into indicators. He’s just doing a really nice job, and it’s important to him.”

New system, new position

Williams entered Notre Dame out of Altamonte Springs, Fla., in 2007 and was one of ESPN’s top 150 high school players. Recruited to play nose tackle in Carin Brown’s 3-4 system, Williams played in all 12 games his freshman year starting two. He totaled 45 tackles on the year and was named a Freshman All-American.

Since that first year, though, the Irish defense has switched defensive coordinators twice, and moved to defensive coordinator Jon Tenuta’s 4-3 scheme in 2009. The switch meant that Williams had to move to defensive tackle, and away from his natural position.

When new Irish coach Brian Kelly hired defensive coordinator Bob Diaco this off-season, it meant that there was once again a new system for Williams to learn. While he had to switch back to the 3-4, and Williams was moving back to his natural position.

While much has been made about the schematic changes, Williams said he was more excited about the new attitude the coaching staff brought.

“I knew a little bit about them, just watching Cincinnati and some of their games last year. I kind of read up on Coach Kelly. Coach Diaco, Coach Elston when they got hired,” Williams said. “I was really excited for the opportunity to have a new coaching staff and just try something new, start fresh.”

Williams said the technical changes on the Notre Dame defense weren’t as big a deal to him.

“It doesn’t make that much of a difference to me,” he said. “I’ll play what I need to play. Defense is defense. I know I’ve said that plenty of times, but I’m just trying to go out there and have fun on every play.”

In addition to Diaco, Kelly also hired strength and conditioning coach Paul Longo, who Williams said has been invaluable to his development.

“It’s all paying off,” Williams said before Notre Dame met Stanford on Sept. 25. “I mean, we’re 1-2 right now, but I think it’s paying off and we’re getting better.”

Old man on the line

In addition to Williams’ responsibilities on the field, he’s also the senior man on the Irish defense this season.

“I’m the old guy in the group now,” Williams said. “So I just feel like I have to be a role model for the younger guys.”

Elston said that Williams has been taking charge by his attitude in practice, as well.

“He’s been a leader, he’s been working hard,” Elston said. “Not a day goes by that I think he’s wasting his time, wasting four hours. He’s been doing a nice job. He’s locked in and having fun too.”

Williams said that over the off-season, he had freshman defensive lineman Braxton Leggee, who lives about a half-hour away in Florida, over to his house to show Leggee some workouts.

“I had him come down where I lived and just worked on some things this summer,” Williams said. “He just came down, I showed him some things to work on, and he just really worked on them by himself.”

Williams added that he modeled his leadership after the advice he got from seniors during his freshman year.

“I mean when I was a freshman, I had Trevor Laws, Justin Brown and [Pat] Kuntz who were the older guys,” he said. “They showed me how to play.”

The new-found leadership role became official against Michigan State on Sept. 18, when Williams was named a game-day captain, along with junior ends Kyle Rudolph and Trevor Laws.

Williams said he was caught a bit off guard when Kelly called him out at the Friday team meeting, but knew that someone back home would be very happy.

“I was very surprised and I was very thankful,” he said. “My mom’s been asking for four years, ‘Ian when are you going to be a captain?’ I’m really happy. ‘Ian when are you going to be a captain?’ ‘Mom, I’m a captain,’ so she was really proud of me.”

‘Clog the middle’

Against the Spartans, Kelly singled out Williams for his outstanding play.

“Yeah, he’s a man,” Kelly said. “I mean, he’s our man. He controlled the line of scrimmage from his position. Now, he’s got to have help at certain areas, but he was clearly a dominating player for us on the defensive side of the ball.”

While Kelly may have been pleased, Williams said he still has plenty to improve.

“I personally think I didn’t play that good, so I’ve still got a lot of work to do,” Williams said. “I really appreciate him calling me out and giving me a little pub, but I just feel personally that I still have a lot of things to work on.”

While the generic job description of a nose guard in a 3-4 defense is to “clog the middle,” Williams said it was more specific than that.

“My job is to make sure the ball bounces outside,” he said. “Make sure the ball doesn’t come in any of my gaps.”

Once it gets out there, Williams relies on junior defensive ends Kapron Lewis-Moore and Ethen Johnson to make plays. He called Lewis-Moore and Johnson “two of [his] best friends.”

“It helps with chemistry, talking on the field,” Williams said. “We can joke around about little things, keep everything level on the field.”

Despite Williams’ difficult job description, he didn’t miss a game for more than three seasons, until suffering a season-ending MCL sprain against Navy on Oct. 23.

Due to that injury, only linebacker Kerry Neal played in every game of the last four years.

“Me and Kerry, we’ve worked hard since we got here as freshmen,” Williams said. “We made a pact before we got here that we would just try and make plays in every game that we play in.”

One aspect of the game that is not part of Williams’ job description is pass defense, but in two of Notre Dame’s last five wins — this year against Purdue and last year against Washington State — Williams has recorded interceptions.

“It’s crazy because 3-4 linemen never get interceptions so it’s exciting I got two,” he said.

Against Purdue, Williams caught the ball after senior cornerback Gary Gray tipped it to him.

Williams said he owes Gray a night out to dinner for helping him get the pick.

With Williams currently tied for the team lead with one interception, and has his sights set on more.

“I’m trying to go for more,” Williams said jokingly. “I’m trying to lead the team.”

Notre Dame’s defense currently ranks 79th in the country in run defense, but throughout the season Kelly said it has seen improvement in the defense.

Being a defensive player, you don’t want the opposing offense to get any points, gain any yards or anything like that,” Williams said. “So, I mean, that’s a negative right there. But I can see a difference in us from last year.”

Elston said that while Williams’ strong play didn’t surprise him, he foresaw even more improvement during his senior year.

“I expected him to play the way he is playing right now, so it is not really a shock,” Elston said before the Stanford game.

“He is not yet, but he can be a dominant, dominant nose guard.”

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Williams played in every game during his first three seasons with the Irish before injuring his MCL during Notre Dame’s 35-17 loss to Navy on Oct. 23.
Gallup relishes both returning a kick and playing the piano

By LAURA MYERS
Spun Writers

A concert pianist sits alone on stage, showcasing his skills for an appreciative audience.

Fifth-year Barry Gallup, Jr. played piano from kindergarten to high school. As a Notre Dame student, he returned two kicks, and was a member of the band as well.

"He's just been very supportive," said his dad, Bobby Burger. "I didn't know if I was ever going to play again, because I had a pretty bad ankle injury. But that was a job I didn't want to give up.

In nine returns in 2009, Gallup totaled 163 yards. He competed for the job again this season, but fell on the depth chart.

"All the guys give me a hard time. They say the fifth years are old, so maybe I'm a step slow outside of football, as well," he said.

However, he has still played a significant role on special teams this year. Gallup has made three tackles on the season, including one for loss.

"A lot of people said I probably hadn't made a tackle since high school, but I don't think I even made too many tackles in high school," said Gallup, who is listed at 5-foot-11 and 190 pounds.

After the 2009 season, Gallup did not know whether he would come back for a fifth year. When the coaches offered, Gallup answered quickly.

"It wasn't really a decision for me. It wasn't a predicament," he said. "The opportunity to play at Notre Dame one more time, I didn't have any indecision on my part. Just to be around the opportunity to run out of the tunnel, and to play another season was something I was looking for."

Because he didn't know his situation, last season's Senior Day loss to Connecticut could have been Gallup's last game. However, he said the seniors are determined to make this year special.

"I think the main difference this year is we want to finish the game and you give them a fake smile. It's just not the same feeling when you lose your family's on the field after the game and you give them a fake smile. It's just not the same." 

The fifth year gave Gallup a chance to explore his interests outside of football, as well. He graduated with a degree in finance after just three years, and has spent the last two years taking graduate-level classes in other subjects that interest him — including piano.

"I don't think many of my teammates know that about me," he said. "You don't see a lot of football players and pianists walking around..."

That's something my mom was proud of," he said. "She was happy to hear that. I've got to keep my mom happy. She's the best.

In fact, part of the deal for Gallup to attend Notre Dame, which is far from his home in Wellesley, Mass., was that his mom would attend every one of his games.

"I'm really close with my family. My mom, my dad, my sister. They're all my best friends," said Gallup. "My mom actually never missed one of my games, all five years. She comes to every game. I'm forever grateful to her for everything she's done for me. And my dad, he's my biggest supporter. And my sister, she's my best friend.

After five tumultuous years at Notre Dame, Gallup said he is ready to face the real world.

"It's been crazy all the stuff that's happened," he said. "I think my experiences here have prepared me for life after football and everything I'll have to go through."

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BOBBY BURGER

Burger leaves starting spot at Dayton for ND

By CHRIS MASOUD
Spun Writers

Dayton scout team defensive player of the year as a redshirt freshman in 2007, a team-high eight sacks the following year, and a Division I FCS Mid Major National Football Championship in 2007 — that would be at the top of senior Bobby Burger's college football resume.

So why drop a starting spot at a respected collegiate program and transfer to Notre Dame?

"It's been a lifelong dream ever since I was a little kid," Burger said. "When I was at Dayton, I gave everything I had to the Dayton Flyers. But my grades were finally good enough, and academically interested and was accepted. It's been a dream come true.

Burger's dream developed at a young age, when he came to South Bend to watch football games as a kid. Burger, an offensive guard for the Irish in high school, was with his father playing on the national championship team of 1977. Burger has never been secret to follow in his footsteps.

"You really don't do anything," Burger said. "He's been so supportive of me throughout the entire walk-on process, earning a scholarship, playing — he's just been very supportive."

Burger's transfer from Dayton started when a turn-on out, putting in the work in the classroom. But once accepted at Notre Dame, Burger knew he could earn a spot on the team as a walk-on. After a very successful prep school experience, Burger and his fellow walk-ons forged a relationship known as the WOPU — the Walk-On Players Union.

"We joined the team, and we had three days a week, while we're practicing, of 5:30 a.m. workouts. Just a half-an-hour, no-stop, no-water, throw up a couple times, that's okay workouts. At practice, instead of practicing, we did conditioning drills because we weren't ready to play yet."

After emerging as a member of the team, Burger focused his attentions on showcasing his skills that brought a national title to Dayton — on the other side of the ball. The coaching staff converted Burger from a defensive end into a fullback and a tight end. Burger excelled in his new position on the scout team, earning a scholarship before the start of the regular season.

"I'm proud of that fact, the whole year — having your respect as a football player, and I think I did that through scout team. I won scout team player of the week several times, and it was just a matter of getting my respect that first year."

While Burger's role changed from starter to scout team player, the senior has embraced his role as working to improve the starters on the defense while ensuring that the practice offense mimics the style of each week's opposition.

"To see the [opposing] offense run the same plays you ran during the week and seeing the defense stop them — that's definitely satisfying knowing that you helped the defense by doing your part," he said.

In addition to his scout team role, Burger made 183 appearances on special teams for the Irish in 2009, including his first play in Notre Dame Stadium. Burger started on kickoff return for the first game of the 2009 season against Nevada.

"I'm thinking to myself, 'Okay, this is the first time I ever ran out of the tunnel, first time I ever put pads on, game jersey on. Just let this one be kick-off so I can kind of get the flow of the game down.'"

But after winning the toss, Nevada deferred the return.

"I get down in my stance, and it's kick-off return. Burger said. "All of a sudden, I'll never forget, I started smiling and I told myself, 'Let's just do this. This is awesome. This is cool. This is what you worked so hard for.'"

Burger's biggest play for the Irish came later in the season in a 24-21 victory against Purdue on Sept. 26. Burger caught a pass and broke a tackle for a nine-yard gain, good enough for an Irish first down on a critical third-and-long situation in the third quarter.

While the senior has relished his moments as a member of the football program, he said he has been especially grateful for his experiences with professors and friends off the field. For Burger, just attending a Notre Dame is a dream fulfilled.

"While Dayton was just a wonderful experience, there's only one Notre Dame," Burger said. "When I was growing up, just thinking about South Bend throwing a football, looking up at the Stadium and seeing all those guys run out there. Sometimes if you put your mind to a goal, even your wildest dreams can come true if you really work hard at it."

Contact Chris Masoud at cmasoud@nd.edu.
Moments of glory break through years of strife

By SAM WERNER
Spun Wine

Before Notre Dame Stadium public address announcer Mike Collins even announced the play, everyone in the building knew who just got the carry. No, the student section isn’t booing. They’re screaming “Humphahumph!”

Senior running back Robert Hughes has become familiar with that sound from the northwest corner of the Stadium. “[The cheer] means a lot,” Hughes said. “When I hear it, it just kind of gives me that extra motivation to say, ‘Hey, the fans are loving this, so keep doing it and keep going.’”

So when I hear it, it just makes me want to run harder and give that much more.”

Perhaps the one play that exemplifies Hughes’ extra effort came last season against Washington. With 2:20 left on the clock, the Irish scored a touchdown to go ahead 28-27. Hughes plowed up the middle on the two-point conversion attempt and was stuffed at the line of scrimmage. But then, the pile just started moving slowly towards the goal line until the line of scrimmage. Hughes said he could count on his ability to break tackles on play after play.

Hughes made an immediate push for playing time. He made special teams appearances in the first three games of his Irish career, and received his first carries in the fourth. Against Michigan State, he ran the ball six times, mostly in short-yardage situations, for 33 yards and scored his first touchdown. Just over a month later, though, tragedy struck. On Oct. 30, 2007, Hughes’ brother was shot and killed in Chicago. Despite the tremendous emotional turmoil, Hughes said the tight connections he forged at Notre Dame were invaluable throughout the grieving process.

“The whole Notre Dame community was excellent in a hard time — my teammates especially… A lot of things were going on, but my teammates were there to pick me up and give me a little bit of encouragement and peace of mind.”

Robert Hughes senior running back

Hughes, pictured running a play fake in April’s Blue-Gold Game, has accounted for 13 touchdowns and more than 1,100 rushing yards in his career.

In that weekend’s game against Navy, the Irish drove the ball down to the Midshipmen’s 3-yard line on their opening drive. Hughes came in and powered the ball into the end zone, giving the Irish the lead on the board. After the game, then-Irish coach Charlie Weis said Hughes was “going to get [the ball] every play until he got it in the end zone.”

“He gave me the opportunity, and I wanted to score touchdowns and help the team win. I got the ball and was able to get in there,” Hughes said. “I didn’t play the rest of the game because I was a little too emotional on the sideline, but it definitely felt great. That definitely would tie as one of my greatest moments [at Notre Dame].”

Later in the season, Hughes would see the field even more, and make some history in the process. In the final two games of the 2007 campaign against Duke and Stanford, he carried the ball 35 times for 246 yards and two touchdowns, Hughes, though, hesitates to pinpoint one moment or game as his favorite from the past four years. “It's just been a great four years,” he said. “In the course of a season, as many things happen — so many great things happen. To sit here and say there’s one special great moment would just not really shed light on all the time that I had here.”

A year later, Hughes saw his role on the team change slightly. When then-senior James Aldridge went down with an injury, Hughes was forced into duty at the fullback position.

“It just adds versatility to your resume,” he said of the position switch. “It’s just like having any other profession, going and getting experience in different things. Whatever I can do to help the team win, I’ll definitely try my hardest at it and do it because I love the guys on this team.”

