When we do that, we're a pretty fast tempo and we did that well. We emphasized this week to play at a fast tempo and we did that well. Gray said. "It was a big emphasis this week to play at a fast tempo and we did that well." Gray put the Irish on the board first, capping off an eight-play, 67-yard drive by barreling in the middle for a touchdown, a career-high 136 yards on 13 carries to take a 24-7 lead going into halftime. Gray topped the 100-yard mark with just under nine minutes to play in the third quarter. Kelly said Gray's performance has come to be expected at this point in the season. "We asked our team to get off to a fast start," Kelly said. "We did that, but I thought that was important for us to come here and really make a statement early on. I thought we did that — put some points on the board. So when we look at it, it was a very good victory for our football team, and I liked their preparation this week, the continuity of you around us that I liked our preparation during the week and that paid off today." Senior running back Jonas Gray topped the 100-yard mark on the ground for the first time in his career, carrying the ball 21 times for 136 yards and two touchdowns, including the first score of the game on Notre Dame's first drive. Kelly said Gray's performance has come to be expected at this point in the season. "We felt like it was about — he's been a consistent performer for us, and he's really emerged as a big-time back. That's why we went with two backs in the backfield for the first time this year, we played both Jonas and (Sophomore running back) Cierre (Wood) because they've been so productive for us." Wood came up just short of 100 yards as well, gaining 99 yards on the ground against the Terrapins. He took one of his 18 carries into the end zone, scoring from three yards out with just under nine minutes to go in the third quarter. "We know we would be able to run the ball so we started with a physical mentality and continued that throughout the game," Kelly said. "It was a big emphasis this week to play at a fast tempo and we did that well. When we do that, it's a pretty good offense that's hard to stop. The defense can't line up as fast as they want to, just things like that, and (Kelly) is doing a great job of dialing plays up." The Irish defense also put points on the board when sophomore cornerback Lo Wood intercepted Maryland sophomore quarterback Danny O'Brien's pass in the third quarter and returned it 57 yards for the score. "(Senior safety) Jamo-ris (Slaughter) did a great job of closing on that screen and had read that screen out and forced a high throw, and Lo was in a good position," Kelly said. "It was good to get Lo in the game — he's going to have to play for us next year so it was nice to see him get a pick six." Gray put the Irish on the board first, capping off an eight-play, 67-yard drive by barreling in the middle for a touchdown, a career-high 136 yards on 13 carries to take a 24-7 lead going into halftime. Gray topped the 100-yard mark with just under nine minutes to play in the third quarter. Kelly said Gray's performance has come to be expected at this point in the season. "We asked our team to get off to a fast start," Kelly said. "We did that, but I thought that was important for us to come here and really make a statement early on. I thought we did that — put some points on the board. So when we look at it, it was a very good victory for our football team, and I liked their preparation this week, the continuity of you around us that I liked our preparation during the week and that paid off today." Senior running back Jonas Gray topped the 100-yard mark on the ground for the first time in his career, carrying the ball 21 times for 136 yards and two touchdowns, including the first score of the game on Notre Dame's first drive. Kelly said Gray's performance has come to be expected at this point in the season. "We felt like it was about — he's been a consistent performer for us, and he's really emerged as a big-time back. That's why we went with two backs in the backfield for the first time this year, we played both Jonas and (Sophomore running back) Cierre (Wood) because they've been so productive for us." Wood came up just short of 100 yards as well, gaining 99 yards on the ground against the Terrapins. He took one of his 18 carries into the end zone, scoring from three yards out with just under nine minutes to go in the third quarter. "We know we would be able to run the ball so we started with a physical mentality and continued that throughout the game," Kelly said. "It was a big emphasis this week to play at a fast tempo and we did that well. When we do that, it's a pretty good offense that's hard to stop. The defense can't line up as fast as they want to, just things like that, and (Kelly) is doing a great job of dialing plays up." The Irish defense also put points on the board when sophomore cornerback Lo Wood intercepted Maryland sophomore quarterback Danny O'Brien's pass in the third quarter and returned it 57 yards for the score. "(Senior safety) Jamo-ris (Slaughter) did a great job of closing on that screen and had read that screen out and forced a high throw, and Lo was in a good position," Kelly said. "It was good to get Lo in the game — he's going to have to play for us next year so it was nice to see him get a pick six." Gray put the Irish on the board first, capping off an eight-play, 67-yard drive by barreling in the middle for a touchdown, a career-high 136 yards on 13 carries to take a 24-7 lead going into halftime. Gray once again finished the drive for Notre Dame, powering through the line on fourth-and-one from the one-yard line with just 29 seconds left in the half. "We felt like it was about — it was less than a foot," Kelly said of the decision to go for the touchdown on fourth-and-one. "Even if we weren't a very good running team I was going to probably go for it no matter what. But we've been running the ball physically and controlling the line of scrimmage against most teams, so we felt that was not a difficult call at the time." Rees, who completed 30 of his 38 pass attempts and threw for two touchdowns, said the increased tempo Maryland on their heels and was the key to Notre Dame's offensive success. "We wanted to go with a hurry-up with the tempo a little bit, and it worked out," he said. "I think we caught them when they weren't lined up a little bit, and we could tell throughout the game, the guys were getting tired and I think that has a lot to do with how we pushed our tempo." Maryland coach Randy Edsall said that, while there were bright spots for his team, it suffered from too many mistakes throughout the game, as it has all season. "Notre Dame has an outstanding football team," he said. "They had something to do with those missed tackles, and offensively we couldn't get a whole lot going and, same thing, dropped passes. That didn't help with the continuity of what we needed to get done." The Irish scored twice more in the third quarter — Cierre Wood's three-yard touchdown and Lo Wood's interception return — to extend their lead to 38-7. Notre Dame has now outscored its opponents 77-13 in the third quarter this season. "I think our guys settle into the game," Kelly said when asked about the halftime adjustments he makes. "They're tuned in. We can talk to them and they know exactly what we want to do in the third quarter and they go out and do it. Again, our guys understand how important it is to get some adjustments made at halftime. There's good communication, and our guys go out and execute." Notre Dame is now 5-0 in the month of November under Kelly. The Irish will try to continue that streak Saturday when they take on Boston College in their last home game of the season. "I think for us the process is what we do during the week because we're not at the point where it's habit, that we do it the right way all the time," Kelly said. "We're making good progress there. We really can't fly at 35,000 feet, so to speak. We have to really focus on the day-to-day. Contact Eric Prister at epriester@nd.edu"
LANDOVER, MD. — Let the record show on Nov. 12, 2011, Notre Dame defeated Maryland by a score of 45-21 at FedEx Field, home of the Washington Redskins of the National Football League.

