Irish sophomore quarterback Tommy Rees completed 27 passes for 215 yards, but Rees was also responsible for three of Notre Dame’s five turnovers. The Irish lost 35-31 to the Wolverines in a game that saw 21 combined points in the last 72 seconds.

“Every time you see this game, you’re going to know that both teams are going to fight to the end,” Robinson said. “It’s never over until you see zeroes on the clock.”

After two disappointing losses, Irish junior linebacker Manti Te’o was nearly despondent after the game. But when asked if his team would be able to bounce back in time for next week’s matchup with Michigan State, Te’o had one, resolute response.

“We have to,” he said. “It’s not ‘will we’ or ‘can we. We have to.’”

Contact Allan Joseph at ajoseph2@nd.edu
Notre Dame and Michigan both donned special throwback uniforms Saturday in honor of the contest being the first night game in Michigan Stadium’s 84-year history.

This is what college football is all about

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — That’s all you need to see. If you knew nothing about college football, Irish football or the rivalry between Notre Dame and Michigan before Saturday’s game at Michigan Stadium is all you needed to see.

Granted, I’ve never been to an SEC game under the lights, a Texas-Oklahoma shootout or a hundred other college football masterpieces, but there was something mystical about Saturday’s contest that I’ve never experienced before and never will again. And it wasn’t the throwback jerseys or the history behind a rivalry that has gone stale.

The first night game at the “Big House” certainly won’t be the last. As predicted, Michigan fans filled the bowl until the stadium was just a sea of maize interspersed with the occasional blue or green. The Seven Nation Army chant raised the decibels to a new level, and I found out over 114,000 fans really do make a difference.

But who could have predicted the way the jumbotron lights danced off the student body’s maize like lightning, or the full moon offset by a clear sky in place of expected showers or the final 72 seconds of a game that sent Notre Dame to an 0-2 record?

Take yourself and this game out of context. Two unranked teams met on the second Saturday of September and produced one of the greatest finishes in college football history. Saturday night is the reason this sport exists. It’s the reason fans sit through eight months of offseason workouts, booster-led scandals and recruiting updates — a chance to witness history.

But ultimately nothing can be taken out of context. After Saturday’s loss, Notre Dame is headed down a very dangerous path that could send a season that began with BCS hopes just 10 days ago into an irrecoverable tailspin.

The quarterback situation couldn’t be clearer. Rees looks awful throwing on the run, and as Kirk Herbstreit said Friday, “he can’t move.” Yet when Rees avoids the pressure, even into an irrecoverable tailspin.

The Irish again committed five turnovers Saturday. Notre Dame lost three interceptions and two fumbles.

The Irish had the ball for just over 37 minutes Saturday, an exceptionally high number for a Brian Kelly offense.

Notre Dame and Michigan combined for 21 points in the last 72 seconds of the game to create a wild finish.
Irish defenders try to tackle Michigan quarterback Denard Robinson. Robinson accounted for 446 total yards of offense and five touchdowns Saturday night, including three scores in the fourth quarter.

By CHRIS MASOU
Assistant Managing Editor

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Following a heart-wrenching 35-31 defeat at the hands of Michigan, many Irish fans have lately begun the finger-pointing. While costly turnovers on offense and miscues on special teams contributed to the loss, a large portion of that pointing has been aimed squarely at the defense.

Heading into the fourth quarter with a 24-7 lead, the Wolverines posted four consecutive touchdown drives to steal a victory under the lights. Irish junior linebacker Manti Te'o said the experience was unlike any football he had ever played.

"Never, and it's something that I hope I don't experience again," Te'o said.

With the Irish down four points in the final minute, sophomore quarterback Tommy Rees connected with junior wide receiver Theo Riddick for a 29-yard score. Michigan quarterback Denard Robinson responded with his fourth touchdown of the quarter. In just three plays and 28 seconds, the junior led the Wolverines 80 yards down the field, denying Notre Dame its first win of the season.

"I'm surprised that obviously we didn't do enough," Kelly said. "Sometimes it doesn't go your way. The cornerback position is such that you're put out on an island. Sometimes it doesn't go your way. I'm very confident Gary's going to bounce back next week."

Additionally, a fourth down and five on the Michigan 29-yard line was negated for unsportsmanlike conduct, giving the Wolverines a new set of downs. Robinson and Michigan'sclincher was a touchdown pass from Robinson to junior receiver Jeremy Gallon.

"That was all on us," he said. "Michigan fans provided us with a great atmosphere to play college football. I really appreciate them for this environment and this atmosphere, and I feel real privileged to be part of this game."

Floyd sets more records
Senior wide receiver Michael Floyd added to his record-breaking career with a career-best 11 receptions, the second-most catches in a single game in Notre Dame history. With a 21-yard catch in the first quarter, Floyd surpassed Golden Tate for the most receiving yards in Notre Dame history. Floyd’s 159-yard effort was the 15th time he surpassed 100 yards in a game, tying him with Tate for the most 100-yard games in Irish history. Floyd has had at least 100 yards in 15 of the 32 games in which he has appeared. Saturday was the first time Floyd had more than 10 catches in two consecutive weeks.

Last-minute heartbeat
Michigan's touchdown to take the lead with two seconds remaining in the game was the latest winning touchdown recorded by a Notre Dame opponent in Irish history, coming later than Matt Leinart’s score during the 2005 Notre Dame-USC game. Irish wide receiver Theo Riddick’s touchdown with 30 seconds remaining would have been the sixth-latest game-winning touchdown in Notre Dame history.

Irish rushing falls short
Junior running back Cierre Wood combined for 129 yards and 77 rushing yards on 22 carries, while Floyd added 66 yards on six carries. The 35-11 loss, however, marked the first time in 28 games Notre Dame lost when outrushing its opponent. The last time the Irish lost despite winning the ground game was in 2004, when Notre Dame fell 31-28 to Oregon State in the Insight Bowl.

Contact Allan Joseph at ajoseph2@nd.edu
The first-ever night game at Michigan Stadium was one for the ages, as Notre Dame and Michigan battled to a wild finish that gave the Wolverines a 35-31 victory over the Irish. A record crowd of 114,808 witnessed Michigan quarterback Denard Robinson put up another astonishing performance against the Irish, as Robinson accounted for 446 yards and five touchdowns. The two teams combined for 35 points in the fourth quarter, 21 of which came in the final 1:12. The loss dropped Notre Dame to 0-2; the Irish host Michigan State this Saturday.

Night game nightmare

Clockwise from top: Michigan receiver Junior Hemingway scores a touchdown; Notre Dame sophomore receiver T.J. Jones tiptoes down the sideline; Michigan cornerback J.T. Floyd holds Irish receiver Michael Floyd; Notre Dame safety Jamoris Slaughter looks at Wolverine receiver Kelvin Grady; Irish quarterback Tommy Rees fumbles.