When he did get the ball during the junior season, though, Hughes made the most of it. Even though his total carries decreased from 112 to 88, his rushing yards rose from 382 to 416 to go along with five touchdowns. In his first start of the season against Washington State, the junior had a career-high 24 carries for 121 yards and a score.

So far this season, Hughes has been used primarily as a blocking back in Irish coach Brian Kelly’s spread offense, but showed his effectiveness three weeks ago against Western Michigan, when he rushed the ball eight times for 63 yards. Hughes said he has also assumed a lead-by-example role in the Irish backfield this season.

“The leadership role that I play isn’t necessarily being a rah-rah guy,” he said. “It's really just continu- ing to fight. I think knowing what I’ve been through and having other guys look at me and see I’m still fighting, still standing strong, hopefully that inspires a lot of guys to keep doing this.”

Hughes said the most memorable part of his Notre Dame experience has been the strong bonds formed in the Irish locker room, through both wins and losses.

“It’s much different than just having regular friends because you’re playing the same things, you’re going through the same struggles,” he said. “It’s good to look over at the guy next to you and know that he’s bearing the same problem’s you’re bearing. You’re patting him on the back and he’ll put you on the back.”

He did note, however, that the reasons he came to Notre Dame in the first place encompassed more than just the football program. Though he considered numerous Big Ten schools during the recruiting process, he said the decision was “hands-down” Notre Dame.

“I could’ve gone to any other school, I could have played just as fine, but I wanted to come here and challenge myself academically,” he said. “I knew it was going to be difficult so pretty much took a leap of faith, I knew at the end of the day I’d be better for it.”

Has that challenge paid off?

“I’m much wiser, much smarter, or being a rah-rah guy,” he said. “It’s just sort of crept up on me. Feels like yes- terday I was running out of the tunnel for the first time.”

Whether or not he realizes it, Hughes’ senior year is winding down, but at the end of the long practices and after disappointing losses, though, there’s always one thing Hughes said he could count on when he goes home — his 1½-year-old Dugo Argentino, who will be there to greet him.

“He doesn’t care whether the day’s bad or good,” Hughes said. “It’s happy to see me and I come home happy to see him.”

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BRANDON WALKER
One of Walker's first kicks counts as his favorite

By MICHAEL TODISCO
Sports Writer

Many athletes chose Notre Dame at the end of their recruiting process because of the University’s unique blend of athletic tradition and academic excellence. For senior kicker Brandon Walker, it was fate. While kicking for his Midget football team in fifth grade, Walker's talents were identified by his hometown Findlay, Ohio, high school football coach called Walker over and told him that if he kept kicking, one of Findlay’s bigger colleges would take note for Notre Dame.

The story even shrugged off the coach's prediction as a long shot. During his senior season at Findlay High School, it seemed that Walker's skepticism was well founded. He had committed to play for Notre Dame, but never for Brickowi Petrino. 

The senior from Findlay chose a life on the Notre Dame football team for a job in the NFL, Walker's decision-making process was replaced by Notre Dame as the first school to call. Thinking back to the days of his high school football coach, Walker knew that it was meant to be.

Senior Derry Herlihy has played many roles for Notre Dame as a versatile scout team player.

By SAM WERNER
Sports Writer

New jersey number, new skill set, new persona — just another week for senior Derry Herlihy.

As a member of Notre Dame's scout team, it's Herlihy's job to mimic opposing players that the first team defense needs to prepare for.

"They'll give us a jersey number of someone on the other team, and we're that person for a week," he said. "I've played H-back, running back, wide receiver. But it's a ton of fun because you're doing something a little different every week."

That ability to play multiple positions gives Herlihy a unique role. 

"I'm kind of a hybrid, like an X-factor," he joked.

Herlihy made his first attempt at walking on to the team his freshman year, but didn't survive the 15 rounds of tryouts. Giving up, the Houston native returned a year later to fulfill his dream of playing football.

During the interim, Herlihy took his talents to the rugby gridiron, joining Notre Dame's club rugby team in its first season transitioning to Division I.

"Rugby is a man's game," Herlihy said. "You have to be a man to play rugby." 

It definitely toughened me up a little bit. Putting someone with pads on is a piece of cake after you do it without any pads," Herlihy returned to football full time and said that the main feeling when he made the team was "relief." After two rounds of tryouts, the 10 or so remaining walk-ons had to survive five weeks of 5:30 a.m. "workouts from hell," according to Herlihy.

"I was really excited when I made the first cut in tryouts," he said. "Then after that it was a constant worry of how did I do today? Who was watching national prominence to get cut? It was relief [when I made the team], because by that time all my friends thought I was on the team, so I didn't have to want to tell everybody. 'Oh, I got cut.'"

It's those friends, though, that helped define Herlihy's four years at Notre Dame. He said the connections he made during his time at Notre Dame have a special bond that the guys and coaches were always there for me. His desire to just be part of the team again is what motivated me to get back to shape."

Walker's greatest challenge at Notre Dame came not from his opponents, but rather from some of the fervent Irish fans. As a highly touted recruit, Walker certainly had high expectations from the Irish faithful.

"When Notre Dame made me an offer, I took it as a sign that I was meant to be. "I know that the fans are really passionate, but it was really hard to hear some of the criticism," Walker said. "We have really great fans, but at the same time we have heard plenty of really tough comments."

Despite a slow start to his career, Walker kicked a crucial 48-yard field goal in the third quarter to lead the Irish to victory. Walker said he would always remember his big game at the Rose Bowl.

"The game at UCLA was definitely my defining moment on the field," Walker said.

When he kicked the winning field goal, he was really excited when I took my visit, the football team in fifth grade, Walker said. "When I took my visit, the University's unique blend of athletics and academics immediately met with Walker. The group of talented freshmen was expected to lead Notre Dame back to national prominence.

Walker earned the starting kicker role his freshman year, a season in which the Irish went 3-9. Walker said that his tumultuous freshman season was a difficult adjustment from high school.

"It was tough to be thrown in there as a freshman and start losing because of the last 17 years I had been recruited came from winning programs," he said.

Although the season was a disappointing one for the Irish, Walker's favorite memory from the season is the time as a walk-on player came during that 2007 season. In the game at UCLA, Walker kicked a crucial 48-yard field goal in the third quarter to lead the Irish to victory. Walker said he would always remember his big game at the Rose Bowl.

"The game at UCLA was definitely my defining moment on the field," Walker said.

Despite a slow start to his career, Walker kicked a crucial 48-yard field goal in the third quarter to lead the Irish to victory. Walker said he would always remember his big game at the Rose Bowl.

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David Ruffer

Walk-on, now a starter, shatters Irish records

By DOUGLAS FARMER
Sports Editor

Editor's note: This article first appeared in the Oct. 15 edition of The Observer.

When David Ruffer walked off the practice fields Tuesday afternoon, two loyal autograph seekers quickly approached him and asked for his signature. Unsurprisingly, the senior walk-on kicker signed away something he never thought he would be in a position to do.

“It’s cool I guess,” Ruffer said a few seconds after putting the cap back on the provided Sharpie. “I never really thought of myself as somebody one day who would be signing autographs, but I’ll take what I can get. It’s neat to be in that position.”

Then again, Ruffer never really thought of himself as somebody who would be Notre Dame’s starting place kicker, having never missed a competitive field goal, even splitting the uprights from 50 yards away. In fact, the only aspect of Ruffer’s current life he could have anticipated is the one aspect that initially had been denied him — being a student at Notre Dame.

Denial serves its purpose

Ruffer’s father and grandfa-
ther graduated from Notre
Dame, as did a few of his uncles and his older sister, but when Ruffer received a response to his application, it was not the response anybody in the family had hoped for.

“I grew up loving Notre
Dame. I just wanted to be a
student first of all,” Ruffer
said. “I walked on there kicking,” he said. “and it's worked out
ever since.”

A field goal and a tryout

Once he transferred to Notre
Dame, Ruffer joined the Siegfried interhall football team, and after two games, in which he kicked one field goal and a couple of extra points, attempted to walk on with the Irish.

“I was more of when I would go out and practice (that I impressed people),” Ruffer said.

The tryout process was threefold — one night with only tees and the then-special teams coach Brian Polian, one night with a snapper and hold-
er and Polian, and a final night in front of then-Irish coach Charlie Weis.

“I was really nervous. These guys were going to see me for about 15 or 20 minutes, and if I don’t do really well, they will probably not want to see me again,” he said. “I just hoped I would perform to the best of my ability. I would have obviously been upset with myself if I came out here and didn’t do the best that I know I could have.

Impress them he surely did, as Ruffer does not remember missing a single kick in the three tryout sessions.

The rest is history

Ruffer only took one kick in a game in 2008, a point-after attempt that clanked off the upright. In 2009, Ruffer took over place kicking duties after incumbent Nick Tausch injured his foot, and Ruffer connected on nine of his 10 point-after attempts, and all five field goal attempts.

After nine games this season, he has made all 13 of his field goal attempts, bringing his Notre Dame career total to 19-
of-19. Including his one field goal as a Ramblaw, Ruffer has never missed a field goal attempt in competition.

By making kick after kick, Ruffer has raised the Notre Dame standard for place kick-
ers. His 18 consecutive made field goals bested Tausch’s school record of 14, as well as the previous record for most consecutive made field goals to open a career, which was previ-
ously 13.

“I try not to think about the streak,” he said. “Right now I’m zero-for-zero with Western Michigan coming up, and that is how I approach every game.”

Ruffer’s 50-yard kick against Pittsburgh tied the sixth-
longest field goal in Notre Dame history. The longest in school history was kicked in 1976 by Dave Reeve, a 53-
yarder. Reeve should not count his record safe as long as Ruffer is kicking, according to special teams coach Mike Elston.

“I see the kid kick 52 or 53 yards every day,” Elston said. “We were well in front of his threshold [on the 50-yard field goal] which is really about the 35-yard line.”

‘Kickers are head-cases’

After the Pittsburgh game, in which Ruffer also connected on 32- and 31-yard field goals, he attributed much of his success to junior holder Ryan Kavanagh, also a walk-on.

“Ryan Kavanagh is one of my best friends and he will say something to keep me calm,” Ruffer said. “But then from when the ball is snapped to when I kick it I don’t know what happens.”

Tuesday Kavanagh said he knows he needs to keep a close eye on Ruffer, if for no other reason than the position he plays.

“Kickers are head-cases,” Kavanagh said. “You have to be sure they are on the ball.

“I just give him a couple reminders, take it easy, make sure he takes a deep breath. I feel like he’s just focused on the kick.”

Elston said he has seen the

“head-case” in kickers that
Kavanagh refers to, but in Ruffer it is more of an even demeanor that Elston sees.

“The kickers that I’ve been around that are good athletes, that have a good demeanor, that aren’t just specialists as kickers and have done other things in their athletic career, they typically tend to be more competitive and more even-
keered when they take the field in pressure situations,” Elston said. “Because they are used to being in it.”

Whatever reasoning Kavanagh and Elston have for his success this season, Ruffer thinks he has found a groove simply because he has relaxed, in all areas of his life.

“I still work really hard [in school], but before I was really a perfectionist. Now I have grown up to a point where I realize things won’t always go your way,” Ruffer said. “That little bit of a laid-back attitude that has helped my focus a little bit.”

At some point, things on the football field won’t necessarily go Ruffer’s way. He may miss a field goal — believe it or not, he does miss them in practice. When the Saturday afternoon comes that one goes awry, Ruffer said he is ready to deal with that setback.

“You can only learn from mistakes,” he said. “You can’t make every single one, so it will happen eventually. The trick will be how I bounce back from that. It will happen, but I feel like I have a pretty strong head, so I’ll be okay.”

‘Not For Long’

If Ruffer keeps making each and every one of his field goals, questions concerning the NFL are bound to come his way.

Ruffer quickly dismisses those thoughts.

“I don’t plan on playing foot-
ball forever,” he said. “It’s probably going to end after this season and I’ll need to get started on the next chapter of my life.

“NFL stands for Not For Long, right? I would give it a shot, but if there is something else that gives me more of a sense of fulfillment, I’ll do that instead.”

Afield goal and a tryout

Senior kicker David Ruffer has never missed a field goal for Notre Dame, standing at 18-for-18 over the past two seasons.

David Ruffer has never missed a field goal for Notre Dame, standing at 18-for-18 over the past two seasons.

From The Observer's archives.

Senior kicker David Ruffer has never missed a field goal for Notre Dame, standing at 18-for-18 over the past two seasons.

Contact Douglas Farmer at dfarmer1@nd.edu
Two-sport star leaves track behind to walk on}

By ANDREW OWENS
Sports Writer

For many high school students, picking a college is a simple decision — just choose the one that has the best balance of academic and athletic prestige. For senior cornerback Ryan Sheehan, the decision was a little more complicated.

An eight-time varsity-letter winner at Loudon Valley High School in Purcellville, Va., Sheehan starred in both track and football. In track, he won conference and state titles while setting school records.

In football, his list of accomplishments was no less stellar, earning all-district honors and ranking at the top of his team in both rushing yards and tackles. His senior year, Sheehan was named Loudon Valley’s Most Outstanding Male Athlete.

Sheehan faced the decision of fulfilling his dream of becoming a college football player at a small school, or coming to Notre Dame under scholarship as a track athlete. Unlike his four brothers who made the decision to play college football, Sheehan decided to go in a different direction and accept Notre Dame’s scholarship offer.

“I was the first from my family to come here, and I rave about this place all the time when I go home. I have no doubt that I am a better person now than when I first started here.”

Ryan Sheehan senior cornerback

But during his freshman year, Sheehan partially tore his Achilles tendon, ending his season and leaving him out of action for eight months. The lengthy healing process gave Sheehan a chance to evaluate his priorities, during which he made the decision to drop track and follow his true passion — football.

“When I made that decision, I was unsure of how my family would react to me quitting track,” Sheehan said. “It turned out that I had my family’s full support.”

As Sheehan learned, it would be no small task to switch sports. During his sophomore year, tryouts were held at 4:30 a.m. for the entire semester. During such a difficult time, Sheehan reflected that it would have been easy to simply give up, but that he always had the support of his family.

“My parents and my brothers helped me get through it,” Sheehan said. “They came to all the games even though I have not gotten much playing time. They make the drive from Virginia every weekend to see me play.”

Despite making the squad, the nature of being a student-athlete prevented life from getting any easier. He now had to juggle the life of a varsity athlete with the academic workload of a Notre Dame student — without a full scholarship this time. Nevertheless, Sheehan believes that having such a busy schedule ending up his academic life.

“I’ve actually gotten better grades since joining the football team even though I have had more difficult classes as I have gotten older,” Sheehan said. “I had to put in the time to make sure I did well. I had no choice but to work hard or fail.”

Sheehan added that a typical day in his life includes classes, practice, and then heading straight to the library to do homework.

All of the experiences Sheehan has encountered during his time at Notre Dame have prepared him to excel once he graduates in the spring. As an accounting major, he plans on pursuing a master’s degree, but is still unsure of where that will be.

“This summer, he will be working in the field of public accounting in Washington, D.C. Despite the struggles, setbacks and hardships he has faced, Sheehan looks back on his time at Notre Dame with a positive attitude.

“I’m very happy with my experience,” he said. “Coming here and meeting all the people, especially the other walk-ons, has made me to see something unique. I was the first from my family to come here, and I rave about this place all the time when I go home. I have no doubt that I am a better person now than when I first started here.”

