Staying perfect

Irish use long drives to build lead, hold on to beat Eagles on same day No. 1 Alabama falls

By MATTHEW DeFRANKS
Associate Sports Editor

CHESTNUT HILL, Mass. — An early 95-yard touchdown drive was all No. 4 Notre Dame needed as it beat Boston College 21-6 in front of 44,500 people at Alumni Stadium on Saturday.

Irish sophomore quarterback Everett Golson engineered the 13-play, 95-yard march on Notre Dame’s first possession of the game, going 3-for-5 and including only 53 rushing yards. The Eagles were creative on offense, calling screens and reverses to try and catch Notre Dame off guard.

“Some were plays where you thought you were at Disney World, there was Mickey Mouse plays everywhere,” senior linebacker Manti Te’o said. “There were reverses, screens, that was the most screens I’ve ever defended in one game. Our guys came out and everyone flew to the ball. When something happened, somebody there.”

Eagles junior linebacker Chase Rettig was 27-43 for 297 yards and an interception. He was also sacked five times.

Golson finished the game 39 rushing yards on 11 carries. “We got a great push up front and I was able to run for the first downs,” Golson said. “I like to think that’s what makes me, me. ... It also takes the other guys around you to complement you and can finish the play off.”

 Dating back to the Pittsburgh game, Notre Dame converted on 12 consecutive third downs before an incompletion in the third quarter.

“It’s something we harped on, a lot of repetition,” senior running back Theo Riddick said. “Everyone was very detail-oriented in what they were doing. Everyone was on the same page and it worked out tonight.”

Notre Dame entered the game scoring touchdowns on less than half of its red zone chances but converted all three red zone trips into touchdowns Saturday, including scoring passes to sophomore tight end Troy Niklas and graduate student receiver John Goodman.

“Everett Golson played the way he needs to play, especially in the red zone,” Kelly said. “Once he starts playing at the level we need him in the red zone, we’ll start scoring touchdowns and not just field goals.”

Two series after Boston College (2-8) cut the Notre Dame lead to 7-3 with junior kicker Nate Freese’s 36-yard field goal, Notre Dame scored again on a long drive. This time, the Irish went 87 yards in 16 plays, taking up 8:30 of the second quarter. Notre Dame went 4-3-4 on third down on a drive capped by a 7-yard touchdown pass to Niklas. The grab was Niklas’ first touchdown of his career.

Riddick, who ran for 104 yards on 18 attempts, said Golson was the key to the long drives. “Long drives are going to tire out the defense and (Golson) made perfect checks and he knew what he was doing and it was a result of his play,” Riddick said.

Senior tight end Tyler Eifert continued to develop a rapport with Golson, grabbing six catches for 67 yards. “I think they’re feeling more comfortable with each other,” Kelly said. “Getting the ball to Eifert is very important and putting the ball in a good position where he can go up and use his size. That’s what I liked tonight. The little nuances of (Golson’s) game tonight is he put the ball in areas where Tyler can play (6-foot-5) because if he can play at that size, he’s hard to defend.”

Notre Dame turned the ball over twice on fumbles by Riddick and sophomore running back George Atkinson. The Irish now have five turnovers in the past two games.

“The only thing I’m not happy with is the turnovers, we’ve got to take better care of the football. They played hard and they played physical for four quarters,” Kelly said. “These are guys that have carried the ball a lot, they’ve got to do a better job.”

The Irish defense allowed just 300 total yards of offense, including only 53 rushing yards. The Eagles were creative on offense, calling screens and reverses to try and catch Notre Dame off guard.

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Eagles junior linebacker Chase Rettig was 27-43 for 247 yards and an interception. He was also sacked five times.

Boston College became the fifth team to not score a touchdown against Notre Dame. “I think they ran every play imaginative,” Kelly said. “Our guys defensively saw so many different plays tonight but they kept fighting and kept them out of the end zone.”

When you need a big play, he’s going to be around the football,” Kelly said.

Te’o said the Irish can still be better. “We can do better with our offense, he said. “We can do better executing. We’ll come back on Sunday and Monday and correct the mistakes and get ready for Wake Forest.”

The Irish will welcome the Demon Deacons to Notre Dame Stadium on Saturday at 3:30 p.m.

Contact Matthew DeFranks at mdefrank@nd.edu

PLAYER OF THE GAME

EVERETT GOLSON
NOTRE DAME QUARTERBACK

Golson only threw for 200 yards but completed 16 of his 24 passes and did not turn the ball over. He continuously converted third-down runs into first downs and accounted for all three Notre Dame touchdowns. The sophomore signal caller also ran for 39 yards on 11 carries, making him Notre Dame’s second-leading rusher for the game.

Junior linebacker Prince Shembo said the Irish were prepared for the various plays.

“We knew this was like their Super Bowl so we knew there was going to be a lot of trick plays and stuff like that. Everyone was ready and prepared,” Shembo said.

Junior cornerback Bennett Jackson led the Irish defense with a team-high eight tackles, including seven solo stops and one tackle for loss. Shembo recorded three sacks in the win.

“I wasn’t doing anything special, just chasing quarterbacks,” Shembo said. “In the past weeks, I would get to the quarterback and he would throw the ball every time, throw it out of bounds. This guy wanted to hold it so I was like ‘All right, cool, it’s about time.’”