Let the record show Notre Dame should have won that game, just as it did.

Let the record show Notre Dame's 45-21 victory over Maryland in FedEx Field on Saturday.

This was just one game — nothing more (though not Stanford). But that talent has been overshadowed by clumsiness and apathy for nearly 15 years.

That talent needs to shine against teams like Maryland more often. Unfortunately, having shined against Maryland is not enough. That was just one day, one game.

Then again, that was senior running back Jonas Gray’s first career 100-yard game. Junior receiver Robbie Toma set career highs in both receptions and yards. Sophomore cornerback Lo Wood even found the end zone.

The special teams unit made no mistakes, even pinning the Terrapins deep in their own territory on one punt. Irish sophomore quarterback Tommy Rees did not make as many knuckle-whitening throws as he usually does.

The Irish defense continued its third quarter dominance, holding the Terrapins to an over-matched team in the quarter. Notre Dame fans can breathe easily.

One game this was not a trendsetter. This was not more than one victory. This was not a statement.

This was not than one touchdown.
Toma steps up in Riddick’s absence

Irish junior receiver Robby Toma runs after a catch during Notre Dame’s 45-21 victory over Maryland on Saturday. Toma finished the game with seven catches for 73 yards.

By CHRIS MASOUD
Assistant Managing Editor

LANDOVER, Md. — One man goes down, the next man comes in.

For a Notre Dame squad plagued by injury this season, Irish coach Brian Kelly’s philosophy of replacing injured athletes with capable replacements has been embraced successfully at several positions. Junior Robby Toma’s career-high seven catch, 73-yard performance Saturday as a starter in place of injured wide receiver Theo Riddick was just another chapter of the same book.

“He’s been waiting for his chance, his opportunity, and he’s a classic case of our ‘next man in’ philosophy,” Kelly said.

Toma is no stranger to the starting lineup, moving up to the first team against Army and USC last season following injuries to Riddick and sophomore receiver TJ Jones. When Riddick was unable to recover from a hamstring injury in time for Saturday’s contest, Toma said Kelly noticed some of his progress in practice before kickoff.

“Coach [Kelly] came up to me and asked me if I was in, and I didn’t know, so I looked up at the board, and I told him I was in,” he said.

Featuring soft hands and uncommon acceleration, the 5-foot-9-inch Toma ignited an Irish offense in the first half. The receiver contributed a 26-yard catch to keep Notre Dame’s first drive alive, eventually leading to the first of five offensive touchdowns in the game.

“Last year I was put in a similar situation when Theo also went down, so I was ready for this,” football a game I love, and I prepare for it, so it felt like a normal game for me,” Toma said.

“Obviously keeping in mind that one of my best friends, Theo, went down, but just to get out there and play felt really good.”

Toma credits the talented cast of fellow Irish receivers for drawing the Terrapin defense’s attention away from him, allowing Toma to find open space and create an easy target for sophomore quarterback Tommy Rees.

“(Toma) played great,” Rees said.

“Toma’s a special player, and he’s got a knack out there on the field. It’s good to have him back out there. We can’t wait to get Theo back and get all those playmakers out there together.”

The Laie, Hawaii, native, who redshirted his true freshman season before being diagnosed with a ruptured eardrum, credits the experience to his development.

“It was tough. Everybody had their doubts,” he said. “They thought my recruiting was this, or they thought it was that. I just never paid attention to it because I felt Coach Weis recruited me because he felt I could play. Now, I feel like I’m showing everybody that I was recruited to come here.”