Contact Andrew Owens at aowens2@nd.edu

4.0 GPA not all that defines cornerbacks Notre Dame career

By ANDREW GASTELUM
Sports Writer

The priorities of the student come before the priorities of the athlete, and according to senior cornerback James “J.T.” Redshaw, that is the way it should be.

Redshaw graduated as his high school’s valedictorian while captaining the football and baseball teams at Norwin High School in Pittsburgh. “Academics and sports have always been a big part of my life, since I was little,” Redshaw said. “My parents always taught me that grades come first, but I never had good grades for anybody else but myself, because that was what I wanted to do.”

Even with a schedule filled with medical school interviews, keeping up with friends, and football practice in the afternoon, Redshaw’s pre-med major still makes academics his No. 1 priority. The senior has maintained a 4.0 GPA while excelling in his studies, and dedicating to the football field.

“Coming out to practice against this caliber of athletes always keeps you driven and motivated to do whatever you can to help the team for the upcoming Saturday,” Redshaw said. “I love waking up every day and coming here to be a part of this team, knowing that I contribute to something great.”

Without his football pads, track meets, and every class in between, the senior cornerback is hardly recognized on campus, often having to prove his position on the roster.

But Redshaw finds inspiration in former walk-on, and 2009 graduate, Mike Anello, who became a special teams expert and fan-favorite despite his small stature.

“Seeing everything that Anello went through being undersized makes you realize how important the intangibles are in football because you can’t teach that,” Redshaw said. “It serves as inspiration that shows you how important every rep is in practice and where it can get you.”

While Redshaw draws inspiration in those around him on the football field, he finds motivation in his family, trying to return their sacrifices with his success.

“I see all of my family’s hard work to get me to a place like this,” Redshaw said. “I can do to give my best effort when I am given this wonderful opportunity.”

“Football and family seem to mean the world to the Redshaw family, especially living in a football town in western Pennsylvania.”

“Growing up in Pittsburgh, football is a way of life,” the senior said. “My dad was one of those dads that make sure they show up for every practice and game, and for him to see me play for Notre Dame is something special.”

When breaking the news that he made the team to his family during spring of his freshman year, Redshaw waited until Easter break, a week before the annual Blue-Gold exhibition game.

“My dad practically fell out of his booth while my mom just started crying,” Redshaw said. “It just shows how much that meant to them, knowing how important football is to me. They really had no idea that I was trying out for the team.”

In fact, the only person close to Redshaw who knew that he was trying out for the team was his roommate, and that was simply a result of Redshaw waking up at 4:30 a.m. to work out with the squad.

“You wouldn’t want to tell anybody about the tryouts because at any moment you could get cut,” James Redshaw senior cornerback

“Contact Andrew Gastelum at agastell@nd.edu
Many times life does not go as planned, even for a highly recruited football player. Irish senior Darrin Walls has constantly faced adversity over the past several years, but he has overcome it and contributed with four years of playing time, three as a starter.

In fact, Walls’ football career nearly came to an abrupt end before he even had visions of running out of the tunnel at Notre Dame Stadium. 

“My sophomore year in high school I had shoulder surgery and I thought my career was done,” he said.

Walls fought through the pain and rehabilitation to return to the team his junior year. While things were starting to return to normal on the football field, he experienced tragedy in his personal life. Two of his cousins, ages seven and 30, died within a year of each other. Once again Walls experienced hardship and needed support and mental toughness to fight through it.

His senior year, as a five-star cornerback and prized recruit, he needed shoulder surgery again. Despite the setback, he received offers from Florida, Michigan and in-state schools Pittsburgh and Penn State, before eventually deciding that Notre Dame was the institution best suited for him.

When he stepped on campus as a freshman, he did so as one of the top 30 players in the nation from the previous recruiting class, according to most websites. The expectations were high, and Walls was pressed into action from the get-go. He earned playing time during his freshman season in the secondary for the Irish, who entered the 2006 season ranked No. 2 in the country.

In his collegiate debut, Walls had the difficult task of covering All-American wide receiver Calvin Johnson of Georgia Tech. The Irish freshman held the future second overall pick in the NFL Draft to two catches and 16 yards in the second half. The shutdown of Johnson was crucial in helping Notre Dame earn a hard-fought 14-10 victory in Atlanta.

Walls immediately had to perform at a high level not only on the field, but also in the classroom. As a double major in psychology and sociology, he quickly learned how to balance academics and athletics. “I mean it’s been tough, especially my first couple years, because it was an adjustment to academics and having to juggle football and school at the same time,” Walls said. “It was difficult coming out of high school. Here you have so many things that demand time, but it’s been good. Notre Dame has so many academic services for student-athletes to help with the transition.”

One of Walls’ most memorable moments occurred in his fourth game at Notre Dame. The Irish, fresh off a 47-21 loss at home to Michigan, were in East Lansing and trailing Michigan State 37-21 in the fourth quarter under extreme weather conditions. Walls and the Irish pulled off a dramatic comeback to win the game, 48-47, in double-overtime. Had Notre Dame lost that game, they would have fallen to 2-2 on the season and would have had to win their final eight games to earn a BCS berth.

While Notre Dame finished the regular season 10-2 and reached the Sugar Bowl, the fortunes of the Irish would soon change. The team endured a nightmarish 3-9 season in 2007 after the graduation of several stars, including quarterback Brady Quinn and wide receiver Jeff Samardzija.

Despite the team’s struggles in the 2007 campaign, Walls’ top memory from his time at Notre Dame occurred in the second week of the season. As the starting cornerback in a difficult environment at Penn State, he recorded his first interception on a pass from Anthony Morelli and returned it for a touchdown, the only time the Irish would reach the end zone that evening.

“It was a special moment for me,” Walls said. “I was able to record my first interception and touchdown in my home state. My entire family was at the game and was able to see it.”

When the Irish players returned to campus in the fall of 2008, their starting cornerback from the previous season remained home. Walls remained in Pittsburgh for the entire semester and sat out the football season due to personal reasons.

“I was at home for a semester,” he said. “Basically I took some time off and tried to bounce back. I learned a lot from that experience. I learned to avoid taking anything for granted. It’s important to appreciate what you have in life and I learned that Notre Dame is a special place and that I’m fortunate to be here.”

But adversity was nothing new for Walls. He had been through it before and, once again, overcame it. He returned to campus for the spring semester and regained control of the starting cornerback position. With much of the squad returning and what many considered to be a favorable schedule, the Irish headed into the 2009 season with high expectations, despite the many questions surrounding the program following a 7-6 season.

Walls started eight games and played in all 12 as an important member of the defense. Once again, hope turned into despair once the Irish finished the season 6-6 and fired coach Charlie Weis. It was another turning point for both the program and Walls.

Shortly after terminating Weis’ contract, Notre Dame hired Brian Kelly to take over the football program. The change at the top also meant a completely new defensive staff, meaning Walls would play under his second head coach and fourth different defensive coordinator in his four seasons. Rather than use the experience as an excuse, he turned it into motivation for his final season with the Irish.

“I feel like sometimes it’s good to have a new start and new beginnings,” Walls said. “Every coach I’ve had has been a great coach and I’ve learned a lot. Good things are going to happen with this program.”

He entered the season as the most experienced member of the secondary, having started 21 of 32 games for the Irish. His 16 pass breakups ranked 11th in Notre Dame history at the start of the 2010 campaign.

Once the final snap takes place Saturday evening and the seniors sing the Alma Mater for the final time as players in Notre Dame Stadium, reality will sink in and they will realize that their collegiate careers will quickly come to a close. Walls, however, is intent on making the most out of the lessons he has learned and making a bright future for himself.

“I’m not really sure where the future will take me,” he said. “We’ll see what happens after the season and how everything turns out. I’d like to try to go to the NFL. If my football career is over I’d like to work with kids somehow and coach football as the high school level.”

During the difficulties he has faced over the past several years, Walls has received the full support of others to help him overcome the set-backs.

“I’d say the support and the caring of everyone including the students at Notre Dame has been great,” he said. “Everyone cares about each other and it is a loving place. They tell you that when they’re recruiting you, but it’s true.”

Not only has the Notre Dame community enabled Walls to fight through difficult times, but so has his family.

“I say my brother and sister don’t know this, but they are my greatest inspiration for playing well and playing hard,” he said. “They don’t know that, but they there are. I just want to be a good role model for my family.”
By LAURA MYERS  
Sports Writer

Notre Dame’s back-up quarterback signal plays with dynamic and often humorous gestures. But Bryan Castello’s favorite sign is more subdued.

“The victory kneel,” the senior walk-on said. “He does it by raising his right hand with his middle and ring fingers in the air, thumb and index finger together and pinkie folded.

“It’s the signal of the Red Arrows. It’s the drivers of the quarterbacks. And we would like to see it do the victory kneel.”

Castello nearly always stands to the direct left of Irish coach Brian Kelly when Notre Dame is on offense, and is caught on TV often when the cameras look to the sidelines for Kelly.

“We move it around, but more often than not I am next to Coach,” Castello said. “Gives me a lot of TV time. … More often than not I am next to Coach.”

Castello has also gotten keys to successful kick coverage.

“Everyone knows the trials and tribulations of walk-ons, and that brings us all together,” he said. “We all have a common characteristic: a lot of walk-ons are really good guys and that’s who you want to surround yourselves with. So yeah, WOPU Nation.

“Turle” emerges as special teams contributor

Senior walk-on quarterback Brian Castello, 15, signals in “the victory kneel” in the closing moments of Notre Dame’s 23-17 victory over Pittsburgh on Oct. 9.

By LAURA MYERS  
Sports Writer

Senior walk-on running back Pat Coughlin’s practice mentality has earned back-up quarterback airtime.

The worst thing that happened to Castello was that he didn’t make it,” said Castello. “But I worked back. And Castello as a quarter- back.

In 2010. Both made the team

“We move it around, but more often than not I am next to Coach,” Castello said. “Gives me a lot of TV time. … More often than not I am next to Coach.”

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Castello nearly always stands to the direct left of Irish coach Brian Kelly when Notre Dame is on offense, and is caught on TV often when the cameras look to the sidelines for Kelly.
Harrison Smith

Amid years of change, safety adapts in form

By BLAIR CHEMIDLIN
Sports Writer

Senior safety Harrison Smith makes one of his 10 tackles against Michigan State on Sept. 18. Smith, a three-year starter, has one more year of eligibility remaining.

"Harrison Smith has always been safe. If he can't play safety, he can't play. It was pretty easy for that one."

Brian Kelly
Irish coach

At 37, Harrison Smith was tired of everyone "long to dry."

"It was too long, took too much time that Smith's passion for football became apparent."

Although Smith admitted some disappointing games and seasons during his time at Notre Dame, he hopes to use his last year to turn things around.

"Since I've been here, we haven't really had a strong team. That is something I really want to have. When people see us on their schedule, I want them to say 'Oh, no, this week is Notre Dame.'"

Smith said, "That is something I want to bring Notre Dame back to. - that when people think about us, they think about us as being a tough team - guys who aren't going to stop, guys who are disciplined, and just guys you really don't want to go up against for four quarters.

Smith said he feels better about coming back next year. He is certainly excited, and has high hopes for the fall season, but many of his fellow teammates from the class of 2011 will not be returning.

He reflected on how he has become close with all of his teammates. "He's my best friend," senior wide receiver, has much to bring it up to him as a topic of conversation. Smith specifically cited his "mom and grandmother" as giving him a hard time about his long hair more than anyone else.

"My mom loves to tell the story," he said. "During that football season I would wear my helmet and all my pads, even though I wasn't playing. I used to dress up in all the gear because I missed it. I'd go out in the yard and pretend I was playing in a game, playing against the trees. I would hit the trees and run around them playing in a game, pretending to be around."

"I was the only one who was home to play," Gallup said.

He's played ever since, and plans to continue, in a fifth season at Notre Dame next fall.

These past four years Smith has experienced a variety of changes - changes in field position, hairstyles and coaching staff.

"I just felt at home. Everything about the school, the way the team acted together - how close they all were with one another - all of this helped me decide," he said. Has it lived up to his expectations? Yes - except in one area.

"Obviously we haven't won as many games as we thought we would," he said. "But at least for me, there's always next year.

Smith's football career began 13 years ago when he was in third grade. He went on a hiatus the following year in order to play competitive soccer instead. It was during this time that Smith's passion for football became apparent.

"My mom loves to tell the story," he said. "During that football season I would wear my helmet and all my pads, even though I wasn't playing. I used to dress up in all the gear because I missed it. I'd go out in the yard and pretend I was playing in a game, playing against the trees. I would hit the trees and run around them playing in a game, pretending to be around."

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Chris Stewart

Law school simply another challenge for Stewart

By LAURA MYERS

Article 2.6.4 of the Notre Dame Law School's academic code strongly discourages first-year students from any employment, due to the "academic rigor of the required curriculum," but it doesn’t say anything about first-year students starting for a Division I football program.

Offensive Lineman Chris Stewart could be setting a new precedent.

"I'm definitely invested. I'm not giving up on my football career. Law school is second to football in my mind, because I've been at this longer and it's the more imminent thing." — Chris Stewart, senior offensive tackle

Fifth-year offensive guard Chris Stewart has served as an elderstatesman among the offensive line this year.

"Law school is a great career, you can always come back to it. The pro aspect, you really can't come back to it." — Chris Stewart, senior offensive tackle

Stewart tries to keep his football and law school lives separate as much as possible.

"I've evolved this rule that I don't study Friday or Saturday," he said. "That's time strictly devoted for football, for final preparations for the game. So I take a hiatus from that Friday after I leave the law school to that Sunday. It's better to have 100 percent focus on football for 48 hours."

That much of a break could leave him at a disadvantage, so he has to work even harder after each game weekend.

"Sunday and Monday, the days when we don't have as much going on here, I really have to buckle down and study and catch up," he said. "So I'm kind of playing catch up the whole time, but that works way better than bringing it on the road, trying to figure out complex ideas on a bus or on a plane. That's not smart."

And while Stewart carried a 3.536 grade point average as an undergraduate, including a 3.834 in his final semester, he won't have any idea about his law school grades until the end of the semester.

"There are no midterms. We have take-home practice exams, and the whole grade is based on a test at the end of the semester," he said. "One-fourth test basically determines your whole grade."

After graduation, Stewart took a year of graduate classes, including a few law classes, before deciding to apply to law school. In spring 2009, while enrolled in a torts class and one other special studies law course, he took the LSAT.

"Anyone who's in law school would tell you unless they're a genius, that that test (is terrible)," he said. "It's one of the toughest tests I've ever taken."

During the admissions process, he was asked about his next step, and he answered honestly.

"Football would come before law school. "Law school is a great career, you can always come back to it," he said. "The pro aspect, you really can't come back to it."

With nearly one year of law school done, Stewart will focus on his goal of getting to the NFL — after this season is over.

"Right now I'm going to focus on ending the season in a good way," he said. "... I want to be here as long as possible as a Notre Dame football player."

However, he made sure his intention of leaving school to go to the pros would not hurt his law school application.

"I made it very obvious that it's my goal to come back here and finish," he said. "Law school is only three years and I kind of have a year under my belt anyway. So it's not that big of a deal to come back and spend two more years to get a degree. That's not bad at all. I've been in school for like 10 years straight, even summers, so a break will be nice."

"And I'll have a chance to focus on football."

Contact Laura Myers at lmyers2@nd.edu

Stewart, the only FBS player to be enrolled in law school, has started every game but four in the past three seasons for the Irish.