Graduate student defensive end Kapron Lewis-Moore and sophomore defensive end Stephon Tuitt each added sacks of their own.

Te’o bolstered his Heisman Trophy candidacy with five tackles an interception in the fourth quarter. It was his sixth of the season, the most in a single year by an Irish linebacker.

Te’o leads the country in turnovers forced, with two fumble recoveries in addition to his six picks.

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Teo seals the game with his sixth interception

Notre Dame continues to tune out noise, history

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QuartErbacks
Everett Golson had another solid performance as a game manager and avoided any turnovers. He made plays with his legs as well while Tommy Rees was perfect in his one play of action.

Running backs
Theo Riddick topped 100 yards again but the Irish backs were muzzled by turnovers. Riddick lost a fumble and George Atkinson also coughed the ball up. Cierre Wood was almost a non-factor, getting only six carries.

Receivers
Tyler Eifert had another nice game as Golson continues to look for him on offense. He had six catches for 67 yards. TJ Jones had key catches on third down while John Goodman and Troy Niklas each made their only reception count, scoring touchdowns.

Offensive line
The offensive line continued their quiet dominance of opponent, this time opening holes and allowing the Irish to average 4.6 yards per carry. The unit also did not allow the Eagles to sack Golson.

Defensive line
Every game, the defensive line seems to get better. They continuously pressured Chase Rettig and did not allow the Eagles to establish any rushing game. Boston College managed just 2.3 yards per carry as Stephon Tuitt and Kapron Lewis-Moore tallied sacks.

Defensive backs
The secondary allowed Rettig to throw for 247 yards but he did so on 43 attempts. Bennett Jackson had a team-high eight tackles but dropped an interception. Zeke Motta continued his solid season with seven stops.

Special teams
Kyle Brindza made all three of his extra points and the kickoff coverage team held Spiify Evans to 56 return yards on three attempts. Ben Turk also landed two punts inside the 20-yard line.

Coaching
At some point, the Irish should dominate the inferior stage no upset bid by aggressive running the football.

Overall GPA: 3.33

The game was never in doubt and the Irish dominated Boston College even if the score did not show it. Notre Dame played down to the 2-8 Eagles but still found a way to win. For the first time since 1993, Notre Dame is 10-0, but they still find themselves on the outside looking in, sitting at No. 3 in the latest BCS rankings.

Play of the game

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Irish start with long drive

By MATTHEW DeFRANKS
Associate Sports Editor

CHESTNUT HILL, Mass. — Everett Golson was watching it. Bennett Jackson found out before the game. Theo Riddick said no one knew about it. But Irish coach Brian Kelly and the Notre Dame coaching staff did.

No. 1 Alabama had lost.

The top-ranked and previ-ously undefeated Crimson Tide dropped their first game to 29-24 to Texas A&M on Saturday. The upset happened before No. 4 Notre Dame took their own 21-6 victory over Boston College on Saturday. Notre Dame moved up to No. 3 in the BCS rankings after Alabama’s loss to Texas A&M.

Irish coach Brian Kelly addresses the media following Notre Dame’s 21-6 win over Boston College on Saturday. Notre Dame moved up to No. 3 in the BCS rankings after Alabama’s loss to Texas A&M.

Contact Matthew DeFranks at mdefrank@nd.edu

By CHRIS ALLEN
Sports Editor

CHESTNUT HILL, Mass. — The Irish initiated the scor-ing in their 21-6 victory over Boston College on Saturday with a 95-yard touchdown drive in the opening half of the first quarter. The drive, which lasted 12 plays and spanned 5:39, was the longest Notre Dame touchdown drive of the season. The Irish last record-ed a touchdown drive of over 95 yards in the 2011 season opener against South Florida, when they drove 99 yards for a touchdown in the waning sec-onds of a 23-20 loss.

The Irish followed up that drive with an 87-yard drive in the final minutes of the second quarter. The drive culminated in a seven-yard touchdown pass from sophomore quarter-back Everett Golson to sopho-more tight end Tyler Eifert. In total, Notre Dame possessed the ball for 12:27 of the second quarter and extended its lead to 14-3 in the period. Spanning the Pittsburgh and Boston College, but have found ways to pull out wins and stay undefeated.

“Winning is a win, and a win is not easy,” Jackson said. “Style points are style points. We’re going to come out and give it our all and try to come up with a victory.”

Te’o, who had five tackles and an interception in the win, said Notre Dame does not fo-cus on style points.

“It’s always about the win, that’s all that matters to us,” he said.

Kelly said the Irish have their sights set on Wake Forest, their next opponent, and not on how many points they win by.

“We’re going to work on win-ning against Wake Forest and take care of what we can take care of and then when it’s all said and done, we’ll see where we are,” Kelly said. “We really can’t waste any of our energy. You see how hard it is to win in college football. We can’t wor-ry about those things.

“We have to focus on what we can do and that is win on the field. If people don’t like us winning, I don’t know what else to tell you.”

Contact Chris Allen at callen10@nd.edu

Irish start with long drive
Notre Dame opened the game with a 95-yard touchdown drive and never looked back, cruising to a 21-6 win over Boston College. Sophomore quarterback Everett Golson threw for two touchdowns and ran for another as the Irish rolled up 393 total yards on offense. The win pushed Notre Dame to 10-0 for the first time since 1993 and into the No. 3 position in the BCS rankings.