While Riddick’s status remains questionable for Notre Dame’s next contest against Boston College, moving forward Kelly said the coaching staff faces the additional challenge of incorporating both slot receivers into the Irish attack.

“Well, I think Robby is somebody we’ve always had high regard for,” he said. “We’ve tried to get him in the games, and I think we’ve managed to get him in early in games. It’s incumbent on us now to continue that rotation with Robby and Theo when Theo’s back.”

Contact Chris Masoud at cmasoud@nd.edu

The Observer

Notre Dame returns to top-25 polls

By DOUGLAS FARMER
Editor-in-Chief

LANDOVER, Md. — Notre Dame jumped into the polls for the first time since the preseason Sunday. The current three-game winning streak landed the Irish as No. 24 in the AP Top 25, and No. 25 in the USA Today Coaches poll.

“I think when you get ranked you’re playing better obviously,” Irish coach Brian Kelly said Sunday. “We started 0-and-2, and to be ranked this late in the season means we’ve played better football since that 0-and-2 start.”

Four Notre Dame opponents finish higher than the Irish in the AP poll: No. 8 Stanford, No. 12 Michigan State, No. 18 USC and No. 20 Michigan.

What’s a sack?

For the first time in nearly five complete games, Notre Dame gave up a sack Saturday, and then it gave up two more. Irish sophomore quarterback Tommy Rees was last sacked against Pittsburgh, a span of 195 pass attempts between the losses of yards.

“It was just a matter of time,” Kelly said.

“When you’re throwing the football as much as we do at times, they’re a pretty good front.”

Rees, meet Theismann

Legendary Notre Dame quarterback Joe Theismann spoke at a pep rally on the National Mall on Friday night, receiving cheers from Redskins fans who remember his NFL days.

Come Saturday, Theismann’s name became relevant again, when Rees tied his mark of 31 career touchdown passes, good for sixth in Irish history.

At his current rate, Rees would rank one notch above Theismann in career winning percentage. The statistic necessitates a minimum of 20 starts, and Rees only has 13, but his .846 winning percentage would rank sixth among Notre Dame quarterback rotation with Robby and Theo when Theo’s back.”

Contact Douglas Farmer at dfarmere@nd.edu

The Observer • IRISH INSIDER

scoring summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First quarter

Notre Dame 7, Maryland 0
Jonas Gray 1-yd run (David Ruffer kick) with 11:25 remaining
Drive: 8 plays, 67 yards, 2:33 elapsed

Notre Dame 10, Maryland 0
Michael Floyd 9-yd pass from Tommy Rees (David Ruffer kick) with 6:20 remaining
Drive: 7 plays, 80 yards, 2:31 elapsed

Notre Dame 17, Maryland 7
Quintin McCree 13-yd pass from Danny O’Brien (Nick Ferrara kick) with 5:18 remaining
Drive: 9 plays, 61 yards, 3:04 elapsed

Notre Dame 24, Maryland 7
Jonas Gray 1-yd run (David Ruffer kick) with 0:29 remaining
Drive: 13 plays, 70 yards, 4:43 elapsed

Second quarter

Notre Dame 31, Maryland 7
Cierre Wood 3-yd run (David Ruffer kick) with 8:48 remaining
Drive: 14 plays, 84 yards, 6:06 remaining

Notre Dame 38, Maryland 7
Lo Wood 57-yard interception return kick (David Ruffer kick) with 7:18 remaining

Fourth quarter

Notre Dame 38, Maryland 14
C.J. Brown 24-yd run (Nick Ferrara kick) with 14:02 remaining
Drive: 14 plays, 84 yards, 6:06 remaining

Notre Dame 45, Maryland 14
Tyler Eifert 34-yd pass from Tommy Rees (David Ruffer kick) with 5:31 remaining
Drive: 7 plays, 77 yards, 3:23 remaining

Notre Dame 45, Maryland 21
D.J. Adams 2-yard run (Nick Ferrara kick) with 0:37 remaining
Drive: 13 plays, 67 yards, 4:47 elapsed

statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>rushing yards</th>
<th>passing yards</th>
<th>time of possession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>34:30</td>
<td>25:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>24:00</td>
<td>13:24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1st quarter

Rees 30-38-296 O’Brien 14:21-132

2nd quarter

Gray 21-136 Adams 16-55

3rd quarter

Floyd 9-90 McCree 5-76

Monday, November 14, 2011
ndsmeobserver.com | page 3
An easy victory

Despite playing just 12 miles from Maryland’s campus, Notre Dame took the field for its off-site, ‘Shamrock Series’ home game to raucous cheers and never looked back. The Irish started fast, jumping out to a 17-0 lead midway through the second quarter. Senior running back Jonas Gray and junior running back Cierre Wood combined for 235 rushing yards on the night, and junior quarterback Tommy Rees added 296 passing yards in another 500-yard performance for the Irish offense. The 45-21 victory improved Notre Dame’s record to 7-3 on the season and put the Irish back in the top 25 of the AP and USA Today coaches’ polls.