Chris Stewart

"I'm definitely invested. I'm not giving up on my football career. Law school is second to football in my mind, because I've been at this longer and it's the more imminent thing." — Chris Stewart, senior offensive tackle

Stewart, the only FBS player to be enrolled in law school, has started every game but four in the past three seasons for the Irish.
Tommy Smith

Football experience complemented by time in ROTC

By KELSEY MANNING
Sports Writer

As a business marketing major, a Naval officer in training and a safety on the Irish defense, the life of senior Tommy Smith is a balancing act. Smith does not view his busy schedule as a burden, however, but rather as the fulfillment of several lifelong goals.

A Connecticut native and a third-generation Doner, Smith dreamed about going to Notre Dame since his youth. And with a mom that swam at Notre Dame and a grandfather who walked onto the football team, Irish athletics are in his blood. Smith’s first love is hockey, and several Division III schools in the New England area recruited him for both sports. But once he got into Notre Dame, there was no looking back.

“The first time I was ever at the Stadium I was four years old,” Smith said. “There is a picture of me and my sister in the old stadium before they redid it. Smith laughed. “I remember the first game here when I was in fifth grade we beat Arizona State, and even since before then I’ve always wanted to come here. And I always knew if I got in and came here I would want to try to play football, and just check my goals off by one if I could.”

That he did. As a freshman Smith started out on the Stanford interhall football, which went undefeated and won the championship game in the Stadium. From there he walked onto the Notre Dame football team the spring of his sophomore year, fulfilling a lifelong dream of being a part of the Irish.

“Football has been great,” Smith said. “Ever since I thought about the idea to walk on, I thought about how much of an honor it would be to be part of the tradition, to line up against these guys in practice every day.”

Senior receiver Chris Gurries, 38, turned down offers from Division III schools to take a shot at joining the Irish through the walk-on process.

“去年, I played two snaps last season highlight engineer’s career. … There is a picture of me at Notre Dame and be part of the two.”

Tommy Smith senior safety

Senior safety Tommy Smith not only walked onto the football team, but also has been involved with Navy ROTC for four years.

By JACK HEFFERON
Sports Writer

Two snaps last season highlight engineer’s career

Senior safety Tommy Smith not only walked onto the football team, but also has been involved with Navy ROTC for four years, as well as participating in ROTC during his junior year of high school. Smith was recently selected to one of the Navy’s more elite programs, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), and will be training for that. As long as I can continue along this training pipeline, and successfully make it through the next two years of training and school, then I would like to stay in the Navy for longer than the initial four-year commitment, possibly 10 to 14 years,” Smith said. “If I can do that I will be grateful for his entire Notre Dame experience.”

“Everything has been worth it,” he said. “I don’t get a lot of sleep some nights but I’m ready to go the next morning. I have no regrets at all because both [ROTC and football] have been great for me.”

Contact Kelsey Manning at kmannin3@nd.edu
Two weeks ago Notre Dame may have been upset 28-27 by Tulsa, but the argument could be made that No. 14 Utah’s loss last week was even more devastating for the Utes.

Utah (8-1), then ranked No. 5, hosted No. 3 TCU for a Mountain West Conference showdown, only to be blown out by the Horned Frogs 47-7. Whether the Utes are reeling from that result or not, Irish coach Brian Kelly said he expects to see the same high-powered Utah team fans are accustomed to.

“Generally my experience has been a team that has a lot of confidence coming in, is not all of the sudden going to lose all of their confidence,” Kelly said during a press conference Tuesday. “They are going to chalk it up to, hey, we had a bad day, let’s put that behind us, maybe we don’t even look at the film. Let’s get going on Notre Dame.”

Whittingham cited both Notre Dame’s present team and individuals and its tradition and history as formidable opponents this weekend.

“[Sophomore linebacker] Manti Te’o is a big, physical presence in the middle. It’s just what you expect out of Notre Dame. “When you think of Notre Dame, you think of the Four Horsemen, Knute Rockne, ‘Rudy’ the movie. … The tradition, the guys they had there — Joe Montana, Joe Theismann. That’s everything that embodies what Notre Dame is.”

Follow our live blog from the press box throughout Saturday’s game at ndsmcobserver.com/sports/irish-football/irish-insider-extra

Utah quarterback Jordan Wynn unloads a pass during No. 3 TCU’s 47-7 victory over the then-No. 5 Utes Saturday. The sophomore has accounted for 14 touchdowns through the air this season.
The senior class of 2011 has experienced a trying four years of football at Notre Dame. A 3-9 freshman year, losing three out of four games against Navy and numerous last-second, heartbreaking losses are just the tip of the iceberg when describing the gridiron hardships that this senior class has gone through.

Despite the losses and a coaching change before their final year at Notre Dame, the members of the original class have held strong and seem intent on finishing their career on a positive note. No matter the result against Utah, the seniors will stand tall with the rest of their graduating class and proclaim words that have kept them going strong through it all:

“And our hearts forever, praise thee Notre Dame. And our hearts forever, love thee Notre Dame.”
**Notre Dame Fighting Irish**

**Record:** 4-5

**AP:** NR  
**Coaches:** NR

**First season at Notre Dame**

**Career record:** 175-62-2  
**Second at ND:** 4-5  
**against Utah:** 0-0

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**2010 Schedule**

- **Sept. 4:** Purdue — W  
- **Sept. 11:** Michigan — L  
- **Sept. 18:** @ Michigan State — L  
- **Sept. 25:** Stanford — L  
- **Oct. 2:** @ Boston College — W  
- **Oct. 9:** Pittsburgh — W  
- **Oct. 16:** Western Michigan — W  
- **Oct. 23:** @ Navy — L  
- **Oct. 30:** Tulsa — L  
- **Nov. 13:** Army  
- **Nov. 20:** Utah  
- **Nov. 27:** @ USC

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**Head-to-Head**

**ND OFFENSE**

- Scoring: 26.8 ypg (72nd)
- Total: 189.0 ypg (25th)
- Rushing: 111.0 ypg (17th)
- Passing: 78.0 ypg (14th)
- Total: 300.0 ypg (13th)
- Scoring: 17.78 ppg (14th)
- Turnovers for: 14 (74th)
- Sacks: 23 (24th)
- Interceptions: 7 (75th)
- Fumbles rec.: 7 (48th)
- T.O.P. for: 26:49 (117th)

**UTAH DEFENSE**

- Scoring: 19.9 ypg (34th)
- Total: 393.8 ypg (31st)
- Rushing: 216 ypg (13th)
- Passing: 177 ypg (28th)
- Total: 571 ypg (49th)
- Scoring: 17.78 ppg (14th)
- Turnovers against: 13 (67th)
- Sacks: 22 (21st)
- Interceptions: 6 (78th)
- Fumbles lost: 6 (49th)
- T.O.P. against: 29:49 (70th)

---

**Statistical Leaders**

**ND OFFENSIVE COACHING**

- Brian Kelly

**Def. Coordinator**

- Bob Diaco

**Off. Coordinator**

- Charley Molnar

**Head coach**

- Brian Kelly

**ND SPECIAL TEAMS**

- Senior David Ruffer

**UTAH DEFENSE**

- With senior Armando Allen out for the season with a hip injury, the Irish running game, which has already struggled so far this season, could be in even more trouble. Notre Dame averages only 3.8 yards per carry, and if Allen’s contributions are removed, they average only 3.1. The Irish will turn to freshman Cierre Wood and senior Robert Hughes for contributions on the ground. Wood has gained 4.6 yards per carry and Hughes is picking up 5.3 yards per rush. Wood and Hughes have the potential to be a speed and power combination rush attack if the line gives them space to run.

**EDGGE: UTAH**

**ND PASSING**

- Brian Kelly’s offense was not performing up to standard with Dayne Crist under center, and having Tommy Rees as the starter will certainly not expand the playbook. The injuries to the offense, combined with some questionable play-calling against Tulsa inspired little confidence. That being said, Kelly is well respected as an offensive mind, so it would be unwise to count his offense out no matter the opponent.

**EDGGE: UTAH**

**ND RUSHING**

- Senior David Ruffer continues to be perfect for his career and for the season on field goal attempts. He has made all 13 tries this year and continues to be the bright spot on the Irish special teams.

**EDGGE: NOTRE DAME**

**EDGGE: UTAH**

**ND RECEIVING**

- Matt Gamber

**Specialists**

- Brian Kelly’s offense was not performing up to standard with Dayne Crist under center, and having Tommy Rees as the starter will certainly not expand the playbook. The injuries to the offense, combined with some questionable play-calling against Tulsa inspired little confidence. That being said, Kelly is well respected as an offensive mind, so it would be unwise to count his offense out no matter the opponent.

**EDGGE: UTAH**

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**EDGGE: UTAH**

**EDGGE: UTAH**

**ND SPECIAL TEAMS**

- Matt Gamber

**Sports Writer**

- Matt Gamber

**Sports Editor**

- Eric Priester

**Associate Sports Editor**

- Eric Priester
The Utah offensive line has also given up only four sacks all season, placing them fourth in the nation. If Notre Dame is unable to put pressure on Wynn, the secondary will have a difficult time hanging with the Utah passing attack.

**EDGE: UTAH**

**The co-offensive coordinators for Utah, Aaron Roderick and Dave Schramm, are also the coaches of the wide receivers and tight ends, respectively. This gives a good indication of the focus of the Utah offense.**

**Statistical Leaders**

**UTAH OFFENSE**

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**2010 Schedule**

- Sept. 2: Pittsburgh
- Sept. 11: UNLV
- Sept. 18: @ New Mexico
- Sept. 25: San Jose State
- Oct. 9: @ Iowa State
- Oct. 16: @ Wyoming
- Oct. 23: Colorado State
- Oct. 30: @ Air Force
- Nov. 6: TCU
- Nov. 13: @ Notre Dame
- Nov. 20: @ San Diego St.
- Nov. 27: BYU

**Head-to-Head**

**UTAH PASSING**

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**ND RECEIVING**

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<tr>
<td>Receiving Yards:</td>
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**NOTES**

- **EDGE: UTAH**
  - The Utah offensive line has also given up only four sacks all season, placing them fourth in the nation. If Notre Dame is unable to put pressure on Wynn, the secondary will have a difficult time hanging with the Utah passing attack.

- **Statistic Leaders**
  - **Passing**
    - Utah: 245.89 ypg (41st)
    - Notre Dame: 228.56 ypg (80th)
  - **Rushing**
    - Utah: 175.89 ypg (36th)
    - Notre Dame: 164.56 ypg (79th)
  - **Scoring**
    - Utah: 41.00 ppg (9th)
    - Notre Dame: 24.89 ppg (62nd)

- **2010 Schedule**
  - Utah: 8-1
  - Notre Dame: 3-9

- **Head-to-Head**
  - Utah: 34-27
  - Notre Dame: 44-27

- **Statistical Leaders**
  - **Passing**
    - Utah: 245.89 ypg (41st)
    - Notre Dame: 228.56 ypg (80th)
  - **Rushing**
    - Utah: 175.89 ypg (36th)
    - Notre Dame: 164.56 ypg (79th)
  - **Scoring**
    - Utah: 41.00 ppg (9th)
    - Notre Dame: 24.89 ppg (62nd)
The Irish Class of 2011 opened its final season with a convincing 23-12 victory over Purdue before spiralling into a three-game losing streak which included last-minute losses to both Michigan and Michigan State.

With a 1-3 record, the Irish faced the prospect of a loss season before a three-game winning streak raised their record to 4-3. The winning streak included a 44-20 rout of Western Michigan on Oct. 16.

Notre Dame barely had time to enjoy that rout before facing Navy at the New Meadowlands Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. Navy took control of the game early, and for the third time in four years beat Notre Dame. The following week, the Irish fell to Tulsa at home.

With possibly only three games left in their careers at Notre Dame, the seniors will need two wins to reach a bowl game. 

A season of streaks

Counter-clockwise from top: Seniors Robert Hughes, Armando Allen and Emeka Nwankwo, from left, sing the Alma Mater; senior cornerback Gary Gray prepares for a play during Notre Dame’s 37-14 loss to Stanford on Sept. 25; seniors Ethan Johnson and Brian Smith, from right, leap in an attempt to block a Pittsburgh field goal; senior running back Robert Hughes gains an extra yard during Notre Dame’s 44-20 victory over Western Michigan on Oct. 16; senior safety Harrison Smith attempts a tackle against Michigan State.
Running back helps Irish in every possible way

By LAURA MYERS

Editor’s note: This article first appeared in the Sept. 17 edition of The Observer.

“You got my hat!” Armando Allen exclaimed as he entered the Lotus Center for a photo shoot with The Observer Tuesday. The senior running back grabbed the small green hat and placed it, at a slight angle, on his head, ready for his close-up.

Allen donned the leprechaun hat in celebration after Notre Dame’s win in the Hawaii Bowl on Dec. 26, 2008, and turned it into a post-game ritual in 2009.

“We all laughed, since he’s about 5’5” on a good day,” said sophomore wide receiver Theo Riddick, a former part of the running back corps with Allen, who is actually listed at 5-foot-10. “He’d get us all laughing and cracking up. It was a good joke.”

But two games into his senior year, Allen isn’t kidding around anymore.

“Some people joke about me being short, the size of a lep-rechaun,” he said. “But I do it in respect to Notre Dame. That’s my way to say I respect Notre Dame.”

Allen started 26 games over the last four seasons before suffering a season-ending injury against Western Michigan on Oct. 16.

Going to work

That is not to say that Allen hasn’t been taking his role at Notre Dame seriously up to now. He was the leading rusher for Notre Dame in 2008 and 2009, with 585 and 697 yards, respectively. His mark of 126 yards against Boston College is his best performance in any game.

Allen’s seniority has its upside too, in an increased leadership role on the team. The coaches select-ed him to be a captain for last week’s Saturday’s game against Michigan.

“It was a great honor to go out there and take part in something special, so I really want to go out on a good note,” Allen said.

Leading by example

Allen’s seniority has its upside, though, in an increased leadership role on the team. The coaches select-ed him to be a captain for last week’s Saturday’s game against Michigan.

“It was a great honor to go out there and be a captain and lead this team against Michigan,” Allen said. “It says a lot about what I’ve been doing here and to me it was a great honor to go out there and show that I can do this and I can be in the right place for my teammates.”

Despite his penchant for wearing leprechaun hats, Allen is usually not showy, wearing leprechaun hats, and showing something special, but it always felt good.”

Allen started 26 games over the last four seasons before suffering a season-ending injury against Western Michigan on Oct. 16.

At this point, Allen is serious about continuing in the same way he has started the season, being an example for the new challenge in front of us.”

“Leadership comes in many styles,” Hinton said. “His work ethic and his on-the-field toughness have been the things he’s really displayed.”

“I think it’s very, very important,” Allen said. “The biggest thing is just to go out there and make sure that everybody has forgotten about the ending of the season and just be ready for this week, that we’ve got a new challenge in front of us.”

At this point, Allen is serious about continuing in the same way he has started the season, being an example for his teammates with hard work in practice and performance when it counts.

“We’ve been very pleased with what he’s doing,” Hinton said. “Obviously his challenge right now is to do it consistently for the next ten weeks. That right now is the biggest challenge that Armando has ahead of him. He can’t be self-satisfied. He’s got to be hungry to be better tomorrow, the next day and the next day until the season ends.”

Contact Laura Myers at lmyers2@nd.edu
Emotions, two TDs define linebacker's four years

By ERIC PRISTER
Assistant Sports Editor

In his player bio on UND.com, the first word used to describe senior linebacker Brian Smith is emotional, and it is that emotion that has enabled Smith to become the active leader in games played for Notre Dame throughout his career.

"When you put on the field, I embrace the emotion, the energy from the crowd," Smith said. "I'm very passionate about what I do, and so to be described as emotional lets people know. 'Yeah, that's real me on the field.' You just have to have the emotional advantage, that even if you aren't, that you play like you are the huddiest on the field and nobody can stop you. Having the kind of attitude makes you a better player and so that gives you that edge against the person you're going against."

Smith has played in all but three games throughout his Irish career, and has not missed a game since his sophomore season. He leads all active players in tackles with 180 and has added two touchdowns to his résumé with 180 and.

"The best advice I got was 'What can Notre Dame do for you?' That was a dream school which can do something for you which Iowa can't," hearing that from my father, I had to make the choice to come here."

Brian Smith senior linebacker

Smith has played in 43 games in the Notre Dame uniform, and in those 43 games has managed to score two defensive touchdowns.

The beginning of Smith's career at Notre Dame was a tenuous one, as he had already committed to Iowa when he was offered a scholarship slip from the Irish, just two weeks before signing day. For Smith, that was when the real decision process began.

"The decision process was kind of a rocky one because I was committed to go to Iowa for about eight months during my senior year of high school, and then all of a sudden, two weeks before signing day, Notre Dame offers me," he said. "It kind of put me at a crossroads because it was like, 'If Notre Dame didn't want me, I don't know that I'd be where I am today.' So I kind of had a mind block about it. But then the best advice I got was, 'What can Notre Dame do for you?' That was a dream school which can do something for you which Iowa can't. Hearing that from my father, I had to make the choice to come here."

Smith's career did not get any easier when he arrived on campus. The Irish went 3-9 during his freshman season, and have not recorded a winning season in his four years as a member of the football program, but Smith said he has not been heartbroken by the ups and downs that Notre Dame has endured.

"Coming to Notre Dame is expecting to be a part of excellence," he said. "Even though our football seasons haven't been what everyone has wanted them to be, I still feel like I've been a part of excellence, being around these guys and these coaches. Living a first-class championship lifestyle will bring championship results. In years to come, everyone in the world will be able to see that."

Keeping that championship attitude was not easy for Smith. He was moved from outside linebacker in a 3-4 defense to inside linebacker in a 4-3 defense during his sophomore and junior years. Smith said that changing positions was difficult, but in the end gave him a greater understanding of the game.

The process changing from outside to inside was very hard, because as a middle linebacker, you have to know what everyone is doing on the field," he said. "I give a lot of credit to [former Irish defensive coordinator John Tenuta], because he taught me a lot about football and that, with my coaches now, [defensive coordinator Bob] Diaco and [Irish coach Brian] Kelly, I feel like there's nothing on the football field that I don't know. So now, transitioning, I feel like I can play anywhere on the field now that I've played middle linebacker, because that's the captain of the defense, making calls, adjustments and checks. So I feel like I can play anywhere. Wherever they stick me, I feel like I'm going to do a very good job at it."

Position on the field is not the only change Smith has experienced during his time at Notre Dame. He has played under two head coaches and three defensive coordinators, which can make finding a comfort zone difficult. Smith said he has used the coaching changes as a learning experience, as well.

"It makes you not only a better player but also a better man, because in the real world you're going to face changes, day in and day out," he said. "Having a new staff was different, but you have to adjust. When I'm in the working world, my boss is going to change and I have to adjust to what he's going to do. My position changed — one day your position in the office is going to change, and you have to make adjustments. It keeps you on your toes and keeps your edge razor-sharp, because you have to always keep a razor-sharp edge to be competitive, not only in your life, but in our life."

Smith said many people have made an impact on his life since being at Notre Dame, but coaches and former players in particular have taught him the lessons he needs both on and off the field.

"There have just been a lot of guys that have played the game here and are still around," he said. "Guys like [former Irish players] Reggie Brooks and Chris Zorich, coach Tenuta and [former defensive coordinator] Corwin Brown, that have played the system and have taught me since I was a young pup in the system — those are guys who I always look to and try to keep in touch with because they are the roots of the man I want to become in the real world."

Despite a career full of changes, successes and failures on the field, Smith said he still believes that he made the right choice in coming to Notre Dame.

"Our class has seen it all," he said. "Living a first-class, championship lifestyle is always number one for me, and I feel like, even through all these wins and losses, the loss column especially, that I've still been a part of excellence. Because we're Notre Dame, even though we've been down as well, we're still in the national spotlight. Because we are Notre Dame, we are known for our excellence, and so I feel like being a part of this establishment has been the biggest blessing for me."
When many scholarship football players step on campus for the first time as a freshman, they have dreams of someday playing on Sundays. Irish senior Matt Romine has realized since the start that there is life after football.

Despite being one of the most highly recruited prospects in the nation coming out of Union High School in Tulsa, Okla., the 6-foot-5, 292-pound offensive lineman said he is always focused on academics. He chose Notre Dame to give himself the best chance to fulfill his two dreams.

"The main reason I came here was to be a business major and I picked marketing because I really like the shoe industry," Romine said. "I'd like to work for Nike someday and either market their shoes or work in the Nike football department. It's always been my dream to work in the Nike marketing department if the NFL doesn't work out." While Romine has excelled in marketing while at Notre Dame, the football end of things has not always been so easy. In his freshman year, he played in each of the first two games before getting injured during the third. He missed the rest of his first season on the team. That injury, however, has opened the door for Romine to play another season if he so chooses.

"I medically redshirted after getting injured during the third game of my freshman season, so I have the opportunity for a fifth year," he said. "If Romine chooses to return, he would be one of several returning linemen on a very experienced unit, which could be the key to an improvement in wins and losses.

Injuries are not the only roadblock that Romine has faced during his time at Notre Dame. This year, he has played under the third different offensive line coach the Irish have employed in four seasons. John Latina led the unit in 2007 and 2008, Frank Verducci in 2009 and Mike Elston is currently coaching the linemen.

Romine has not used the experience as an excuse, but rather as a challenge to get better and as a valuable lesson for his future.

"It's taught me to adapt to anything," Romine said. "I've had three offensive line coaches in four years and they've all had a different style and system and want something different. Going through all that has taught me to adapt and be ready to change for any situations that arise.

Through it all, he has always been able to depend on the support of his family.

"My parents have been so influential in my life," Romine said. "I've been injured a lot during my four years here so relying on the support of my parents has been huge for me. They come to a lot of home games and are here for me a lot." After battling through injuries and coaching changes for three years, Romine earned his first career start earlier this season against Pittsburgh. He considers it his most memorable moment at Notre Dame.

"I finally got the chance to get on the field and run out of the tunnel as a starter. It was great to help lead the team to a win because Pittsburgh is one of our biggest wins this season."

Even if Romine opts to depart from Notre Dame following his graduation this spring, he will leave with a very favorable outlook of his time here.

"I didn't realize coming in how tightly knit the Notre Dame family is," he said.

Contact Andrew Owens at aowens2@nd.edu
Emeka Nwankwo
Waiting only yields benefits for Florida native

By Jack Hefferon
Sports Writer

“Good things come to those who wait” may be an overused cliché, but overused clichés are often overlooked for a reason: they are true.

Senior defensive end Emeka Nwankwo can certainly argue the validity of that phrase, after waiting in the wings as the depth chart’s wait until he proved himself worthy of a starting role of his career in what has become a redemptive season for the Panther 3-4 defensive line in high school, so I was able to step right in day one. "He made Neal realize the importance of that phrase early in his Notre Dame career.

"Other guys like [defensive lineman] Trevor Lawes, [linebacker] Maurice Crum, and [tight end] David bubbles really showed me the way things were done, and how to go about your business," Nwankwo said.

After mostly working with the scout team and slowly climbing the depth chart in his freshman year, Nwankwo was able to bust into the lineup within the first seven or eight games of his sophomore year.

"It was nice to start to get noticed, and the coaches start to get at you a bit more," he said. "That year was Nwankwo’s breakout year of sorts, as he played in seven games, and had two tackles. More promising, though, was that he saw action in five of the final six games, and his stock seemed to be rising. But during his junior season last year, Nwankwo seemed to get lost in the depth chart, and did not play a snap during the season. Once again, Nwankwo was forced to lie in wait, and the experience was frustrating.

"That was by far my worst year here," Nwankwo said. "Not that I wasn’t accomplished, though, and now is playing the biggest role of his career in what has become a redemptive season for him."

"This four-year run has been great. I have really grown as a man with everything that I have accomplished and Notre Dame has really opened my eyes up to a lot of things," said Kerry Neal, senior linebacker.

"That was by far my worst year here," Nwankwo said. "Not that I wasn’t accomplished, though, and now is playing the biggest role of his career in what has become a redemptive season for him."

"This year has been my best year here. I’ve really enjoyed it," said Nwankwo, who was named all-state twice at offensive line in high school, so I was able to step right in day one. "He made Neal realize the importance of that phrase early in his Notre Dame career.

Senior linebacker Kerry Neal chases after a fumble during the season opener against Purdue on Sept. 4, but did record one tackle for loss in the Irish victory.

"I really want to go back for grad school, though, and get my MBA. Eventually, I plan to be in the business world."

Like so many other things for Nwankwo, future success is just a matter of time.

Contact Jack Hefferon at wheffero@nd.edu

Kerry Neal
Linebacker credits family for helping him succeed

By Andrew Gastelum
Sports Writer

He began the journey as a boy, and the road turned him into a man.

Senior linebacker Kerry Neal vowed that Notre Dame has changed him into the person he is today, admitting that he was "a boy out of high school, all 220-pound boy."

"This four-year run has been great," said Nwankwo, who has played in five games and has three tackles on the season.

"At first, I was really nervous at making the switch, but I worked out in the summer and improved my agility," Neal said. "Now I am much more comfortable being able to run in space and use my athleticism to the team’s advantage."

"The move to linebacker made Neal realize the importance of putting in work and taking advantage of every opportunity to get better."

"There are no days off in the offseason," Neal said. "You have to come with [the effort] every day and work harder than the other man."

But football isn’t the only matter that Neal has striving to improve in. Off the field, full of the funk has his eye on the gold helmet. Rather, he spoke of the friends he made while playing football.

"I wouldn’t be the same without the bonds that I have made with all of my friends and my roommate [senior running back Robert Hughes]," the senior said. "We are all brothers and it’s like being in a giant family with moments that I will never forget."

Contact Andrew Gastelum at agastell@nd.edu
Waiting game may be safety's primary specialty

By MEGAN GOLDEN
Sports Writer

If at first you don't succeed, become friends with senior safety Michael Garcia, and try, try again.

Garcia’s journey toward suc-
cess began during his senior year of high school, when he received an envelope in the mail from the Notre Dame Admissions Office.

“I was one of those waitlist
guys,” Garcia said. “When you’re on the waitlist it’s almost like you have to want it more because you didn’t get in to begin with. That was probably the most stressful thing.”

Garcia proved, however, that he wanted it more than anyone. I did everything I could. I became good friends with [Director of Admissions] Bob Mundy, and I put on the full court press on the admissions office,” Garcia said. “Then I got a call May 14, 2007, and that’s when I got into Notre Dame.”

Coming from a family of Notre Dame graduates, Garcia always dreamed of being accepted into his father's alma mater and walk-
ing on to the basketball team.

My two brothers were already at Notre Dame, and my dad went walking on to the basketball team. “WOPU Nation is Walk-On Players Union, an elite group of people,” Garcia said. “It’s awesome, it’s a brotherhood. We have each other’s back. That’s part of the WOPU Nation, and we take pride in that.”

Garcia has been ready to enter a game since day one. Two weeks ago against Tulsa, however, he went the extra step to make sure he would be ready if his number was called.

“You share a number with another walk-on, and it’s hilari-
ous. I share a number with [senior tailback] Pat Coughlin,” Garcia said. “They pulled a switcheroo on me last game because Coughlin was on kickoff, and I was going to be on kickoff. I was on the two-deep, so I was like, ‘Okay, there’s a slight chance that I might get into the game.’ I actually showed up to the game, and my number was 29. I knew I couldn’t be number 29, so I asked for a new number. So I came back, and I wore number 34.”

Garcia swapped jerseys and texted his mom about the number change just in time for her to see his debut on national television.

“It was my first time getting in and playing for ND. It was awes-
some,” Garcia said. “As a walk-
on, that’s what you work for, to consistently help the team out, and that’s how everyone thinks, and everyone wants their shot to compete for ND, compete for Our Lady. I feel like I was finally ready.”

“It was awesome getting in, running down the field in the house that Rock built. I had chills running down the field in the Lady. I feel like I was finally
come down my back, it’s some-
things that I’ll remember forever.”

Playing football for Notre Dame taught Garcia life lessons.

“I learned a lot about people, I learned a lot about leadership, I learned a lot about courage. You learn so much. With whatever circumstances you’re given, you just have to take it and roll, and you have to do the best that you can,” he said. “Being a walk-on, we’re prepared for any situation.”

Garcia is grateful for all of his supporters who helped him get the opportunity to play at Notre Dame.

“I have to thank my parents, my family, my two brothers, my friends and all who’ve supported me. I have to thank the coaches for giving me the opportunity,” he said. “It’s just been an amazing journey, an amazing experience.”

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After initial denial, walk-on chases, and fulfills, dreams

By JOSEPH MONARDO
Sports Writer

As a lifelong Notre Dame fan from Chicago, senior line-
backer Steve Botsford consid-
er’s himself lucky to have played for the Irish.

Botsford always dreamed of playing football for the Irish, but he had to wait. He was not recruited by Notre Dame, so he enrolled at the University of Indiana before transferring to Notre Dame after his fresh-
man year.

“When I got rejected from Notre Dame after high school, I knew I wanted to try to transfer,” Botsford said. “And then once I got in, I knew I was going to take the next step and see what I could do to with this football thing.”

As a sophomore, Botsford became a resident of Fisher Hall, where Notre Dame football career immedi-
ately as a member of his inter-
ball team. In the spring, Botsford decided to take the next step and pursue his goal of joining the varsity squad.

“[Tryouts were] rough,” Botsford said. “We started out three days a week, and then we went to five days a week at, like, 5:30 in the morning. It’s funny looking back on it now, but during it was horri-
ble.”

Most people would not be able to recount 5:30 a.m. practices with a hearty laugh, but he managed to do just that managed to do just that.

Botsford, who describes him-
self as “fun-loving” and “goofy,” makes sure that everyone knows how happy he is to be part of the Notre Dame football team.

“I’ve always got a smile on my face, I’m always goofing around,” Botsford said.

While Botsford said he cher-
ishes the fact that he has a role on the team, he harbors other passions as well. Although the economics major already has one job offer, he hopes to work on Wall Street in the future.

“I like economics a lot,” Botsford said. “It’s tough, but it’s fun, and it’s helping me get a job. It’s something that’s really easy to talk about when you get in an interview.”

Botsford said his biggest surprise at Notre Dame has been managing both football and academics. Although those two areas require a huge time commitment, he still finds time to relax.

“[If I’m not studying or play-
ing football, I’m probably either watching movies or playing the NCAA [football] video game,” Botsford said.

The movies Botsford may be watching, however, might sur-
prise the new Notre Dame student. While the movie buff likes movies like “The Matrix,” “Remember the Titans” and “Rudy,” his favorite is the 1942 classic “Casablanca.”

“It throws people off because it’s old, but I love it,” Botsford said.

As he prepares for his final home game, Botsford said he has come to appreciate his time at Notre Dame.

“The team has been great and everything I hoped it would be,” Botsford said. “Growing up a Notre Dame fan, obviously you want to be on the team, but you hope it’s a whole bunch of good guys out there who really work hard. And you get here, and everyone works hard, and everyone is really nice and open.”

Botsford said he has learned a lot during his time at Notre Dame.

“It’s taught me a lot about time management, and just working for a team,” Botsford said. “In high school, you get a little more.credit, and as a walk on, you don’t really get that. But you still work hard and you get success from see-
ing the team succeed.”

Contact Joseph Monardo at jmonardo@nd.edu
After setting freshman records, Kamara settles in

By MEAGHAN VESELIK
Sports Writer

Growing up in Jersey City, N.J., Duval Kamara was never interested in playing football at Notre Dame, but once he arrived on campus, he knew he’d found something.

“It [Notre Dame] actually wasn’t my first choice. I was actually interested in University of Miami but that didn’t go too well with the parents,” Kamara said. “They weren’t too sure about Miami, a big party school and all that. They thought I needed to be focused. Then I actually came here for a visit out here, and I liked it. The guys were cool, the coaches were great, I thought it was a perfect fit.

Finding that perfect fit enabled Kamara to set freshman records for receptions and receiving yards, allowed a smooth transition to college and an attitude that he knows he won’t be able to find anywhere else.

“I think that’s one of the things about Notre Dame’s football team — the guys in the locker room,” he said. “These are the guys that you’ll talk to for the rest of your life, your brothers, your family. That’s just another reason I came to Notre Dame, just the guys around me. I’m going to keep in touch with these guys for years and years to come. It’s a pretty special thing, Kamara’s close relationship with his teammates began that freshman season, when his older teammates aided him in taking his game to the next level as he prepared to wear his No. 18 Irish jersey.

“Coming in as a freshman, I thought it was a pretty smooth transition. You know you have older guys like [graduated players] David Grimes, D.J. L lord, they helped us out, the young guys, myself and Golden Tate, the freshmen coming in,” he said. “They helped us and prepared us for the offense and basically college.”

The leadership that Grimes and Hord showed became instilled in Kamara, who tries to emulate his former teammates and set an example that the young men can follow. He feels that a large part of this comes with being a senior on the team.

“It feels good to actually be a senior, you know, to be at the top of the locker room. The guys look up to you, and you have to play that role,” Kamara said. “I think that comes with the territory of being a senior. And just ways that you can lead the team, ways that you probably don’t think about it but you are leading the team just because you are a senior.”

Kamara leads with his approach to practice every day and an attitude that he knows will lead to better results.

“Just going out there and working every day, and showing the guys that you have to work every day, every day that you’re supposed to and if you do little things, it’ll all work together.”

Another important lesson that Kamara works to instill in his underclassmen teammates is that the team surrounding them is everything, and that’s what makes Notre Dame more special than any other university.

“I think the guys in that locker room know it’s all about the players around you,” he said. “Those are the guys that you see every day, those are the guys who, when you’re going through your worst times, those are the guys that are going to be around you. I mean it’s four years and four years is a long time.”

Kamara also said he believes the team’s family atmosphere makes the players more willing to help each other improve.

“You don’t really get sick of them,” he said. “These are guys who are going to tell you that if you’re doing something wrong, they’re going to tell you it’s wrong. Those are the type of guys you need around you. You don’t need someone who’s just going to kiss you up to you. That’s just what you need, a brother, a family member, who’s going to tell you what you’re doing right and what you’re doing wrong.”

Kamara said his classmates have made his college experience what it is.

“I think we’re a close group of guys. I think we’ve been close since we came in freshman year, and that’s what makes it special,” he said pointing to the group of seniors around him. “It’s like everyone. Kamara said while traveling the globe and we just have one thing, football, to bring us together. I mean it’s special. We take our school seriously in life, we all want to achieve the highest level of this sport, and we just know that coming in, and that’s one of the things that brought us together.”

For Kamara, the past four years seem to have flown by, and he tries not to focus on that as he approaches senior day and his final game in Notre Dame Stadium.

“It’s reality but I try not to think about it, so it’s unreal. It seems like yesterday we just came in as freshmen,” he said. “It all went by so fast. But I really don’t think about it, it’s just another chapter of life. It’s in the past right now, that’s how I think about it. I try to stay level headed.”

Although he tries to stay level headed, Kamara said he can’t help but recall the feeling of stepping into Notre Dame Stadium and wearing his No. 18 jersey for his first game with the Irish, a feeling he knows he won’t be able to find anywhere else.

“My freshman year, I can remember it like it was yesterday,” Kamara said. “I mean I was just struck, shocked about how many people were out there in the stadium. That’s just part of going to Notre Dame, it’s something special, it’s a special place.”

He’s able to laugh and smile about it now, but Kamara said he wasn’t so relaxed when he first was called in to play.

“My first game — oh man, I was nervous. My first play of freshman year, I went out there and my legs are shaking, my arms are shaking, and I’m like, ‘Oh man, I don’t want to mess up. I don’t want to mess up.’ And I actually caught my first pass on my first play,” he recalled.

That first play led to a standout freshman season in 2007 in which Kamara surpassed legendary Irish receiver Tim Brown’s rookie record for catches with 32, including four touchdown catches, and he recorded 357 receiving yards in 11 games.

Kamara continued to be a contributor for Notre Dame in his sophomore and junior seasons, playing in a combined 25 games with 14 starts. So for this season, he has played in six games, notching 68 receiving yards.

“It’s something special,” Kamara said.

“It’s kind of like you’re going to war with your guys. You walk down the hall, tap the walls, tap the ‘Play Like A Champion Today’ sign. It’s something special, you can’t explain it unless you’re part of it. It’s something hard to understand, but it’s something special. Walking out and just looking around at 80,000 people.”

Although he’s no longer a freshman, Kamara said he still feels the same nervous excitement that he felt as a first year player whenever he emerges from the tunnel with his Irish teammates.

“I always have butterflies, that’s just who I am. But as a senior, you go out there with the confidence, a different swagger about yourself, you just want to perfect everything you do,” Kamara said.

Driving that swagger and desire for perfection for Kamara are both his family and teammates.

“Just knowing I’m doing it for someone, and another thing is the program. Just doing it for years to come, and eventually a National Championship, and I can say I was part of building that.”

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Gary Gray

Outgoing safety gives Irish a shot of athleticism

By LAURA MYERS
Sports Writer

In Gary Gray’s first game in an Irish uniform, he returned an interception for 41 yards. A little more than a year later, in the senior corner-back’s first start, he led the team with six tackles and returned a 30-yard interception.

Now, he is a steady presence in Notre Dame’s back-field.

In Notre Dame’s first game of 2010, a 23-12 win over Purdue on Sept. 4, Gray led the team with eight solo tackles and tallied nine in total.

He followed that with five tackles against Michigan and Pittsburgh, eight against Western Michigan and nine against Tulsa.

“I think I’ve developed as a player, having more urgency,” Gray said. “Watching film more, learning your opponent. In high school, you didn’t watch film, but here you have to, to be ready.”

Gray said he became more of a leader as a senior, and his performance in games defined his leadership style.

“I’m not much of a talker, but I talk about plays on the field, and what I do,” he said. “Guys see that, and they want to make plays too.”

At every new step Gray has taken, he has been tackled.

“As far as I could,” he said. “I hurt my arm in spring practice, then my recurring shoulder injury was bad (in the fall). But it gave me a chance to adjust to college.”

He played his first game in Notre Dame’s 35-17 win over Michigan on Sept. 13, 2008.

In the fourth quarter, he grabbed the interception off a pass from Wolverine quarterback Nick Sheridan. He ran the pass to the USC 13 yard-line to Michigan’s 17 before being tackled.

“That was great. I read the coverage right, picked it and ran as far as I could,” he said.

Gray’s mother was in the stands to see him make the interception, which made it even better, he said. But he noted a playful grudge against defensive tackle Ian Williams, one of his best friends on the team.

“I mean, going into the season we didn’t think we’d be 4-5 right now, but we’ve been close in all our games except two. It’s tough, but there’s still season left.”

Gray Gray senior cornerback

“I could have scored, but Ian didn’t block for me,” he said. “... He didn’t block, that’s why I got tackled.”

Gray played in nine games as a sophomore, but then took a leave from the team for personal reasons. He returned as a junior for the 2009 football season and soon became a fixture in the defense. He played in 11 games and started the last seven.

In his first career start, against Southern California on Oct. 17, 2009, he recorded six tackles and intercepted a pass from Matt Barkley. He ran the pass to the USC 13 yard-line, setting the Irish up for a touchdown three plays later.

In his career Gray has intercepted four passes and helped to break up many more. His position in pass coverage led him to get a tattoo on his back, of a hawk carrying a football. The tattoo reads “Ball Hawk.”

“It just means I’m always around the ball when it’s in the air,” Gray said. “When it’s in my vicinity, I’m going to be around it.”

Gray had the tattoo done as a junior.

“My godfather always talked about getting to the ball,” he said. “We always joked about me getting a tattoo, like squeezing the air out of a ball, but I already got it. It has meaning behind it.”

Outside of practice, Gray is just like any other student — he listens to music, does homework and plays video games with friends. He has grown close with most of the football team’s seniors, he said, and spends most of his time with them.

Defensive end Emeka Nwankwo is the one to beat when playing Madden NFL, Gray said, but he is “great at FIFA,” a soccer video game.

His favorite place on campus is related to football as well, the Guglielmino Complex, where players lift weights, study, have meetings and eat dinner.

“We spend half our time here,” he said.

Gray will graduate in May with a degree in sociology and a minor in computer applications. He said he could continue with the computer applications major if he comes back to the team for a fifth year — something he would like to do.

“Hopefully I can do that,” he said. “We’ll see how things work out this year.”

Through three years of action, Gray’s time at Notre Dame has included plenty of upheaval, as the defense changed schemes in each year he played.

“It hasn’t affected me that much. I think I’m a quick learner,” he said. “I think I adjusted okay.”

But the coaching change worked out well.

“It’s been tough with the coaching changes,” he said. “But the transition was good. [Irish coach Charlie Weis] is doing great with the Chiefs, and I really like what [Irish coach Brian Kelly] brings to the table, and I like our defensive staff.”

Gray said the problems the team has faced since his freshman year have given the Irish a fighting character.

“There’s the turmoil, us losing last year and having mediocre years the next two years after that has been tough, but you just have to keep fighting,” he said. “That’s what we always do.”

That character has been evident in this season as well, he said.

“I mean, going into the season we didn’t think we’d be 4-5 right now, but we’ve been close in all our games except for two,” he said. “It’s tough, but there’s still season left.”

But there is still a lot to accomplish in 2010. Gray said talk among the seniors is focused on avoiding a senior day loss.

“Just get the win for the seniors,” he said. “They don’t want to leave their last game in Notre Dame Stadium with a loss. It was tough last year, seeing my friends leave with a loss in the Stadium. We don’t want that to happen again.”

With coming back for a fifth year as a possibility, Gray’s view of that senior game may be a little different than that of most; but his reflection on his four years at Notre Dame summed up the experience of this year’s senior class.

“We know the score, but we’ve been close in all our games except for two,” he said. “It’s tough, but there’s still season left.”

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The Observer • IRISH INSIDER
Martin Quintana
Time at ND teaches Quintana the ‘right manner’

By Andrew Gastelum
Sports Writer

This Saturday, senior outside linebacker Martin Quintana will take his last steps onto the field he has worked so hard to find. Then he will trade in his helmet for a briefcase and swap his jersey up for a gold helmet. It’s a new chapter for a player who has a grasp on what the game’s really all about and understands everything that he has accomplished, not the other way around.

Quintana’s story is one of perseverance and overcoming obstacles, both on and off the field. He has had one more year of eligibility, and he was able to return and be a part of his team. “He was very important to me and my heritage to receive this degree,” Quintana said. “I also had one more year of eligibility and I was lucky enough for (former Irish Brian) Kelly to let me return and be a part of his team.”

Quintana’s first year on the team was a wash as he dealt with injuries and challenges we face and it’s almost like it is a competition between us during practice.”

Reinforcing one of Kelly’s favorite mandates, Quintana also insists that he owes Notre Dame for what he has accomplished, not the other way around. “I have grown so much since coming here,” he said. “Playing here is about doing things the right way and conducting yourself in the right manner. I can’t believe I have developed the values that I developed during my time here.”

As always, I am just going to make the guys out there better and prepare them for what he has accomplished, not the other way around. “Because of everything that I have gone through, there is nothing that someone can put me through that I haven’t experienced before,” Quintana said. “The values that I developed here are what I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”

With his bright future coming to an end, Quintana had only one thing to say. “I love this university, but it’s time for me to move on to other things,” he said.

Those other things will result in a gold-plated name on his desk, four years after seeing his name scribbled onto tape stuck to a gold helmet.

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Dan Wenger

With another year possible, Wenger not done yet

By Eric Prister
Associate Sport Editor

Fifth-year offensive lineman Dan Wenger has dealt with position changes, coaching changes and battled injuries throughout his time at Notre Dame. Through it all, Wenger said he felt the direction he had something to prove, and is confident that he was able to accomplish his goal.

“It’s just one of those things where you’re looking for the real end goal — to be successful every year and to keep getting better and hopefully play at the next level,” Wenger said.

Wenger was in life, in football, in school or really in any aspect there’s always going to be something that comes up and brings you down to your knees and says are you going to get up or are you going to sit there and lay down and not do anything about it?

And I just kept fighting and getting up and was stronger for it and bounced back and picked up. There’s a toughness and smartest and most reliable players that have come through this program.”

Wenger’s 19 starts places him third among active offensive players in that category. He attributes part of his success to the teaching he received in his first few years on the team. “I would like to thank my first offensive line coach, John Latina, recruited me from the start and was really always in my corner for everything,” he said. “He molded me and shaped me and taught me football like I never knew it was supposed to be played. He showed me what the game’s really all about and taught me everything from defense to offense to receiving in a real high school player to a real college player who really understood what he was trying to do. Not only coach Latina, but also (former Irish center) John Sullivan reached out to me a lot, and luckily I had two years with John. Those two definitely helped me and worked with me and made me football smarter.”

Wenger’s most successful season was his junior year. He started every game for the Irish at center in 2008, a team that finished 7-6 after their Hawaii Bowl victory. “[Being a starter is] obviously one of the greatest feelings in the world,” he said. “I started at center and at all the calls were on me. I had control of the line, and that’s what I really live and die for in playing this game, because I have control. I’m the anchor of the line. That was the greatest feeling of it all, just knowing that the other four guys could trust me and knew that I was going to get my job done and had faith and confidence in me. That’s the best feeling, being able to give your all on every snap of every game and being there for us.”

Wenger played center in high school, but has been moved back and forth between center and guard, a process that he said he believes has taught him to adapt. “It gave me the ability to just be able to adapt in pretty much a split second, because with my position changes and coaching changes, there was a lot of back-and-forth,” he said. “So it’s just a matter of being able to be coached in certain situations at certain positions and roll with the punches. You’ve got a situation that’s out of your hand, out of your control, and you have to make the best of it.”

Despite the many setbacks, Wenger said he would not change a thing about his time at Notre Dame, which he hinted, might not be quite done. “It’s been great,” he said. “I couldn’t change one thing about it. I met great guys, great people, great coaches. I got a great education, and this place is something special. Whoever gets the opportunity to come through here, not only going to school but if you’re given the blessing of playing here, you really have to treasure it. It took me a while to really understand that and really realize where I was. You can’t take it for granted at all. But don’t rule me out. I might be back next year.”

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WOPU Nation president relishes chances to lead

**NICK LEZYNSKI**

**WOPU Nation president relishes chances to lead**

**By MATTHEW DEFRANKS**

Sports Writer

For some kids, it’s a dream to one day play football for Notre Dame. For senior walk-on corner Nick Lezynski, it was much more than that.

“I would come home in first grade with a 100 on my spelling test and I would ask my mom ‘Is this good enough to get into Notre Dame?’ Well I’d be able to play football there?” Lezynski said.

The Newton, Pa., native hails from a family draped in Notre Dame tradition. Lezynski’s parents, sister and uncles all attended Notre Dame. He even attended Notre Dame High School in his hometown.

An Irish fan growing up, Lezynski walked on during the spring of his freshman year and now is part of the very select WOPU Nation — the Walk-On Players Union, described as a brotherhood between the walk-ons.

“We have parties. We have formal. We have e-mail chains. We have video skits,” Lezynski said. “Basically, we rip on each other the whole process.

Members of the WOPU Nation don’t take themselves too seriously, either.

“I’m the president and they’re thinking about impeachment,” Lezynski said. “It’s not going to happen. It’s turned into a bit of a dictatorship.”

Lezynski mentioned fellow senior walk-ons Michael Garcia, Dan Franco, Martin Quintana and Chris Guries as among those who have supported him throughout this process.

“The bottom line is that we want Notre Dame football to win,” Lezynski said. “These past few years have been tough, knowing that, being a player, I can influence the outcome. It’s been frustrating. I owe a lot to the previous coaching staff and this coaching staff for giving me a shot.”

Lezynski, a marketing major, envisions the WOPU Nation bonds to continue for the rest of his life, including in a possible business venture.

“There’s so many skills not just physically, but mentally also,” Lezynski said. “Now that I’ve accomplished this goal, I feel like anything in the future, I’ll be able to tackle. ‘Even though we have these down seasons and personally, I’m not a star. I wouldn’t trade this for anything. There’s nothing like being a Notre Dame football player.’

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**CHRIS SKUBIS**

Lineman spends time with linemates on, off field

**By SAM GANS**

Sports Writer

Rarely is a man who is six-foot-two and weighs in at 232 pounds bigger might intimidate some people. Christopher Skubis relishes the opportunity of going up against Notre Dame’s offensive line every day in practice.

“It was a tough adjustment at first going against offensive tackles who are 310 (pounds) or 320,” Skubis said. “It was a challenge every day to come out here, but I’ve been getting better and I’ve had a blast doing it. It’s nice to get in there and try to throw my weight around a little bit.”

Skubis, a walk-on, came to Notre Dame as a typical student. He did not play for the team as a freshman, and didn’t try out until his sophomore year, after a season of interhall football, when he felt the urge to attempt something bigger and better.

“My freshman year, I played interhall, but something was missing,” he said. “It wasn’t as competitive as playing on the varsity, and I didn’t think I could do something more.”

While he had been on the field now for his senior year, the disadvantage, he had to battle even harder just to make the team. Tryouts took place in the spring and were an agonizing process, filled with many demanding workouts.

“It was a brutal process back under (former Irish coach) Charlie Weis,” he said. “They really hate the crap out of us, and they had us in there five days a week at five in the morning. They worked us to the bone.”

Skubis stuck it out, though, and became one of about 10 players out of the 50 from his class who tried out to make the squad. Though he was a walk-on, the sophomore was instantly embraced as a member of the team.

“All those guys took me under their wing,” he said. “They showed me what was expected and taught me the plays.”

Not only were the other defensive linemen helpful to him on the field, but he became friends with them off the field, as well.

“I never thought I’d be running around with [sophomore nose guard] Ian Williams and [junior defensive ends] Brandon Johnson and Karon Moore,” he said. “We’ve actually become really good friends.”

Last spring break, I was down in Florida with those guys. It’s just opened a lot of doors for me, and I’ve met a lot of great people that I probably wouldn’t have had a chance to.”

Though Skubis has not made a huge impact for the Irish on the field, he and the rest of the senior walk-ons have helped to make their own large contribution to the program. Through the Walk-On Players Union (WOPU), a group that unites all the walk-ons and brings them closer.

“WOPU has grown in strength,” he said. “Back in the day, no one knew about it and part of our senior class goal was to get the word out there and make it one of those powerful groups on campus. It’s on the rise. We already got a hold of some new guys, teaching them our ways, showing them what’s expected, and they’re going to keep the tradition going.”

A double major in accounting and economics, Skubis plans to head south to Atlanta after graduation to work in auditing — and to escape the cold.

“I’m from Buffalo, and then coming to South Bend, I’ve got ten my fair share of snow,” he said. “So I figure I’ll go down there with nice, warm weather and enjoy the heat for a while down in SEC country and represent Notre Dame.”

But before he does that, there is still some more football to be played and memories to reflect on.

“I’ve gotten to experience so much by running out of that tunnel and being out there on the field for warm-ups,” he said. “It’s just incredible, and I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

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Wyoming walk-on excels most with track team

By MATTHEW DeFRANKS
Sports Writer

Nuss switches sides of ball early in ND career

By CHRIS ALLEN
Sports Writer

ANDREW NUSS

“Though a dozen schools were interested in me, the perfect mix of academics and athletic accommodations just didn’t happen,” Nuss said. “I realized I’m not really athletic. I thought I should try offense instead.”

Andrew Nuss senior guard

Wyoming walk-on long snapper John Belcher has taken his role with the Irish seriously, while enjoying hyjinx off the field, including an eating contest he called “the Man Challenge.”

As a pre-med student who has opted to not attend medical school, Belcher would like to work in medical device sales for a company like Stryker or Johnson & Johnson. An ideal situation would be in the operating room with surgeons instructing him on how to use the instruments, he said.

“I was very fortunate to have this opportunity, and lucky to be on this team,” Belcher said. “I can’t believe I’m already senior. I’ve just really enjoyed my time here.”

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Andrew Nuss

Nuss switches sides of ball early in ND career

By CHRIS ALLEN
Sports Writer

When offensive lineman Andrew Nuss first stepped onto the field of Notre Dame Stadium during his freshman year, he envisioned some of his greatest in an Irish uniform happening when he chased after opposing quarterbacks.

Little did he know then that his career would center around protection for his teammates.

Before the change could be made, the six-foot-five senior from Arizona had to experience a moment of self-realization.

“My freshman summer, when I got here in training camp I was on the defensive side of the ball,” Nuss said. “It was a lot of fun, but I realized I’m not really athletic. I should try offense instead.”

Later, before he considered his prospects on the offensive line, Nuss was a four-star recruit who started his college search looking for a school that could provide him with a perfect mix of academics and athletic accommodations. Though a dozen schools offered him spots, when Notre Dame came calling, he couldn’t resist.

“I visited every school because I wanted to give every school a fair chance,” Nuss said. “When I was offered by Notre Dame, I was like, well, this is what every kid grows up wanting. When I visited in the summer, it was basically, I’m done, I’ve found everything I wanted.”

When Nuss arrived on campus, his switch after the coaching change in the off-season, gave him the opportunity and lucky to be part of the offensive line.

“My freshman summer, when I got here in training camp I was on the defensive side of the ball. It was a lot of fun, but I realized I’m not really athletic. I should try offense instead.”

Andrew Nuss senior guard

But overall, I think I would do it again if I could.”

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Long snapper exceeds even his own expectations

By MEAGHAN VESELIK Sports Writer

A well-rounded Notre Dame experience is all Bill Flavin wanted when he stepped on campus four years ago as a student, but as he moved his belongings into the fourth floor of Keough Hall, Flavin never expected he’d one day be the starting long snapper for the Irish.

It’s a story that began his freshman year in the same dorm hallway where he still lives today, and one that ended two weeks ago when his ankle broke in the first quarter. Although it ended prematurely, Flavin said he would never forget experiencing a walk-on’s dream.

“I walked on in the spring of my freshman year,” he said. “It’s been a dream to come to Notre Dame since I was a little kid. My dad came here and I’ve been coming to football games my whole life. I didn’t really think about walking on com-ing out of high school, I just thought I’d be done. But then (graduate Irish player) Mike Anello, he was a walk-on and was a junior when I was a freshman, and he was in Keough and lived in my sec-tion, and he said, ‘Did you ever think about walking on?’ And I said, ‘Well, kind of, I mean I can long snap alright, so might as well try.’

Another hallmate and friend, Dan Brennan, also pushed Flavin to try out and seconded Anello’s encouragement.

“I was on the fence but (Brennan) was like, ‘just do it, you got nothing to lose. Even if you don’t make it, you’ll just be back here, where you are now,’” Flavin said. “So I took his advice to heart, and I gave it a shot and here I am now.”

Some things Flavin didn’t think about when he took that advice: early morning practices walking through snow, tough workouts that are expected to fit in around hours working in the summer, and football’s only a game.

Flavin breaks in the first quarter.

“I hurt my knee, I realized that that’s nuts, I wouldn’t have told you, when I first started, I would have said that that’s nuts, I wouldn’t have been able to do it,” he said.

Senior walk-on short snapper Bill Flavin was part of an all-walk-on field goal unit before breaking his ankle against Tulsa.

“But I think I’m able to do more when I’m involved with more. It’s cool to be able to go from a football practice at the Gug to lab in Jordan or things like that. I think I’ve seen a broad piece of football in the past four years and it’s been great.”

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Mike Ragone
Torn ACL helps tight end realize priorities in life

By MEGAN GOLDEN Sports Writer

A torn ACL, a taste of Notre Dame academics and a coaching change were not going to stop senior tight end Mike Ragone from becoming the athlete, student and, most importantly, friend that he is today.

Ragone saw action in 11 games as a freshman, and he quickly learned the difference between his high school’s game day atmosphere and the training camp, and my knee couldn’t take it anymore, so I had surgery and couldn’t play that year,” he said. “Just over-all, it definitely sets you back. But at the same time, it also developed me into the person I am today.”

Senior tight end Mike Ragone.

The highlight of Ragone’s athletic career came early in the Washington State game during his junior season. The Cougars blocked an Irish extra point and attempted to return the ball, until Ragone sprinted 95 yards and came out of nowhere to make the tackle.

“What Washington State, I caught a guy from behind. It was a 95-yard run down the field,” he said.

“This time, he said the drive to lead came from his desire of having a Notre Dame degree. I will be happy that I went through it. Having a degree at the end, plus football, I mean that’s something nothing really better than that.”

Ragone learned that there is more to life than football.

“Before, I would just be messing around and not taking anything seriously. I was just worried about football, and football’s only a game. When I hurt my knee, I realized that there’s a life out there. Just enjoy everything.”

Mike Ragone senior tight end

When senior tight end Mike Ragone tore his ACL his sophomore year, he was forced to notice the other chances Notre Dame offers.

And that’s what it came down to. He’s a great coach, com- petitor, and he’s there to help you,” he said. “At first I didn’t know what to think. I wasn’t mad or anything. Coach Kelly’s won everywhere he’s been.”

Although this senior tight end might have been rocky with the injury and coaching change, Ragone has made friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.

“I think of the biggest reasons he’s chosen Notre Dame — his Irish coach Charlie Weis — was fired, and Notre Dame announced Brian Kelly’s hiring as head coach.

“Weis was always there for me, and he recruited me. He’s like a friend, someone who’s always there, who’s going to be at your wedding. It was tough. We all had the same goal, we all wanted to win.

That means Ragone enjoys it.

“This is so tough, but it’s awe-some. My advisors and men- tors have really helped me, just standing over [me],” he said. “It really pays off in the top is nothing new for him, however, as he has held leadership positions before. This time, he said the drive to lead came from his desire of achieving his own goals and to help Notre Dame do well.

“I’ve been a Notre Dame fan my entire life, and obviously, no one enjoys seeing Notre Dame lose or not play a complete game to teams that [it] should beat, so the overall desire is to help the team win and to get the team back to where it should be,” he said. “I think the difference between a leadership role on the football team at Notre Dame to a role in student government or whatever else I’ve been involved in, is that with this, the group of people you’re with, it’s an incredibly motivated group. It doesn’t take much to catalyze that effort. It’s kind of leadership by example, you set the tone and everyone follows right away, everybody gets caught along for the ride.”

Flavin breaks in the first quarter.

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Ragone learned that there is more to life than football.

“When Alabama fired him, I was sad because he was somebody who really matured me in a lot of ways,” he said. “Before, I would just be messing around and not taking anything seriously. I was just worried about football, and football’s only a game. When I hurt my knee, I realized that there’s a life out there. Just enjoy everything.”

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Notre Dame obvious choice for South Bend WR

By MIKE GOTIMER
Sports Writer

When senior wide receiver Dan Franco was looking at colleges, he knew he wanted to play football at the Division I level. But for the Granger, Ind., native, playing at Notre Dame was always the ultimate goal.

“I was looking at a lot of different kinds of schools,” Franco said. “I had a lot of offers from smaller schools, Division III schools, but I also had it in my head that I wanted to go to a Division I school because I want to see what I’m capable of and how I can compare against the best. And even if I’m not the best, I want to know if I could compete with the best.”

In his first season with the Irish, Franco turned in a fine play in practice that proved he could compete with some of the nation’s elite talent when he beat former Irish defensive back Raeshon McNeil for a touchdown in one-on-one drills at practice.

“Raeshon McNeil was our top cover corner at the time, and he came up expecting David Grimes and instead I show up,” Franco said. “I look over and I’m like ‘I’m ready to go coach, what do you want?’ and he looks at me and says [expletive] him, go run a go route.’ So I get to the line, [Irish quarterback] Dayne [Crist] throws the ball, throws it deep, 40-yard touchdown pass. I caught it right at the end. The entire offense swarmed me.”

Franco walked on for the Irish in the winter of 2008 after transferring from Indiana University South Bend, and he hasn’t looked back since making the cut under former Irish coach Charlie Weis.

“I never doubted my decision,” Franco said. “I knew from when I was younger if I could get myself an opportunity to go to Notre Dame and actually walk on the team that I was [going to] do everything I could.”

Since arriving on campus, Franco has become close with his fellow walk-ons, and he says that he’ll miss spending time with his fellow WOPU Nation colleagues once his playing days are over.

“We have a thing called WOPU Nation, which is what the walk-ons call ourselves — the Walk-On Players Union,” Franco said. “These are the guys who when we first walked on, we’re waking up at like 4:15 in the morning, going through this process five days a week. It was hell, and it was painful, and it was only for guys that really, really wanted it.”

Franco, a psychology major, plans to graduate after this semester and will look to continue his studies in graduate school and work for a Ph.D. in psychology. He’s mainly focused on social psychology and ultimately hopes to get into sports psychology.

“It’s really something I’ve been interested in since I was like 10 years old, and I’m planning on going to grad school,” Franco said. “I’m hoping to get into a Ph.D. program after the semester. It’s always been a passion of mine.”

Contact Mike Gotimer at mgotimer@nd.edu

By MIKE GOTIMER
Sports Writer

Dan Franco
Notre Dame obvious choice for South Bend WR

The GUARDIAN
SUZANNA PRATT/The Observer
South Bend native and wide receiver Dan Franco never wavered in his decision to go to Notre Dame.
By SAM GANS
Sports Writer

There is an old saying that competition brings out the best in people.

Senior offensive tackle Taylor Dever may not have been the embodiment of that claim.

After backing up former Irish right tackle Sam Young for three years, Dever began spring practice in a competition for 2010 graduate Young’s vacated spot. Following a tough battle with fellow senior tackle Andrew Nuss, Dever emerged from fall camp as the starter.

The competition not only was a challenge that made Dever better, but was an enjoyable experience for him, as well.

“The competition was good,” Dever said. “I was at right tackle with Andrew. He’s a great football player. Competition is what football is. It’s so much fun. It makes you play the game worth it. It makes coming to work every day worth it.”

Since that time, Dever has cemented his position as the starter when healthy, playing an important role in all of the Irish’s contests in which he’s been available. One game in particular that he noticed his play really come together was Notre Dame’s contest in which he’s cemented his position as the starter.

“Dever has thought about his future, but has not made any definitive plans at this point. He plans to graduate with a degree in business, social life, education and future career planning. ‘It’s been really frustrating only being able to go out on the field might slip away,’ said Steve Paskorz senior linebacker.

“Red Mack actually graduated last year and caught up and having their bye week] for games this season. Possibly the last time I have the chance to off the field to help the guys on the field,” Paskorz said. "It's been really frustrating only being able to watch my senior season. Possibly the last time I have the chance to go out on the field might slip away.

Steve Paskorz senior linebacker

Senior linebacker Steve Paskorz may come back for one more season with the Irish after tearing his ACL this season.

By MICHAEL TODISCO
Sports Writer

Notre Dame football is defined by tradition — the gleaming golden helmets of the Fighting Irish carry with them decades of pride and success. For senior linebacker Steve Paskorz, this is what lured him to the University.

“The name and tradition that comes along with playing for Notre Dame is outstanding,” Paskorz said. “The coaches entered Notre Dame as a highly touted prospect, in a group with the likes of Jimmy Clausen and Golden Tate, and he said he looks back fondly on the relationships that was formed with his fellow recruits.

“Not only were those guys leaders on the field but they were great people off the field, and I was real good friends with both of them,” said. “We enjoyed talking to them when they were under here [during their bye week] for games this year and catching up and having fun with them.”

A highlight of Paskorz’s career continues to be earning his sophomore year, in which he established himself as a strong special teams player. “I would say the defining moment was the Hawaii Bowl,” Paskorz said. “We really had fun, plus it was a unique experience to get out there and see Hawaii.”

Paskorz continued playing special teams during his junior season, and seemed prime to take on a bigger role as a senior under the new coaching regime. However, after tearing his ACL, Paskorz was out for the season, which was aggravating for the Allison Park, Pa., native.

“It’s been really frustrating only being able to watch my senior season,” he said. “Possibly the last time I have the chance to go out on the field might slip away without even having a chance to play, it’s kind of depressing.”

Once he realized that he wouldn’t have an impact on the field for this season, Paskorz said he decided to try to make a positive impact on the team in other ways. Paskorz has tried to take the underclassmen under his wing and share his experiences with them.

“I stay around and talk to the younger guys and try to help them out, and mentor them with what I know and what I’ve been through,” Paskorz said. “I do what I can off the field to help the guys on the field.”

Paskorz said he has had the opportunity of coaching the new coaching staff, especially strength coach Paul Luongo. Paskorz’s time at Notre Dame allowed him to take advantage of the opportunity to work with a legend: Former Notre Dame standout and a member of the Super Bowl I champion Green Bay Packers team Red Mack has taken an interest in Paskorz.

“Red Mack actually graduated from my high school, and when he comes to a game and attends practices he always gives me advice,” Paskorz said. “He lets me know what I’m doing wrong, but he also just talks to me and tells me his story which is really inspiring."
Top seeds Dillon and Sorin square off for ultimate supremacy
Three Robinson siblings make Stadium a family affair

By SAM GANS Sports Writer

When sitting down with Kaitlin, Ryan and Clare Robinson, three siblings vying for an interhall championship, the must-win nature they share is evident from the first words.

When asked how serious they were as kids playing neighborhood games, all three Robinsons echoed two words monotonously, as if rehearsed: "very competitive."

That drive has carried on to their time at Notre Dame, as all three will be playing in the interhall championships in Notre Dame Stadium this Sunday. Kaitlin and Clare will be battling for No. 1 Howard against No. 2 Pasquerilla West and Ryan will be playing for No. 3 Sorin against No. 2 Dillon. They have all played key roles and numerous positions in the pursuit of victories.

Clare, a freshman, has played safety and running back, and even moved to the offensive line last game. Kaitlin, a senior, plays several positions, but most notably, is the main receiver and linebacker. Ryan, a sophomore, is the wide receiver, tight end, defensive end and linebacker.

"We pretty much go wherever the team needs us," Kaitlin said.

Each sibling made key plays in the semifinals. Against Pangborn, Kaitlin, the Robinsons' receiver, made a big play on a flag. Gaby, Ryan's twin receiver, cleared the back whenclare had an important sack on fourth-and-goal, helping lead a Duck (6-0) romp. Ryan had a catch for Sorin's only touchdown in the Otters' 7-6 win over Alumni.

"They come off the ball really well," Kaitlin said.

The Robinsons' passion for athletics did not begin at Notre Dame. Rather, it started in a backyard.

"We're really close in age, so we had a lot of overlap friends from growing up playing sports," Ryan said. "Touch football got pretty intense."

One sport, in particular, was heated, especially as they grew in age.

"We played driveway basketball until we just got too old and too physical for that," Kaitlin said.

"Then it got banned."

The memories of the intensity of these games stay with the Robinsons, though, in the form of physical reminders.

"Ryan has scars and I have chipped teeth," Kaitlin said.

"But don't ask them any specific tales — what happens in the backyard stays in the backyard."

"There are no secrets," Ryan added. "There are no secrets that we can say," Ryan said. "That's deep, dark family secrets."

The Robinsons are a true Notre Dame family. The three currently enrolled have a younger sister, Molly, a high school student who hopes to attend Notre Dame. They also have a little brother, Jack, a second grader who is a big Irish fan. The family love for Notre Dame was sparked in large part by their father, who attended the University.

"We grew up with Notre Dame," Kaitlin said. "Some people got sung lullabies, and we got sung the Notre Dame fight song."

Family members will be watching the games in Notre Dame Stadium this weekend.

"We've got a big family in Chicago and a lot of them are coming for the games," Kaitlin said.

"For the matchups themselves, Ryan is respectful of Dillon, but confident. They have a pretty good team, but we do, too," he said. "It should be a good game."

The women's side is not as friendly, after a bitter championship game last year between Howard and Pasquerilla West, which Howard won. "There's animosity," Clare said.

"It's like, 'Be it physical, but don't break the glass,'" Kaitlin said.

"I don't really care [how they play], as long as we win," he said. "Typical siblings."

Contact Sam Gans at sgans@nd.edu

Dillon freshman quarterback Kevin Fink looks for a receiver in the Big Red's 12-7 semifinal victory over Siegfried Sunday.

Dillon senior captain Jordan Spinelli and sophomore wide receiver Ryan Robinson catch the only touchdowns of the Otters' 7-6 win over Alumni Sunday.

If there's one thing I've learned about interhall football in the two years I've been involved with it, it is that the men's game is usually decided by big plays. The defenses usually are able to keep offenses from putting together sustained drives, and the lack of a kicking game means teams usually find themselves playing for a touchdown. This will be a huge factor in this game, as both teams have big play passing game.

Kevin Fink and Ted Spinelli have been running these offenses all season, and they'll get a chance to face off against each other on Sunday. The game will almost certainly come down to one big pass play on either side. I think the combination of Spinelli to the vertical receiving threat Ryan Robinson will be enough to give Sorin the victory, but Fink and Dillon won't make it easy.

FINAL SCORE: Sorin 13, Dillon 7

Mackenzie Summerlin/Sorin Studios

Sorin sophomore wide receiver Ryan Robinson catches the only touchdowns of the Otters' 7-6 win over Alumni Sunday.

By MATT DEFRANKS Sports Writer

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FINAL SCORE: Sorin 13, Dillon 7
Senior quarterbacks Simone Bigi of Pasquerilla West, left, and Kayla Bishop of Howard fight for title in the interhall football. The senior class is determined to give the Weasels another title and a championship sendoff.

By ANDREW GASTELUM
Sports Writer

Talented quarterbacks are among friends face off one last time

Darkness engulfed the two friends, greeted by silence and anxiety, with a single light at the end of the banner-filled tunnel. The other left them, on the other hand, have prevailed in close contests in their first two rounds, defeating Lewis and McGlenn by a combined seven points. While those margins may have been slim, Koerbel believes that her team is continuing to improve.

"Against Lewis, we played terrible. Our defense was slow, and our offense was pretty much anemic," Koerbel said. "I feel really good about our defense after last week, though. Our defense was on the field for about 80 percent of the game, but we got some big stops, and our defensive linemen played great, especially (sophomore linebacker) Erin Pangborn and (junior defensive end) Jennifer Schmitt. She played unbelievable."

Pasquerilla West will need that defense to step up again against the wide-open spread offense of Howard, which is averaging over 21 points a game. On the other side of the ball, Bigi and the rest of the Weasels’ senior leaders will let it happen.

"It’s not the walk through the same tunnel that Lou Holtz and Joe Montana once trudged in together through or the view of Notre Dame Stadium from the field that Bigi recalls from 2009. She remembers losing in the championship game to Howard, Bishop believes that her team is continuing to improve, even from a dormant as small as Howard. I think that we can take advantage of that." The Purple Weasels’ quarterback until last year, also grew up enamored with playing football. "I would always go to sports camps and love throwing the football," she said. "I also grew up with two brothers who made sure I didn’t throw like a girl."

Nevertheless, the time spent practicing as a youth has turned Bigi into a premier quarterback who has taken Pasquerilla West (6-0) to two straight championship games, utilizing the deceptive triple-option as the Purple Weasels’ weapon of choice. "The (triple-option) keeps the defense honest because they don’t know whether we are going to pass or run," Bishop said. "When things click on offense, we are unstoppable."

Meanwhile, Bishop attributes her offense’s success to pure athleticism. "We take what natural talent we are given and use it to our advantage," the captain said. "Being in a small dorm, we naturally have great chemistry that translates to the football field."

Even with the intense rivalry growing larger each year, the two friends hold each other in high esteem, knowing that just reaching the finals is an accomplishment. "Kayla is nearly perfect under pressure and I really admire the way she plays the game," Bigi said.

Bishop echoed those sentiments, when asked about her former teammate. "I am very happy with our team. We play with such intensity that she isn’t afraid of anything. I talk to her and we talk about whether we respect each other," Bishop said. "And we expect (Pasquerilla West) to come out with a lot of passion and enthusiasm."

On Sunday, the two quadrants will experience their own individual sense of déjà vu. Walking out of the tunnel just as they did last year, one will hope to start a dynasty while the other will hope to exact their revenge in Bigi vs. Bishop II. But no matter what, both say they will remain friends, no matter the outcome of this day that will last a lifetime.

Contact Andrew Gastelum at agaste11@nd.edu

Howard senior quarterback Kayla Bishop talks to the media after Howard’s 13-7 win over Pasquerilla West in last year’s championship.

"Even though our dorm may be large, we’re really close on and off the field. Everything is so close to clicking for us, and I think it will all come together on Sunday," Koerbel said. Bishop echoed a similar sentiment.

"Last year, we proved that we are capable of winning a championship, even from a dorm as small as Howard. I think that we can take advantage of that."

Purple Weasels, Ducks fight for title again

Two teams with a history will meet again Sunday when No. 1 Pasquerilla West (6-0) takes on No. 2 Howard (6-0) in the interhall championship on the field. In last year’s championship game, the Ducks (6-0) were set to outlast the Purple Weasels (6-0) 13-7 in a tension-filled contest. Howard grabbed a first half 13-0 lead, and was able to hold the explosive Purple Weasel offense to just one touchdown the rest of the way. Howard senior captain and quarterback Simone Bigi, Kayla Bishop remembers it well.

"It was very close and really hard fought on both sides. Our defense helped us hold on in the second half, and we were able to win the game," Bishop said.

Pasquerilla West senior captain Libby Koerbel, on the other hand, said she hopes to learn from what went wrong last year.

"We came out super hyped up. We were really confident, and expected to score right away," Koerbel said. Instead, "I always wanted to play football since I was a little girl," Bishop said. "My sister would want to play dolls while I preferred to throw the football around in the yard." Bigi, who didn’t become the Purple Weasels’ quarterback until last year, also grew up enamored with playing football. "I would always go to sports camps and love throwing the football," she said. "I also grew up with two brothers who made sure I didn’t throw like a girl."

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On Sunday, the two quadrants will experience their own individual sense of déjà vu. Walking out of the tunnel just as they did last year, one will hope to start a dynasty while the other will hope to exact their revenge in Bigi vs. Bishop II. But no matter what, both say they will remain friends, no matter the outcome of this day that will last a lifetime.

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Senior quarterbacks Simone Bigi of Pasquerilla West, left, and Kayla Bishop of Howard fight for the interhall trophy.

"I always wanted to play football since I was a little girl," Bishop said. "My sister would want to play dolls while I preferred to throw the football around in the yard." Bigi, who didn’t become the Purple Weasels’ quarterback until last year, also grew up enamored with playing football. "I would always go to sports camps and love throwing the football," she said. "I also grew up with two brothers who made sure I didn’t throw like a girl."

Nevertheless, the time spent practicing as a youth has turned Bigi into a premier quarterback who has taken Pasquerilla West (6-0) to two straight championship games, utilizing the deceptive triple-option as the Purple Weasels’ weapon of choice. "The (triple-option) keeps the defense honest because they don’t know whether we are going to pass or run," Bishop said. "When things click on offense, we are unstoppable."

Meanwhile, Bishop attributes her offense’s success to pure athleticism. "We take what natural talent we are given and use it to our advantage," the captain said. "Being in a small dorm, we naturally have great chemistry that translates to the football field."

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Senior quarterbacks Simone Bigi of Pasquerilla West, left, and Kayla Bishop of Howard fight for the interhall trophy.

The rematch storyline is too good to ignore, but last year’s game won’t have much effect on this year’s contest. If anything, it should only make the game that much closer, as both teams have experiences walking down the hill before. I certainly expect nothing less than a contest that goes down to the wire.

Pasquerilla West’s triple option is extremely well-executed, and as every Notre Dame fan knows all too well, that can make for an infallible triple-option. On the other side, Kayla Bishop is a dynamo for the Duck attack. If the Purple Weasels can contain her, they’ll be well on their way to exacting revenge for last year. As I see it, though, she’s just too excel- lent for that to happen. Different season, same result.
Howard and Pasquerilla West face off in a rematch of last year’s title game.